

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
February 13, 2008

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the Building Department Conference Room, 1301 Palm Boulevard on February 13, 2008, at 4:30PM. Members attending included Barbara Bergwerf, Pat Campbell, Bob Hooper, Sandy Stone and Dick Watson; also the Director of Planning, Douglas Kerr was present. Ron Denton and David Stevens were absent. The press had been notified of the meeting and the agenda for the meeting was posted in City Hall and the Building Department to comply with the Freedom of Information Act.

With the Chairman absent, Vice Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The next item on the agenda was the review of the minutes of the January 9th, 2008 meeting. Mr Stone made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

DISCUSSION OF COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Mr. Campbell explained that the next item on the agenda was to discuss the commercial district and the three workshops that had been held on the issue. He stated that he felt that the input that had been received on this issue provided a good starting point for the discussions on the Comprehensive Plan. He explained that the review of the Comprehensive Plan was the next major issue that the Planning Commission had on their schedule and that he felt that this was logical time to discuss the issues that had come up in the past discussions. Mr. Hooper stated that he agreed with this strategy. Mr. Kerr and added that if any issues stood out as needing quicker attention, the Commission could discuss those now.

Ms. Bergwerf explained that she was disappointed in the lack of involvement from the Beach Company in the discussions. Mr. Campbell agreed and stated that this may be an issue of timing. Ms. Bergwerf added that she would not be inclined to recommend changes to the zoning code without a good idea of what proposals would be made and that she felt that if changes were to be recommended those changes should be aimed at promoting true retail uses, not more real estate offices.

Mr. Campbell explained that he was disappointed that the business owners were not better represented at the meetings. Mr. Watson explained that the issue of parking seemed to dominate the discussion. Mr. Hooper added that he felt strongly that parking would continue to be the primary issue and that it was short-sighted of the City to build a public safety facility without incorporating a structure

to accommodate additional parking. Ms. Bergwerf explained that she felt the opposite, that the discussions seemed to reinforce that there are very few days that all of the existing parking spaces are taken and in those times the district would not physically fit the hundreds of additional people that the garage would accommodate. Mr. Kerr added that the City is dealing with several very expensive issues at the same time including beach erosion, new fire stations and a failing bulkhead and that the timing may not be right for trying to build a parking garage.

Mr. Campbell explained that, related to parking, there is a very good e-mail from Ron Denton outlining his discussions with Bob Clark of the highway department and he thought that it would be useful to have Mr. Clark come to a meeting to discuss the possibilities. Mr. Bergwerf asked if the issue of parking in State right-of-ways is within the Planning Commission's purview. Mr. Kerr explained that he felt that generally it was an issue that the Commission should look at and review, but that City Council would be the final authority on the issue. The Commission agreed that it would be useful to have Mr. Clark come to the April meeting.

Mr. Campbell explained that an idea had been submitted by a resident about blocking traffic in the commercial area and opening up the pedestrian areas. Mr. Hooper said that this would be difficult with the existing curb-cuts. Mr. Campbell said that it would be a point to be looked into in the future.

Mr. Stone stated that he did not believe that there were any changes that needed to be made to the zoning requirements at this time. He stated that he felt that the issue in the commercial areas was the seasonality of the area, which he felt a change in zoning, including allowing mixed use, would not improve. Mr. Kerr explained that the initial concept about allowing mixed use was centered around the idea of giving the property owners an incentive to develop retail space, which might be good for the areas. He stated that if the group felt that the result would be just more congestion during the already busy season, then he agreed it may not be the best thing for the community. Mr. Stone added that with half of the island being within a gated community with its own commercial amenities, he thought it would always be difficult for retail businesses to thrive on the island.

Mr. Campbell added that he had recently attended a meeting regarding Coleman Boulevard with the Town of Mount Pleasant and they had changed their plans for one property from a mixed-use project to a hotel, which he found interesting.

The Commission generally agreed that other than meeting with Mr. Clark in April, they would hold off additional discussions on the district until the review of the Comprehensive Plan begins.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Mr. Campbell explained that the Commission will hold off on discussing the curve at 21st Avenue until Mr. Stevens is present, but he had been watching the area and he agrees that it is dangerous. Mr. Campbell asked if this issue was within the Planning Commission's purview. Mr. Kerr stated that he felt it would be appropriate to pass along an observance and recommendation to the Public Safety Committee of City Council.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m..
Respectfully submitted, Ron Denton, Chairman.