

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
May 9, 2007

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the Building Department on May 9, 2007, at 4:30PM. Members attending included Barbara Bergwerf, Pat Campbell, Ron Denton, Bob Hooper, Michael Loftus, David Stevens, and Andrew Roskill; also the Director of Planning, Douglas Kerr was present. 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The first item on the agenda was the review of the minutes of the April 11th 2007 meeting. Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

REVIEW OF PLAT: SUNDIAL CIRCLE

Mr. Kerr explained that this request was for preliminary approval of a subdivision of five lots for residential use at Sundial Circle (at the entrance to Wild Dunes). He explained that the property is located in the Wild Dunes Planned Development (PDD zoning district) and therefore there are no minimum lot requirements. However the original PDD gave the developer, which is now Lowe Wild Dunes Investors (LWDI), control over the density within the development. He added that a letter was included in the packet from LWDI explaining that an agreement exists granting the owner of the subject property the ability to create five lots.

He explained that a copy of a letter from the Isle of Palms Water and Sewer Commission stating that they have the capacity and are willing to serve the development with public water and sewer. He stated that a letter had been distributed from the Wild Dunes Community Association (WDCA) granting approval for the lots to drain into their infrastructure and that prior to final approval, all infrastructure will have to be constructed and approved. He stated that he believes that request meets the minimum requirements for preliminary approval and therefore recommended approval of the request.

The Planning Commission discussed the trees that would need to be removed to allow the installment of infrastructure and Mr. Kerr explained that he felt that the designers had done a good job of designing the lots to minimize the loss of larger trees. Mr. Loftus explained that he did not support increasing the density on the island. Mr. Hooper explained that he felt that as long as the request met the letter of the law, the Commission was obligated to approve the request. Mr. Hooper made a motion to approve the request and Mr. Stevens seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the request.

REVIEW OF PLAT: 1018 & 1020 CAROLINA BOULEVARD

Mr. Kerr explained that this was a request for final approval of a subdivision at 1018 and 1020 Carolina Boulevard. The property is located in the GC3 zoning district and the only lot dimension requirement for the GC3 district is that each lot have a minimum of 20 feet of frontage on a public or private street, which both lots have. He added that both properties will be serviced by public water and sewer and that he believes that the application meets all of the standards required by the ordinance and therefore recommends approval of this request.

Mr. Denton asked if there was a floor-to-area ratio (FAR) requirement for residential development in the GC3 zoning district and Mr. Kerr answered yes, there is a 55% FAR. Mr. Denton explained that he noticed an advertisement on the lots for structures that exceeded a 55% FAR. The owner explained that he was unaware of the requirement. Mr. Stevens made a motion to approve the request and Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the request.

DISCUSSION OF TREE ORDINANCE

Mr. Kerr explained that this ordinance was a result of the discussion at the last meeting. Since the last meeting, the ordinance had been changed by moving the specific language regarding the tree preservation plan from the ordinance to a guideline and adding language that required an arborist to certify that the tree preservation plan was adhered to during construction prior to a project being issued a Certificate of Occupancy. The Commission generally agreed that this was their intent at the last meeting and Mr. Roskill made a motion that the ordinance be sent to City Council with a recommendation for approval. Mr. Hooper seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

DISCUSSION OF DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Loftus explained that this was an ongoing discussion of the Commission and that he had distributed spreadsheets showing the floor to area ratio (FAR) for all properties in SR1 and SR2. Mr. Hooper explained that the data showed that there are still a lot of underdeveloped properties on the island. He added that he felt that the rate of development was not unusually high- approximately 50 or 60 new houses a year. Mr. Loftus explained that it was really the mega-structures that he saw as a problem. He stated that he felt that the 7,000 square foot maximum size was too large. Mr. Roskill explained that he felt if the true concern was the hotel-type structures, the Commission should focus on the number of

bedrooms allowed in a structure. Mr. Campbell explained that out of the 4,500 houses on the island, only 40 or so are larger than 5,000 square feet, which he does not think is a problem. Mr. Denton explained that he did feel that most of the very large houses were appropriately located, on large lots and typically in an area of large houses, such as ocean front. Ms. Bergwerf explained that she felt that it would be tough to limit the number of bedrooms, because if an owner wants to get more people into a house they will put bunks into areas not intended for sleeping. Mr. Campbell stated that the group is discussing restricting the rights of owners outside of Wild Dunes and he wanted to know what the difference is between in the gate and out of the gate. Mr. Loftus explained that Wild Dunes has their own security force to deal with these issues. Mr. Campbell explained that the group is discussing legislating civil behavior, which the City already can do with the current ordinances. He explained that he felt that the conversation is getting dangerously close to severely damaging the property values of a portion of the citizens and he made a motion to defer discussion on the issue for one year. Mr. Hooper seconded the motion and after general discussion the motion failed with a vote of three in favor (Campbell, Hooper and Stevens) and four against (Bergwerf, Denton, Loftus and Roskill).

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Mr. Hooper explained that he would present information to revisit the issues in the commercial district at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.
Respectfully submitted, Michael Loftus, Chairman.