

MINUTES OF THE ISLE OF PALMS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
April 10, 2013

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission met in the City Hall Conference Room, 1207 Palm Boulevard on April 10, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. Members attending included Bev Ballow, Ron Denton, Patrick Harrington and Noel Scott. The Director of Planning Douglas Kerr was present as well. Richard Ferencz, Penny Lewis and Don Smith 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.

Chairman Noel Scott called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Scott explained that the first item on the agenda was the approval of the March 20, 2013 minutes. Mr. Harrington made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted and Ms. Ballow seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION OF TREE ORDINANCE

Mr. Kerr explained that a redlined draft and an ordinance draft which included the changes from the last meeting had been distributed in the packets. Ms. Ballow explained that since the last meeting she had taken a lot of measurements of pine trees and she felt certain that there were very few, if any, pine trees that measured 24 inches or larger in diameter. Therefore the amendment suggested at the last meeting of protecting pines larger than 24 inches would be meaningless. She explained that she felt that the protection of pine trees should be extended to smaller pine trees.

Mr. Scott explained that he understood the fact that many citizens have a negative attitude toward pine trees because of all the damage that they have caused in storms, but we was willing to go along with an amendment of protecting 24 inch pine trees based on the recommendations of the arborists from Clemson, but he was unsure of going below 24 inches. Additionally, he stated that the Commission as a whole agreed at the last meeting on 24 inches and he was uncomfortable with changing that vote with three members absent.

Mr. Denton explained that he too had been measuring trees recently and he too felt that a 24 inch diameter tree is really large and that it may be reasonable to protect pine trees smaller than this.

The group agreed that they would hold this discussion until the next meeting to give the others members an opportunity to be included in the discussion.

Mr. Harrington explained that he had an issue with the fact that the amendment would not allow an owner with a tree causing damage to an accessory structure to remove the tree. He explained that he supported the protection of trees, but when a citizen has a pool, which can be extremely expensive, that is being damaged by a tree he believes that owner should be allowed to protect his investment and remove the tree.

Mr. Denton stated that the ordinance's requirement to keep structures out of tree protection zones is the same for principal structures and accessory structures, so maybe it would be logical to have the removal standards for principal structures and accessory structures also be the same.

Mr. Scott explained that since the group is waiting to discuss the issue of protecting pine trees until the next meeting, he would like to hold any decisions on the issue of accessory structures until the next meeting as well.

REVIEW OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mr. Kerr explained that he had included updates to the Population element from the last meeting. He stated that the unusually high number for long term rentals discussed at the last meeting was not accurate and the correct number is more in line with expectations. He explained that he thought it interesting that the Isle of Palms had the largest percent drop of year-round population of all the barrier islands. He added that it stood out that Kiawah had seen a 40% increase in population since the 2000 census.

Mr. Denton explained that he felt this was because Kiawah is still very young and still in the process of being built out and the Isle of Palms had run out of additional developable wildernesses many years ago.

Mr. Kerr also noted that the percentage of seasonal houses, which includes second homes and vacation rentals, increased by 26 percent between 2000 and 2010, which he stated a large portion could be attributed to the Villages in Wild Dunes.

The group reviewed the Economic element of the plan and agreed that it was all still applicable.

The group agreed to review Natural Resources element at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Noel Scott, Chairman.