



Oconee County Planning Commission

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Minutes Planning Commission Meeting May 2, 2011

The Oconee County Planning Commission held a regular meeting on May 2, 2011 at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers at the Oconee County Administrative Building, 415 S. Pine St., Walhalla, SC 29691.

Members Present: Ryan Honea, (Chairman)
Howard Moore
Andy Heller
William Gilster
Gwen McPhail

Staff Present: Aaron Gadsby (County Planner)
Yancey Green (Planner)

Media Present: Carlos Galarza, Daily Journal
Ray Chandler, Anderson Independent Mail

Item 1: Called to Order

Chairman Honea called the meeting to order.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

Ms. Heller made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 18, 2011 meeting. Mr. Gilster seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3: Public Comment

Mr. B.J. Littleton commented on zoning and individual freedoms in Oconee County.

Item 4: Extended Public Comment Session (5 minute limit)

Mr. Tom Markovich commented on the rezoning processes adopted in Oconee County's zoning regulations. He reminded the Commission that Council zoned the entire county into the Control Free District when zoning was adopted. Also, he noted that the three mechanisms for rezoning contained in the regulations only allow one to be used at a time, and not a combination of the three. He stated that that the Planning District Method, although it has not been used, is the only citizen initiated rezoning method, for the Small Area Method focuses on small groups of property owners. Additionally, the third rezoning mechanism, the Council initiation method, allows Council to act to bring a

parcel into compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Markovich stated that because the Control Free District was determined to be in compliance with the Plan at the time zoning was adopted, Council is not allowed to initiate a rezoning; otherwise, the Zoning Enabling Ordinance was invalid.

Item 5: Discussion and/or Consideration of Capital Project Prioritization

The Chairman called for comments from citizens wishing to comment on various capital projects:

Mr. B.J. Littleton spoke in favor of saving the old courthouse due to its quality and history, and questioned the need for replacing the Book Mobile. He also stated that he did not like the Land Bridge Project, and said the County should not be involved with a hotel conference center.

Mr. Gadsby updated the Commission on the changes to the priority list since the budget process had started at the Council level. Discussion followed.

Ms. Heller made a motion to recommend Council limit the price of the proposed Seneca Branch of the library to \$6 million. Mr. Moore seconded the motion. Discussion followed. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Heller made a motion to remove the proposed Hotel & Conference Center from the recommendation list. Ms. McPhail seconded the motion. Discussion followed. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Heller requested the staff look into how Oconee County might be able to partner with or assist the YMCA with their plans to locate a new facility in the County. Mr. Moore stated that the new YMCA facility was needed in Oconee County, but that extreme caution should be used when it comes to using public tax dollars to help private industry. The Commission directed Mr. Gadsby to explore the issue.

Ms. Heller made a motion to adjust the Capital Projects Prioritization to show the firetruck and substation in priority one. Mr. Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. McPhail made a motion to change the wording of “Assess Viability of Future Needs of Old Courthouse; Sipplast modified roof membrane for Old Courthouse, or Demolition” to “Sipplast modified roof membrane for Old Courthouse and to list the building on the national historical registry and upgrade building pursuing historical grants.” Ms. Heller seconded the motion. Discussion followed. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. McPhail made a motion send the modified document to the County Council Budget Committee as a recommendation. Ms. Heller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 6: Discussion of Draft Major Development Ordinance

Mr. Gadsby presented the Commission with some possibilities for addressing the concerns raised by the Commission regarding residential development, time constraints, and commercial standards. The Commission discussed the ordinance and the direction it

should head. It was the consensus of the Commission to begin receiving a monthly report on commercial building permits issued. The consensus of the Commission was to address the ordinance for more discussion at a later date.

Item 7: Old Business

Mr. Gadsby announced that Chairman had approved making the May 16, 2011 meeting a workshop to discuss the ongoing review of the zoning districts.

Item 8: New Business.

Chairman Honea instructed Mr. Gadsby to draft a letter to all utilities and public bodies serving the unincorporated areas of Oconee, informing them of the need to comply with Section 6-26-540 of SC Code of Laws by providing the Commission with an opportunity to review all future building projects.

Mr. Gadsby informed the Commission that the first meeting in July was scheduled for July 4th. The consensus of the Commission was to cancel the meeting.

Item 9: Adjourn.