

OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



TEL (864) 638-4218 FAX (864) 638-4168

MINUTES OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

6:00 PM, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2014
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
OCONEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

Members Present: Mr. Lyle, Chairman
Mr. Gilster
Ms. Heller
Mr. Honea
Ms. McPhail
Mr. Childress

Staff Present: Josh Stephens, Deputy Director of Community Development
Matthew Anspach, Planner I
Tom Martin, Esq., County Attorney

Media Present: None

1. Call to Order

Mr. Lyle called the meeting to order. 6:01 PM

2. Approval of Minutes for Monday, January 27, 2014

Mr. Childress motioned to approve the minutes.

Mr. Honea seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Public Comment for Agenda and Non-Agenda Items (3 minutes)

Mr. Henry Watson spoke on his opposition to cluster development and ¼ acre lots and requested a minimum lot size of one-half of an acre to be added to the Overlay standards.

Mr. Buzz Williams of the Chattooga River Conservancy offered himself as a resource to answer any questions related to the Chattooga.

Mr. David Bennett of Waterside Crossing spoke concerning tower height and setbacks. He requested further review of standards to address all concerns that had been brought to the Commission.

Mr. Jim Codner of Advocates for Quality Development spoke on his constituents concerns about cluster development and ¼ acre lot size.

4. Discussion regarding Sub-Committee Ordinance Review of Chapter 32 & 38

a. Staff Comments

Mr. Stephens spoke about reviews of surrounding counties' ordinances for communication towers regarding room for emergency services, height cap allowing administrative review, and engaging or partnering with the Forest Service. He also spoke about staff's efforts to bring in an expert on communication towers.

b. Discussion & Consideration

Mr. Lyle asked for details on the heights of the towers already in the county.

Mr. Stephens responded that staff will search building permits for those details; also he could send the Commission the communication tower location map immediately.

Mr. Gilster asked that Mr. Stephens include the old tower survey with the communication tower location map.

Ms. Heller mentioned that she and Mr. Honea had worked out a compromise for complaints in regards to 38-2.7. She stated they agreed anyone could report a violation, if the violation occurred in the Overlay.

Ms. McPhail asked if there was someone designated to enforce zoning violations.

Mr. Stephens replied that he was designated to enforce zoning violations.

Ms. McPhail stated she believed there should be a difference between a major environmental violation and a minute issue.

Mr. Childress commented that he believed anyone should be able to report an illegal action no matter where they live. He also recommended the issue be brought before Council.

Mr. Lyle asked Mr. Martin if it was legal to limit who could complain.

Mr. Martin responded that he would like to review the Comprehensive Planning Act.

Ms. Heller added that the 10 day response time was problematic.

Mr. Stephens said that staff does their best to make that response time.

Mr. Gilster moved on to the subject of parking standards, pointing out that Bed & Breakfast parking standards should be removed because they were already been dismissed as an insufficient amount.

Mr. Lyle asked what would be considered sufficient parking standards for a B & B.

Ms. Heller suggested removing parking standards for B & B's.

Mr. Gilster brought up posting for public hearings. He asked about whether the ¼ mile from the boundary of the property would be implemented.

Mr. Stephens responded that staff was looking into sign inserts and their costs, so that the same signs could be used for a variety of different hearing types. He also explained language that was added on page 21; a provision for split zoning. Additionally, "10 feet from the right of way" was added as a setback for signs.

Mr. Lyle questioned why the statement "The height of a tree shall be measured as the distance from the ground at the base to the highest point of vegetation" was in 38-9.4.

Mr. Stephens commented that Article 38-10 should line up more with 32-9 for non-residential height. Mr. Stephens then discussed staffs update to the use matrix.

Ms. McPhail mentioned that "distribution and other warehouses" is ambiguous. She believed single family subdivision, solid waste landfill, and waste management services should be prohibited completely from list of uses in the Agricultural District.

Mr. Gilster added that agriculture and farming are not distribution.

Mr. Lyle asked if places of worship should not be permitted everywhere in the use matrix.

Mr. Stephens mentioned that places of worship are always at least permitted as a special exception.

Ms. McPhail suggested that group homes should be removed as a use from Public or Recreational Lands District.

Mr. Gilster thought the legend for "permitted (P), not permitted (X), conditional use (C), special exception (S)" should be placed at the beginning of the matrix as well as the end.

Ms. Heller stated it was her belief that the intention for the Lake Overlay District was for each lot to be one-half of an acre.

Mr. Stephens mentioned that the ability to interpret the for lot sizes helps the County negotiate with developers.

Mr. Lyle asked what the concern was with lot size.

Mr. Stephens responded that the concern was largely the impact of increased traffic.

Mr. Lyle suggested looking at minimum lake frontage rather than lot size.

Mr. Stephens added looking at reducing total initial acreage before calculating density.

Mr. Gilster presented requiring single family homes to be at one-half acre lot size while multifamily homes stick with current language.

Ms. Heller stated that lots should not be smaller than one-half acre. She also mentioned that she believed the issue should be brought before Council. She then called for a vote on changing the way the ordinance reads for Chapter 38-11.1.d.1.a.1. from reading a net density of two dwellings units per acre, to specifying that each dwelling unit must be on a lot with a minimum size of one-half acre.

The vote passed 5-1. The dissenting vote was Mr. Lyle.

Mr. Stephens added that the vote does not change the ordinance as it currently reads and that the “half-acre minimum lot size” edit would only reach Council as a recommendation.

Mr. Martin suggested citizens be required to pre-submit comments questions to any future public hearing concerning the Lake Overlay lot size issue.

8. Old Business

None.

9. New Business

The next meeting date was set for Tuesday, March 4 at 6:00 PM

10. Adjourn

Ms. Heller motioned to adjourn.

Ms. McPhail seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. 8:28 PM

Anyone wishing to submit written comments to the Planning Commission can send their comments to the Planning Department by mail or by emailing them to the email address below. Please Note: If you would like to receive a copy of the agenda via email please contact our office, or email us at: jstephens@oconeesc.com.