



Planning Commission

Work Session Minutes – August 11, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

1:39 PM

Following a social lunch at Lowcountry Produce, a work session of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Mike Tomy and was held in-person at The Landing Pad at 500 Carteret Street, Beaufort, SC. The meeting was not recorded or able to be streamed on Facebook in accordance with City Policy due to technical difficulties.

ATTENDEES

Members were in attendance: Mike Tomy, Chairman, Kim McFann, Clinton Hallman, Benjie Morillo, Bill Suter, and Libby Anderson. Bill Bardenwerper was on the phone via Mr. Tomy's cell phone for part of the meeting.

Staff in attendance: Curt Freese, Community Development Department Director, Christopher Klement, Planner III and Nicolas Navia, Planner I. Also, present were city-contracted architects Jeremy Tate and Maria Short from Meadors Architecture, LLC in Charleston, SC, and Members of the Public, Lise Sundrla of the Historic Beaufort Foundation, former commissioner Paul Trask and resident Tom Rubin.

Mr. Freese had to leave the meeting early due to an emergency, and Mr. Klement took over his role.

Additional materials were provided including a letter and petition from Ms. Ackerman, materials from Libby Anderson, materials from McCormick Consulting and materials from Graham Trask. Graham Trask's input pertained to his belief that there should be sunset provisions for demolition permits in the Beaufort Historic District.

Discussion of the following Agenda Items ensued:

1. If and how Building Design requirements could be improved in the Code and Discussion on scope of changes to Chapters 2, 3, and 4

Staff made a presentation of slides regarding various projects approved either by staff or by Boards pursuant to the form Based Code adopted in 2017 to guide discussion of if the code has been working and meeting its intent and how it could be improved. Slides and discussion included such recent development projects of Pintail Point, Carrington Manor, Culver's, the Quality Inn Conversion (The Pearl), Pointe Grand, Hanover Park, 4000 Margaret, Garden Oaks and Salem Bay. "The compound" currently for sale on Lafayette Street was not included. Ms. Anderson mentioned Ashley Point should also be looked at. The recently approved project across the street from the hospital was also discussed.

Issues raised were whether all aspects of the form based code were actually appropriate for all parts of the City (certain corridors, for example), how some of the presented projects may not really have been totally complied with the 2017 code and may be bad examples, how lot configuration such as flag lots present special challenges, how Jeremy and Maria's firm Meadors Architecture, LLC, had little input on many projects, how

the planning process would benefit from regular updates and analyses of approved and ongoing projects, and whether the map and/or district definitions need to be addressed.

Consensus was reached to the effect that parking (including shared parking), TIA's, availability of appropriate stacking capacity, street network and neighborhood connectivity (and the tension between connectivity and security concerns and existing neighborhood arguments against connectivity) and pedestrian access issues including sidewalks and safe cross walks were critical issues to be addressed as part of the approval process.

The role of the Civic Masterplan was discussed, and it was clarified that the Civic Masterplan is a "guide" for the planning process.

Possible changes to map and definitions were suggested, including a requirement for mixed uses in high density projects, a requirement for diversity in design and housing options within projects, more detailed Lowcountry design guidelines and application of same to all districts, relaxation of guidelines and approval process for affordable housing.

The need for annexation provisions in the code and future land use planning was discussed, as were the following: differences of opinion on the future multifamily projects, realities of real estate financing and need for input regarding same to inform the code revision process in a realistic manner, and growth area boundaries.

2. Exchange on the overall issues of ADUs, Short-Term-Rentals and Affordable Housing options in general

Extensive discussion of these issues ensued, as was the plan to devote the August 18 regular PC meeting to public input on these issues. It was agreed that Kim McFann would contact Ashley Brandon, City Information Officer to seek assistance in publicizing this meeting and other future meetings on social media, as such publicity for the planning commission has not been occurring for reasons unknown.

A list of issues was developed, including the number of permissible ADUs and possible special exceptions re same, licenses and transferability of same, grandfathering upon sale, waiting list, the 6% cap, owner occupancy requirements on short term rental properties, financial considerations for property owners, code enforcement, safety, requirements to be used as a short term rental – e.g., kitchen, bathrooms, and parking.

3. Planning Commissioner Discussions and scheduling of future Code changes.

It was agreed that a regularly scheduled monthly work session would continue and be publicized at least until code revision process is complete.

4. Additional public comment

Lise Sundrla requested guidance in the Code on plans that included plaza type features (e.g. Hop Dog downtown).

Paul Trask stated he had four additional suggestions re Code changes that he was going to submit via staff.

The Work session ended at approximately 4:30 pm.