

DRAFT/MINUTES

ISLANDS PLANNING COMMISSION

MARCH 17, 2015 - 6:00 P.M.

The Casino Bldg., 530 Beachview Drive, SSI

MEMBERS PRESENT: Preston Kirkendall, Chairman
Desiree Watson, Vice Chairman
Stan Humphries
William Lawrence
Robert Ussery
Karen Ward
Joel Willis

STAFF PRESENT: David Hainley, Community Development Director
Eric Johnson, Planning Manager
Karl Bursa, Planner II
Janet Loving, Admin/Recording Secretary

Chairman Kirkendall called the meeting to order and the invocation was given, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. He then gave a brief recap of the rules, voting procedure and audience participation in discussing agenda items.

AGENDA - **Additions, Deferrals, Deletions, Postponements**

Upon a request from staff, a motion was made by Mr. Stan Humphries, seconded by Mr. Robert Ussery and unanimously adopted to add Village Preservation Application *VP3015* to the agenda for the Planning Commission's consideration.

PP2925 Captain's Cove: Consider preliminary plat approval for a 33-lot subdivision. The 11.256-acre parcel is zoned R-6 One-Family Residential and located on the east side of Frederica Road, south of North Harrington Road. Parcel IDs: 04-05297, 04-05298, 04-05309, 04-05310, and 04-05313. Ron Sluder, agent for Mortgage of America, owner.

Mr. Ron Sluder was present for discussion.

According to the staff's report, the applicant is proposing to develop 33 lots and multiple common areas within two phases. The lots are designed to accommodate one-family detached dwellings. The smallest lot would be at least 6000 sq. ft., which complies with the R-6 Zoning District.

The following are preliminary plat requirements (and staff's comments) in accordance with Section 703 of the Glynn County Subdivision Regulations - The preliminary plat shall consist of a map or maps, drawn at a scale of not less than one inch, two hundred feet depicting the following:

1. The proposed name of the subdivision and proposed street names shall not duplicate or too closely approximate phonetically the name of other subdivisions or streets in Glynn County. If shown to the contrary, the Planning Commission or Geographic Information System (GIS) office may refuse to accept such subdivision and street names; must indicate whether the streets are to be public or private.

Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

2. Name, address and telephone number of the owner of record.

Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

3. Name, address and telephone number of the subdivider.

Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

4. Date of survey, north point and graphic scale, source of data, date of plat drawing, and space for revision dates.

Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

5. Preliminary Plat Certificates and Statements.

Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

6. A vicinity map locating the subdivision in relation to the surrounding area with regard to well-known landmarks such as major streets and thoroughfares, railroad rights-of-way, rivers, streams and other named bodies of water. Vicinity maps may be drawn in freehand and at a scale sufficient to show clearly the information required, but not smaller than one inch to one mile.

Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

7. Name of former subdivision(s), if any.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
8. Exact boundary lines of the tract or parcel to be subdivided, indicated by a heavy line giving length and bearings, and total subdivision land area in acres. The boundary lines shall apply to the entire tract to be subdivided.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
9. Natural features within the proposed subdivision, including drainage channels, bodies of water, flood plain, wetlands and other significant features.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
10. Cultural features within the proposed subdivision, including rights-of-way widths, and names of existing and proposed streets and alleys, existing structures, existing easements, buildings, city and county lines, zoning districts and boundaries, and other significant information.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
11. Proposed layout including lot lines with rough dimensions, lot numbers, block letters, street and alley lines, sites reserved through covenants, dedication or otherwise for public uses.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
12. Location of existing water and sewer utilities, if a connection to these public systems is proposed.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
13. Proposed unit division or stage of development, if any, by the subdivider.
Staff Comment: Not pertinent to this application.
14. The names of owners of record and zoning of land adjacent to the tract to be subdivided.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
15. FIRM Panel Number and flood zone designation.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
16. Building setback information per Zoning Ordinance including setback lines on odd shaped lot.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

Mr. Johnson stated that staff believes that the submitted preliminary plat adequately meets all ordinance requirements.

Mr. Ussery stated that there appears to be several wetlands that are shown on the plat and there are some portions of those wetlands that are being filled. He then asked what process would the applicant have to adhere to regarding these wetlands. Mr. Hainley explained that the Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over the wetlands; therefore, the applicant would have to obtain a permit to impact the wetlands. Mr. Ussery stated that some of the wetlands are very small. He asked if the Corps allows a certain percentage. Mr. Hainley stated that there are a multitude of options. The applicant can purchase mitigation credits out of the mitigation bank, but he would have to advise as to whether or not he has already secured approval from the Corps.

During a brief presentation, Mr. Ron Sluder stated that the majority of the wetlands are located at the entrance to the road. He stated that they will be under the Nationwide Permit which means under one-half acre. He then pointed out the common areas and the wetlands that would be impacted. Mr. Ussery asked if there is an old drainage area along Harrington Road. Mr. Sluder replied no; there is actually a county ditch that goes through near the wetlands area. He explained that they were originally going to access off of Frederica Road but after meeting with several people in the county, they decided to access off of Harrington because of the traffic. Mr. Ussery wanted to know if the small area of wetlands located on Frederica Road being retained as a common area. Mr. Sluder replied yes.

There being no further comments from the applicant, a motion was made by Mr. Robert Ussery to approve application **PP2925** subject to the preliminary plat meeting the requirements of all applicable codes and regulations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Joel Willis. Before taking a vote, Chairman Kirkendall opened the floor for public comments beginning with Mr. James Holland, former Riverkeeper, who requested a copy of the site plan. Mr. Hainley agreed to forward a copy of the site plan to Mr. Holland via e-mail.

Ms. Lisa Norton asked if there is a percentage of acreage that is supposed to remain as greenspace in accordance with current county ordinances. Mr. Hainley replied no. A few years ago there was an ordinance in affect relative to this issue, but as a result of a court case, it was deemed unconstitutional. He pointed out that open space retention is one of the issues being examined with the current moratorium. Ms. Norton sated that she's curious as to whether the Harrington Road area can sustain additional traffic. Mr. Eric Johnson stated that during review, staff determined that the preliminary plat is compliant. Mr. Hainley elaborated on staff's review and explained why the decision was made to move the entranceway off of Frederica Road onto North Harrington which he stated provided a safer entrance into the facility.

Mr. Ed Meadows of St. Simons wanted to know if the current ordinance requires a setback from the Frederica Road right-of-way to the boundary of the first lot or the first residence. Mr. Hainley stated that there is a required dedication to the county of 15 ft. of additional right-of-way. In other words, there will be a 15 ft. setback off of the existing right-of-way to the property line. The building setback line starts from that point.

Mr. Meadows made the following comments, which he stated would have value to the members of the Islands Planning Commission:

“This is one of the proposals that concerns Island residents because the residents are committed to maintaining the character of our Island. That character contributes to the real estate values of everybody's property.

“The North Harrington intersection is a crucial spot along Frederica Road. Whether traveling from south or north, the tree canopy at this location is a key part of the gateway to Frederica Circle, an iconic landmark on the Island.

“My career has been in real estate related enterprises. I have a lot of experience with design of developments that fit with neighborhood character. In many projects, developers enhance their product by carefully maintaining the existing character and resources of the property. In this case, protecting the canopy at the Frederica intersection, and the interior entrance to the subdivision, can minimize the disturbance of the character - of both the public road, and the first impression to the subdivision. This will also enhance the appeal, and value, of the lots.

“By protecting the development with a forested buffer, the developer can be eligible for tax benefits for the area protected. Among other benefits, the developer and property owner can reduce their taxes on the other lots sold. This approach also may result in higher value of the other lots. For example, if the project included a 75-100 ft. buffer from the road ROW to the first lot, that area could be tax-deductible. Equally important, the visual impact of the entire development would be reduced, possibly reducing citizen objections to the project. This would provide benefits to the developer - and possibly be an example for other developments on the Islands.

“I urge the Islands Planning Commission to include a meaningful buffer from the road in your consideration of this project. There are many benefits to all concerned.”

Chairman Kirkendall thanked Mr. Meadows for his comments; afterward, the Public Hearing was closed. Discussion continued among staff and members of the Islands Planning Commission.

Mr. Humphries stated that everyone knows that traffic on Frederica Road is getting worse. He pointed out that a wise person said “if you're in a hole the first thing you do is stop digging.” Mr. Humphries stated that the county has employed firms to make a traffic study of St. Simons Island and he suggests that this item be deferred until the results of the traffic study are in. He then respectfully suggested an alternative motion to defer this application until the traffic study has been completed. Chairman Kirkendall reminded Mr. Humphries that there is an existing motion on the floor. Mr. Humphries asked if the motion could be amended. Chairman Kirkendall advised that the motion could be amended by the person who initiated the motion. If the motion is defeated, another motion would be in order.

Ms. Watson wanted to know when the traffic study is due. Mr. Hainley stated that it should be completed later this year.

At this time, Ms. Karen Ward offered a second to Mr. Humphries alternative motion to defer this application until the traffic study has been completed; however, Chairman Kirkendall ruled that this motion is out of order. (Acton needs to be taken on the first motion; it needs to be approved, amended, or defeated.) For the record, the motion on the floor, which was made by Mr. Ussery and seconded by Mr. Willis, is for approval of application **PP2925** subject to the preliminary plat meeting the requirements of all applicable codes and regulations. Voting Aye: Mr. Preston Kirkendall, Mr. William Lawrence, Mr. Robert Ussery, Ms. Desiree Watson and Mr. Joel Willis. Voting Nay: Mr. Stan Humphries and Ms. Karen Ward. The motion carried for approval of application **PP2925**

PP3008 Sea Island Subdivision Block 24, Lots 7 A through D: Consider preliminary plat approval for a four lot subdivision. The 24,606 square foot parcel is zoned RR Resort Residential and located on the east side of River Club Drive, approximately 870 feet from its intersection with Sea Island Drive. Parcel ID: 05-00516. Sea Island Investors, LLC, applicant and owner.

Attorney Jim Bishop, Mr. Bobby Shupe and Mr. Josh Youngner were present for discussion.

In presenting the staff's report, Mr. Johnson explained that the applicant is proposing four lots in order to accommodate townhouses. The smallest lot would be at least 5,489 sq. ft., which complies with the RR Zoning District.

The following are preliminary plat requirements (and staff's comments) in accordance with Section 703 of the Glynn County Subdivision Regulations - The preliminary plat shall consist of a map or maps, drawn at a scale of not less than one inch, two hundred feet depicting the following:

1. The proposed name of the subdivision and proposed street names shall not duplicate or too closely approximate phonetically the name of other subdivisions or streets in Glynn County. If shown to the contrary, the Planning Commission or Geographic Information System (GIS) office may refuse to accept such subdivision and street names; must indicate whether the streets are to be public or private.

Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

2. Name, address and telephone number of the owner of record.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
3. Name, address and telephone number of the subdivider.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
4. Date of survey, north point and graphic scale, source of data, date of plat drawing, and space for revision dates.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
5. Preliminary Plat Certificates and Statements.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
6. A vicinity map locating the subdivision in relation to the surrounding area with regard to well-known landmarks such as major streets and thoroughfares, railroad rights-of-way, rivers, streams and other named bodies of water. Vicinity maps may be drawn in freehand and at a scale sufficient to show clearly the information required, but not smaller than one inch to one mile.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
7. Name of former subdivision(s), if any.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
8. Exact boundary lines of the tract or parcel to be subdivided, indicated by a heavy line giving length and bearings, and total subdivision land area in acres. The boundary lines shall apply to the entire tract to be subdivided.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
9. Natural features within the proposed subdivision, including drainage channels, bodies of water, flood plain, wetlands and other significant features.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
10. Cultural features within the proposed subdivision, including rights-of-way widths, and names of existing and proposed streets and alleys, existing structures, existing easements, buildings, city and county lines, zoning districts and boundaries, and other significant information.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
11. Proposed layout including lot lines with rough dimensions, lot numbers, block letters, street and alley lines, sites reserved through covenants, dedication or otherwise for public uses.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.
12. Location of existing water and sewer utilities, if a connection to these public systems is proposed.
Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

13. Proposed unit division or stage of development, if any, by the subdivider.

Staff Comment: Not pertinent to this application.

14. The names of owners of record and zoning of land adjacent to the tract to be subdivided.

Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

15. FIRM Panel Number and flood zone designation.

Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

16. Building setback information per Zoning Ordinance including setback lines on odd shaped lot.

Staff Comment: Provided by applicant on plat.

Mr. Johnson stated that staff believes that this application adequately meets all ordinance requirements.

During a brief presentation, Attorney Jim Bishop introduced the surveyor, Mr. Bobby Shupe, and the architect, Mr. Josh Younger. He stated that they are all available to answer questions.

Mr. Humphries stated that some of the neighbors had complained to him about the drainage issue in the area and he would like clarification on this issue. Mr. Bishop stated that the area has private drainage, which has been examined by county staff and will be addressed at the appropriate time. The streets are also private. He pointed out that he asked Mr. Shupe to do a computation of the maximum number of units that could be developed and Mr. Shupe reported that 9 units could be developed. Mr. Bishop stated that this request is in compliance with county regulations.

There being no further comments at this time, a motion was made by Mr. Joel Willis to approve application **PP3008** subject to the preliminary plat meeting the requirements of all applicable codes and regulations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robert Ussery. Discussion continued; afterward, Chairman Kirkendall opened the floor for public comments beginning with Ms. Monica Smith.

Ms. Smith expressed concerns about the identification of Sea Island Investors, LLC. In checking the records, she stated that there is no such entity registered with the Secretary of State. She stressed that using synonyms as a representative is not a good habit to practice. It would be better to know the names of people involved in order to hold them accountable for their actions. Ms. Smith also stated that the application indicates that sewage would be via private sewage company. However, she stated that Sea Island collects sewage from parts of Sea Island and then ships it off to the Joint Water & Sewer Commission. She feels that the residents need to know if the Joint Water

& Sewer Commission has agreed to take in these lots. She also wonders if the county has given any thought to requiring private facilities to meet the standards of the Joint Water & Sewer Commission, and she stated that private facilities should mesh up with the public system.

Ms. Jane Frazer also expressed concerns about drainage. She especially pointed out that the drainage at 5th Street has been a major problem for at least 5 to 10 years and she has personally experienced major drainage problems in the area since 1972. Ms. Frazer stated that the Commission should have something in writing about the sewage, i.e., how is it going to get off of the Island and where will it go. She stated that water is collecting in the streets each time that it rains, and it is a very serious problem.

Mr. Julian Smith wanted to know if the Islands Planning Commission intends to conduct a site-walk in connection with this project. Chairman Kirkendall replied no. To avoid violating the “*Sunshine Law*,” he explained that the members generally review each site individually, rather than as a group which involves a quorum, public notification, etc. Mr. Smith stressed that Chairman Kirkendall’s explanation is not satisfactory. He stated that there is too much going on that is outside of the convenient view and review of the citizens of St. Simons and Sea Island. He is asking the Islands Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners to develop policies that would encourage site walks for new projects. Mr. Smith stated that the public needs to be more involved and needs to see what is going on.

Mr. Ernest Jones wanted to know if the public comments of this meeting are being recorded and passed on to the County Commissioners. Chairman Kirkendall stated that the Minutes are recorded, written, and public comments are included. Also, the Minutes are available to the public as well as to the County Commissioners. (For the record, the Minutes are available on the county’s website and in the Office of Community Development. Video recordings are also available.) Mr. Jones stated that there are some valuable comments being made tonight and he wanted assurance that they were being recorded.

At the end of the public comments, Chairman Kirkendall expounded on the preliminary plat approval process, and he reminded everyone that the motion on the floor is for approval of **PP3008** subject to the preliminary plat meeting the requirements of all applicable codes and regulations. Voting in favor of the motion: Mr. Stan Humphries, Mr. Preston Kirkendall, Mr. William Lawrence, Mr. Robert Ussery, Ms. Karen Ward, Ms. Desiree Watson and Mr. Joel Willis. The motion for approval of **PP3008** was unanimously adopted.

VP3015 - 529 Beachview Drive: Consider approval for exterior improvements to an existing building/site on a 0.54-acre parcel. The property is zoned VMU Village Mixed Use and located in the Island Preservation District. Parcel ID: 04-04664. Larry L. Bryson, agent for Golden Isles Convention and Visitors Bureau, Inc., owner.

Mr. Larry Bryson and Mr. Scott McQuaid were present for discussion.

According to the staff's report, which was presented by Mr. Johnson, the proposed request is to allow for exterior improvements to an existing site. These improvements include new landscaping, sidewalks, paving, and wall signage. Also during the staff's presentation, photographs of the area were included for the Planning Commission's review.

In accordance with Section 709.4, the Island Preservation District gives the standards for review, as follows:

- (a) Construction, or remodeling or enlargement of an existing building in a manner inconsistent with the existing building massing (the three-dimensional bulk of a building: height, width, and depth), articulation (the pattern of the building base, middle and top, created by variations in detailing, color and materials or stepping back or extending forward a portion of the facade) and fenestration (the arrangement, proportioning, and design of windows and doors in a building) in the immediate area; or
- (b) An absence of unity or coherence in composition which is in opposition to the character of the present structure in the case of repair; or
- (c) Violent contrasts of materials or intense colors not representative of the existing buildings in the immediate area; or
- (d) A multiplicity or incongruity of details resulting in a disturbing appearance.

Ms. Desiree Watson wanted to know the size of the signs involved with this application and whether or not the signs are in compliance with the regulations. Mr. Johnson stated that one sign that's located over the building is 12.56 sq. ft. and the sign located to the right is 23.42 sq. ft. The signs are in compliance with the regulations. Ms. Watson asked if there would be any illumination relative to signage. Mr. Hainley replied no.

During a brief presentation, Mr. Larry Bryson, agent for the applicant, explained that they are basically proposing to re-landscape the base of the building in addition to having new signage. They will be replacing some of the hardscape with pavers in front of the building. On the rear of the building they intend to remove some areas that are presently paved so that the net site coverage is actually a reduction.

For clarification, the applicant, Mr. Scott McQuaid, pointed out that the demolition for this site is a landscaped demolition. The building is going to remain the exact same way. The landscaping will be changed as noted by Mr. Bryson.

There being no further comments from the applicant, a motion was made by Mr. Stan Humphries and seconded by Mr. William Lawrence to approve application **VP3015**.

For discussion purposes, Chairman Kirkendall opened the floor for public comments beginning with Ms. Lisa Norton.

Ms. Norton wanted to know the fate of the existing welcome center that's located at the end of the causeway. She specifically asked if it is being replaced by the proposed building, "The Golden Isles Welcome Center." Mr. McQuaid stated that the old visitor's center at the end of the causeway is a historic structure that is currently closed, but it is actually owned by the Georgia Department of Transportation and is under their purview. He stated that it is not necessarily being replaced by the proposed visitor's center.

Mr. McQuaid stated that the proposed facility is currently a 122 sq. ft. visitor's center located in the casino breezeway and it has been very difficult to operate due to limited parking, etc. Basically, there is no parking dedicated to the center or for visitors. Mr. McQuaid stated that what they are proposing at this time will allow for adequate space to operate the center.

There being no further comments, the motion for approval of application **VP3015** was unanimously adopted.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.