

DRAFT/MINUTES
ISLANDS PLANNING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 13, 2015 - 6:00 P.M.
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
 Cayce Dagenhart, Planner II
 Karl Bursa, Planner II
 Julie Grimm, Planner I
 Janet Loving, Admin/Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Alan Ours, County Manager

Chairman Kirkendall called the meeting to order and the invocation was given, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

For the record, the IPC regular meetings are scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month; however, the meeting date was changed from October 20th to October 13th in order to allow the IPC Members to make a recommendation on the proposed amendments before final action is taken by the BOC on Thursday, October 15th. In doing so, the regular meeting room, 108 of the Casino Building, was unavailable on the 13th due to previous booking. Therefore, the IPC meeting was moved to Room 114 of the Casino Building with a seating capacity of only 34. Chairman Kirkendall stated that if anyone felt uncomfortable with the number of people in this room they could leave; however no one left.

Due to the number of people present for this meeting and in an effort to avoid a fire code violation, Chairman Kirkendall suggested that all other agenda items (with the exception of the Proposed Amendments) be deferred to a later date. It was also discovered that Room 114 was not properly equipped for recording.

Mr. Hainley asked representatives of the items to be deferred if the deferrals were acceptable to their clients. Each responded in the affirmative. Thereupon, a motion was made by Mr. Humphries, seconded by Ms. Watson and unanimously adopted to defer Applications PP3104, PP3105, PP3106 & VP3122 to Tuesday, October 20th beginning at 6:00 p.m. in Room 108 of the Casino Building, St. Simons Island. The Meeting Minutes of August 18th and September 15th were also deferred until October 20th.

At this time, Chairman Kirkendall gave a brief recap of the rules, voting procedure and audience participation in discussing agenda items.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

TA3083: Consider an amendment to Sections 302 and 613 of the Zoning Ordinance of Glynn County, Georgia; to require buffers along major, collector, and minor streets in some instances; to provide for standards for these buffers; to provide for definitions of certain terms; and for other purposes.

Mr. Hainley gave a brief overview of the proposed amendment and afterward, the floor was opened for public comments. Those present to comment were Mr. Daniel Parshley, Mr. Kevin Mason and Mr. Julian Smith. Mr. Parshley expressed concerns about the possibility of increased buffers and its affect in subdivision areas. However, he was advised that the change in the buffers would not affect internal streets inside of a subdivision and in some cases; the buffer would remain the same on certain lots.

Mr. Mason and Mr. Smith had technical questions pertaining to the reports from staff. Mr. Smith disagreed with staff indicating that their report includes “an explanation of changes” with respect to the amendments. Instead, he feels that this is a listing of changes and not an explanation. Chairman Kirkendall elaborated on the amendment process as referenced in the Ordinances, and the execution of the staff’s report to the County Commission which also shows what was changed in the text.

There being no other comments from the public, the Public Hearing was closed and a motion was made by Mr. Stan Humphries, seconded by Mr. Robert Ussery and unanimously adopted to recommend approval of **TA3083**, amendment to Sections 302 and 613 of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance.

TA3127: Consider an amendment to Sections 706.4, 707.4 and 708.4 of the Zoning Ordinance of Glynn County, Georgia, pertaining to townhouses in the general, medium, and high residential districts; to increase the minimum lot area, minimum lot width and minimum side yard for townhouse end units; to provide that no more than five contiguous townhouses shall be built in a row; and for other purposes.

Mr. Hainley gave a brief overview of the amendment and afterward, the floor was opened for public comments beginning with Mr. Julian Smith who spoke favorably about this proposal. There were no other comments from the public and therefore the Public Hearing was closed. A motion was then made by Mr. Stan Humphries, seconded by Mr. William Lawrence and unanimously adopted to recommend approval of ***TA3127***, amendment to Sections 706.4, 707.4 and 708.4 of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance.

TA3128: Consider an amendment to Section 723.5 of the Zoning Ordinance of Glynn County, Georgia, pertaining to the planned development district; to clarify standards for districts where standards are not specified; and for other purposes.

Mr. Hainley presented the proposed amendment and a general discussion followed. During which time, Ms. Karen Ward pointed out that drainage is a big issue during the development stage of projects on the Island. In an effort to avoid problems with drainage, she believes that it should be included and addressed on the front end of developments rather than being placed on the “back burner.” Mr. Hainley explained that drainage issues are outlined in Section 619 during the site plan stage rather than during the rezoning stage of a project. However, Ms. Ward was adamant about perhaps changing this so that it is addressed ahead of time before a project is developed rather than trying to tackle a bigger disaster after the fact. She stated that most issues are easier to control if they’ve been identified first. Mr. Ussery agreed with Mr. Hainley and stated that in his opinion, drainage is adequately addressed during the site plan and preliminary plat stage of a development.

During the public comment period, Mr. Bob Kelly, Mr. Dave Olender and Ms. Jane Fulcher agreed with Ms. Ward’s comments. They feel that drainage and other issues are crucial and should be addressed before a development commences. Ms. Lisa Norton stated that this amendment needs additional work and all of the changes should be addressed before this is approved. Mr. Hainley reiterated his comments about drainage issues being included during the site plan review and the preliminary plat stage. He also advised that site plans and preliminary plats will be required up front before LDA’s are issued and drainage and other items will be reviewed during this time.

There being no other public comments, the Public Hearing was closed. A motion was then made by Mr. Joel Willis to recommend approval of **TA3128**, amendment to Section 723.5 of the Glynn County Zoning Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robert Ussery and unanimously adopted.

TA3129: Consider an amendment to Section 904.3 of the Zoning Ordinance of Glynn County, Georgia, pertaining to applications for conditional and special use permits; to clarify the actions that may be taken by the planning commission and county commission; and for other purposes.

In presenting this amendment, Mr. Hainley explained that this proposal deals with conditional uses (as well as special uses as outlined in the next amendment - TA3130), and is considered to be a zoning action under Georgia Law. The County Attorney is of the opinion that because this is a zoning action it should be vested with the Board of Commissioners for a final decision.

During the public comment period, Ms. Karen Manson asked for clarification of the last sentence in the heading of all proposed amendments which states “and for other purposes.” Mr. Hainley explained that the County Attorney included this phrase in each proposal in case staff missed something in the submittal.

There were several residents present to oppose this amendment. They were of the opinion that this amendment takes the power out of the hands of the Planning Commission. In fact, Mr. Jim Foster wanted to know why the Planning Commission would want to relinquish control to the County Commission “when the whole thrust of what the citizens have been saying is that we want more local control?” Ms. Desiree Watson explained that the Planning Commission Members were advised that this amendment has come about as a result of the County Attorney’s interpretation of the zoning laws that the County Commissioners have the final say, and not the Planning Commission. She also stated that she requested an explanation of this interpretation but she has not received it.

One Island resident pointed out that the Flash Floods request is a prime example of the power of the Islands Planning Commission, stating that this application was vehemently denied by the IPC. However, if this proposed amendment is approved, the IPC will no longer have this power. He then asked Ms. Watson how she felt about losing this power, to which she stated that she is opposed to this amendment.

Other residents present to speak in opposition to this amendment were Mr. Dave Olender, Mr. Cesar Rodriguez, Mr. Julian Smith and several others. Some of the names were not recorded, but they all urged the Islands Planning Commission to vote against this amendment.

Chairman Kirkendall stated that although the citizens want the IPC to make the final decision, he advised that the IPC will continue to do the job that we were charged to do, but the Board of Commissioners will have the final say. He stated that it would be in the residents' best interest to attend the BOC Meeting and voice their concerns. In fact, after hearing one Island resident state that there's only one County Commissioner who represents St. Simons Island, Ms. Karen Ward added that the residents should contact their At-Large Commissioners as well as the Chairman. She urged them to utilize their options and let the entire Board know that the Island residents want the Planning Commission to have the final say on conditional uses as well as special uses.

Mr. Cesar Rodriguez asked if some type of stipulation could be added to this amendment. Mr. Ussery stated that an appeal process could perhaps be included in the conditional use cases.

Mr. Stan Humphries asked if the IPC could defer action on this proposed amendment; however, Chairman Kirkendall replied no because it is already on the Board's agenda.

After closing the Public Hearing, a motion was made by Ms. Desiree Watson recommending denial of **TA3129**. The motion was seconded by Mr. William Lawrence. During discussion, Mr. Ussery requested that the motion be amended to include an appeal process; however, the amendment was not accepted and the motion for denial of **TA3129** was unanimously adopted.

TA3130: Consider an amendment to Section 1103 of the Zoning Ordinance of Glynn County, Georgia; to provide that final consideration of applications for a conditional use permit shall lie with the board of commissioners; and for other purposes.

The Hainley presented the proposed amendment and afterward, the floor was opened for public comments.

Mr. Jim Foster of East Beach commented on the recent moratorium which was enacted by the Board. The moratorium was extended and new ordinances were proposed; however, he stated that it appears that the issues have not been resolved.

Mr. Julian Smith stated that this proposed amendment also relinquishes the IPC's power. In his opinion, the County Commissioners appear to be more interested in the mainland rather than the Island. However, Chairman Kirkendall disagreed and stressed that the Board does care about the Island.

There being no further public comments, the Public Hearing was closed; afterward, a motion was made by Ms. Desiree Watson to recommend denial of *TA3130*. The motion as seconded by Mr. Stan Humphries and unanimously adopted.

At this time, Mr. Hainley gave a brief overview of the drainage concerns on St. Simons. Ms. Karen Ward stated that development should be stopped until they take a look at the infrastructure.

Mr. Daniel Parshley stated it appears to him that there is a lack of planning. However, one Island resident stated that he appreciates what the Islands Planning Commission is doing and he hopes that they can get the “ear of the Board of Commissioners.” Another resident spoke out and stated that it is not about less development; it’s about sensible development. He also suggested imposing more impact fees.

In his closing remarks, Chairman Kirkendall stated that there are two sides to the development issues. Landowners also have rights. People who have purchased property and planned to build a retirement home here have rights just like those who already live here. He then thanked everyone for coming out, but again he urged them to attend the Board of Commissioners Meeting.

The next Islands Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20th at 6:00 p.m. in Room 108 of the Casino Building, 530 Beachview Drive.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.