

## **WEST ASHLEY REVITALIZATION COMMISSION**

January 16, 2019

A meeting of the West Ashley Revitalization Commission was held this date at The Schoolhouse, 720 Magnolia Road.

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

### **PRESENT**

Councilmember Peter Shahid, Chair, John deStephano, St. Andrews PSD, Krisalyn Gleaton, Harry Gregorie, Diane Hamilton, Trudie Krawcheck, County Councilman Brantley Moody, Jimmy Palassis, Charles Smith, Mayor John Tecklenburg, Teresa Tidestrom, and Councilmember Marvin Wagner.

**STAFF:** Eric Pohlman, West Ashley Project Coordinator.

Chair Shahid opened the meeting.

#### **Recap of 2018 Year End Review - Eric Pohlman**

Mr. Pohlman said they put together a recap of 2018 for West Ashley that included the accomplishments of the City, County, private developers and nonprofits. He said he would do the second half of the packet distributed to the Commissioners, which was what could happen in 2019 for WARC.

The first half of the Next Steps section were compiled from the different workgroups the Commission broke out into at the time. The first listed was from the **Green Infrastructure and Sustainability** breakout held at the May 9, 2018 meeting. The items identified for priorities were:

- Expand the Keep Charleston Beautiful office through staff and support to make it more active.
- Develop a toolkit survey for neighborhood associations to assess their drainage issues in their various neighborhoods.
- Review City Code to make sure it supported green infrastructure.
- Support a ban on plastic bag use. It was noted that bags and other trash often clogged drainage facilities.

#### **Economic Development - May 9, 2018**

- Support zoning Amendment to incentivize redevelopment of existing retail locations.
- Identify target areas that can be marketed for job creation.
- Develop a vision and message for West Ashley.
- Develop industry and land use goals for West Ashley.
- Development and implement Design Review Board Guidelines.

#### **Transportation - August 8, 2018**

- Implementing modern traffic signalization system along major corridors.
- Work on coordination between SCDOT, City of Charleston and Charleston County transportation departments.
- Add bus pull off and station design to Design Review Board Guidelines.
- Support Additional sidewalk, crosswalk and maintenance.

#### **Community Design and Land Use - August 8, 2018**

- Need for additional public spaces and the connections to them to be emphasized
- Develop monument signage for entryways
- Creation of design guidelines for neighborhoods that are respectful of historic character.
- Creation of joint County and City design review process within Urban Growth Boundary.
- Support for Sam Rittenberg Corridor improvements to be "complete streets" model.

## Housing - August 8, 2018

- Education campaigns created for Heir's Property, workforce housing and the need for attainable housing.
- Assess and locate targeted area that would be appropriate for workforce/affordable housing.
- Review current ordinances to ensure they are encouraging and allowing affordable housing. Support research into additional density for workforce/affordable housing when place in appropriate locations.
- Audit the permitting process to ensure the requirements are not unnecessarily driving up cost for workforce/affordable housing. Research possibility of staff level approvals for workforce/affordable housing.
- Support procedures that can be used to assist renters in a climate where the landlord currently has added protections.

Some other Next Steps the Commission could look into were:

**Supporting Revitalization Effort** - From EPIC Center to small business, the Commission should continue to broker a unified view of development with the County and City. Some steps that could be taken by the Commission was starting a dialogue for a joint Design Review Board review between the County and City. Other areas for opportunities were identified in the work groups.

**Affordable /Attainable /Workforce Housing Study** - A suggested implementation item was to study areas within West Ashley that could be used for affordable or attainable housing. In conjunction with this could be a study of the status of the housing within West Ashley. The study could be led by a committee comprised of members of the Commission.

**Education Campaigns** - The Commission could establish a committee to research and implement education campaigns in conjunction with Charleston Moves, Charleston Metro Chamber, and /or Charleston Parks Conservancy regarding: stormwater and individual properties, community gardens, small businesses, digital entrepreneurs, and other items.

### Advocacy for Pilot Projects

In order to advance the revitalization of West Ashley, there will need to be collaborative pilot programs and projects to showcase the potential of areas. A workgroup from the Commission could be staffed to suggest and coordinate such projects.

Mr. Pohlman reached out to a lot of nonprofits and other nongovernmental entities that were around the area to see what they would like to collaborate with the WARC project.

*West Ashley United* would like to do collaborative initiatives for the West Ashley Greenway / Maryville Bikeway Projects, West Ashley beautification projects, community walks, and education campaigns on city department and procedures.

*Metro Chamber West* was interested in collaborating on refining strategies for targeting business growth, promoting the strengths of adjusting zoning and land development to allow for mixed used and affordable housing, researching how to streamline the process for development reviews along selected corridors and nodes.

*Charleston Parks Conservancy* wanted to partner with WARC when it came to the continued support for the Greenway And Bikeway Master Plan, and including small pilot projects, aiding in community involvement for park plantings and maintenance through Park Angels program, and planning and education campaigns for community gardens.

*Charleston Moves* wanted to collaborate on the continuation of artistic crossings along the Greenway and Bikeway along with Master Plan Implementation, continued advocacy for intersection improvements along St. Andrews Boulevard and Savannah Highway, and advocacy for BUILD or other transportation grants.

*Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission* wanted to work with the Commission on support for the separated path connection to Stono River County Park from the current terminus of the Ashley River

Greenway, aid in community involvement for park programs and events, and participating in public engagements for the parks.

*Charleston County Transportation Development* wanted to participate in continued support for multi-modal facilities to be planned and implemented, aid with the public engagement for West Ashley projects, and advocate for additional bike and pedestrian connections.

Mr. Pohlman said other organizations that would be good to work with that he hadn't gotten around to reaching out to all of them but they had been supportive and interested in what WARC was doing were Charleston County Government, St. Andrews Public Service District, Charleston County School District, Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG), Charleston Area Transit Authority (CARTA), West Ashley James Island Business Association (WAJIBA), Historic Charleston Foundation and Trident Association of Realtors.

Chair Shahid asked the Commissioners if they had any questions regarding the recap, the Next Steps or the collaboration.

Mr. Gregorie wanted to discuss the initiative about launching a branding study and branding plan for West Ashley. Since they have this new Commission and a plan that had been approved unanimously, he felt it would be appropriate for them to begin to take steps to explore how they might market the West Ashley energy. He thought they should consider hiring a branding expert to do an analysis of the West Ashley market and develop a plan on how they could brand and market the community. He said he personally would be willing to underwrite 25% of it to help kick-start this effort and perhaps the WARC would be willing to chip in another 25% so the City could chip in 50% and they could get moving on this.

Chair Shahid noted he spoke to Mr. Pohlman and the Mayor about that and he felt that was something they needed to do. He said once you do that it gave you a visual idea of who we were and as they moved through these projects it helped frame to make sure that as these projects were going through that it gave a visual understanding of whether we were consistent with that or were we complying with what we want to show.

Mr. Gregorie said for \$10,000 they could have a good plan and analysis completed. The order of magnitude would be the Commission could come up with half and maybe if they could find \$5000 within the city then they could get this thing going.

Chair Shahid suggested maybe the County could chip in 25%.

Councilman Moody said he could make some inquiries.

Chair Shahid said he had been contacted by someone who was introduced to him by Mr. Gregorie who showed a great deal of interest. He thought they could get that launched. He said they would have to go through their improvement process to get it all of that done. The City had the right of doing that with public money unless all of the money comes from outside sources and he thought that could expedite the process. He suggested they make that a number one priority item and see what they could do to request the City to fund that and where those funds could come from. They had Mr. Gregorie's match and Councilman Moody could give an update as to if the County could match it and contribute.

Mrs. Tidestrom said she could work with getting the money to get it going, which she thought was critical. She disliked the word branding. She thought it was more of finding a commonality of an area because not two areas in West Ashley were alike.

Mr. Gregorie said he was more of a marketing person than a branding expert. He thought what they wanted to do was establish an identity. West Ashley was a very eclectic community with different demographics and they had to realize all of those things. He thought there were some common touch points they could use as a community to advance the way in which they were perceived by the public at large and do it in a way that would advance the interests of the residents and take them to the next step.

Chair Shahid suggested they change the word from "branding" to "identity".

Mayor Tecklenburg said as Mr. Pohlman reviewed the list noting the collaborations, it occurred to him the Commission could get a "lot of bang for its buck" by collaborating with organizations. Since the commission was somewhat advisory and somewhat advocates, the other groups like Charleston Parks

Conservancy and Charleston County Parks Commission had major parks development taking place West Ashley, if they advocate with them to get some of those things done and work on the connection to the Stono River Park, they could help push along some of those other entities and get some of this work done. The more they collaborated with the other organizations, the collective action for West Ashley would be much more effective.

Looking at some of the specific things, such as the plastic bag ban that won't start until later this year, it raised the issue on City Council of this trash seen in the city. One of the goals of expanding Keep Charleston Beautiful to be more focused on West Ashley tied in with what was presented at the last Council meeting for 2019 to beef up support of Keep Charleston Beautiful to help deal with that challenge.

Mayor Tecklenburg continued saying the idea of the toolkit for neighborhood associations for the drainage issues tied into the new Stormwater Department. Ms. Katie McKain on the Sustainability Committee was working to make sure they support greener infrastructure. There were so many ties with other efforts going on with the City, the County or the Public Service District, they needed to be master collaborators this year. It would elevate the collective results they could achieve. Even though he thought it was a great list, they had to figure out how to take one bite at a time. While he knew Chair Shahid had some committees in place, if he gave him one task he would work on it and would accomplish more that way.

Chair Shahid said after Council took up the plastic bag issue and it passed, the first meeting of the Public Safety Committee, which he chaired, was on litter control. The committee was working on a comprehensive plan to do better enforcement for better litter control. They were checking these things off on the spot. In reference to Mayor Tecklenburg's comment regarding subcommittees, they played with the idea of subcommittees some time ago when they divided the commission into subcommittees. He proposed rather than calling them subcommittees they could call them workgroups and divide themselves into a team of one or two people. Maybe Mrs. Tidestrom and Mr. Gregorie work on the identity issue and Ms. Hamilton would like to work on housing. One of the things they had done with the housing was some of the educational component, which made sure people's homes and properties were protected through proper estate planning. He felt this was some of the things they needed to be doing in one to two person workgroups.

Chair Shahid received an email from Jonathan Zucker saying he would be able to attend the meeting.

Chair Shahid noted the last sentence of the Next Steps on page 26 stated "A committee from the Commission could be staffed to suggest and coordinate such projects." This was what the Mayor was mentioning also - an avenue for pilot programs. Three things that happened at the end of 2018 and the beginning at the 2019 that were on the table. The Glenn McConnell widening project, the Highway 171 - Highway 7 Intersection remodeling and the old Exxon station in Northbridge were projects that would have a big impact on the community at large that they had not formerly brought before the Commission. He asked if those were the kind of presentations they wanted before them and to weigh in on those things, and if so how?

Mr. Smith thought it was a great idea to provide a forum the Commission and the public. He knew it would be an advisory committee where they won't have any binding opinions on these things but to just give themselves and the public a forum within their own community for these projects would be helpful.

Mr. deStephano agreed. He noted one of the projects wasn't in the City but in the County. He asked where do they cut that limit off if someone wanted to build a house.

Mr. Smith said he didn't have a problem with projects of significance within the County coming to the Commission as well. He mentioned the half-acre lots for used car lots being put back on Highway 61.

Councilman Moody said it had been eliminated completely. There were no automobile uses in the Highway 61 overlay.

Mr. Smith said there was a request for someone who wanted to put a half-acre automobile lot there. It was not only putting used automobile uses back into a zone where they had been taken out, it was uses of that nature that were under a half-acre where people crammed in 30 or more cars onto a lot that weren't paved and fluids were dripping into the ground. He did a survey of what was out there last week and without exception there was a dilapidated house or trailer on the lot and a lot of cars crammed on it with a chain-linked fence for security. This was an issue that came up in the County but it was an overlay

district that also affected the City. The fact that it was on that corridor affected everyone. He didn't have a problem with City or County projects, particularly zoning changes or things of that nature, coming before the Commission just for information as he thought the public should know. He couldn't see people lining up to support having half-acre used car lots down Highway 61.

In response to a question regarding the location of the lot, Mr. Smith said he didn't know the specific location but it would be allowing that use within the entire corridor. He didn't feel that would be helpful to the hundreds of thousands dollars spent by the City and the County on planning efforts to try to get these areas to work and look better. He didn't think it would be a great move to allow for these used car lots to come back into this area. He added this was just an example.

Councilman Moody noted he was ready to see some action, ready to see some stuff happening. Charleston Moves had already painted the crosswalks, Highways 171 and 7 was getting out and Glenn McConnell was coming on line with bike and pedestrian access. He thought Mr. Zucker said maybe a year ago they had all of this low hanging fruit in all those implementations and they should get into it. If it was in the County, tell him and let him get some staff on it. If it was in the City, get some staff on it. He said to Mayor's Tecklenberg point when you start taking some bites out of those low hanging items things start happening.

Chair Shahid asked Councilman Moody how he felt about someone coming back to them to give updates.

Councilman Moody said that was fine giving updates along the way where things were going on. He said implementation should be action and the Commission would come together every month or quarterly to see what was happening.

Mr. Palassis concurred. He said they needed some action because they have been sitting here and been talking for a couple of years now. He said something got to happen.

Chair Shahid said they did somethings in August that they've checked off and done. But they had an ambitious laundry list to make sure they got all of those things looked at, talked about or done so they could check these things off. He questioned how they would proceed with that. Did they want to create one or two person workgroups, task them with that and report to the Commission?

Mr. deStephano asked if it would be possible to assign a liaison from the Commission to attend the City or County meeting on these different topics.

Chair Shahid said it had to be something more than just a liaison. It had to be someone who was engaged in making sure they were expressing the will of the Commission. They wanted to make sure the decision makers were advised as to how to proceed and make sure it was consistent with the vision of the West Ashley Plan.

Mr. deStephano agreed that would be the basis of having a Commission member as a representative of the Commission to express just that to give the Commission a presence.

Councilman Moody said the Commission met once a month. At times everyone can attend and sometimes they can't. This was the Mayor's full time job, as well as City staff and paid professionals. Instead of forming into workgroups, he suggested getting their staffs to work, let the staff tell them what they can knock out, and don't worry about them coming back and asking about it, just get it done. His point was instead of them continuing to talk and break down into groups, they should trust their professional staffs to start knocking it out.

Mrs. Tidestrom said the collaboration had already started whether it was her group or Charleston Moves. They were actually working together, talking and planning. They've got a good pilot program with the

Parks Conservancy. Charleston Moves and County parks had things going on. While they weren't talking here, it was happening. She said maybe it came back to this forum, but there were things happening.

Mayor Tecklenburg concurred with Councilman Moody's comment. In reference to collaboration and using our staff, he said we needed to collaborate on many of these items with the County. Under Economic Development, things like develop industries and land use goals for West Ashley were more like Planning items, while identifying target areas that can be marketed for job creation was more of an Economic Development item. So, with these two or three items here, he said we really needed Steve

Dykes and the County Economic Development Office along with the City to get together and be assigned a couple of these items from the West Ashley Plan, and County Council and City Council direct their staffs to pick out those two or three items to figure out what they could do to make that happen.

Mayor Tecklenburg noted that in reference to the Planning staffs for the City and the County, with participation from St. Andrews PSD, there were a number of items, specifically like the design review board guidelines, that crossed their jurisdictions. They had to make sure they had the three main organizations in one room to get their joint Planning staffs together to work on it. He said the main category was Economic Development and they had to bring their staffs together, and include the Chamber of Commerce.

He added they had Planning issues that crossed Housing, Economic Development and Transportation issues as well. They were trying to collaborate with Steve Benjamin, the County highway people and SCDOT. He said if someone on the Commission had a great interest in this one aspect, he would welcome them to take ownership. In reference to Parks, he said it seemed like it was the big thing between the Greenway and Bikeway with what the County parks system, the Parks Conservancy and City parks were doing.

Mayor Tecklenburg concluded saying it had to be really purposeful that they were selecting the three or four things to work and convene all of the right partners to get in one room to get the collective action going. He added he would be happy to direct City staff.

Councilmember Wagner suggested putting the staff at the Convention and Visitors Bureau to help with the identity for West Ashley since the CVB was an independent organization and they could get that done quickly by using what they had at their disposal.

Mayor Tecklenburg asked the Commission if they were good with the Next Steps.

Chair Shahid said they spent six months identifying these next steps. They extracted them out the major plan and identified a handful they called low hanging fruit. They have accomplished some of the things on there. They got a suggestion from for a liaison type setting. Councilman Moody suggested to make sure staff was talking with one another and these things were being implemented and followed up upon. But the question was how they envisioned the implementation of this.

Mrs. Tidestrom felt the liaison was extremely important. She thought in working with the different nonprofits, they needed to collaborate with Chamber West, which she became involved with recently. They needed to go after it now and get it down. She didn't want to come back a year or two now to keep talking about this over and over again with the identity. The hurry up and wait needed to stop. They were losing momentum with the public on what they were doing. She said let's get started, let's work together, collaborate and get it done.

Chair Shahid said that was the question he was asking the Commission - how do you want to do that. The one way to do it was assign these things they identified, create a follow up workgroup to make sure that those things that were identified were being done and come back with a report at the next meeting.

Mr. deStephano agreed with Mayor Tecklenberg. Since he was in economic development he would lead the charge for that. What that looked like, getting in the middle of the coordinating with City, the County and other organizations, which they needed to do, he was happy to jump in with both feet. If one of the other Commissioners wanted to assist with that that would be great. He didn't see adding another layer of reviewing County plans and City plans. He said getting their feet wet with these different organizations was the way they needed to attack this.

Diane Hamilton agreed with the idea of reaching out to other partners and a system to make this all become a reality. She also saw the importance of working with city staff because she wasn't the expert. Her primary interest was housing and already she had worked with the Charleston Redevelopment Corporation. They had been talking about a land trust and they were trying to address the issue of affordable housing. They spent a lot of energy this past year although they probably didn't see any concrete evidence of that because one of the issues they ran into was the difficulty of acquiring land whose titles are unencumbered, which has slowed the process down. She said they were working in that area and questioned how they addressed these issues in order to make that process work faster. On the

implementation plan, they said they would create an inventory of land that was public held that could be utilized for affordable housing. She wasn't sure if that was done. She said maybe some things were being done but she didn't know as information wasn't being shared. It would help if they knew where the staff was in their progress. They knew they already had their jobs assigned. She asked if they were an added task for staff to deal with or could they somehow find a way together.

Chair Shahid said one of the priorities for housing was access and locate targeted areas that would be appropriate for workforce and affordable. He said how that was being done and implemented was appropriate for Community Development.

Ms. Hamilton noted there were seven homes being built, which are nearly completed, in Ashleyville. She questioned what were the next targeted areas were because those were just seven so where do they go once those are completed.

Chair Shahid said that was the question. Since Ms. Hamilton was on the board of the organization in charge of that responsibility, he said she just gave them her report. He commented they weren't here to recreate the wheel. They were making sure they could check that off. They had seven houses that had been identified as being constructed. The next challenge was where the other land was going to come from. She could tell them they looked at other places and found some in other area, and they were working with the City and other agencies, and they were going to build ten houses.

Ms. Hamilton said another point they were working on was educating the public as to what these various attempts at dealing with affordable housing, what did look liked and how it affected them because the public needed to be educated as to what's going on. When they said land trust not everyone knew what they meant so they needed to increase their efforts in educating the public as to what they meant and what was available so that they know and they can buy into it. The person who would be the recipient of these efforts would also be aware of what was going on. So they needed to step up their efforts on educating the public as to what was happening here.

Chair Shahid concurred with Ms. Hamilton. He asked how they go forward with this.

Mrs. Krawcheck said talking this through helped one to get to concrete steps. She had always seen the Commission as a clearinghouse for information. She didn't think one negated the other. She believed if they did the subcommittees, she wanted to work on the economic development. She commented if everyone had their area that they were working on, when they came to these meetings they invited those parties they deemed necessary to be at the meetings. They had a purpose and a meaning behind the meeting. The Commission knew what that was and they brought them to the meeting for their part of what they deemed necessary in a coordinated effort. Each group with the larger body had its area of expertise. They do get educated generally about everything but they had their area of expertise that they were working on that they thought they could make happen. She thought it was a tandem effort that they do have the subcommittees but she had always seen the Commission as being the expert, visionary body that could advise all of the groups.

Mayor Tecklenberg said he went through the list and determined there were five categories: Economic Development, Planning, Parks, Traffic/Transportation, and Community Development/Sustainability. In each one of these categories there was collaboration mostly between the City and the County, but sometimes with the PSD or nonprofit groups. He suggested he and Chair Shahid get with Mr. Pohlman and they would reach out to the right staff. As an example, Mr. Smith, who once served on the County planning board, would like to follow planning and if Mrs. Krawcheck, Mr. Gregorie and Mr. deStaphano wanted to follow the economic development group, when they got that staff together, they could to that meeting and layout those WARC items they were working on and collaborate with them to get things done this year. He thought it would go a long way and the Commission wouldn't have to get together every month. They could work with their different staffs together for a couple of months, include their collaborators like the Chamber and the County PRT, get those different groups together, outline what the Commission wanted to see happen this year and ask them to go about getting the work done with their advocacy and push it along.

Councilman Moody agreed with Mayor's Tecklenburg suggestion.

Chair Shahid said one thing they can start doing was let Mr. Gregorie and Mrs. Tidestrom move forward with the identity issue and get that part of it started. Ms. Hamilton was already engaged in the housing part of this. Mrs. Krawchek and Mr. deStephano would work on economic development.

### **Establish Meeting Dates**

Chair Shahid said he proposed the following dates - March 20, May 22, July 17, September 18, and November 20.

Mr. Pohlman asked the Chair to move the dates back to the second Wednesday of the month. The Planning Commission met on the third Wednesday of the month, which was tonight. Some staff members who wanted to attend WARC weren't able to because they had to staff the Planning meeting. He noted moving it to every other month was good. If Chair Shahid moved the dates outside of the second Wednesday, they had to make sure they had the correct staff to could be there.

Chair Shahid said the revised dates were March 13, May 8, July 10, September 11 and November 13.

Chair Shahid asked those Commission members who wanted to be in one of the five groups (Economic Development, Planning, Parks, Traffic/Transportation, and Community Development/Sustainability) to email their choice to Mr. Pohlman.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Councilmember Harry J. Griffin, of 99 Fieldfare Way, thanked the Commissioners for serving and for their support. He also thanked Councilman Moody for his help in getting I-526 through. He mentioned some items he wanted the Commission to discuss:

1. *The former Piggly Wiggly site* - He didn't see any reason why the Commission couldn't give any recommendations to Council at the city level as to what the City could do with sites similar to that. He thought that was going to a place that would be very important to West Ashley and should have a lot of citizen input and Commission input.
2. *Economic Development* - He suggested they have the developers of Westwood Plaza give insight to the Commission as to how they went about making that shopping center successful and maybe the local community could reach out to places like Lowe's Food and others who might be interested in coming to the West Ashley area as there were some shopping centers that were struggling, such as the Village Square Shopping Center, where Chuckie Cheese was the anchor, that needed to be renovated. He also suggested they reach out to some commercial developers because at this point City Council was asking for a Church Creek TIFF District. Eventually they were going to have to get some economic and commercial development in that area because Church Creek had nothing.

Sherry Irwin of Sycamore Avenue noted the Commission stated last month the public had approved of all this stuff but the public never agreed to the hiring of Dover and Kohl and spending around a million dollars on the planning and drawings. She said they never agreed to turning West Ashley into an urban area and the communist architecture that they keep building up to the road. The public never agreed to ten thousand new apartments or an increase in population density, which lowers the quality of life and increases crime. The public never agreed to Dover and Kohl increasing open spaces by taking people's homes and razing them to the ground like the drawing in the presentation at his presentation at the West Ashley High School in the fall of 2017. She said they never agreed to the right lanes on Highways 17 and 61 becoming bus lanes only, and the left lane toll only as she was told by the Canadian transportation project manager at the Citadel Mall public meeting in July of 2018. They never agreed to having plans for every square inch of West Ashley as was said at the January and February meeting at the Schoolhouse, which violated property rights, which was said at one of the breakout sessions last summer. They never agreed to raising \$2 million for a study where it was determined they need to clean their drains. She suggested using the \$2 million to clean the drains. In reference to banning plastic bags because people were throwing them out, if they had people cleaning out the drains it wouldn't be a problem. Ms. Irwin concluded said the people begged them to clean the drains, stop building in the wetlands and marshlands, which were being destroyed. Nearly every bridge was ruined with communist style apartments at the base of the bridges. She said they couldn't stay in our homes because now people in

Shadowmoss are being forced out due to flooding because of the overbuilt over the past 5 to 10 years in the surrounding areas in places that shouldn't have been built.

Joe Kelly of 104 Battlewood Avenue thanked the Commission for the time and effort they were putting into it. He noted in looking at the presentation with the priorities, everything on the list looked like low hanging fruit. Acting on the development they identified as the areas that might be marketed for job creation, he felt they should be creating the jobs. He questioned why they were at this point and still identifying these things. He said in looking at parks and recreation, every child in West Ashley should be able to get to a park within a half mile. They should be able to walk or bike there safely. The high hanging fruit ought to be what was in this plan. He wasn't trying to criticize them as he knew it was hard work and trying to collaborate took a lot of effort and time. But it was frustrating to see that the priorities identified were very low-level things. He didn't see any the grand vision or a real transformation. Rather than improving a couple bus stops why weren't they talking about getting BRT down Savannah Highway? Why didn't they have big targets like having buses that run every 15 minutes on the main corridors three years from now instead of adding a couple routes?

Patricia Jennings said she came to this meeting because she was looking about getting more information on the Suicide Merge intersection. She looked on the website and couldn't figure out was going on. She wanted to see a presentation of other options they were looking at so she could provide her commentary back to them.

Victoria Stein of 1780 Dartmoor Circle said she was the lot directly behind the McDonalds off Orange Grove Road. All five of the approved drawings of widening Orange Grove took part of her lot. She had a survey done that week that showed it would take down five grand oaks, while across the street on Orange Grove Road was a wide swath of just dirt and a sidewalk. She would like the Council to consider widening that way instead of taking her land and her oaks.

Cooper Collins, who lived down towards Sherwood Forest, said in reference to safety in West Ashley, he thought West Ashley had a crime issue, especially in certain neighborhoods like Sherwood Forest and Ardmore areas. It was kind of the Wild West. He called the cops on certain things over there. He had seen fighting adults and assaults. He had people come to his door with baseball bats at 3 in the morning. He's been to the police and received no response.

Chair Shahid responded to some of the comments he heard. There was a public forum on how to reuse the Piggly Wiggly site. They hoped to get the redesign of the merge of Highway 7 and 171 to be addressed. That was going to be a top priority because that was the gateway. That went back to comments made by Mr. Gregorie and Mrs. Tidestrom about the identity of West Ashley. Their number one priority in redevelopment was that site.

In reference to Ms. Irwin's comments, Chair Shahid said the West Ashley Plan was approved unanimously by the Commission, the Planning Commission and City Council.

Chair Shahid said Mr. Kelly's comments about the grand vision was on point. They were looking at the small things and had to take care of the small things but the idea of this plan was for a grand vision of West Ashley. Their responsibility was to make sure they weren't just looking at the things they could take care of, they had to keep their eyes on the ball for the grand vision of West Ashley. Ms. Tidestrom commented that the Commission's responsibility was to the public to make sure the Commission was accountable to carry out the plan they have approved. It was a long process and while it seemed they were moving very slowly, they were dealing with public funds and they had to go through the process of getting them. They had to have everyone's input, which they were doing right now.

In reference to Mrs. Jennings' comments regarding the merge redesign, there were several public forums on it. One was held in December and there was a public meeting for Sandhurst residents. They had the designs available for review at Chair Shahid's Coffee and Conversation in December. This Saturday at Charles Towne Landing at 10 a.m., they will bring those comments back up and he would bring those design boards again so she could look at them. The comment period on the merge ends January 31, 2019. She had to go website. What was on social media wasn't what the County was going to take into consideration. They had to receive the comments on the official website.

Regarding Mr. Collins comments on crime in West Ashley, Chair Shahid said they just received a report from the police chief. He said we're still one of the safest communities in the City of Charleston. Throughout the state, he said we had 10 traffic fatalities. The City was working with the County. He just spoke to some residents on Magnolia Road about slowing the speed down. They were working with the County Sheriff partners to address the speed on Magnolia Road.

There were 10 homicides in 2018 in the City of Charleston. All of those individuals were people who were familiar with one another. They were not random acts. They were individuals dealing with gang violence and drug related offenses.

Mrs. Tidestrom said February 4 at 6 p.m. at West Ashley High School there would be town hall meeting with the City Police Department giving the stats Chair Shahid just referred to for 2018. She said they wanted it to be more of community forum where the community was giving positive feedback and ideas. They were also working on a program for the youth to present.

Councilman Moody said he received a challenge. He noted if they heard him talk about the comments on 171 and 7 a few times and were getting tired of it, Mount Pleasant submitted 1500 comments on Highway 41. Before the holiday break 106 comments were submitted on Highways 171 and 7. He felt they were better than that. He asked the audience go online, make their comments and to tell their neighbors and friends. He said they could send an email directly to him at [bmoody@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:bmoody@charlestoncounty.org) and he would make sure their comments got to the right person.

Mr. Smith said there was email form that you could fill out or you could print out a piece paper, scan it and email. The email was [ssmetana@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:ssmetana@charlestoncounty.org).

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Marcia L. Grant  
Council Secretary