

Planning Commission

April 19, 2023

A meeting of the Planning Commission was held this date at 5:04 p.m. in the public meeting room at 2 George Street.

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

PRESENT

Commission Members: Charlie Karesh, Chair, Harry Lesesne, Vice-Chair, Jimmy Bailey, Jr. (left at 5:10, returned at 6:47), Donna Jacobs, Sunday Lempesis, McKenna Joyce, Loquita Bryant-Jenkins, and Erika Harrison (arrived 5:05).

City staff: Christopher Morgan, Ana Harp, Philip Overcash, Philip Clapper, and Mollie Conner.

Others: Craig Richardson, Geoff Green, Gordy Moore, Tyson Smith, Jonathan Oakman, Ralph Jordan II, Eve Greene, Jasmeen Shaw, Jeffery Borowy, Frank Copeland, Mark Clancy, Sebastian Davies, Judith Condon, Anna Mims, Kim Steele, Madeline Gehrig, Mark Davis, Sarah Laurens, and Michelle Ballinger.

Link to meeting recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bizZrP6yl3U>

Chair Karesh explained the rules and procedures of the meeting and introduced the Commissioners.

Mr. Morgan introduced the Planning staff.

PRESENTATION:

1. **Presentation from Clarion and Associates regarding the City's Zoning Code rewrite project.**

Mr. Morgan said the City was excited about this project. It was their biggest effort yet to implement to Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Code would be elevation based, would have strong emphasis on affordable housing and equity, and would be easier to use.

Mr. Richardson, Director of Clarion Associates, introduced himself and his colleagues Geoff Green, Gordy Moore, and Tyson Smith.

As it had been 50 years since the Charleston City Zoning Code had been updated, Clarion Associates had been brought on to do so with a project team built from specialized backgrounds.

The project being proposed required substantive knowledge in many different areas addressing rising water requirements with elevated zoning codes, which were requirements identified by the Comprehensive Plan. They had brought in experts in affordable housing and transportation, as mobility could become an issue. Transportation issues included off-street parking standards, mobility issues, and connectivity issues.

It was projected to be about a 2.5 year project process. The Commission could ask questions at any time. He said they would highlight the issues already identified in the Comprehensive Plan first.

Clarion Associates was a good-sized city planning and growth management consulting firm. They were based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Updating development codes had been one of their main types of work. Since the firm's inception in 1992, they had successfully updated over 150 development codes across the Country. Recent and relevant updates included the one in

Norfolk, Virginia. Norfolk was the east coast community that was subject to the greatest sea level rise. They were given a charge of rethinking the code and making future development as resilient as possible.

They had also done a lot of work in South Carolina. One of their recent projects was updating the Columbia zoning code. They had also updated codes in Rock Hill, Beaufort County, Hilton Head, and Folly Beach.

Jimmy Bailey, Jr. left the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

Mr. Richardson said they had a great team, as well. Members of the team for the current Zoning Code project had been employed by Clarion Associates for the majority of their work, including the architecture firms Dover, Kohl & Partners and Union Studio. Dover, Kohl & Partners had done previous work in both West Ashley and Charleston overall, and would be responsible for form-based coding and design-related issues. Union Studio was chosen to be part of the project for their design standards in making buildings more resilient on the waterfront.

Mr. Richard introduced Tyson Smith, the team member in charge of review procedures and legal issues on a targeted basis.

Atlanta-based Blue Cypress Consultants, LLC. were part of Clarion Associates' project in Norfolk, and would be responsible for sustainability and rising water issues.

The firms Kittelson & Associates and BIHL Engineering would be the transportation experts for the project. Their responsibilities would cover parking, mobility, circulation, complete streets & transportation issues in form-based districts.

Horsley Witten Group would provide support on stormwater and green infrastructure issues related to form-based districts.

The team had crafted a project website (www.newchsstandards.com) to provide background information about the project, project schedule, tasks, etc. They had had a public meeting Monday night and introduced the site then. If someone were to be interested in project meetings, signing up with the website would notify them weeks in advance. Completed projects would be added to the website, along with a survey element available for citizen response, which in turn would help the project with their direction. He encouraged the Commission to look at and use the website.

Mr. Green reiterated that the project was anticipated to last about 2.5 years. Comprehensively updating a zoning code, particularly one as old as Charleston's, was really significant, so they had developed a 5 Task Project Scope which would take them from the initial start date (May/June 2023) to the projected end date (Spring 2025).

Task 1 would begin project initiation. They would do a deep dive into the City's current regulations and plans. The Project team would then meet with different members of the community and City staff to corroborate information and better understand the City's challenges and to try to get a sense of what goals the City wanted to accomplish.

Task 2 was development of the code assessment. The code assessment had two parts. The first part was a diagnosis where they would talk about the current Zoning Code in the context of the City's priorities, such as sea level rise, housing affordability, etc. If the new Code did not align with the established goals, they would provide recommendations for what the City and its citizens wanted. They would prepare the code assessment, give staff a first look at it to make sure they didn't do anything horribly wrong, and then they would have a public draft. They would have public meetings and more. The code assessment was meant to be an annotated outline

and a suggestion of what the new Code could look like, assuming the recommendations in the diagnosis were adopted. It would be written in plain English and designed in a way so that people could understand what the new code would look like.

The reason they came back after the code assessment was to make sure everyone had a chance to look at it, provide their comments, and see if they hit the mark, and see if they needed to make some adjustments.

Task 3 was drafting the updated code. That process would take about a year. It was split into three modules. They would follow the same process for each of those modules as was done in the code assessment. By the end, they would have drafted three modules, gotten comments on all three, and identified changes to be made for the completed draft.

Task 4 was the testing phase. They would work with staff to identify up to seven potential development sites. They would look at the sites from two perspectives: what could be developed under the current regulations, and what could be developed under the proposed new regulations.

After that, they would integrate all public comments heard during Tasks 3 and 4 into the new code.

Task 5 would involve a public hearing draft version of the code that would come to Planning Commission and City Council in the adoption process.

Mr. Richardson said they wanted to receive any input the Commission had. In previous projects, what they had found most helpful to their clients had been to provide them with goal highlights the project team had already found during their planning stage. Policy direction from policy documents was important, but they also valued community input in the early stage of project development. Were there other goals? Was there anything else they needed to do? And that was what they had been doing for the previous three days.

From their experience, there did already seem to be community support for the planning and policy issues.

One of the first important issues, with respect to the goal of the project, would be to develop an elevation-based zoning code that addressed rising water issues and incorporated standard developer practices into the code. In Norfolk, there were regulations that restricted development in the most vulnerable areas, and that could be an option for the City. Another thing they would discuss in the assessment would be encouraging higher density development in the higher elevations. Another practice other communities had started using was providing incentives for restoring and mitigating natural systems to better absorb and better address water rising issues. Another idea was making the community more resistant to the shocks that occurred during flooding events. That meant ensuring new, critical facilities were located in places that would not be subject to flooding.

They would be developing new elevation and construction standards to make new buildings more resilient. Another issue was making sure to include new standards where new development occurred to ensure that those buildings would be more resilient than they were now.

Another issue was the kind of rules that would be established when buildings were damaged in the future, and what type of resiliency requirements would be included in those buildings.

It was clearly set out in the Plan, and was clear in community input, that the code needed to be more equitable. The American Planning Association had adopted an Equity and Zoning Policy Guide. They would be using that Policy Guide, which their firm had done a lot of work on. It

included things like ensuring the process and procedures of public input were fair, and that the community was notified about potential development applications, both so they could be reviewed and also to make sure they had an opportunity to speak.

Another issue clearly identified in the Plan was to provide and incentivize more affordable housing. It was a very important issue which many communities were facing. There were some incentives present in the existing code, but they needed to be more aggressive.

Mr. Green said he knew Charleston was a pretty unique place. It was important that the new zoning code respected that and included appropriate regulations in particular parts of the city that recognized the fact that there were many neighborhoods in Charleston that had unique design, site design, neighborhood amenities, and more. They had done a tour, and one of the things that was pointed out were the corner stores on the peninsula. That was not seen in a lot of other American cities, and so that was the type of context-sensitive regulation that they thought would be important to incorporate into the new zoning code.

Another of the key goals was to make the document more user friendly. The current code was very text heavy. There were some tables, and not many illustrations. In speaking with staff from the Zoning Division, they knew there were many obsolete provisions. There were a lot of redundancies and inconsistencies, which made their jobs harder to do. It also made it more difficult for developers and the community at large. As the Zoning Code was 50 years old, many changes made over the years had been tacked on to the end of sections and the current design lacked pictures, was text heavy, and too dense to easily navigate. They would also incorporate a new design for zoning districts. He showed examples of the desired zoning code design, which included a dimensional drawing and standards.

Charleston had a lot of zone districts, and it was not clear that all existing zoning districts were necessary. They would examine the zoning districts to see what needed to be removed and what needed to be added. Older neighborhoods would require different needs and were often nonconforming, and the project team would take a closer look at that and try and come up with something that better suited the needs in each area. They would update the uses and make sure they were well defined. Finally, they would modernize development standards. Priorities they had were removing barriers to infill development, and reviewing developmental standards through sustainability and equity lenses.

They would make sure they were not oversupplying parking and would update site and building design standards to make sure that there was good pedestrian circulation.

Mr. Richardson said they went over those slides in order to get the Commission thinking. He asked the Commission for input.

Chair Karesh asked the Commissioners if they had any questions.

Ms. Harrison asked how much input Mr. Richardson expected from the Commission when the input wouldn't necessarily be a part of a public hearing, as the statute said that input would be a part of their role.

Mr. Richardson asked for clarification if she meant how much input they expected from the Commission that day.

Ms. Harrison confirmed.

Mr. Richardson said that the input expected was as much as the Commission would be willing to give. The project was just beginning. They could put something in writing and provide it to Mr. Overcash, who would pass it on to them, if the Commissioners wanted to. If they had further questions later on, they could contact Mr. Overcash and they could set up a meeting.

Chair Karesh said it would be an ongoing process.

Mr. Richardson said the key thing was that they wanted to make the process as transparent as possible. They didn't come in with any particular bias. They wanted to provide the Commission, elected officials, and the public as many opportunities for input as possible. They would be having meetings with the Commission throughout the process.

Ms. Jacobs commended the team on the usability and effectiveness of their project website. A similar thing had happened during the Plan West Ashley process where they were able to silently poll on questions they had received. Having the ability to hear from people without biases caused her some surprise at the answers they received. There was a difference between what she had seen there and what she heard at public hearings. She hoped that would happen during this process.

Mr. Richardson said he believed the results from those surveys were now online.

Ms. Jacobs asked if the project team had reviewed the 700 pages of their current Zoning Code and if Mr. Richardson had noticed any major red flags in their initial review.

Mr. Richardson said there were a number of conflicting provisions, and a number of opportunities where they believed could consolidate districts. It could be much more user friendly. They believed there could be new districts. There was a whole list of issues. They would conduct a much more thorough evaluation before and during the code assessment.

Ms. Jacobs said that on Monday, someone was concerned that the new code could conflict with certain current plans. She wanted to know how grandfathering such projects would work. However, she said they did not have to answer that question that day.

She also said that the Commission had always been concerned with balancing equity with resilient redevelopment standards. That would be a very important discussion to have going forward, because there were a lot of people feeling pushed away from where they were living because they could not meet the resiliency standards.

Mr. Richardson said that would be a big challenge.

Ms. Lempesis asked if they would remove uses that were already by right in zoning areas like GB and LB that allowed for an unlimited amount of residential.

Mr. Richardson said they would take a hard look at the existing use table, and they would determine if uses they saw needed to be modernized, totally deleted, or modified. If they felt a use was not consistent with the desired character of a district, they would also flag that use. The old standard of industrial classification from the 1970s and 80s was in the Code right now. They would use a much more modernized use table.

Ms. Lempesis asked for clarification on if communication with them should be done through staff.

Mr. Richardson confirmed. He asked that the Commissioners forward questions and comments through staff.

Ms. Lempesis asked if any development within the next 2.5 years would be under the Pending Ordinance classification.

Mr. Morgan said there would probably not be, until there was a reading by Council.

Chair Karesh thanked Mr. Richardson for their presentation.

MINUTES

1. Request Approval of Minutes from February 15, 2023, and March 15, 2023 Planning Commission Meetings

The minutes were taken at the end.

On a motion of Donna Jacobs, seconded by Harry Lesesne, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the January 18, 2023 minutes.

The February 15, 2023 minutes and March 15, 2023 minutes were deferred.

REZONINGS

1. 17 Magazine Street Harleston Village - Peninsula | TMS #4570803003 | Approx. 0.07 ac. Request rezoning from Diverse Residential (DR-2F) to Limited Business (LB).

Owner: Ernest Pinckney
Applicant: Old City Jail, LLC

Mr. Morgan explained the Item.

The property was located in an area with a mix of different property uses and commercial aspects, such as offices and storage spaces. There was parking on and near the property.

The Item in question was a small scale residential, located between Franklin St. and Logan St., and the applicant intended it for commercial use. The commercial use would not fit within the parameters of a DR-2F.

He showed aerial maps and photos of the main property and adjacent properties.

The Comprehensive Plan listed the street under Neighborhood, which allowed for limited uses compared to a commercial scale property. The Neighborhood classification of use would be appropriate.

Maps and images of the property and surroundings were shown.

Exterior changes to the property would be under BAR's jurisdiction.

There was parking to the east and west of the property, which could support more commercial uses in the area in the future. Existing commercial uses in the area included a Worthwhile, Robert Mills Manor, the Old City Jail, and Queen Street Grocery.

Another major property within the area, the Fielding Funeral Home, had been put up for sale.

Staff recommended approval based on the Neighborhood designation from the Comprehensive Plan and the limited nature of a Limited Business use on the site.

The property had a similar residential density to a Limited Business: 19 units/acre. The Limited Business classification would allow for the construction of a café. Hours of operation would be limited from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. LB was much more neighborhood-scale than some of their other commercial categories. In the past there had been some discussion of Commercial Transitional, but the problem with CT was that if the property were to have outdoor dining, then it had to be 150 ft. from residential uses. It would not be able to meet that standard.

Mr. Oakman with Landmark Enterprises said their company was making a long-term investment in the area via the Old County Jail project. It operated under a use variance in the residential zoning, but it could be for an office, a restaurant, retail, special events, tour operations, or other uses that could be possible with the renovation. The projected goal was to do something synergistic with an additive to that neighboring project they were already working on.

After research into previous uses of the property, they found that while it was historically residential, as recently as 2009, the property was being used as a travel agency on the ground floor. That was the type of potential use he thought the property could be good for. There was a history of commercial use. There were a bunch of surrounding commercial uses even if the zoning in the area was residentially based. The existence of multi-tenant offices on the corner of Logan St. and the commercial aspects of the Old County Jail also supported this.

The applicant felt that the contemplated use for the property fit within the neighborhood-friendly commercial-type use.

Part of the development of the Item included speaking with the neighborhood association the property was located in, Harleston Village, who were very supportive. They had received no opposition during talks about their plans. The Neighborhood Association also had submitted a letter in favor of the 17 Magazine St. rezoning, which was submitted too late to be included in the packet for the Commission meeting. The applicant had been in lockstep with the Neighborhood Association and had included them in most steps in the development process.

They had reached out to other neighbors, both commercial and residential uses, and had not encountered any opposition for the request. People in the neighborhood understood the mix of uses and were not afraid of that type of change.

Chair Karesh said that a letter in favor of the application was included in the packet.

Chair Karesh closed the public aspect.

Ms. Bryant-Jenkins asked if the letter submitted by the Housing Authority included comments in support from actual residents of the Housing Authority.

Mr. Oakman said that the letter was from the CEO of the Housing Authority, Mr. Art Milligan, and spoke on behalf of the organization. It did not directly reference the residents.

Ms. Bryant-Jenkins thanked Mr. Oakman.

On a motion of Harry Lesesne, seconded by Sunday Lempesis, the Commission voted unanimously to approve Rezoning Item 1. Jimmy Bailey, Jr. was absent.

2. 2 Radcliffe Street
Radcliffeborough - Peninsula | TMS #4601202035 | Approx. 0.09 ac.
Request rezoning from Diverse Residential (DR-2) to Limited Business (LB).

Owner: Ralph Jordan II

Applicant: Eve Greene- eXp Realty

Mr. Morgan explained the Item.

He showed images of the Item.

The Item looked like a commercial property and had been a funeral home in the past.

It was designated City Center in the Comprehensive Plan. LB was in line with that.

Further images were shown.

Staff recommended approval.

Mr. Ralph Jordan II said his family had owned the property and ran the Smith-McNeal Funeral Home out of it. As the funeral home business itself had moved to another property, they wanted to sell the building and rezone it for residential-commercial use, if that matched the City ordinance.

Eve Greene with eXp Realty said she represented the applicant. The applicant's decision to rezone the property was based on previous offers and suggestions for the property after the applicant decided to put it on market. She thought that the rezoning could aid the community through conversion into commercial use, perhaps by creating jobs or providing educational uses. It had a history of commercial use. Before it was a funeral home, it was a dry cleaner. They consulted with the Neighborhood Association President Henry Golabek about rezoning and received favorable feedback.

Chair Karesh closed the public aspect.

Ms. Jacobs asked if the usage of the Limited Business rezoning would conflict the property's proximity to a local church graveyard.

Mr. Morgan said based on their Zoning Code, it would not, and the ABC would take care of that.

Chair Karesh thanked Mr. Jordan and Ms. Greene.

On a motion of Harry Lesesne, seconded by Erika Harrison, the Commission voted unanimously to approve Rezoning Item 2. Jimmy Bailey, Jr. was absent.

SUBDIVISION

1. **River Rd. and Swygert Blvd.**
Swygert's Landing - Johns Island | TMS #3120000050 | Approx. 55.08 ac.
Request subdivision concept plan approval for a new CCDS District 9 elementary school.

Owner: Charleston County School District

Applicant: ADC Engineering

Ms. Harp explained the Item.

The applicant requested a subdivision concept plan approval for an elementary school.

The property was zoned Conservation and was designated Neighborhood in the Comprehensive Plan.

The concept plan was approximately 55 acres to be subdivided into 3 tracts in order to create new public rights-of-way that would tie onto existing rights-of-way.

Three-parcel subdivisions wouldn't normally appear before the Planning Commission, however, this one did, because there were new public rights-of-way.

She showed aerial maps of the Item, the three lots, and the proposed rights-of-way.

The removal of trees was reviewed and approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals Site Design a few months prior. Further coordination would be needed between the development team and SCDOT for any improvements to River Rd.

The concept plan was reviewed by the City's Technical Review Committee and was found to meet the requirements for concept plan approval. The project would need to return to the Technical Review Committee for site-specific review, and would return for road construction review, and would require a preliminary plat for the subdivision of the lots.

Staff recommended approval.

Chair Karesh said that most comments submitted to the Commission addressed the school, rather than the subdivision itself, which was not something that the Planning Commission actually covered.

Ms. Shaw introduced herself as the Executive Director of Capital Programs for the Charleston County School District, her supervisor, Chief Operating Officer Jeff Borowy, Frank Copeland, project manager of Brownstone Management Group, Mark Clancy, project architect representative of Clancy and Wells, and Sebastian Davies, their civil engineer with ADC Engineering.

Charleston County had begun looking for property to build a new school on back in 2017. They had vetted 8 different property locations, including existing schools. Angel Oak was an elementary school on the Island, which was built for 590 students. Currently, there were 781 students at the site in trailers. Another considered site was Mt. Zion elementary school, which was built in the 1950s. Many of their systems were at the end of usability and the school was built into the septic system.

Those locations weren't viable for the project compared to the current Item, whose acreage would comfortably house the intended student population of 600+, with the opportunity to expand up to 900 students.

The connectivity the site had could allow the property to be a neighborhood school, with accessibility allowing for students to walk or bike to class. The most important aspect of the property was that it had already been identified for public use. That area was where the majority of the school's students would be located. To put a school anywhere else on the Island would lead to more students needing to be on the road travelling to it.

Part of the reason for deferral from the last meeting was their public transparency. The school had offered over a dozen public input opportunities, which included four CCSD community meetings held at Mount Zion Elementary, Angel Oak Elementary, and St. Johns High School, with a combined total of 180 participants. They had also had a CCSD constituent school board meeting, which was also public, had presented to Rational Roads for Johns Island and the Johns Island Task Force, and had presented at three Johns Island Advocate meetings. They had presented at DRB for concept meetings and BZA to address the matter of trees on the property. They had also had three individual neighborhood outreach meetings. The neighbors in question were individuals whose driveways would be extended by the creation of the roundabouts near their homes. They had also had two different Planning Commission meetings.

Forms of communication between the applicants and residents of the area included mail, certified mail, emails, doorknockers, media advertising for Channel 2 News, different social media platforms, the Charleston County School website, and more. The applicants looked forward to continuing communication with their neighbors and stakeholders.

Mr. Clancy said that the Item in question, while not perfect, was very good for school development. The property was large enough and zoned properly to allow for a school, and the utilities were in place. The wetlands to the south would provide an opportunity for the students in the school to learn. There were lots of Grand Trees and dense vegetation that would need to be mitigated, but the trees provided natural buffer opportunities. The school footprint needed to be

tight and limited to two stories and as far from River Rd. as possible. The entrance faced south towards the wetlands and the residential neighborhoods. The plan provided for connectivity that would allow for students to walk and bike to school, and allow for very short drives in adjacent neighborhoods.

The east-west road would be a traditional two-lane road with parallel parking trees, and sidewalks on each side. Going south also allowed for buffering for play areas, retention ponds, and on both sides of River Rd.

Tight school placement also allowed for car drop-off and stacking space on the west side, and bus drop off and stacking space on the other side. This would keep congestion from residential and subdivision roads.

Mr. Davies said that the project design team took the input gathered from the various public outreach meetings and used it to improve the site development plans. A lot of their improvements went beyond what was required by the City's Stormwater Design Standards Manual and the Planning Department. The planned parking area for 65 buses was cut in half to allow for more ponds on site to go beyond what was required for their stormwater design. Stormwater was a key item now, and one of the things that the Stormwater Department emphasized was mitigating sea level rise. In making their ponds bigger, they could prepare for the future by being able to hold more water on-site.

Roadways were tightened up on-site, which made the site more compact while not losing functionality for the site.

Based on public outreach feedback, the offsite traffic circle was moved on-site 54 feet south to allow for a buffer for the neighbors to the north, which would allow for River Rd. to remain intact during construction. This would impact only the ends of River Rd. where it would be tied into the traffic circle. The construction of the roundabout would then impact traffic at the very end of construction when traffic was shifted over.

After the feedback from the neighbors regarding their driveways, they went back and looked at how they could streamline them. They looked at where their mailboxes, trash receptacles, and recycling would be, and tried to provide a better solution than what they had last time.

There were a few other changes to the site, but none of great significance.

Chair Karesh commended the applicants on their act to serve the community.

Public Comment

In Favor

Judith Condon

- Johns Island resident, CCSD parent, current principal of Angel Oak Elementary School
- Future principal of new D-9 elementary school
- There was community fear of deferment of Item motivated by overcrowding at current schools
- Wanted to recognize the very valid concerns that had been brought up.
 - o Wanted to ensure that the neighbors knew that their concerns were being addressed
- Wanted to stress the urgency of building the school: school population had grown from 430 to over 870 students within 6 years; students were being taught in trailers; teachers were forced to use non-classroom spaces for instruction; unable to have the correct number of pre-K students due to limited spaces; education would be in peril by deferment.

- Hoped the project would help galvanize future projects on the Island.

Chair Karesh said that Ms. Condon's prepared statement could not be addressed by the Commission, as their decision would not be based on the things she was listing out.

Anna Mims

- Mount Zion Elementary principal, CCSD parent, and resident of West Ashley.
- Students and community would benefit from the project, which would expand access to equity and educational opportunities for all involved.

Opposition

Kim Steele

- Brought in drawings of the plan and distributed them among the Commission.
- Location of traffic circle was in front of her property.
- Had met with CCSD twice since the previous Planning Commission meeting.
- Reiterated the need for a school but said she did not like the location.
- Not enough changes were made to the design of the traffic circle after the previous meeting.
- Insufficient buffer barrier.
 - o Trees in front of their home would be cut down and replaced with 14 ft. high bushes.
 - o Substantial buffers of tall trees that could be requested would not grow in within her lifetime.
- Being granted control over maintaining the roadway would only be a financial burden for the people of her street.
 - o Because the City was not maintaining the roadways along River Rd. it was not believed that the City would take care of the small buffer area between the residences and the traffic circle.
 - o Concerned about road safety.
 - o The residents of Swygert's Landing already employed a landscaping company to take care of the ditches along the roadway, and the applicant's offer to maintain the ditches would expire after a year. This meant that the residents would have to take on another financial burden.
- She would be forced to share a driveway with a neighbor.
 - o Would remove direct trash and mail services.
 - o Would force her to go to her neighbor's property in order to access them.
 - o Could also lead to financial and legal issues further down the line.
- Issues with residents making right turns out of their driveways.
 - o Forced to turn only left out of their driveways and then take a two mile detour turning at the Brownswood Rd. / Murraywood Rd. intersections.
 - They were incredibly dangerous intersections.
 - Would increase their commute times.
 - Left turns would also prevent her family from being able to pull their boat, trailers, and campers behind them.
 - Would also be unable to easily access the boat landing.
- The value of their homes would go down.
- Would maybe have to file suit against all involved parties should the Item be passed.
- Said the Item should be deferred until the applicant could satisfy the expressed concerns.

Chair Karesh and Mr. Morgan said that most of the outlined concerns fell outside of the realm of Subdivision Approval.

Madeline Gehrig

- Homeowner and current board of director member of the Swygert's Landing HOA.
- Appreciated the accommodations that had occurred already.
- Opposed the traffic route plan.
 - o Roads feeding into the traffic circle included in the plan had no sidewalks.
 - o Swygert's Landing experienced dangerous traffic from people using the neighborhood as a shortcut to River Rd.
- It was projected that 30% of the school's car rider traffic would be directed through their neighborhood.

Mark Davis

- Seconded comments made by Ms. Steele.
- Appreciated the school listening.
- Property value would be diminished
 - o Ingress and egress from their properties would be affected by the traffic circle.
- It would make it impossible to make a left-hand turn out of their property.
- The plan would increase traffic.
- Did not know if proper notice had been given to Swygert's Landing.

Sarah Laurens

- Would be forced to share a driveway with Ms. Steele's property.
- If private driveway owners would be unable to retain their private driveways after construction, then it wouldn't be an appropriate place to install a traffic circle.

Michelle Ballinger

- River Rd. resident.
- Purchased home for its location at the end of a road, which would be changed by the inclusion of the traffic circle.
- The roads were dangerous.
 - o Speed limits were disregarded.
 - o The roads lacked sidewalks.
 - o More traffic would exacerbate this issue.

Ms. Shaw said that busses were already on River Rd. She said the community would benefit from the roundabout as it would direct weekend traffic better.

Chair Karesh said that the concerns were mainly regarding the impacted driveways of neighbors.

Mr. Clancy said that they agreed with many of the comments, and also agreed that the conditions of the roads on the Island needed tremendous improvements. They supported the placement of speedbumps in certain locations on the road and placing other roundabouts at other locations, and drainage improvements, particularly on River Rd. The only thing that the applicants had control over was the property selected for the Item. River Rd. and the surrounding buffer area was owned by the State, not the City or the County, which would need to approve any and all changes made to it. As such, the applicants would be unable to definitively say exactly how the project was going to be.

Chair Karesh closed the public aspect.

Mr. Lesesne wanted to clarify for those present that the Planning Commission's only authority was to determine whether the applicant's subdivision concept plan met the City's standards.

Chair Karesh said it did, according to City Staff.

Mr. Lesesne reminded those present that there were more opportunities for them to express their opposition on the specifics of the design.

Ms. Jacobs said that getting a building permit from the City would be a much higher bar than having the concept plan approved, and the Item would go through more technical review.

Ms. Harrison said that it was difficult to give public comments weight when their names and addresses were anonymous or obscured.

Ms. Lempesis said that forcing people to have adjoining driveways ways was personally unacceptable and the drop-off plan needed to be rethought.

On a motion of Donna Jacobs, seconded by Charlie Karesh, the Commission voted unanimously to approve Subdivision Item 1. Jimmy Bailey, Jr. was absent.

ZONINGS

1. **226 Norris Avenue**
Edgewater Park - West Ashley | TMS #3490900019 | Approx. 0.58 ac.
Request zoning of Rural Residential (RR-1). Zoned Single Family Residential (R-4)
in Charleston County.

Owner: Thomas and Patricia Moore

Mr. Morgan introduced the Item.

The Item was designated Low Impact/Conserved in the Comprehensive Plan and had the potential to become a future subdivision.

Staff recommended approval.

Mr. Bailey returned at 6:47.

Ms. Jacobs thanked Ms. Conner for her work.

On a motion of Donna Jacobs, seconded by Jimmy Bailey, Jr., the Commission voted unanimously to approve Zonings Item 1.

2. **1721 Ashley River Road**
West Glow & Westover - West Ashley | TMS #3511600030 | Approx. 0.23 ac.
Request zoning of Limited Business (LB). Zoned Ashley River Road Corridor
Overlay District Limited Commercial (OD-ARRC-LC) in Charleston County.

Owner: Conti Investment LLC

Mr. Morgan introduced the Item.

Staff recommended approval.

On a motion of Harry Lesesne, seconded by Jim Bailey, Jr., the Commission voted unanimously to approve Zonings Item 2.

3. **1708 Jessamine Road**
Pinecrest Gardens - West Ashley | TMS #3511200023 | Approx. 0.20 ac.

Request zoning of Single-Two Family Residential (STR). Zoned Single Family Residential (R-4) in Charleston County.

Owner: 10-4 Props, LLC

Mr. Morgan introduced the Item.

Staff recommended approval.

On a motion of Harry Lesesne, seconded by Jimmy Bailey, Jr., the Commission voted unanimously to approve Zonings Item 3.

4. **1349 Ashley Hall Road**
Memminger Hall - West Ashley | TMS #3511100056 | Approx. 0.21 ac.
Request zoning of Single Family Residential (SR-1). Zoned Single Family Residential (R-4) in Charleston County.

Owner: Madison Pfeifer and Carter Brakefield

5. **1648 Secessionville Road**
Fort Lamar - James Island | TMS #4310600072 | Approx. 0.54 ac.
Request zoning of Single Family Residential (SR-1). Zoned Single Family Residential (R-4) in Charleston County.

Owner: John and Kathleen Simpson

6. **1408 Orange Grove Road**
Orange Grove Estates - West Ashley | TMS #3521000049 | Approx. 0.23 ac.
Request zoning of Single Family Residential (SR-1). Zoned Single Family Residential (R-4) in Charleston County.

Owner: Sharon Hartnett

7. **360 Lynwood Drive**
Oakland - West Ashley | TMS #3101200076 | Approx. 0.29 ac.
Request zoning of Single Family Residential (SR-1). Zoned Single Family Residential (R-4) in Charleston County.

Owner: Karan S. Hawkins

8. **818 Saint Denis Drive**
Moreland - West Ashley | TMS #4210300093 | Approx. 0.25 ac.
Request zoning of Single Family Residential (SR-1). Zoned Saint Andrews Area Overlay District Single Family Residential (OD-STA-R4) in Charleston County.

Owner: Karen Jean Byrd

9. **2919 Doncaster Drive**

**Hickory Hill - West Ashley | TMS #3581000080 | Approx. 0.40 ac.
Request zoning of Single Family Residential (SR-1). Zoned Single Family
Residential (R-4) in Charleston County.**

Owner: Caroline Watford and Justin Clack

Zonings Items 4-9 were taken together.

Ms. Jacobs asked, for the sake of consistency, why Item 5 had been classified as Low Impact/Conserved but wouldn't be handled like the Low Impact Zonings Item 1.

Mr. Morgan said that the only other Low Impact/Conserved Item was on a narrow frontage that would be subdivided, while Low Impact Item 5 couldn't be subdivided any further.

Ms. Jacobs said she wanted to make sure they were being consistent.

Mr. Morgan said they had a frontage averaging requirement so the character of streets could be kept. Because the surrounding lots were substantially sized, they would not be able to subdivide the lot any further.

Staff recommended approval.

On a motion of Donna Jacobs, seconded by Harry Lesesne, the Commission voted unanimously to approve Zonings Items 4-9.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Commission selection of a chairperson and vice-chairperson to serve until January 2024.

On a motion of Sunday Lempesis, seconded by Jimmy Bailey, Jr., the Commission voted unanimously to elect Charlie Karesh as Chair and Harry Lesesne as Vice-Chair.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Morgan said there would be a joint meeting the following day with the Community Development Committee to discuss affordable housing as it related to the Union Pier project.

Mr. Bailey said that as he would be unable to attend the meeting, he would give his statement at the current meeting. For what the Ports Authority had asked for in total, the numbers they had projected for affordable housing seemed light.

Ms. Lempesis said they all agreed with him.

Mr. Lesesne asked if there was any shift in their numbers.

Mr. Morgan said that there had been some changes made that would be presented tomorrow.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55.

Mae-Lee Colwell
Clerk of Council's Office