

PLANNING COMMISSION
JUNE 12, 2014

The Planning Commission met in the Council Chambers of the Town of James Island, 1238-B Camp Road, James Island, SC on Thursday, June 12, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. Members present: Chairman David Bevon, who presided, Robin Hardin, Ed Lohr, Bill Lyon, and Garrett Milliken. A quorum was present to conduct business.

Also present: Kristen Crane, Senior Planner, Councilman Leonard Blank, Councilwoman Mary Beth Berry, Ashley Kellahan, Town Administrator, and Frances Simmons, Secretary to the Planning Commission and Town Clerk.

Call to Order: Chairman Bevon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Prayer and Pledge: Commissioner Hardin led the prayer and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act: Chairman Bevon announced that this meeting was noticed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

Approval of May 8, 2014 Minutes: Chairman Bevon moved to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2014 meeting; Commissioner Hardin seconded and the minutes passed unanimously.

Public Comments: Sandra Barbour, 1504 Battery Island Drive: Mrs. Barbour owns property on Honey Hill Road, and is the President for the Honey Hill neighborhood. Mrs. Barbour voiced concern that the homes being built will be in the \$300,000 price range. She said homes at that cost will raise taxes and will have an effect on Honey Hill and the neighboring communities. She is against putting in homes at that price range because the residents do not need to have their taxes raised. She expressed that this is a big concern to her.

Deborah Barrett, 982 Honey Hill Road: Mrs. Barrett expressed concern about the cost of the homes that will be built. She also stated that she was not notified of last week's meeting concerning plans for the property. She asked who is responsible for making sure the developers notify the residents that will be affected by changes to their community.

B. Keith Bright, 1131 Seaside Lane: Mr. Bright stated that his family is building a community; hopefully it will be across the street. He said the family wants to be conscious of the neighborhood because he lives here and is from James Island. He noted, yes, there is more development, but the family is trying to concur with what the neighborhood would be appreciative of for James Island. Mr. Bright said he is not here to speak about the cost of the homes; however, this is a concern should be addressed at a later time. He appealed to the Planning Commission that a wonderful community will be built on the Bright property; one that will represent James Island and his family well. He hopes the Planning Commission will consider this and look at the issues before them.

Trent Kernodle, 753 Swanson Avenue: Mr. Kernodle asked the Bright family to consider approaching the Town and sell the property to them for a park, as this area is the city center of the Town of James Island. Mr. Kernodle commented on last week's PSD meeting when plans for the Dills Bluff property (behind the Town Hall) were discussed; that the Town approached the PSD to purchase the property for a park or administrative offices. The Bright property is beautiful and it would make a superb park. He understands that people want to build houses; but he does not know where all of the cars will go. He believes there are 15 acres of land and 5 acres for a pond and after the roads and infrastructure are in place, he wonders if that violates the Town's density of 3 units per acre. He talked about the community's concerns of

transportation and homes that might be 40 feet in the air. Mr. Kernodle said he does not want to stand in the way of anyone earning a living or to pursue what to do with their land; but he knows that it is virtually impossible to travel the island today. He spoke about development on James Island, (Secessionville) and asked what do we have control over -- we have control over what we have today and should find the best use for what we have. He asked the Bright family again to consider selling the property to the Town and he hopes the Town will consider using some of its Greenbelt monies to purchase the property.

Staff Comments: None

Conceptual PD Development Plan Presentation of the Preserve at Dills Bluff with Discussion and Feedback: Chairman Bevon announced that the applicants for the Planned Development, The Preserve at Dills Bluff, will give a presentation of their Conceptual Plan. The purpose of the presentation is for discussion and feedback only. No action will be taken on the Plan at this meeting.

Applicants:

Charlie Tipton
Vice President, Construction Operations
Pulte Group

Gret Mackintosh, ASLA
Landscape Architect
HLA, Inc.

Graham Hawkins, PE
Land Project Manager
Pulte Group

Mr. Tipton stated that the draft PD Development plans will be submitted to the Town tomorrow and he is hopeful that the plan will be presented to the Planning Commission at its July meeting for recommendation.

Ms. Mackintosh gave an overview of the proposed development located at the corner of Dills Bluff and Camp Road. The site is a total of 11 acres, including 1.0 acre of preserved wetlands. The proposed development will consist of thirty (30) single family residential lots. Ms. Mackintosh discussed the process for preserving the trees; that a third party arborist was hired to assess the condition of all of the grand trees on the property. This information was used in the plan to work around the natural resources of the property and resulted in preserving all of the healthy grand trees. Over an acre will be set aside for tree preservation. The trees will be preserved in groups, allowing small, large, young and old trees to be preserved. A 20ft. buffer will be retained along Dills Bluff Road to protect the existing vegetation to ensure that the character and aesthetic of the corridor is maintained. Street trees will also be maintained. She said this plan represents the company's ultimate vision for the site.

Mr. Tipton explained the process of clear-cuttings vs. selective clearings. He said none of the trees will be clear-cut. He mentioned previous plans that had been proposed for the property and expressed excitement about their project and the vision for the community.

Mr. Hawkins elaborated on the comment made during the Public Comment about density. He said they are asking for smaller lots; they are not asking to increase the allowable density. The reduction of the lot sizes will allow the consolidation of the buildable areas that will reduce the impact throughout the entire site. Consolidating where the homes will be placed will allow them to have four (4) tree preservation areas.

Questions/Responses:

Mr. Lohr asked the size of the grand tree; to which the response was 18" and above.

Chairman Bevon said the materials the Planning Commission were provided mentions a maximum height of 42'. He asked if this is because of the elevation that will be built upon. It was explained that there is no intention or need for drive-unders. The elevation shots have been pulled and the worst case on some of the lower lots is they will need to go up 3' to be above the flood level. The draft submitted on tomorrow will show 35' that is measured from the flood elevation; this is what they are asking for.

Commissioner Milliken asked for the PUD to be amended to say 35' because all of the adjacent parcels are at 35' and there would be a big inconsistency if the PUD were at 42'. Mr. Hawkins said this was fine if they can measure from the flood plain.

Chairman Bevon asked if street trees will also be planted; and the answer was yes.

Commissioner Milliken asked about sidewalks along Dills Bluff Road; will it be on the road or will it wind through the vegetation within the 20' buffer. The applicant said the staff has asked that the sidewalks go property line-to property line on Dills Bluff on either side. A slide of this was depicted in the power point presentation.

Commissioner Lohr stated that the tax map shows 9.2 acres of highland and the information presented to the Planning Commission show 10 acres. He asked about the discrepancy. The applicant responded that 2.75 acres were combined with the other, totaling 11.028 acres; along with less than an acre of wetland. The property was surveyed and a combination plat has been filed now showing the property with one tax map number.

Chairman Bevon asked the applicants if they knew whether the price range of the homes will affect taxes of lower income neighborhoods next to it. Mr. Tipton stated that he could not speak to this at this time.

Commissioner Hardin asked if the sidewalks are depicted on the plan. Mr. Tipton answered that the interior to the community sidewalks are depicted. Mr. Graham further explained the proximity of the sidewalks in relation to the grand trees.

Item D: Architectural and Landscaping Design Standards, second paragraph, last sentence will be deleted from the draft.

Commissioner Lyon asked how much area will the road consist of (pavement section). The answer was not definite; but the applicants would like 22 feet.

Commissioner Lohr received explanation of the Traffic Summary (item J).
Sewer will be corrected to read James Island PSD not Johns Island (VII –page 7).

Commissioner Milliken asked a question regarding the sale being contingent at \$1.75 million. He asked the applicants if their company will be building the homes. Mr. Hawkins said Pulte has the property under contract with the Bright family and it is contingent upon zoning received from the Town. Mr. Hawkins said it is important to say that Pulte will not only develop the land; they will also build the homes. They do not plan to develop the land and then sell it to someone else.

The mobile home on the property will not remain there.

Mr. Hawkins offered an apology that everyone was not notified about the community workshop. He and his team offered to speak with anyone after the meeting and answer questions that they might have.

Chair's Comments: Chairman Bevon thanked the residents and those who spoke during the Public Comments. He also thanked applicants: Graham Hawkins, Charlie Tipton, and Gret Mackintosh for giving an informative presentation.

Chairman Bevon said he has served on prior incarnations of the Planning Commission; and, for this parcel (as Charlie said, and the Bright family knows); he has seen things that were a hundred times worse. He noted that this is not intended to be a back-handed compliment; but there were things, in his mind, that were non-starters for what would be good for the Town of James Island.

Commissioners' Comments: Commissioner Milliken said he agreed with Chairman Bevon's comments and it is good to keep an open mind about land use and future land use. It is also important to consider the long term vision for this part of the island. He think Trent's suggestion of a park is a good one, and if you look at the long term, parks are going to be hard to come by; it will be hard to find the territory for parks in the future. Commissioner Milliken said he enjoyed this approach to development. Everyone knows that he is someone who loves trees, and this is the first development he feels has seriously considered putting trees at the forefront of its plan and commended the applicants for doing this. He said he is a little worried about the Town; that we need to do a better job and redouble our efforts to get the word out about these types of zoning changes far in advance. He knows that we post notices 30 days in advance of a hearing, but he think that we are doing the public a disservice. He stated that when we begin to have conversations it is okay to include the public at an earlier stage in the process, that way everyone benefits when they have a voice. He would like to see us make more effort to inform adjacent neighborhoods about rezoning and post notices in advance.

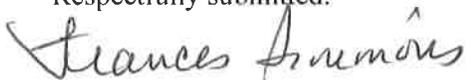
Ms. Crane, Town Planner, iterated the procedure for postings and notifications to the public. She said that a public hearing has not been held, but will be in July by Town Council and it will be advertised. Commissioner Milliken reiterated that when discussions begin during the early stage, it is good to include the public at that time. He complimented the applicants for the workshop they held, but not everyone was notified and we need to work harder at that.

Commissioner Lohr asked staff if the requirements of the Ordinance have been met for the Planned Development. Ms. Crane said tonight's presentation is a Conceptual Plan and the Draft Planned Development Plan will be submitted by the applicants tomorrow. Commissioner Lohr asked as of today, if the staff is satisfied that all the conditions for the PD have been met. Ms. Crane responded that after the plan is submitted everyone involved would make that determination, i.e., Town staff, Planning Commission, Charleston County, Storm water, and those dealing with tree issues).

Next Meeting Date: The next meeting of the Planning Commission will be held on Thursday, July 10, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn: There being no further business to come before the body, the meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Frances Simmons
Secretary to the Planning Commission