

Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan Implementation Committee Meeting
Executive Conference Room, County Administration Building
100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort, SC 29902
March 25, 2016

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Robert Semmler, Chairman, Northern Regional Plan Implementation (NRPIC) Committee and Beaufort County Planning Commission; Vernon DeLoach, Town of Port Royal Councilman; Brian Flewelling, Beaufort County Councilman District 5; Alice Howard, Beaufort County Councilwoman District 4; Billy Keyserling, City of Beaufort Mayor; William McBride, Lowcountry Council of Governments; Mike McFee, City of Beaufort Councilman/Mayor Pro-Tem; and Samuel Murray, Mayor of Town of Port Royal.

Members Absent: Jerry Cook, Town of Yemassee Mayor; Mary Cordray, Beaufort County School Board Chairman; Gerald Dawson, Beaufort County Councilman District 1; and Joe DeVito, Vice-Chairman, Northern Regional Plan Implementation (NRPIC) Committee Metropolitan Planning Commission Chair.

Staff Present: Libby Anderson, City of Beaufort Planning Director; Linda Bridges, Town of Port Royal Planning Administrator; Anthony Criscitiello, Beaufort County Planning Director; Eric Larson, Environmental Engineering Director; Ginnie Kozak, Lowcountry Council of Governments; Robert Merchant, Beaufort County Long-Range Planner; Paul Sommerville, Beaufort County Council Chairman; and Barbara Childs, Beaufort County Administrative Assistant to the Planning Director.

Other Attendees: Paul Butaro, Lady's Island Business Professional Association/citizen; Jim Hicks, Lady's Island resident; Tom Klein, Town of Port Royal Councilman; Jason Mann, U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort; Joe MacDermont, small business owner; Chuck Newton, citizen; and Ed Pappas, Beaufort County Planning Commissioner.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Robert Semmler called the Northern Regional Plan Implementation Committee (NRPIC) meeting to order at approximately 9:36 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mr. Semmler led those assembled with the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

REVIEW OF MINUTES: **Motion:** Beaufort County Councilman Brian Flewelling made a motion, and it was seconded, **to approve the minutes** as written. Discussion included amending page 2, where Mr. Hicks mentioned the Taco Bell property being annexed--since the City of Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling stated that the property has not been annexed, Mr. Semmler asked if changing the verbiage to "being considered for annexation" would be acceptable and Mayor Keyserling agreed. The motion **carried** to approve the minutes as amended (**FOR: DeLoach, Flewelling, Howard, Keyserling, Semmler, McBride, McFee, and Murray**).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: None given.

ANALYSIS OF LAND USE POLICY ALONG SEA ISLAND PARKWAY FROM SAMS POINT ROAD TO CHOWAN CREEK

Mr. Robert Merchant, Beaufort County Long-range Planner, briefed the Committee using a power point presentation. He noted that the Committee discussed the transportation surrounding the proposed WalMart along Sea Island Parkway. He noted that the area beyond the Lady's Island Airport is rural, especially the south side of the road that includes the marshes. There are some small businesses before Eustis Landing Road. The Northern Regional Plan (NRP) growth boundary is at the Chowan Creek bridge. The future land use plan in the NRP showed the airport junction as light industrial and the balance was neighborhood residential, suburban in nature. The County's zoning map mimics the future land use plan. The City of Beaufort's zoning map has a similar use with the future land use around the airport, although there is a more intense zoning. The County's zoning represents the character of the area. T2-Rural Center zoning covers the existing businesses. He noted that in the area there were two existing Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)—Airport Junction and Distant Island. The County believes the logical step would be to hold the development to the Airport Junction PUD. If parcels beyond that point are annexed into the City of Beaufort, the County recommends keeping those parcels in context with the current character. The question to offer the committee is whether to hold the line at the WalMart property or to Chowan Creek.

Ms. Libby Anderson, City of Beaufort Planning Director, noted that she and the County planning staff have been working on this analysis. She believes moving the growth boundary does not make sense.

Committee discussion included:

- Belief that the City would not want the Committee to down zone in the growth boundaries, rather keep the zoning so the City can annex in the growth boundary;
- The rationale for the growth boundaries that were drawn in 2008 was the County trying to protect the rural areas, with a compromise to exclude Coosaw Island;
- Lady's Island having only two access points that are problematic;
- Considering moving the growth boundaries back from Chowan Creek to prevent a strain on the infrastructure, including schools, roads, stormwater, etc.;
- Querying if the City of Beaufort wanted to annex any of the parcels after the WalMart (*Mayor Billy Keyserling explained that the City has retreated to their original footprint to in-fill. The bigger issue is what the County expects for Lady's Island. The City has strategically annexed commercial properties because there is a demand. There is more concern for north of Highway 21, with potential for commercial growth. 40+ years ago there was talk about a beltway around the City of Beaufort. The Sea Island Parkway and Sam's Point Road have not developed into a destination as the City had hoped. How big will Lady's Island grow and how will we help them grow? We have a shared responsibility.*);
- Clarifying the Northern Regional Plan concept where a property owner who wants to upzone and the property is in the growth boundary, then he is passed to the respective municipality for annexation. (*Mr. Jim Hicks stated that the Lady's Island Professional Office District was designed to accommodate services for Lady's Island. The density was 1 unit per acre, until the roads were widened. We need a vehicle/a tool like placing a caveat in the Northern Regional Plan that the area will remain rural until the infrastructure can*

support the rezoning. Mr. Hicks recommends considering a contingency to pause the growth.);

- *Determining whether a traffic impact analysis was needed for new development (Mr. Hicks noted that a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) notifies the problem but does not solve the traffic dilemma. Mr. Anthony Criscitiello, County Planning Director, noted that if the use was permitted, then there were two triggers—contiguity and the growth boundaries. We should be looking at changing the Lady’s Island future land use map to be contiguous with the zoning map.);*
- *Clarifying that the future land use map would be a 5-year versus a 25-year vision for Lady’s Island (Councilman Flewelling stated that the County needed the municipality’s help when increased infrastructure is required. Beaufort County Council Chairman Sommerville noted that there are 3,000 to 5,000 permitted lots on Lady’s Island.);*
- *Noting that the County had hired a consultant regarding a bypass road off Lady’s Island and a large public outcry caused the concept to be dropped (Councilman Sommerville noted that a tax referendum may be an answer. He noted the uncontrolled growth in Bluffton.);*
- *Considering man-made and natural effects to the land, especially sea level rise (Mayor Billy Keyserling noted how large Lady’s Island will be in twenty to forty years. How do we need to weave that into the discussion. Mr. Semmler noted that sea level rise will be discussed by Mr. Merchant. Mr. Semmler believes relocating the pump stations, bridges, raising the road levels, etc., should be considered now. A third bridge for Lady’s Island should be considered.);*
- *Having a consensus at the next meeting on how the Committee should move forward with a plan for Lady’s Island (Beaufort County Councilwoman Alice Howard stated that the schools should be added in the discussion. Town of Port Royal Councilman Vernon DeLoach would like to see a written copy of what is being proposed and how it affects the Town of Port Royal. Councilman Flewelling stated that changing the future land use map seem apropos. Mr. Semmler asked the planning staff to work together finding solutions for the problem. Councilman Sommerville agreed with Councilman Flewelling’s recommendation regarding the future land use map change. Councilman Flewelling wanted scientific data to support the sea level rise projections. Mayor Keyserling said the Sea Level Rise Task Force has evidence. Mr. Semmler asked for a plan regarding the Lady’s Island at next meeting from planners. Consensus was received from the Committee regarding the planning staff having a plan for the Lady’s Island zoning.)*

JOINT LAND USE STUDY (JLUS)

Ms. Ginnie Kozak of the Lowcountry Council of Government (LCOG) briefed the Committee. She mentioned using a consultant to help change the ordinances of government entities involved. At a meeting this week, the consultant (Mr. Tyson Smith) and the planning staffs of Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal determined that the Joint Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) would start the approval process. The group will be able to move by the end of the year. The Department of Defense (DOD) has requested that sea level rise be included in the work. She noted that the DOD BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure Commission) may get involved. TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) work is also involved. Mr. Semmler asked about the public being able to view the JLUS discussions during the MPC meetings since the MPC would be the conduit of JLUS public comments. Video recording of the MPC was raised. The City of Beaufort and The Town of Port Royal are awaiting recording of

their municipal meetings. Councilman Brian Flewelling noted that he would contact the County Administrator regard the video recordings of such meetings.

LOWCOUNTRY AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (LATS) UPDATE

Ms. Ginnie Kozak briefed the Committee that the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) was based on transportation needs. A long range transportation plan was required because of the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) status granted to the area. She provided a power point presentation, indicating that the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) members came from the City of Beaufort; the Towns Port Royal, Bluffton, Hilton Head Island, and Hardeeville; and Beaufort and Jasper Counties. SCDOT noted that Highway 17 must be widened. The team came up with projects that will occur after the year 2020. Ms. Kozak noted that transportation models will be run for each of the projects, with scenarios over several years. The Highway 17 project will begin in two years and will take about two years to complete. The MPO Policy Committee includes all the government agencies mentioned above in the LATS group.

COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Beaufort County adopted its Comprehensive Plan on January 2011. There has been a 5-year assessment by the staff and the Planning Commission. There are 10 elements in the Plan. Recommended actions included updating the population and demographics chapter, developing a comprehensive economic development plan, refocusing an affordable housing strategy, revisiting the transportation chapter, revisiting the 10-year Capital Improvements plan, and making minor revisions to the remaining chapters. The Planning Commission is now working on the details within each element of the plan. Three elements—Chapter 4, Land Use; Chapter 6, Cultural Resources; and Chapter 9, Energy—are going through the process toward adoption by County Council.

REPORT: Status of Spanish Moss Trail: Mr. Robert Merchant noted that the section between Depot Road to Broad River Boulevard is completed with a HAWK lighting feature on Robert Smalls Parkway (Highway 170). There is a marked use of the trail. The section north of Roseida Road has already been designed. The Kennedy Family has offered a challenge grant for the Roseida Road to Clarendon Road portion of the Trail. Councilman Flewelling noted that the challenge grant needs additional funding. He also noted that there was the video tutorial on the appropriate use of the HAWK light, on the County website.

LIST OF PARKS:

Mr. Semmler noted that Mr. Joe MacDermott handed in his written list of parks north of the Broad River. Mr. MacDermott noted that he did his research using his bicycle and that his list did not include the parks in the schools and on federal government properties. Councilman Flewelling, in thanking Mr. MacDermott for his work, noted that he would have the information added to the County website.

ROUND THE TABLE COMMENTS: Council Chairman Paul Sommerville noted that he was a member of the MPO and had agreed to commit the money to upgrade Highway 17. The project will be a 4-lane road with a bicycle path.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- a. **Discussion of the Frequency of NRPIC Meetings:** Mr. Semmler noted that the frequency of the meetings would remain at every other month. He asked that the Committee members give him agenda suggestions prior to each meeting.
- b. **Next Scheduled Committee Meeting** is Friday, May 20, 2016, in the Executive Conference Room, Beaufort County Administration Building, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort SC 29902.

ADJOURNMENT: Councilman Flewelling made a **motion to adjourn the meeting**, and Mayor Murray seconded the motion. The motion **carried** (FOR: DeLoach, Flewelling, Howard, Keyserling, McBride, McFee, Murray, and Semmler; ABSENT: Cook, Cordray, Dawson, and DeVito). Mr. Semmler adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:21 a.m.

Note: No video coverage occurred during the March 25, 2016, Northern Regional Plan Implementation Committee meeting. The minutes are a recollection from notes taken by the Beaufort County Planning Department Administrative Assistant.