



COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY
Beaufort County Planning and Zoning Department
Beaufort County Government Robert Smalls Complex
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The regular meeting of the Beaufort County Planning Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) was held at the Beaufort County Council Chambers on Monday, June 1, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Ed Pappas, Chairman
Mr. Jon Henney
Ms. Cecily McMillan, Vice Chair
Mr. Gene Meyers
Mr. Glenn Miller
Ms. Gail Murray
Mr. Chuck Newton
Mr. Dennis Ross

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Pete Cook

STAFF PRESENT:

Ms. Kristen Forbus, Long Range Planner
Mr. Robert Merchant, Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Pappas called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair Pappas led those assembled in the pledge of allegiance.

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES: The May 4th workshop minutes were approved with no objections. An error was noted in the May 4th regular minutes and they were not approved.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Chair Pappas asked if there were any non-agenda related citizen comments.

Comments were received by staff and given to Chairman Pappas to read. They are attached.

To: Beaufort County Planning Commission, Attn: Ed Pappas, Chair
From: Sherry L. Knight, please read as I cannot attend this meeting
Subject: Unchecked Development along Route 278, Bluffton, SC
Date: June 1, 2026

I am a 20-year resident of Beaufort County living ten years in Island West and 12 in Sun City and also owning property on Hilton Head during that time..

What I see and experience currently is not long-term planning to "benefit the citizens of the county" as the mission states. Rather, just about every inch of land is being developed or for sale between I-95 and Hilton Head Island on 278. It is ugly, stated as mixed use or certainly has no supported infrastructure to sustain such rampant destruction of land for commercial or housing and wildlife habitats. A clear and prime example is the tract called Pepper Hall at the headwaters of the Okatie River. Not only is the concept really ugly housing, just where are all the cars going to go? Do we really need another Parkers? So, planning commission, is this an example of your work?

I served on the Board of Directors of the Red Cross when I initially came here. Disaster planning was a large concern at that time with forward projections that provided a clear view of what the development in the area did to our ability to safely navigate and get citizens to safety. It was a concern. Today it is much worse due to traffic and destruction of our trees.

And, who is working with Jasper County about the adverse impacts their clear cutting and completely unchecked development has and will continue to have upon Beaufort County? What is our leadership doing to preserve and develop our land in a responsible way? I don't see it. Nor do most of the citizens I've spoken to. They, like me, are very unhappy at the result of this so-called planning.

In closing I will mention how "our pennies" are funding a road widening project as the sign says. Well, I've lived through the last one that advocated eliminating all the turn lanes in and out of Island West. It took 20 neighbors showing up to confront the council to help them understand a school bus could not make the turns nor safely get kids in and out. They changed their plan.

I am also contacting Westin Newton. It is ridiculous what is going on here. It is wonderful that this underserved area medically is finally getting facilities it needs. But, we are not preserving those things that have made this county special and attract people to want to live here. Has the 40-year plan been updated? I would like to see an illustration of what your projected development and road plans are for the next five years, as it says is supposed to happen. And, what are your plans to do with regard to buying land as you used to do to preserve it?

It is important that you understand many of your constituents are less than happy. I just happen to be an outspoken one.


Sherry L. Knight

843-476-7425

Copy for Council.

20 Pinckney Drive
Bluffton, SC 29909
June 1, 2026

Representative Wm. Weston J. Newton
7 Plantation Park Drive
Suite 3
Bluffton, SC
Re: Letter to Planning Commission

Delivered by Hand

Dear Sir:

As you have been associated with Beaufort County Council in many ways, I am writing to let you know that today I delivered a memorandum to the county office building for the Planning Commission to read at tonight's meeting. I cannot attend.

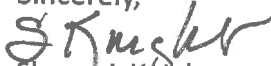
Perhaps with your association with both Beaufort and Jasper you can bring some sanity to the very unpleasant reality that has forgotten about trees, infrastructure and quality of life for the **now** citizens----not the ones that will fill the unconstructed or constructed but unoccupied housing and commercial structures that have apparently been approved by someone or some appointed or elected body.

I understand the need for skilled trades and knowledge workers. Retail doesn't provide that. I understand housing is a need to attract business and workers. Having participated in Reston, VA Chamber of Commerce during the movement of west coast technology companies to the Dulles Corridor, the issues were the same---what about the quality of schools, how will we manage traffic where will they all live, eat lunch, etc. The difference is that SC has not yet attracted the kind of business entities that garner that kind of workforce. We are an area of retirees and small businesses and retail with health care now finally coming into the mix. That ridiculous Buckeyes comes to mind as a major blight on the area.

You might say that blight brings jobs and tax revenue. However, Jasper seems to jump at anything with little regard to impact. Beaufort used to try and preserve land and trees and limit building. Hilton Head actually did that right, limiting construction to rebuilding primarily. Bluffton really needs to get on board with that and stop building willy nilly.

Take a leadership role in Columbia and locally to correct the current mess. You have done many good things for the county over the years. Do it again.

Sincerely,


Sherry L Knight

ACTION ITEMS:

CONSIDERATION OF TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CODE (CDC): SECTION 5.3.20 (APPLICABILITY), 4.2.20 (STANDARDS FOR FREE STANDING ACCESSORY BUILDINGS/ STRUCTURES), AND 10.1.190 (S DEFINITIONS)

Mr. Merchant presented the text amendment. He stated that shipping containers are common in agriculture practices. Staff met with the Farm Bureau and changes were made accordingly to that meeting such as the restriction on density. Mr. Merchant stated that it is hard to limit the structures as some farmers use them for hydroponics. Language was added that added screening requirements. In addition, the allowed proof of farming was tightened and language regarding an affidavit was removed. Mr. Pappas asked about violations. Mr. Merchant's expressed that Beaufort County has a Code Enforcement department that deals with any code violations. Mr. Ross suggested staff clean up the language to differentiate between semitrailer and shipping container. Mr. Newton questioned maximum size and cubic feet. Mr. Merchant stated the language regarding size is for individual containers and not the whole footprint. Mr. Meyers expressed concern about lack of foundation, inspections, and the setback from screening standards. He stated it should match other structures in the screening section and be 200 feet rather than 100.

Mr. Merchant stated that agricultural structures are exempt from building codes by state law. He also stated that annual inspections and monitoring is above normal protocol.

Mr. Miller suggested language regarding "hazardous" waste be included as prohibited storage. Mr. Henney stated there are no requirements for foundation and inspections for regular accessory structures so it should not apply now. Ms. McMillan spoke of concern with electricity and proper ventilation.

Chair Pappas opened the meeting for public comment.

Mary Connor voiced concern of the SCATE card and hydroponics.

There was discussion on electricity. It was stated that there are different levels of "utility class".

Mr. Ross made a motion to defer CONSIDERATION OF TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CODE (CDC): SECTION 5.3.20 (APPLICABILITY), 4.2.20 (STANDARDS FOR FREE STANDING ACCESSORY BUILDINGS/ STRUCTURES), AND 10.1.190 (S DEFINITIONS) to address comments. The motion passed 7-1.

CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING MAP FOR 1.4 ACRES (R300 012 000 0129 0000, R300 012 000 047A 0000) FROM T2R TO C4CCMU

Mr. Merchant presented the zoning map amendment. This area of St. Helena has been recognized as a commercial node on the island. Mr. Merchant stated that in the previous zoning code, the least intense commercial zoning was "commercial suburban" which was the analogous forerunner to the current C4 zoning district. However, there is a less intense district that is more appropriate for the area. He stated it is unlikely that the parcel will have sewer in the near future. Therefore, he recommends that the parcel should be rezoned to T2RC rather than C4. Ms. McMillan spoke of nearby family compounds and rural character. There was discussion of maximum footprint in T2RC.

Kevin Dukes, representing the owner, presented the application's background. He stated that they are willing to amend the application to T2RC. Mr. Miller asked if property was under contract. Mr. Dukes stated the property is already owned and needs an official office. Mr. Dukes stated there would not be any retail in the proposed structure. There was discussion about rezoning other parcels in the area in the future.

Mr. Henney made a motion to recommend approval of CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING MAP FOR 1.4 ACRES (R300 012 000 0129 0000, R300 012 000 047A

0000) FROM T2R TO C4CCMU with the condition that the parcels be rezoned to T2RC rather than C4 zoning stating that the rezoning meet standards 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9. Mr. Meyers seconded. The motion passed 8-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Mr. Pappas reminded that there will be Comprehensive Plan workshops soon.

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Pappas adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY: Kristen Forbus
Long Range Planner

 7/9/26

Ed Pappas
Beaufort County Planning Commission Chairman