



Folly Beach Planning Commission

January 4, 2016

7:00 PM Regular Meeting (Joint Session with City Council)
Council Chambers, 21 Center Street

Commission Members: Beth Saunders, Chairman; Anton Dumars, Vice Chair; Kirk Grant; LaJuan Kennedy; Sam Robinson; Greg Anderson; Karen McNamara-Burkette; John Merritt; John Pence

Regular Meeting 7:00PM

1: Call to Order; Roll Call

Present: Grant, Burkette, Merritt, Dumars, Kennedy, R. Anderson, Pence, Saunders

Absent: G. Anderson

Council Present: Council Member Stuckey, Mayor Goodwin

2: Freedom of Information Statement

3: Approval of Previous Minutes

Mr. Merritt made a motion to approve the minutes of the October, November and December meetings, and Mr. Dumars seconded the motion. The minutes were approved without objection.

4: Personal Appearances

5: Citizen Comments

6: Unfinished Business

7: New Business

A. Public Hearing of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan

Ms. Saunders reported there were 13 emails received regarding the subject of the seawalls and one in support of the marketing strategies outlined in the Comp Plan. She noted each person speaking on the Comp Plan would be given 3 minute to speak.

Richard Beck, 1692 East Ashley Avenue, spoke in favor of seawalls, stating they have helped protect Folly beach homes, particularly on the east end of the island.

Nancy Smith, 1207 Tabby Drive, expressed the desire to have this document treated as a living document. She spoke against seawalls. She added that the beach disappears around seawalls and they are detrimental to turtle nesting.

Ben Davidson, 2395 Folly Road, spoke with concern about the “ultra short-term rentals,” stating that 60% of his rentals are outside of the regular season and are mostly weekend terms of stay. He would like the Planning Commission to reconsider the definition of “ultra short-term rentals.”

Ed Yarborough, 1583 East Ashley Avenue, also spoke in favor of seawalls. He said City of Folly Beach should not restrict what the Federal government has allowed since it was the Federal government that caused the erosion in the first place due to the dredging of the harbor.

“Speedy” Felkel, former Folly Beach property owner, stated that seawalls and groins are needed to protect homes and property.

Cindy Culley, Folly Beach vacationer, stated that homeowners should have the right to build seawalls to protect their properties.

Susan Breslin, 1115 East Arctic Avenue, referred to an email of statistics she sent to the Commissioners earlier. She spoke with concern about any changes being made to East Arctic, claiming that it is already a “shared street” and it “works as is.” She believes that changing East Arctic to a one-lane road will cause more problems on East Ashley.

Mr. Grant made a motion to forward the Comprehensive Plan with the December 7, 2015 changes to City Council. Ms. Burkette seconded the motion. Discussion ensued about possible issues with making East Arctic Avenue one lane for traffic and one lane for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Mr. Grant reminded everyone the Comprehensive Plan is a planning document, not the final word on what will be done. Mr. Grant made a motion to remove the East Arctic Avenue proposition. Ms. Saunders seconded the motion. Ms. Saunders noted the Comprehensive Plan says the issue on East Arctic should be studied, not changed. A vote was taken as follows:

Ayes: Merritt, Pence, Burkette, Grant, Kennedy, Dumars

Nays: R. Anderson, Saunders.

The motion passed. The notion of “ultra short-term rentals” was then discussed. Ms. Burkette and Ms. Anderson stated the intent was to review the issue to make sure it met with current regulations. Ms. Anderson made a motion to alter the wording of that section by changing “degrade” to “may affect” and to remove the word “better.” Mr. Merritt seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

A lengthy discussion then ensued regarding seawalls. Mr. Dumars, who is a professional geologist, stated there are no peer-reviewed articles supporting the notion that seawalls help preserve the beach. He said some articles state that seawalls hurt the beach and

could have actually further the erosion. He said it is important to make decisions such as these based on science and not popular opinion. He believes the language regarding seawalls needs to stay in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Kennedy stated that she believes that had seawalls not been in place at the time of the 1993 renourishment, then all the property at those places would have been lost. She made a motion to remove the seawall language from the Plan, and Mr. Grant seconded the motion. Ms. Anderson stated she also believes the seawalls hurt the beach, and it is not the job of the government to protect property owner's investments to the detriment of the rest of the beach. Mr. Merritt and Mr. Pence agreed the issue will need further study beyond this plan. Mr. Grant suggested changing the language in the plan from implementation to "Council and other interested parties consider rebuilding the seawalls." Ms. Kennedy pulled her original motion from the floor and Mr. Grant agreed to pull his second of the motion. After further discussion about the exact wording, Commissioners agreed to "consider the regulation regarding the rebuilding of seawalls that are damaged." A vote was taken as follows:

Ayes: Burkette, Merritt, Pence, Grant, Kennedy

Nays: Anderson, Dumars, Saunders

The motion passed. Mr. Grant made a motion to send the 2015 Comprehensive Plan as amended to City Council and Ms. Burkette seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor. The Comprehensive Plan will go before City Council on January 12 for First Reading.

8: Staff Comments

9: Commission Comments

The Commissioners thanked and commended Aaron Pope for all his hard work on the formation of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Saunders thanked everyone for coming, noting that while the Commission has sympathy for beachfront homeowners, there are some tough decisions to be made in the future.

10: Adjournment at 8:11pm.