

THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Planning Commission

Minutes of the Wednesday, October 6, 2010 Meeting APPROVED
9:00a.m. – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Commissioners Present: Chairman Al Vadnais, Vice Chairman Loretta Warden, Tom Crews,
Terence Ennis, Therese Leary, Tom Lennox and Gail Quick

Commissioners Absent: Jack Docherty and Charles Young, Excused

Town Council Present: Bill Ferguson

Town Staff Present: Nicole Dixon, Senior Planner
Jayme Lopko, Senior Planner & Planning Commission Coordinator
Scott Liggett, Director Public Projects & Facilities/Chief Engineer
Charles Cousins, Community Development Department Director
Jill Foster, Community Development Department Deputy Director
Kathleen Carlin, Administrative Assistant

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
Chairman Vadnais called the meeting to order at 9:00a.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**
3. **ROLL CALL**
4. **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**
Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.
5. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**
The agenda was **approved** as presented by general consent.
6. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**
The minutes of the September 15, 2010 meeting were **approved** as amended by general consent.
7. **APPEARANCE BY CITIZENS ON ITEMS UNRELATED TO TODAY’S AGENDA**
None
8. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
None

9. NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing

PPR100001

Application for Public Project Review from the Town of Hilton Head Island for restoration and stabilization to the Port Royal shoreline. These improvements will include restoring an area of eroding beach with sand fill from an offshore borrow site and stabilizing the area with a low crested groin to reduce future sand loss. The project area is located between the Westin Resort and the northeast tip of the Island and is approximately 5,400 linear feet of Atlantic Ocean shoreline.

Ms. Nicole Dixon made the presentation on behalf of staff. The staff recommended that the Planning Commission find the application to be compatible with the Town's Comprehensive Plan for location, character, and extent based on the Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law as determined by the LMO Official.

The Town of Hilton Head Island has long recognized that its beaches are a vital asset to residents and the Island's economy. Beginning in 1990, the Town embarked on an ambitious beach renourishment program. In an effort to maintain the Island's beaches in the best possible condition, the Town utilizes beach renourishment as part of its long-term strategy.

Town Council has approved funding the Port Royal Sound Shoreline Renourishment project for \$12.5 million from the beach preservation fee, a 2% tax on short-term rental accommodations, in the Town's fiscal year 2011 budget. The proposed project is required due to the erosion along this specific area of shoreline. Since about 1999, portions of the proposed project shoreline have experienced recession rates varying from 60 to 130 feet per year.

The Town has held numerous public meetings starting in 2006 with various Town boards and committees, adjacent property owners of the project area and the community at large, and the Port Royal Property Owners Association and their Beach Committee to discuss the proposed project, its funding and any project implications. The Town has received several letters and phone calls all in support of the proposed renourishment project.

The project area is located between Barnacle Road (just north of the Westin Resort) and the northeast tip of the Island (near the Port Royal Beach Club) and is approximately 5,400 linear feet of Atlantic Ocean shoreline. The Town is planning on beginning the project in January 2011 and is expecting it to take approximately nine months to complete. Approximately 1 million cubic yards of beach quality sand fill will be dredged from an offshore borrow site located on the eastern side of the Port Royal Sound. After completing a sand search investigation, the Town finds the proposed sand source is highly suitable for use as beach fill material on the north end of the Island. The sand will be pumped from the borrow area to the fill site through a submerged pipeline.

Considering the extremely high rate of erosion at this location, sand fill alone cannot successfully address the ongoing shoreline retreat problem and provide sufficient protection to upland development. The proposed low crested groin is intended to reduce the shoreline erosion rate following the sand fill placement, maintain a more consistent shoreline along the Port Royal Sound shoreline, and allow for continued alongshore sand transport from the Atlantic Ocean shoreline to the Port Royal Sound shoreline.

The project site is located along a section of shoreline that is designated as Critical Habitat for wintering piping plover. The project is intended to stabilize and maintain the critical habitat area. The Town also intends to minimize potential project-related effects to nesting sea turtles in the area by ensuring the fill component of the project is completed by May, which is the beginning of the nesting window of the turtles. The Town will access the beach from an upland location which will minimize the area of disturbance.

Ms. Dixon presented a visual overview of the project as well as a discussion of the Findings of Fact and the Conclusions of Law. Mr. Scott Liggett provided several photographs and statements regarding the history of the Town's Beach Management Program. Following the staff's presentation and discussion by the Planning Commission, Chairman Vadnais requested comments from the public.

Citizens, Mr. Chuck McIntire, presented comments in support of the application. Mr. Charles Gorman asked a couple of questions about the application and offered overall support for the application. Mrs. Mary Amonitti presented comments for discussion. At the completion of public comments, Chairman Vadnais stated that the public hearing for this public project application is closed. Following final comments by the Planning Commission, Chairman Vadnais requested that a motion be made.

Commissioner Ennis made a **motion** that the Planning Commission finds Public Project Application PPR100001 to be compatible with the Town's Comprehensive Plan for location, character, and extent based on the Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law as determined by the LMO Official and as presented in the staff's report. Commissioner Quick **seconded** the motion and the motion **passed** with a vote of 7-0-0.

10. COMMISSION BUSINESS

The Planning Commission's Schedule of Meetings for 2011 was **approved** by general consent.

11. CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS

Chairman Vadnais provided an update on the status of the staff's proposed Community Standards Appearance Code (reviewed by the Planning Commission on September 15, 2010). This item is now scheduled for review by Town Council. The review by Town Council will include the Planning Commission's recommendation that the proposed Community Standards Appearance Code be made broader. The Planning Commission discussed the issue.

Commissioner Crews presented statements in support of having a review board for this kind of review rather than placing a single person in charge.

Chester C. Williams, Esq., presented statements in regard to the Community Standards Appearance Code and the International Property Maintenance Code.

12. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chairman Vadnais requested that the staff provide an update of upcoming Planning Commission meetings (including all subcommittee meetings) for October - November 2010. Mrs. Jayme Lopko, Mr. Shawn Colin, and Mr. Scott Liggett reviewed the upcoming meetings with the Planning Commission. The regular Planning Commission meeting on Wednesday, October 20, 2010 at 3:00p.m. is canceled.

13. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Scott Liggett presented an update on the status of several CIP projects. Mr. Charles Cousins presented statements in regard to the Mall at Shelter Cove.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25a.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Kathleen Carlin
Administrative Assistant

Al Vadnais
Chairman