

THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Planning Commission
LMO REWRITE COMMITTEE
April 22, 2011 Meeting Minutes

1:00p.m. – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

APPROVED

Committee Members Present: David Ames, David Bachelder, Tom Crews, Jim Gant, Walter Nester, Councilwoman Kim Likins, *Ex-Officio* and Charles Cousins, Community Development Department Director, *Ex-Officio*

Committee Members Absent: Chris Darnell and Gail Quick

Commissioners Present: None

Town Council Members Present: None

Town Staff Present: Jill Foster, Deputy Community Development Department Director
Brian Hulbert, Staff Attorney
Kathleen Carlin, Administrative Assistant

1) FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

2) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented by general consent.

3) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the April 8, 2011 Orientation meeting were approved as presented by general consent. The minutes of the April 14, 2011 meeting were amended and will be resubmitted for approval on April 29, 2011.

4) New Business

A. Discuss the final product

Chairman Crews presented opening comments. Chairman Crews stated that the final product should be the rewritten text of the LMO. The final product will be presented first to the Planning Commission and then forwarded to Town Council. The committee will not actually write the document, but the committee will oversee its preparation.

The committee will begin this task by first identifying the goals that they would like to see accomplished. The committee will begin the development of these goals on April 29, 2011.

Following Chairman Crews' opening comments, the committee inquired about Town Council's responsibility in their review of the final product. Mr. Cousins stated that Town Council may wish to provide some guidance on one or more of the issues. At the time of the committee's presentation to the Planning Commission and later to Town Council, the committee may be asked to support their recommendations for making changes to the LMO.

Because of the size and complexity of this task, the committee may find it helpful to break their presentations down into sections or chapters of the LMO.

B. Discuss the process to identify the committee's goals

The committee began with a review of the general steps required to accomplish their task. These steps are: (1) to identify the goals that we want to accomplish in rewriting the LMO. This includes how the LMO impacts these goals; (2) become educated on the existing LMO and how it works; (3) identify the issues created by the existing LMO; (4) review the concepts necessary to address these issues; (5) develop drafts for review by the committee; (6) finalize the product that will be taken forward to the Planning Commission and later to Town Council.

Chairman Crews stated that the committee first needs to identify these steps. At this time it is too premature to have a detailed discussion of the specifics of how the committee will accomplish this task.

Chairman Crews began with a review of the development of Hilton Head Island by Charles Fraser. Charles Fraser believed that the Island's development should be in harmony with nature. Charles Fraser developed seven general concepts: (1) do not impose development on the environment; (2) create green space for privacy; (3) keep density as low as profitably possible; (4) create roads for beauty and efficiency, not just transit; (5) build no structure higher than the tallest tree; (6) cut only those trees that are absolutely necessary; (7) think always of enhancing the quality of life for those who would be residents of Hilton Head Island.

Keeping these concepts in mind, Town Council identified the following in their 2010/2011 priorities for rewriting the Land Management Ordinance: (1) simplify the process; (2) provide greater flexibility; (3) foster revitalization; (4) evaluate existing zoning districts and design & performance standards; (5) determine how to deal with nonconformities; (6) review PUDs in terms of the 'use it or lose it' clause, common area review and consistency among the ten PUDs; (7) develop incentives for redevelopment; (8) identify priority investment areas; (9) keep sustainability and natural resources a priority.

The committee commented on the many challenges of dealing with nonconformities. This will be a major challenge in rewriting the LMO. Chairman Crews stated that dealing with zoning and design standards issues will also be a major challenge. The committee commented on new development and redevelopment issues.

The Town of Bluffton is currently rewriting their Code. Mr. Cousins stated that Community Development staff members attend these meetings and are monitoring their progress. The committee requested that the staff provide some input into this process. This information would be beneficial to the committee.

Several committee members felt that the concepts developed by Charles Fraser reflect mostly residential development (particularly Sea Pines.) For the most part these concepts do not consider the Island as a whole (for example, Coligny Plaza.) The relationship with Sea Pines is far different than the relationship with Coligny Plaza. The committee stated that we need to encourage revitalization for the Island as a whole. Several members commented that the Island seems to lack a true sense of community space. Additional community space may be needed as there is no real sense of the community as a whole. The committee discussed encouraging redevelopment. The development of financial incentives will be crucial in the development and redevelopment process. We need to address certain impediments associated with the revitalization of the Mall at Shelter Cove and Coligny Plaza. Efforts to simplify zoning will be an important element. Several members of the committee stated that there is a need to open up restrictive zoning to deal with non-conformities. Reducing the number of nonconformities is an important goal. Developing financial incentives will be critical to redevelopment.

The committee commented on the existing vacancy rates for commercial property. The committee discussed the need to simplify the permitting process and to make it more predictable. The committee commented on the 'mapping' process and the use of a timeline to measure progress. The committee commented on the need to examine the process for a variance. Is a variance really necessary? The committee and the staff discussed reducing the list of requirements for a variance while still maintaining compliance with State Code. Mr. Cousins stated that staff can provide the number and types of variance applications received over the past few years.

The committee commented on making a list of the members' individual goals. This list might prove helpful in providing a 'snap shot' of what each member would like to see accomplished. The committee commented on the need to protect the Island's edges, its water, and other natural resources. Safeguarding Hilton Head Island's legacy and being good stewards of the Island's future is an obligation to be taken seriously. The committee commented on the needs for additional community space vs. a desire for privacy by many of the residents of the Island's gated communities.

The committee briefly reviewed the goals that were provided to them by Town Council. Several committee members felt that these goals should be addressed. Chairman Crews stated that the LMO Rewrite Committee is not bound by the goals set by Town Council. Chairman Crews presented statements regarding the challenges of zoning and design standards, particularly in relationship to the Mall at Shelter Cove and Coligny Plaza. The committee needs to deal with these important issues.

Mr. Cousins stated that the committee already has several major issues that have been identified by Town Council. Maybe these issues should be addressed first, and then the committee can pursue other goals.

The committee discussed one or two of the goals provided by Town Council (encouraging redevelopment and reinvestment.) Several members felt that one of the goals should be to advance Hilton Head Island as a leader in comparison to other municipalities.

C. Discuss steps for completing the committee's work

The committee discussed the issue of hiring a consultant to help them achieve these goals. The committee commented on the timeline this is required for hiring a consultant. Brian Hulbert, Staff Attorney, provided comments regarding the RFP process. The committee discussed several issues associated with using a consultant. What type of tools will the consultant bring to the table? Tightly developed parameters need to be in place before a consultant is hired; and at this point, these parameters are unknown. The committee will need time (perhaps one or two months) to develop and fine tune these parameters. The committee stated that perhaps a consultant could come in to speak to them to share his/her experiences. Some new ideas may stimulate the committee's discussion. Several members of the committee stated that they would like to know more about form based codes.

Lastly, the committee and the staff reviewed next steps for their April 29th meeting. The staff will present the first two chapters of the LMO at this meeting. The staff will probably present two chapters per meeting until the existing LMO has been well covered. The staff will work with Chairman Crews early next week to set the agenda for the April 29th meeting.

Following final comments by Chairman Crews, today's meeting was adjourned at 2:45p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Kathleen Carlin
Administrative Assistant

Tom Crews
Chairman