

Our Town

A Newsletter of the Town of Hilton Head Island
 Brought to you by the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina
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Town Manager's Note

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Steve Riley

University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) Hospitality Management Facility

In order to bring everyone up-to-date with the location of USCB on Hilton Head Island, I want to provide the following information, and also reflect some of the positive aspects of a USCB Campus on Pope Avenue. We are mindful of all points of view on a USCB presence and are taking measures to balance all concerns.

Current Status

- Carolina Office Park Complex has been acquired. Time Warner building is under contract and will close in mid-2015.
- Tree, topo and wetland surveys have been completed. Site plan being refined.
- Traffic study has been completed, and detailed intersection improvement plans are being developed.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been fully executed.
- Demolition of existing buildings targeted for fall of 2015. Construction slated to begin in 2017 with classes starting in the fall of 2018.

Existing Collaborative Efforts on the Island

- Center for Event Management and Hospitality Training at Sea Pines Welcome Center.
- Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) facility; currently at Pineland Station.
- Coastal Ecology Research Project at Harbour Town Marina.
- Continuing Medical Education in collaboration with USC School of Medicine and the Sea Pines Resort.

Furtherance of the Comprehensive Plan

- The 2010 Comprehensive Plan, "Charting the Island's Future - From Here to 2030" calls for assuring "higher and continuing education opportunities for citizens with emphasis on opportunities that match the specific needs of our local population and economy."
- The Plan notes that "Continuing and adult education has been identified as important to Island citizens."
- And that "More on-Island opportunities should be considered for higher education."

Benefits of USCB collaboration

- Adult and continuing education opportunities for residents and visitors; improving quality of life.
- Opportunities for students at management end of an industry that is one of the largest and fastest growing in the nation.
- Opportunities for students in an industry that allows them to remain in the area.
- Enhanced opportunities for internships with local businesses.
- Better trained and knowledgeable employees translates into better service and a better experience for residents and guests.
- Creates opportunities for other collaborative efforts with the University; adding to Island offerings and thus Island "brand."
- Given its international reputation, success on Hilton Head Island radiates out across the County and region.
- Presence and promotion of the facility will increase exposure of the Island.
- Expanded opportunities for tourism research - adding to the Island's exposure.
- Events and conferences will showcase the Island and introduce us to future property owners.
- Higher education and continuing education opportunities are a hallmark of most "best communities" type lists.
- Free space at Gateway campus for expansion of other programs.

Costs for Road Improvements

- Traffic circulation improvements will serve the entire Pope Avenue, Office Park Road, New Orleans Road and Greenwood Drive areas.
- Costs, currently estimated to exceed \$1 million, will be the responsibility of the Town and will be paid from TIF funds.
- Grants to assist with these costs have been received from Hargray Communications (\$275,000).

Traffic Impacts and Proposed Road Improvements

- A traffic impact study of the proposed USCB facilities has already been completed and reviewed with the CSA Traffic Committee.
- Proposed use has less traffic impact than the other uses and densities allowed under the Town's LMO for the Sea Pines Commercial District.
- A private developer would not have been required to do a traffic study.
- Removal of the Time Warner Building facilitates long overdue reconstruction of the Pope/New Orleans/Office Park intersection; the need for which is reaffirmed by the study.
- Improvements to the Greenwood Drive/Office Park Road intersection are also called for.
- The "regional" traffic study being undertaken is looking at the bigger picture of zoning changes, a build-out scenario and the impacts of redevelopment throughout the southern portion of the Island, including inside the PUDs.

Costs for USCB Facility

- Current discussions are focused on capping costs for "Phase I" (the main building) at \$24.5 million; including land costs and site preparation.
- USCB will contribute \$2.5 million which has already been raised and is in a separate interest-bearing account held by the non-profit Beaufort-Jasper Commission on Higher Education.
- Future phases (separate OLLI Building) will be the responsibility of USCB.
- Through TIF funding, the Town's partners contribute as follows: County (47%), School District (23%), Town (18%), USCB (10%) and HHPSD (2%).
- In the TIF extension, no school operating taxes are used; only Debt Service millage.

Location

- Pope Avenue and Office Park Road. Replaces the Carolina Office Park development (three office buildings) and the Time Warner operations building.



Conceptual Exterior Rendering

