

Town of Hilton Head Island Board of Zoning Appeals Regular Meeting Monday, January 22, 2018 – 2:30p.m. Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance
- 3. Roll Call
- 4. Freedom of Information Act Compliance

Public notification of the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island Land Management Ordinance.

- 5. Welcome and Introduction to Board Procedures
- 6. Approval of Agenda
- 7. Approval of the Minutes December 18, 2017 meeting
- 8. Unfinished Business
- 9. New Business

Public Hearing

VAR-002836-2017: Colin Kinton, P.E., on behalf of Beaufort County, is requesting a variance from LMO Section16-6-104.F, Specimen Tree Preservation in order to remove two specimen trees located within the limits of the Jenkins Island Improvements project on US 278. *Presented by: Shari Mendrick*

10. Board Business

- 11. Staff Report
 - a) Waiver Report

12. Adjournment

Please note that a quorum of Town Council may result if four or more Town Council members attend this meeting.

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND Board of Zoning Appeals Minutes of the December 18, 2017 2:30pm Regular Meeting Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Board Members Present: Chairman David Fingerhut, Lisa Laudermilch, Charles Walczak, John White

Board Members Absent: Vice Chairman Jerry Cutrer (excused), Robert Johnson (excused)

Council Members Present: David Ames

Town Staff Present: Rocky Browder, Environmental Planner; Nicole Dixon, Development Review Administrator; Brian Hulbert, Staff Attorney; Teresa Haley, Senior Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Roll Call

4. Freedom of Information Act Compliance

Public notification of the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island Land Management Ordinance.

5. Welcome and Introduction to Board Procedures

Chairman Fingerhut welcomed the public and introduced the Board's procedures for conducting the business meeting.

Chairman Fingerhut took a moment to say a few words about BZA member Steve Wilson who recently passed away. Chester Williams made remarks about Mr. Wilson as well.

6. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Fingerhut asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Laudermilch moved to approve. Mr. Walczak seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 4-0-0.

7. Approval of the Minutes – August 28, 2017 and September 25, 2017 meetings

Chairman Fingerhut asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2017 meeting. Mr. White moved to approve. Mr. Walczak seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 4-0-0.

Chairman Fingerhut asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2017 meeting. Mr. Walczak moved to approve. Ms. Laudermilch seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 4-0-0.

8. Unfinished Business – None

9. New Business Public Hearing <u>VAR-002598-2017</u>: Douglas Berger, on behalf of Queens Grant II HPR, is requesting a variance from LMO Section 16-6-104.F, Specimen Tree Preservation, to remove a specimen size Live Oak tree which is causing damage to one of the units at Queens Grant. The tree is located adjacent to Unit 552 at 45 Queens Folly Road and is identified as Parcel# 341 on Beaufort County Tax Map# 12.

Ms. Dixon presented an in depth review of the project as described in the Staff Report provided in the Board's packet. Staff received correspondence in support of the variance request. Subsequent to the packet, Staff received additional e-mails in support of the variance.

Staff recommends the Board of Zoning Appeals approve the application, based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law contained in the Staff Report with the following condition:

1. The applicant shall plant four, Category 1 mitigation trees per LMO Section 16-6-104.I.3.

Chairman Fingerhut asked for comments from the Board. The Board discussed and made inquiries regarding: the Town's Environmental Planner agrees with the arborist report provided by the applicant, the current damage to the structure and deck area, the Town believes the tree will continue to cause damage, trees have been removed within Queens Grant, and no other specimen trees exist within the immediate vicinity.

Chairman Fingerhut asked the applicant to come forward. The applicant presented statements regarding the grounds for the variance and answered questions presented by the Board.

The Board discussed a recent case in Queens Grant V in which a specimen tree caused damage to a pool. The Board asked the applicant to speak to the photographs of structural damage. The wall is cracked from floor to ceiling. The gapping is about 1" wide and patch work has not held together due to the upheaval of the tree. The Board asked whether structural issues will be fixed if the tree is removed. Structural issues may change once the tree is removed, so the applicant will wait for the structure to settle and negotiate with the homeowner.

Chairman Fingerhut opened the meeting for public comment and none were received.

The Board expressed its hesitation to take down a specimen tree, however, the expert opinion provided in this case determines that the tree must be removed.

Mr. Walczak moved to approve VAR-002598-2017 based on the Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law contained in the Staff report with the following condition:

1. The applicant shall plant four, Category 1 mitigation trees per LMO section 16-6-104.I.3.

Ms. Laudermilch seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 4-0-0.

Public Hearing

<u>VAR-002614-2017</u>: The Broad Creek Public Service District (BCPSD) is requesting a variance from LMO Section 16-5-103.E, Adjacent Use Buffer Requirements, to allow removal of existing trees and understory vegetation located on the earthen dam embankments of two holding ponds. The trees and understory vegetation proposed to be removed are located within the required adjacent use buffer. The property is located at 3 Marina Side Drive and is identified as Parcel #123 and Parcel #135 on Beaufort County Tax Map #11.

Ms. Dixon presented an in depth review of the project as described in the Staff Report provided in the Board's packet. Staff recommends the Board of Zoning Appeals approve the application based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law contained in the Staff Report. In the packet, Staff recommended approval with a condition that the BCPSD pay into the Town's tree replacement fund. However, since the packet was published, the applicant has submitted information that may conflict with that condition. Staff asks that the BZA approve the application and allow the LMO to decide whether or not the applicant is required to pay into the tree fund.

Chairman Fingerhut asked the applicant to come forward. Walter Nester, on behalf of the applicant, presented statements regarding the grounds for the variance. Mr. Nester and Mike Allen, BCPSD General Manager, then answered questions presented by the Board.

Chairman Fingerhut asked for comments from the Board. The Board discussed and made inquiries regarding applicable DHEC requirements versus its strong recommendations to the PSD. This is not a DHEC regulated dam. DHEC cannot enforce requirements, but strongly recommends this request be granted. DHEC requires the PSD to provide a plan to maintain the dam. The Board asked about the accessibility of the berm. The top of the berm is accessible, but the berm itself is not. There are executed agreements in place with Yacht Cove and Long Cove if the variance is granted. The Board asked whether the trees along the fence can remain. FEMA and DHEC want to be able to see straight through to the dam. There are concerns for security and animal intrusions.

Chairman Fingerhut opened the meeting for public comment. Leon Crimmins and Rich LaLiberty presented statements regarding the executed agreements, mitigation and payment into the tree fund.

The Board further discussed and made inquiries regarding: the neighboring homes are positioned lower than the top of the berm, a landscape plan to include a type of low grass if possible, and maintenance issues. The Board expressed the agreements in place with the neighboring communities are above and beyond the LMO requirements. The issue was raised whether or not a public utility is subject to tree preservation. The Town Attorney will review and make a determination. The Board discussed whether or not to impose the condition of payment into the tree fund, and/or allow the LMO to make that determination. Regarding the stability of the berm, the general consensus among the Board was that there is a potential threat rather than an imminent threat.

Mr. White moved to approve VAR-002614-2017 based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law contained in the Staff Report with the condition that the trees are considered a potential threat, and not an imminent threat, and that the decision on paying into the tree replacement fund should be a decision of Town Staff based on LMO requirements. Ms. Laudermilch seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 4-0-0.

10. Board Business

a) Approval of 2018 Meeting Schedule

Mr. White moved to approve the 2018 Meeting Schedule as submitted. Mr. Walczak seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 4-0-0.

11. Staff Report

a) Waiver Report – The Waiver Report was included in the Board's packet.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55p.m.

Submitted by: Teresa Haley, Secretary

Approved:

David Fingerhut, Chairman



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

One Town Center CourtHilton Head Island, SC 29928843-341-4757FAX 843-842-8908

STAFF REPORT VARIANCE

Case #:	Public Hearing Date:
VAR-002836-2017	January 22, 2018

Parcel or Location Data:	Property Owner	Applicant
<u>Address</u> : SCDOT US 278 Right-of-Way on Jenkins Island <u>Parcel</u> : 35" Single Trunk Live Oak adjacent to R510 006 000 0099 0000, 540' west of Jenkins Road and 85" Multiple Trunk Live Oak adjacent to R510 006 000 0001 0000, 240'	South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) P.O. Box 191 Columbia, SC 29202	Colin Kinton, P.E. Beaufort County 2266 Boundary Street Beaufort, SC 29902
east of Jenkins Road		

Application Summary:

Colin Kinton, P.E. on behalf of Beaufort County, is requesting a variance from LMO Section 16-6-104.F, Specimen Tree Preservation to remove two specimen size Live Oak trees located within the limits of the Jenkins Island Roadway Improvements Project on US 278.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Board of Zoning Appeals **approve** the application based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law contained in the staff report.

Background:

Beaufort County proposes to improve access to US 278 from surrounding neighborhoods on Jenkins Island by adding an additional eastbound and westbound lane on US 278. U-turn intersections will be constructed at Blue Heron Point Road and east of Jenkins Road. Both the Crosstree Drive and Jenkins Road intersections will be modified to eliminate the median openings and only allow right-in/right-out movements from these roads. In order to facilitate the project, tree removal is necessary.

LMO Section 16-6-104.F.1 states that single trunk live oak trees 35 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) or greater and multiple trunk live oak trees with the sum of all trunks 60 inches DBH or greater are considered specimen size. There is a single trunk live oak that is 35 inches DBH and a multiple trunk live oak that is 85 inches DBH, both of which are healthy, located in the right-of-way.

LMO Section 16-6-104.F.2.a.ii, Specimen Tree Preservation, states specimen trees shall not be cut, removed, pushed over, killed, or otherwise harmed. However, LMO Section 16-6-104.F.2.b states if the preservation of a specimen tree causes unnecessary hardship, the applicant may apply for a variance.

The applicant is requesting a variance to remove the two specimen trees because they are located within the right-of-way and the proposed road widening project would not be feasible without removal of the two trees. The applicant has made every effort during project planning to design around the existing trees to include eliminating ditches, placing guard rail and installing curb and gutter to limit the project footprint. However, the removal of the two specimen trees is necessary to accommodate a required clear area adjacent to the proposed roadway for vehicle safety.

Applicant's Grounds for Variance, Summary of Facts and Conclusions of Law:

Grounds for Variance:

According to the applicant, the variance is required because the two specimen trees are located within the required clear area adjacent to the proposed roadway for vehicle safety as set by SCDOT design standards. If the two specimen trees are not removed, they will be a safety hazard for vehicular traffic rendering the roadway widening project on Jenkins Island unfeasible.

Summary of Fact:

• The applicant seeks a variance as set forth in LMO Section 16-2-103.S.

Conclusion of Law:

o The applicant may seek a variance as set forth in LMO Section 16-2-103.S.

Summary of Facts and Conclusions of Law:

Summary of Facts:

- Application was submitted on December 21, 2017 as set forth in LMO Section 16-2-102.C and Appendix D-19.
- Notice of the Application was published in the Island Packet on December 31, 2018 as set forth in LMO Section 16-2-102.E.2.
- Notice of the Application was posted on January 5, 2018 as set forth in LMO Section 16-2-102.E.2.
- 0 Notice of Application was mailed on January 5, 2018 as set forth in LMO Section 16-2-102.E.2.
- o The Board has authority to render the decision reached here under LMO Section 16-2-102.G.

Conclusions of Law:

- The application is in compliance with the submittal requirements established in LMO Section 16-2-102.C.
- The application was submitted 32 days prior to the meeting, therefore meeting the 30 day deadline required in the LMO.
- Notice of application was published 22 days prior to the meeting, therefore meeting the 15 day deadline required in the LMO.

- Notice of application was posted 17 days prior to the meeting, therefore meeting the 15 day deadline required in the LMO.
- Notice of application was mailed 17 days prior to the meeting, therefore meeting the 15 day deadline required in the LMO.
- The application and notice requirements comply with the legal requirements established in LMO Section 16-2-102.E.2.

As provided in LMO <u>Section 16-2-103.S.4</u>, Variance Review Standards, a variance may be granted in an individual case of unnecessary hardship if the Board determines and expresses in writing all of the following findings of fact.

Summary of Facts and Conclusions of Law:

Criteria 1: There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular piece of property (LMO Section 16-2-103.S.4.a.i.01):

Findings of Fact:

- The subject trees are 35 inches DBH for the single trunk and 85 inches DBH for the multiple trunk, which are specimen size per LMO Section 16-6-401.F.1.
- The trees are located within the right-of-way on US 278.
- The SCDOT requires a clear area adjacent to roadways for vehicle safety.

Conclusion of Law:

• Staff concludes that this application does meet the criteria as set forth in LMO Section 16-2-103.S.4.a.i.01 because the size of the two trees and their location within SCDOT right-of-way are extraordinary and exceptional conditions.

Summary of Facts and Conclusions of Law:

Criteria 2: These conditions do not generally apply to other properties in the vicinity (LMO Section 16-2-103.S.4.a.i.02):

Findings of Fact:

- 0 In general, trees are not permitted in the clear area within SCDOT right-of-way.
- Specimen size trees are not typical within the US 278 right-of-way on this 6,000 foot portion of Jenkins Island.
- Other properties in the vicinity do not have to keep a clear area for vehicle safety.

Conclusion of Law:

• Staff concludes that this application does meet the criteria as set forth in LMO Section 16-2-103.S.4.a.i.02 because the specimen trees located within <u>S</u>CDOT right-of-way are a condition that does not generally apply to other properties in the vicinity.

Summary of Facts and Conclusions of Law:

Criteria 3: Because of these conditions, the application of this Ordinance to the particular piece of property would effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property (LMO Section 16-2-103.S.4.a.i.03):

Findings of Fact:

- LMO Section 16-6-104.f requires the preservation of specimen trees. This section also states if preservation of such trees causes unnecessary hardship, a variance can be applied for.
- O Currently, the properties located on Jenkins Island to include the RV Motorcoach Resort on Jenkins Road, Blue Heron Point, Mariners Cove and Windmill Harbour have unsignalized vehicular access to US 278 resulting in several unsafe access points, resulting in traffic incidents that unexpectedly block the only vehicular access to the Town from the mainland.
- The removal of the trees is required to provide the clear area for the roadway widening project.

Conclusion of Law:

• Staff concludes that this application does meet the criteria as set forth in LMO Section 16-2-103.S.4.a.i.03 because if the trees are preserved as required by the LMO, the road widening project cannot be completed to provide safer access for adjacent property owners to the Town's main thoroughfare.

Summary of Facts and Conclusions of Law:

Criteria 4: The authorization of the Variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent property or the public good, and the character of the zoning district where the property is located will not be harmed by the granting of the Variance (LMO Section 16-2-103.S.4.a.i.04):

Findings of Fact:

- The proposed roadway widening project will improve vehicular access points, which will improve travel conditions onto and off of the Island.
- A tree line will remain in place along the north side of US 278 in the vicinity of the two specimen trees.

Conclusion of Law:

- Staff concludes that this application does meet the criteria as set forth in LMO Section 16- 2- 103.S.4.a.i.04.
- Though the LMO guides development to preserve specimen trees, the improvements proposed with the roadway widening project will benefit the public good and adjacent properties by providing safer access points.

• Staff can find no evidence that the removal of the two trees will be a detriment to the public good or the character of surrounding neighborhoods.

LMO Official Determination:

Based on the above Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law, the LMO Official determines that the request for a variance should be granted to the applicant.

BZA Determination and Motion:

The "powers" of the BZA over variances are defined by the South Carolina Code, Section 6-29-800, and in exercising the power, the BZA may grant a variance "in an individual case of unnecessary hardship if the board makes and explains in writing ..." their decisions based on certain findings or "may remand a matter to an administrative official, upon motion by a party or the board's own motion, if the board determines the record is insufficient for review."

This State law is implemented by the Hilton Head Island Land Management Ordinance, Chapter 2, Article 103 and the Rules of Procedure for the BZA.

A written Notice of Action is prepared for each decision made by the BZA based on findings of fact and conclusions of law.

The BZA can either Approve the application, Disapprove the application, or Approve with Modifications. Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law must be stated in the motion.

PREPARED BY:

SM

Shari Mendrick, P.G., CFM, Planner

REVIEWED BY:

ND

Nicole Dixon, CFM, Development Review Administrator January 8, 2018 DATE

January 11, 2018 DATE

ATTACHMENTS:

- A) Vicinity Map
- B) Applicant's Narrative
- C) Site Plans
- D) Pictures



ATTACHMENT B

Memo

Date:	Thursday, December 21, 2017
Project:	Jenkins Island Improvements
To:	Nicole Dixon, Town of Hilton Head
From:	Phillip Hutcherson, PE - HDR
Subject:	Town of Hilton Head Board of Zoning Appeals Variance

Project Description

The project involves intersections of US 278 and Blue Heron Point Road, Crosstree Drive and Jenkins Road, all located on Jenkins Island. The County proposes to improve access to US 278 from the surrounding neighborhoods by adding an additional lane to US 278 eastbound and westbound along the entire length of the project. A U-turn intersection with an eastbound traffic will be constructed at Blue Herron Point Road. Both the Crosstree Drive intersection as well as the Jenkins Road intersection will be modified to eliminate the median openings and only allow right-in/right-out movements from these roads. A U-turn and traffic signal will be added east of Jenkins Road for vehicles from US 278 eastbound to the westbound direction.

Description of Variance

We are requesting a variance to remove two large/specimen trees along the project. This is a variance from Section 16-6-104 from the Town of Hilton Head Land Management Ordinance. Due to the large number of trees in this project area, a survey of every tree was not feasible. We have completed a field survey with the assistance of Amanda Flake, Beaufort County Natural Resources Planner, and identified all the specimen trees in our project area. In addition we identified several additional large trees in the area. We have surveyed these trees and included them in the attached plans. Below is a list of the trees we found:

Tree size and type	Station / Offset from US 278 Westbound Centerline	Comment
35 LO	311+53 – 44'	To be removed due to construction.
23 21 15 15 11 LO	319+40 - 44'	To be removed due to construction.

For all trees affected by construction our design team considered options to redesign around the tree. These options included eliminating ditches, placing guardrail, and placing curb and gutter to limit the footprint of the project. Several trees were considered unfeasible to or not possible. However, a couple of trees were able to be saved by redesigning the project at that location. For example, the 35 11 10 8 LO at Station 316+52, our preliminary design used a ditch that would have affected the tree, but we were able to eliminate a ditch at that location and not impact the tree.

ATTACHMENT B

LMO Section 16-2-103.S.4a. Criteria:

 There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular piece of property:

This project is not contained to one property; however, it is along a roadway widening project along roadway right-of-way in the Town Limits. Since this project involves US 278 it falls under many conditions of safety and design guidelines from the SCDOT.

- These conditions do not generally apply to other properties in the vicinity: Since the project is road project and not a site development project, the design guidelines to not apply to nearby properties.
- Because of these conditions, the *application* of this *Ordinance* to the particular piece of property would effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property:

The removal of the trees is necessary to have a clear area adjacent to the roadway for vehicle safety. This clear area is set by design standards.

4. The authorization of the Variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent property or the public good, and the character of the zoning district where the property is located will not be harmed by the granting of the Variance:

While this project will remove two large trees, numerous trees will remain in place adjacent to the project. A tree line will still remain in place along the north side of the project.

ATTACHMENT C



ATTACHMENT D

35 inch DBH Single Trunk Live Oak



ATTACHMENT D

85 inch DBH Multi Trunk Live Oak





TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Community Development Department

TO:	Board of Zoning Appeals
FROM:	Nicole Dixon, CFM, Development Review Administrator
DATE:	January 11, 2018
SUBJECT:	Substitutions of Nonconformities for Redevelopment

The BZA requested that staff keep them informed of substitutions of nonconformities for redevelopment that are granted by staff. A memo is distributed every month at the regular BZA meetings and is discussed under staff reports on the agenda.

The following language is contained in Section 16-7-101.F, Substitutions of Nonconformities for Redevelopment, which gives the Administrator the power to grant such substitutions for existing nonconforming structures and site features.

LMO Section 16-7-101.F:

"To provide flexibility and encourage redevelopment of sites with nonconforming features or structures, the Official is authorized to approve a Development Plan for such sites if the proposed development:

- 1. Will not include any new development that increases the amount of encroachment into any required buffer or setback;
- 2. Will not increase the impervious cover on the site over the maximum allowed for the district or the existing impervious cover, whichever is greater;
- 3. Will not result in a density in excess of what is allowed under this Ordinance, or the existing density, whichever is greater;
- 4. Will lessen the extent of existing nonconforming site features to the greatest extent possible;
- 5. Will not have an adverse impact on the public health, safety or welfare; and
- 6. Will lessen the extent of nonconformities related to any existing nonconforming structure on the site to the greatest extent possible."

There have not been any Substitutions of Nonconformities for Redevelopment that have been granted by staff since the December 18, 2017 Board of Zoning Appeals meeting.