

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Planning Commission
Minutes of the December 19, 2018 – 3:00 p.m. Meeting
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Commissioners Present: Chairman Alex Brown, Vice Chairman Peter Kristian, Glenn Stanford, Todd Theodore, Judd Carstens, Caroline McVitty, Lavon Stevens, Michael Scanlon

Commissioners Excused: Leslie McGowan

Town Council Present: Tamara Becker, Bill Harkins, Tom Lennox, David Ames

Town Staff Present: Jeff Buckalew, Town Engineer; Charles Cousins, Assistant to the Town Manager; Shawn Colin, Director of Community Development; Carolyn Grant, Communications Director; Brian Hulbert, Staff Attorney; Teri Lewis, LMO Official; Scott Liggett, Director of Public Projects and Facilities/Chief Engineer; Jennifer Ray, Planning & Special Projects Manager; Anne Cyran, Senior Planner; Teresa Haley, Senior Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Roll Call

4. Freedom of Information Act Compliance

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

5. Approval of Agenda

The Planning Commission approved the agenda by general consent.

6. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of December 5, 2018

Commissioner Stanford moved to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2018 meeting as submitted. Vice Chairman Kristian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Charles Cousins then approached the Commission to announce recent changes to Town staff. Mr. Cousins transferred positions to Assistant to the Town Manager. Mr. Shawn Colin was promoted to Director of Community Development. The Commission congratulated Mr. Cousins and Mr. Colin.

7. Appearance by Citizens on Items Unrelated to Today's Agenda – None

8. Unfinished Business – None

9. New Business – None

10. Commission Business – None

11. Chairman's Report – None

12. Committee Report

a. LMO Committee/Electric Go Karts

Staff recommends the Planning Commission advise the LMO Committee regarding whether or not an amendment to allow electric go karts as an Outdoor Recreation use in the Waterfront Mixed Use (WMU) Zoning District should be pursued.

Vice Chairman Kristian presented opening remarks. After hearing from a number of citizens on both sides of the issue during their previous meeting, the LMO Committee felt it was best to bring this issue to a public forum to get additional comments.

Ms. Lewis presented information as described in the Commission's packet. Ms. Lewis noted that while the discussion has focused on the Broad Creek Marina site, this change would apply to all of the properties in the Waterfront Mixed Use (WMU) Zoning District. Staff presented two videos showing electric go karts. Ms. Lewis then presented the maps showing all of the areas zoned WMU on the Island.

The Commission discussed the information presented, including: the difficulty in making a decision based upon sound in a video; whether indoor go karts are currently in use; and the possibility of having a live demonstration of an electric go kart.

Mr. Nate Jones, a representative of Broad Creek Marina, presented information regarding electric go karts as provided in the Commission's packet and a video demonstrating that an electric go kart produced a decibel level of 52.3 at a distance of 25 feet from the track. Mr. Jones said the decibel level of the traffic on Marshland Road was 65 decibels at a distance of 25 feet. Mr. Jones indicated the nearest outdoor electric go kart track is located in Statesboro, Georgia. Mr. Jones noted that Staff's video showed a racing type go kart as opposed to the smaller, slower go karts they want to use.

The Commission discussed the information presented, including: the safety data on electric go karts; that the Statesboro track has no record of incidents in their 3 years of business; that insurance for electric go karts would cost far less than the insurance for Zipline Hilton Head; the footprint of the outdoor track would be approximately 1,000 linear feet or one acre; if this proposal is rejected, Mr. Freedman would consider building an indoor go kart track; that an indoor track is a by right use on this property; an indoor track is not preferred due to costs and impacts to the site's natural beauty; an indoor track would require at least 43,560 square feet and removal of many trees; the relationship of the outdoor electric go karts with Zipline Hilton Head and overall vision of development on this site; this change would apply to all property in the WMU Zoning District; this use does not fit into other WMU zoned properties; that noise may become a nuisance for surrounding residents; whether this use is the right fit for the community; the decibel levels permitted by the Town Municipal Code before and after 10:00 p.m.; the possibility of bringing an electric go kart to the Island for a demonstration; the Broad Creek Marina site appears to have less

impact than the other WMU areas; what the property owner's final product or goal is for the Broad Creek Marina site; if an electric go kart track is developed, all LMO requirements would need to be met including direct access to a minor arterial and maximum impervious coverage requirements; and that decibel levels are read from an adjacent property line.

Chairman Brown asked for public comments, and the following comments were received:

Chip Munday, Indigo Run General Manager, expressed concerns about noise, visibility, and the site turning into an amusement park over time.

Randy Tardy expressed support for this as an opportunity to attract families and younger individuals to the Island and specifically to the north end.

Donald Lucas, President of the 2019 Indigo Run Community Owners' Association, said every resident that has approached him about this issue is opposed to it. Mr. Lucas expressed concerns about noise from multiple go karts running all day long, karts bumping into each other, and crowds of people.

The Commission asked staff how many complaints the Town has received regarding Zipline Hilton Head and the surrounding area. Mr. Hulbert said there have been no noise complaints since Zipline Hilton Head opened.

Chairman Brown asked whether zipline was a by right use or if a change was made to the LMO to allow it. Staff stated it was not a by right use and the definition of Outdoor Recreation had to be changed to allow it.

The Commission asked whether anyone has discussed this concept with the Simmons family, the adjacent property owners. Mr. Jones said he spoke to Mr. Palmer Simmons the other day and he is aware that Mr. Freedman is going through this process. Mr. Jones stated they have a good working relationship with the Simmons family and always have. The Commission asked the minimum age to drive the electric go karts. Mr. Jones indicated a minimum age of 12 years old to drive. A child as young as 6 years old can sit in the seat next to an adult driver. Mr. Jones indicated they would like to purchase a maximum of 20 electric go karts and have 10 on the track at any given time.

The Commissioners made additional comments, including: one Commissioner stated he cannot support this concept; that go karts are a by right use as Indoor Recreation in the WMU Zoning District; that ambient noise already surrounds the community, so noise is not the issue, but whether this type of activity is wanted on the Island; that there are few activities on the Island for families; from an environmental standpoint the indoor use would be worse; an outdoor track could incorporate the landscape and serve as a sound shielding device; whether electric go karts could be allowed as a conditional use or Special Exception.

Chairman Brown asked Mr. Jones to ask Mr. Freedman to approach the LMO Committee

again with a comprehensive plan of the Broad Creek Marina area, including the end goal of the property, and a map or photographs of the layout of the property.

Staff indicated all regulations will need to be complied with should this use be allowed in the LMO. Staff cautioned that Mr. Freedman may show the Commission a plan, but it does not require him to go through with that plan.

13. Staff Report

a. Update on Circle to Circle Committee & Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

Mr. Shawn Colin presented a comprehensive update of the initiatives, recommended by the Circle to Circle Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee as described in the Commission's packet.

The Commission and Mr. Colin had an in depth discussion of the initiatives and the outcomes to date. The Commission thanked Mr. Colin for his presentation.

Chairman Brown asked Commissioner Carstens and the Comprehensive Plan Committee to work with Staff to review and improve on the success of these recommendations.

Chairman Brown asked for public comments and the following were received:

Randy Tardy expressed appreciation for the improvements made at the intersection of New Orleans Road and Pope Avenue. Mr. Tardy expressed concern for U-turns being made at that intersection and suggested a No U-turn sign be installed there.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Submitted by: Teresa Haley, Secretary

Approved: February 6, 2019

Alex Brown, Chairman