

**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting of the Florence County Planning Commission**  
**Tuesday, September 25, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.**  
**County Complex, Room 803**  
**180 N. Irby St., Florence, South Carolina 29501**

The Florence County Planning Department staff posted the agenda for the meeting on the information boards at the main entrance and the back entrance of the County Complex and on the information board in the lobby of the Planning and Building Inspection Departments office.

The agenda was also mailed to the media.

**I. Call to Order:**

Chairman Lane called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**II. Attendance:**

**Commissioners Present:** Jody Lane, Chairman  
Cheryl Floyd, Vice-Chairman  
Allie Brooks  
Dwight Johnson  
Mark Fountain  
Jeffrey Tanner

**Commissioners Absent:** Linda Borgman  
Doris Lockhart  
Karon Epps  
Ted Greene

**Staff Present:** J. Shawn Brashear, Planning Director  
Derrick Singletary, Senior Planner  
Lisa Becoat, Secretary

**Public Attendance:** See sign-in sheet on file with the Florence County Planning Department.

**III. Review and Motion of Minutes**

• **Meeting of August 28, 2018**

Motion to approve minutes as presented – Vice-Chairman Cheryl Floyd / Second – Commissioner Dwight Johnson / Unanimously approved 6 to 0.

#### IV. Public Hearing

##### Zoning Map Amendment:

**PC#2018-20 Map Amendment requested by Jacob B. Ervin Jr. to change the zoning district designation for property located off N. Williston Rd., Florence, SC as shown on Florence County Tax Map No. 00202, Block 01, Parcel 078 from Industrial District (B-6) to General Commercial District (B-3).**

Mr. J. Shawn Brashear presented the staff report and presentation to the Commission. He also indicated that two inquiries had been received regarding the request. One wanted to know the time and place of the meeting. The other was concerned and thought that their mother's property was currently unzoned. Planning Staff conducted research and provided documentation to show that the inquirer's father had the property zoned and later rezoned to B-3. The inquirer accepted the documentation of the information provided from Planning Staff. Staff recommended approval of the zoning map amendment.

(Copy of the staff report and presentation are available at the Florence County Planning Department and on the Florence county website at: <http://www.florenceco.org/offices/planning/commission/>).

Chairman Lane opened the floor up for questions/discussions and thanked the audience for their public interest of the agenda items to be discussed.

Chairman Lane inquired if there was any public who desired to speak opposed to the requested zoning map amendment.

Mr. Scott Tucker was present and spoke against the requested zoning map amendment. He indicated that his mother owns Roosevelt Plantations and he began to read a quote by the late President Theodore Roosevelt. "Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance." He further stated that Roosevelt Plantations was built in 1771, 247 years ago by a Royal grant from the King of England. Roosevelt is older than Florence and Darlington Counties. It is on the National Registry of Historical Places. The back swamp community is a wonderful and rural community where people enjoy hunting, fishing and cycling. The vast majority wishes that the area remains rural. A half mile from the property at North Williston across Interstate 95 is two gas stations, five fast food restaurants and one hotel. Also on TV Road there are two gas stations, one restaurant and one hotel. Any commercial property built on the 80 plus acres of property would only benefit the owner, the few employees they hire and the Interstate 95 travelers. But the many people who reside on the back swamp properties don't need a new gas station, restaurant or hotel, there is plenty already in the area to choose from. Building a commercial business on the property will ruin the community and people will no longer enjoy the property and enjoy the rural lifestyle they moved out there for. On the West side of Williston Road, there's already a failed gas station that has been sitting empty for over 5 plus years. It would be a shame if a commercial property were built on the 80 acres and it failed, then the community would be left with an ugly sight for many years.

He further stated that his mother's house is the closest to Interstate 95 and it breeds many problems. Once a gentleman stopped indicating he was interested in the house and wanted to see it, once his dad showed him the home later he came back and broke into the residence. After further investigation it was determined that he was from Florida and only saw the home after he pulled off of interstate 95. There are also hitch hikers and drug attics that have pulled into the driveway and as commercial properties come out in that area other things like that will only get worse. The Bruce Lee Foundation who is the parent company of Asset Holding has done many wonderful projects and has helped the Community. The land should be rezoned from industrial but should not be B-3 Commercial. The community does not need another South of the Border complex in Florence one in Dillion is enough. Once commercial property is built in the back swamp community of North Interstate 95, it will become a continuous development. In The Bruce Lee Foundation's mission statement at the end it indicates they will support a broad range of charitable purposes included but not limited to medical, health, human services, education, arts, religion, civic affairs and the conservation, preservation and promotion of cultural, historical and environmental resource programs. He further stated that he agreed with the statement of conservation, preservation and promotion of cultural, historical property; and asked the Commission to consider the concerns of the back swamp community and its preservation so that people can continue to enjoy outdoor activities and the ride home.

Mr. David White was present and spoke regarding the requested zoning map amendment. He indicated that he lives a little north to the property and that he is not so opposed to the zoning change but hopes that as development plans are looked at for the area, that every effort be given to preserving Roosevelt Plantation and the character of the area. He further stated that he would just like to see appropriate businesses in the area that would make everyone happy.

Chairman Lane inquired if there was any public who desired to speak in favor of the requested zoning map amendment.

Mr. Barron Irving was present and spoke in favor of the requested zoning map amendment. He indicated that he was present as a representative of the owner requesting the zoning change and also a member of the Pocket Road Community. He further indicated that he lived in the Pocket Road area of Florence for most of his life. He is the president and managing partner of Irving Engineering and also a consultant for a private firm that provides services to property owners and developers in an around Florence and the entire state of South Carolina. He further indicated that as a consultant for property developers he goes out into a market the developer identifies and selects sights that meet the needs of the commercial market they are trying to reach; and once the sites are identified they are narrowed down to the best possible ones for the developer. With property owners, he does the opposite. He looks at the areas the property is located in and determines what the characteristics of the property are; who the property would appeal to; and what the highest and best use of the property is that meets the goals of the person that owns it. The site being requested for rezoning is owned by the Dr.'s Bruce and Lee Foundation. Since the foundation was formed in 1993 it has made grants in excess of 120 million dollars to Florence County for the Florence communities in support of their mission which is to advance the general welfare and quality of life of the Florence communities.

He additionally stated that he is not a part of the organization but hired as an independent consultant. He master planned the Soccer Complex project for the foundation and saw it through. The site was originally owned by Carolina Hospital and when the hospital and the proceeds from the sale went into the foundation, making the property owned by the foundation since its original inception. Thus, he has been asked to look at the property as a whole and provide his opinion. He studied the property and the entire market of interstates 95 and 20 corridors and how it related to Florence. He was able to determine that the 3 lane section of interstate 95, 20 and 327 has the highest traffic count of almost anywhere on 95 in the state of South Carolina. There are also 4 exits within that strength of interstate 95, I-20 at Magnolia Mall, 52, TV Road and 327. The relationship of interstate 95 and Florence goes way back. It started with interstates 95 and 52 with hotels being built up by many different property owners building their own thing right up under the interstate and as a result there was a sprawl. It has been over developed and under demolished through the years and that is not a great area for new development. Interstate 20 Magnolia Mall area is similar and has gone through the same process with the hotels and the mall; there is not a lot of potential there either. Both the interstates 52 and 20 markets because of the growth of Florence have to contend with the local traffic that mixes in with the interstate traffic and makes it less desirable. Looking at it, Florence has done well in its tax base, jobs and sales tax by bringing in people that stop by and promote the economy but do not use up the County's assets otherwise. They provide the county with income without a lot of associated expenses, and in order for Florence to take advantage of that, there needs to be a place for continued development to take place.

In the mid 2000 at a great expense the City while doing another sewage expansion across the interstate added sewage lines under interstate 95 to the other side of the interstate in anticipation of future development. In 2014 the Department of Transportation completed their reconfiguration of the interstates 95 and 327. So from Pocket Road on and off the interstate, there are seven lanes to handle traffic in and off the interstate. He further stated from his experience commercial development sites are few and far. The zoning needs to be changed to reflect what he and the foundation feels is the highest and best anticipated future use of the property.

There were questions and discussion by the Commission.

In response to the Commissions questions, Mr. Irving indicated that he was and is an independent hired consultant to the foundation to provide his long range opinion as to what the best use of the property could be. He further indicated that the property as presently zoned is incompatible with what they believe the future is. Eighty acres is a huge area, you think about things the interstate needs and the needs of travelers like hotels, restaurants, gas stations and the likes. When you think of sites that would be of interest to a traveler it would be limited to a small area. There is a lot of land on the site for buffers and greenspace. The options for the site area are unlimited.

There was discussion by the Commission.

Mr. Bob Weaver was present and spoke in favor of the requested zoning map amendment. He indicated that he was not aware that this item was on the Agenda but wanted the chance to speak in favor of this change. He further stated that several years ago they attempted to change the zoning from B-6 to B-3 in a different location south of the parcel and it did not work out. There is not

much B-3 property available in Florence to develop what you need to. It is a good location for a Commercial site with good roads leading into it and it would be a good thing to change the zoning.

Chairman Lane inquired if there was any additional public who desired to speak in favor of the requested zoning map amendment.

Chairman Lane informed the public that he doesn't normally go back and forth with inquiries, but because the issue is important to all he wanted everyone to have an opportunity to provide input and to ask any questions they may have.

Chairman Lane then inquired if there was any additional public who desired to speak against the requested zoning map amendment.

Mr. Scott Tucker was present and stated that he failed to mention that his dad brought Roosevelt Plantations thirty-two years ago. That it has and will never be vacant. It has been there for 247 years so he was a little disappointed that that information in the first zoning report he received indicated that the property was vacant and unzoned. Then the next report he received indicated that it was vacant but residential and zoned B-3. My mom is 85 years old and still lives at Roosevelt Plantations, the home has never been vacant. Twelve years ago his dad's property was rezoned to Industrial B-6 against his wishes. The Roosevelt Plantations would have been dilapidated and an eye sore if it had not been for his dad purchasing and fixing up the property which was in total disarray. He further stated that his father went before the zoning commission 12 years ago as he had envisioned four different purposes for Roosevelt Plantations. The different purposes were: a historical site; a museum or historical museum; special events place; which it was at one time for a few years; and, a bed and breakfast. He didn't know why the property was zoned B-3 twelve years ago, because his father never had any intentions to develop commercial property.

There were questions and discussion by the Commission

Mr. J. Shawn Brashear indicated that the building on the map that is labeled B-3 is a closed convenience store. He further expounded on B-6 and B-3 zoning districts and their definitions for the public's information. He further explained what types of uses would be allowed in zoning business districts B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, B-5 and B-6 per Florence County Zoning Code of Ordinances.

Commissioner Dwight Johnson made a motion that the requested zoning map amendment **PC# 2018-20** be approved as presented. / Second – Commissioner Mark Fountain / Unanimously approved 6 to 0 the requested zoning map amendment PC# 2018-20.

The Public Hearing was closed.

## **V. Plat/Plan Approval**

**PC#2018-21 Sketch Plan Approval requested by Claussen Pointe Development, Inc. for Claussen Pointe, Phase IV subdivision located off Claussen Rd., Rd., Florence, SC as shown on Florence County Tax Map No. 00209, Block 01, Parcel 019.**

Mr. J. Shawn Brashear presented the staff report and presentation to the Commission. He additionally indicated that the plat/plan had been reviewed at a Technical Review Committee on September 10, 2018. He further indicated that all issues had been resolved and addressed and that Staff recommended approval of the plat/plan.

There was discussion by the Commission.

(Copy of the staff report and presentation are available at the Florence County Planning Department and on the Florence County Website at: <http://www.florenceco.org/offices/planning/commission/>).

Commissioner Mark Fountain made a motion that **PC#2018-21 be approved** as presented. / Second – Vice-Chairman Cheryl Floyd / Unanimously approved 6 to 0 the proposed sketch plat/plan for PC#2018-21.

**PC#2018-22 Sketch Plan Approval requested by West Star Development Group, LLC for Wessex, Phase 3B subdivision located off N. Ebenezer Rd., Florence, SC as shown on Florence County Tax Map No. 00098, Block 01, Parcel 032.**

Mr. J. Shawn Brashear presented the staff report and presentation to the Commission. He additionally indicated that the plat/plan had been reviewed at a Technical Review Committee on September 10, 2018. He further indicated that all issues had been resolved and addressed and that Staff recommended approval of the plat/plan.

There was discussion by the Commission.

(Copy of the staff report and presentation are available at the Florence County Planning Department and on the Florence County Website at: <http://www.florenceco.org/offices/planning/commission/>).

Vice-Chairman Cheryl Floyd made a motion that **PC#2018-22 be approved** as presented. / Second – Commissioner Allie Brooks / Unanimously approved 6 to 0 the proposed sketch plat/plan for PC#2018-22.

**VI. Other Business:**

Mr. J. Shawn Brashear informed the board of the wind and flood damage assessments that had been conducted by the Planning and Building Department after tropical storm Florence. He additionally provided information regarding the rising of some bodies of water in the area and anticipated road closures.

Chairman Jody Lane inquired of the Commission if they had reviewed the draft and proposed 2019 Planning Commission Meeting Calendar.

**Motion** – Commissioner Dwight Johnson made a motion that the 2019 Planning Commission Meeting Calendar be approved as presented. / Second – Commissioner Allie Brooks. The 2019 Planning Commission Meeting Calendar was unanimously approved with a vote of 6 to 0.

**VII. Director's Report:**

Mr. Brashear's comments were as follows:

- **Summary Plat Report for (August 2018)**
- **Building Report for (August 2018)**

The summary plat and building reports were attached and presented; and, staff was available to answer any questions.

Chairman Lane inquired if there were any further questions or discussion.

There were no further questions or discussion.

**VIII. Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn – Vice-Chairman Cheryl Floyd / Second – Commissioner Allie Brooks / Unanimously approved 6 to 0.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

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Lisa M. Becoat  
Secretary

Approved by:

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J. Shawn Brashear  
Planning Director

\*These minutes reflect only actions taken and do not represent a true verbatim transcript of the meeting.