

**TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Monday, December 3, 2018
Municipal Complex, Committee Meeting Room, 3rd Floor
100 Ann Edwards Lane, Mount Pleasant, SC 29464**

MINUTES

Members Present: Kathy Landing, Chair; Bob Brimmer, Joe Bustos and Rick Crosby (MPW)

Staff Present: Eric DeMoura, Town Administrator; John Holladay, Business Development Manager

Ms. Landing called the meeting to order at 11:12 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes from the [November 5, 2018](#) meeting

Mr. Crosby moved for approval; seconded by Mr. Bustos. All present voted in favor.

2. Public Comment

[None]

3. Introduction of Business Development Manager

Ms. Landing stated that she pleased to introduce the Town's new Business Development Manager, John Holladay.

John Holladay, stated that he is excited to serve in the community where his family lives. He grew up in the West Ashley area and this is home and where he raised his family. He stated that he, much like Council, has a great deal of interest in making Mount Pleasant the best community possible. He received his Degree in Electrical Engineering from Clemson University, his MBA from the University of South Carolina, and also has specialized training in Economic Development from the Economic Development Institute through the University of Oklahoma and the

Economic Development Institute, School of Government at the University of North Carolina. He stated that he also has a great deal of experience through the South Carolina Department of Commerce. He stated that he has been involved in various economic development projects throughout the State of South Carolina and looks forward to bringing a specific focus to economic development here in Mount Pleasant. He is very excited about assisting the existing businesses in the Town, first and foremost, and being able to recruit new businesses as well. He thanked management for the trust they have placed in him and looks forward to working with staff, Town Council and the Economic Development Committee.

4. Update regarding proposal to change commercial building sizes for Pepper Plantation

Ms. Landing stated that it may even surprise people that this is on the agenda, because typically items do not go back and forth on the Committee level. However, two months ago there was an application that passed first reading and it was after-the-fact that many of the residents came forward to voice their opposition and concern. She said it was reviewed in this committee with both the residents and property owner and there were promising discussions. She said the result was that the owner of the property, Mr. Cooke, deferred his application for second reading. She said he did so, because if it was denied, he would have to wait one year to reapply. She said from an economic development standpoint, there may be other projects that could bring jobs. She stated that she met with the Planning staff and Mr. Cook and learned that if the Town does nothing and Mr. Cook brings his application back for second reading and Council votes it down, there are currently nine homes that back up to the commercial property. She said with no changes at all, the owner of the property is able to have a 40,000 square foot grocery store with a fifteen-foot buffer backing up to these nine homes. She said this is what the current permitted use is. She said what we are accomplishing by having this meeting is to let residents know that by Mr. Cook coming back and working on this behind the scenes in order to try and accommodate,

he is adding substantially larger buffers and trying to have smaller businesses closer to the homes. If there are larger businesses, they will have them closer to Highway 17, further from the entrance to Tupelo.

Tim Cook, stated that he did meet with the Planning staff to discuss different ideas and strategies, to have increased buffers with a sliding scale of how close buildings can be to the property line. During the course of investigations and how we all got to this place, it is apparent that the home builder did not totally disclose to the property owners what the residual property could be developed for. He feels that this is a contributing factor to the situation we are currently in. The current building setback and buffer is fifteen feet according to the Planned Development. He has indicated their willingness to increase the buffer to twenty-five feet and after some discussion and thought, they have come up with a proposal which he will submit formerly to staff. Any building that is 4,000 square feet and less will have a twenty-five-foot buffer and building setback. He said any building larger than 4,000 square feet, will have the twenty-five-foot buffer and a fifty-foot building setback. He said hopefully this allows the bigger buildings to be further away from the residences and allows some buffering to occur so that buildings are not right up against the property line. He said this is currently what they are amenable to doing.

Ms. Landing stated that this type of item is typically heard in the Planning Committee; however, if this is voted down, it can hurt the appearance of Mount Pleasant wanting to do business development as well as economic development.

Mr. Bustos stated that with these changes, at what point must it go back through the process.

Mr. Ulma stated that Planning has also been looking at it in the general direction of the changes, which are more restrictive and limiting. He said the Planning Commission approved the original request to have some limitations on the square footage of the buildings and many had no limitations. He said Planning may look at this as the property owner's willingness to do this, capping it somehow and increasing buffers and

satisfying both sides, which may be something that does not have to go back through the process. He said Planning is currently looking at it as continuing through the process and being able to strengthen the conditions within the Planned Development which appears to be moving in a direction that everyone can support and ultimately approve.

Mr. Cook stated that Ms. Cannon did consult Town Council and as long as they are more restrictive in their request then it would likely move forward without resubmittal.

Ms. Landing asked when Mr. Cook would be prepared to bring it before Council for second reading.

Mr. Cook said it would likely be at the December Town Council meeting.

Bill Joy, 2004 Welsh Pony Drive, stated that they are the house on the corner of Tupelo Forest Drive and Welsh Pony Drive, so they would be most impacted by this proposal. He said what Mr. Cook relayed was correct. They were told by the builder that there would be no commercial buildings closer than the current pond, which is approximately 50 yards away. He stated that a fifteen-foot buffer is very small. He said they have a small backyard and having something fifteen feet from their backyard is going to be a serious issue for his family. He asked if this area was permitted for a 40,000 square foot grocery store.

Mr. Cook responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Joy said he thought originally, it was a 4,000 square foot limited use and asked about the largest use for each lot.

Ms. Landing stated that it is based on usage. She stated that a list was provided and there are many businesses that can be substantially higher than 4,000 square feet. She said there are limited uses, such as a bank, which would require 4,000 square feet or less; a doctor's office would be 4,000 square feet or less; however, if it is a funeral home, it could be 10,000 square feet.

Mr. Joy said he would like to voice his and his eight neighbor's continued concern whose homes back up to this commercial property. They

appreciate the concessions that Mr. Cook is making, but are worried about safety and the ability to get out of their community, as well as lighting and construction from the commercial buildings.

Mr. Brimmer said he hears their concerns loud and clear and asked what the residents are asking for specifically.

Mr. Joy said once again what they were told was that there would be no commercial buildings from the pond and the area that backs up to the homes, which is half covered in woods providing for a nice buffer. This would go away with the current proposal. He said the pond is set back much farther and would have provided ample buffering. He said he realizes this substantially cuts into Mr. Cooke's opportunity and understands that what they were originally told is neither Mr. Cook's issue or the Town's. He said they were led to believe that there would be no commercial buildings closest to them from the pond.

Ms. Landing asked if the larger buffer could include trees.

Mr. Joy stated that there was some discussion about fences and walls but is not sure what can actually separate the commercial and residential homes.

Mr. Cook stated that they are required to have a landscape buffer and currently it is fifteen feet. A fence is not required. He said if the residents were misled by the builder, then perhaps a suit against the builder should be filed to provide a wall.

Ms. Landing suggested that Mr. Cook and the homeowners affected, schedule some time to work together and sort out the details, since this is possibly coming back to Council next week.

5. Update on Business Concierge Initiative

Ms. Landing stated that she would like to table this item as they are currently working on a project to forward this process.

6. Presentation on initial meeting of Mayor's Economic Development Advisory Panel

Mayor Will Haynie, 316 Mallard Court, stated that the Mayor's Economic Development Advisory Panel held its first meeting and believes there was either 100% in attendance or close to it, including Mr. Crosby, who is representing the Mount Pleasant Waterworks Commission. He said the Chairman of this panel, Mr. Alan Bolduc is also present today, who has brought together great talent to this panel, including Ford Graham and Stephanie Yarborough, who work in Economic Development. He said the learning curve for typical business people in the room was very steep, to find out what can happen at the State and County level and what the Town can do to get economic development here. He said they have Windi McKeithan, who has owned the Ragamuffin Shop on Coleman Boulevard for over 30 years to Jeanne Welsh, who is a Mount Pleasant native and resident working at Boeing. He said the point is not to leave our local businesses behind, but to look at the high impact industries that are currently being recruited by the Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA). He said that we cannot out-recruit or reinvent the wheel over the millions of dollars that CRDA spends bringing industries here. He said the ones that we are able to do, such as transportation, offices and life sciences that we can bring to Mount Pleasant will be desirable. He said they will find out where, how and what is needed to accomplish this and any suggestions that they have, will come back through the Economic Development Committee. He said it was a great first meeting and they will meet again after the first of the year.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Ashe

December 3, 2018