



TOWN OF PAWLEYS ISLAND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Town Hall – Conference Room | 323 Myrtle Ave | Pawleys Island SC 29585
6/5/2025 – 4:00 PM

PRESENT: John LaMaster, John Hildreth, Ed Fox, Paul Groce, Mark Hawn, Fran Green (Virtual)

ABSENT: Buddy Keller

STAFF PRESENT: Dan Newquist, Corey Higdon

ADDITIONAL PRESENT:

1) CALL TO ORDER

- a) Chairman John Hildreth called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

2) PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a) No public comments were presented.

3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Mr. Hildreth requested a motion to approve or amend the 4-4-2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Mr. Groce made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. LaMaster seconded the motion. No further discussion. All voted in favor.

4) Historic Preservation Updates

Mr. Newquist informed everyone that there is a delay in announcing the grant recipient from the State Historic Preservation Office. He stated that 10 proposals had been submitted and that he should receive an update about the process by June 30th. Mr. LaMaster added that funds from the federal government are delayed, so this is expected.

Mr. Newquist then noted that all the historic preservation signs on the island have been updated as a courtesy of the Pawleys Island Civic Association (PICA), to ensure they are all at the same height and are more visible. He added that documentation is ready to be submitted for both the Cassena Inn and the Tip-Top Inn to be added to the list through PICA, who funded the new signs.

Mr. Groce then gave a presentation about the historic preservation process that will be needed in order to be recognized formally by the SC Historic Preservation Office. He explained that more needs to be done for properties that are either currently on or have a desire to be added to the National Register of Historic Places. He stated that following the inventory of designated historic properties a historic preservation ordinance would be required to establish our framework. An ordinance is being drafted based off of the state's template ordinance along with a review of other municipal ordinances already adopted in SC. He then went on to discuss the key decision points for designating a property as Historic and the need to offer clear and real benefits to owners who opt in to the program.

Mr. Groce also shared the proposed next steps for the Planning Commission to research and focus on. Mr. LaMaster then asked about the process for residents to make changes to their homes that are required to be historically preserved. Mr. Groce stated that he used a more simplified version of Sullivans Island's ordinance to modify historic homes and wrote them into the draft to apply to Pawleys Island. He explained that he wants the process for residents who need to make repairs or

want to make changes to their homes to be easy and quick, especially in a beach community where damage repairs are more frequent. At the end of his presentation, Mr. Groce emphasized the importance of having a new historic preservation committee. The entire commission questioned whether this was possible, considering the small population on Pawleys Island and the fact that many owners already serve on a Town committee. Specifically, Mr. LaMaster questioned Mr. Newquist about the minimum number of members required for the commission, to which Mr. Newquist stated that a minimum of 5 is required. Mr. Hildreth and Mr. LaMaster added that the Architectural Review Board already has too many responsibilities and that it would make their duties easier with a new commission.

5) Flood Mitigation/Drainage Master Plan Update

Mr. Newquist stated that several key milestones have been completed for the Drainage Master Plan. The Town's consultant for the project, Seamon Whiteside, produced maps of the island that display flooding based on different parts of the island and weather conditions. These maps were created with projections that extend to approximately 2075. He added that they are currently working on project recommendations for various parts of the island to help mitigate flooding, as well as avenues for the Town to receive funding for these projects.

Mr. Newquist went on to discuss the new rain garden that was installed at the town hall, which was completed with the help of Seamon Whiteside and partners at Clemson University Extension. He explained that rain gardens provide a natural solution for residents to mitigate flooding and stormwater runoff on their own properties using native plants.

Mr. Newquist then announced that Town Council has approved the elevated berm for a section of Myrtle Avenue near the chapel to help reduce the king tide flooding that this area receives. Mr. LaMaster questioned the drainage on the east side, to which Mr. Newquist stated that the drains on that side need to be cleared by the Department of Transportation (DOT), and backflow preventers would be added to prevent water from the creek from flooding the area through the drains. Mr. Fox inquired about the source of the material for the berm, to which Mr. Newquist responded that it would be brought in and that he was exploring options for vegetation. Ms. Green questioned when the berm project would begin. Mr. Newquist answered that he is estimating the target date for construction to start in either January or February 2026. Mr. LaMaster then asked about the property owners' rights to their docks during the process. Mr. Newquist stated that he is working through each property to inform them about this project. He noted that he has received several positive reactions from residents. Mr. Fox questioned the source of the money, to which both Mr. Newquist and Mr. Groce stated that funding for flood mitigation projects was secured through a Rural Infrastructure Authority grant and Georgetown County Capital Project Sales Tax funds. Mr. Hawn then suggested holding a conference call with the owners to discuss this project and make the residents more comfortable with the project, and sending out a formal letter to them to formalize this. Mr. Newquist noted this and stated that it was a good idea.

Mr. Newquist then went on to discuss how he is working to obtain approval for funding through Congressman Russell Fry for improvements to the stormwater infrastructure in the Birds Nest area of the island. He added that Congressman Fry had given support to their submission. He explained that 15 projects in total can be awarded for federal funding across Congressman Fry's district. For the

match component of the funding allocation, Mr. Newquist noted that funds from the Capital Project Sales Tax can cover it. However, he stated that the town will likely not receive an answer until Fall.

6) Beach Management Issues/Topics

Mr. Newquist announced that Pawleys Island was recognized as the number one beach in South Carolina by USA Today. He then highlighted the effectiveness of the Big Belly trash cans and has seen a large part of the public utilize them. He stated that his goal is to install more Big Belly trash receptacles in the future.

He then informed the commission about Beach Vitex and its effects. He thanked the North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve for their efforts to help manage the plant. He also commended Jen Plunkett for her assistance in establishing a volunteer group to remove the invasive species from the island. He stated that the island has a group of 8 to 10 active volunteers helping with this project. Mr. Fox inquired about the location of this plant on the island, to which Mr. Newquist replied that it is clustered on the north and south ends of the island and that the first round of removal using a herbicide had started earlier in the week. Mr. Groce asked when the buds would begin to appear, and Mr. Newquist stated that they would be very soon. He also noted that approximately 12 houses have been identified with Beach vitex, and the removal of private homes is scheduled to begin soon; however, the project as a whole is expected to take a few years to complete.

7) NEXT MEETING DATE

The Planning Commission decided that the next meeting would be held on July 31st at 4:00 p.m.

8) COMMENTS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS

No comments were presented.

9) ADJOURN



APPROVED



ATTEST

7-31-25
DATE

7-31-25
DATE

