



TOWN OF PAWLEYS ISLAND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Town Hall – Conference Room | 323 Myrtle Ave | Pawleys Island SC 29585
11/7/2025 – 3:00 PM

PRESENT: John LaMaster, John Hildreth, Ed Fox, Paul Groce, Mark Hawn, Fran Green, Buddy Keller

ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Dan Newquist, Corey Higdon

ADDITIONAL PRESENT:

1) CALL TO ORDER

- a) Chairman John Hildreth called the meeting to order at 3:00 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 9-2-2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Mr. Groce made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Hawn seconded the motion. No further discussion. All voted in favor.

4) HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSULTANT RFP REVIEW

Mr. Hildreth introduced the Historic Preservation Consultant Request for Proposal (RFP), which was sent out to a list of qualified consultants across the country in previous weeks. The Town received 8 proposals for the Historic Preservation Workshop discussed in the previous Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Newquist noted that the workshop will be scheduled in early December, so the Planning Commission would have to make a final decision on the consultant during the meeting to move forward with scheduling. Mr. Hawn explained that he separated the firms into two groups: small, more personable firms and bigger, more expensive firms. Mr. LaMaster added that four proposals fit within the Town's allocated budget for the workshop. Mr. Groce recommended that a smaller firm would be more suited for the workshop, and highlighted Thomason & Associates out of Nashville, Tennessee. Mr. Hildreth agreed that Thomason & Associates was a top option in his eyes, citing the firm's experience working with the city of Georgetown and Sullivans Island. Mr. Keller noted that he called several references for Thomason & Associates, and each of whom commended Phil Thomason, the head of the firm. Mr. Hawn and Mr. Groce added that the invitation to the workshop should be extended to others who have expressed interest in Historic Preservation, not just the Planning Commission members.

Mr. Hildreth requested a motion to move forward with interviewing Thomason & Associates for the Town of Pawleys Island Historic Preservation Workshop. Mr. Keller made a motion to move forward with the interview. Mr. Groce seconded the motion. No further discussion. All voted in favor.

5) FEMA CRS RATING REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Mr. Groce referenced Mr. Hildreth's comments from a previous meeting, in which he stated that houses in the Town of Pawleys Island are becoming too tall. Mr. Groce suggested that this issue has become more prominent due to new homes being built higher than the Design Flood Elevation (DFE) requirements, rather than the issue arising from the DFE requirement itself. He explained that decreasing the DFE requirement could result in a lower rating in the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) program, which would, in turn, lead to higher flood insurance rates for residents. To specify, dropping the DFE requirement from 3-feet above base flood elevation (BFE) to 1-foot above BFE (the FEMA requirement), the CRS rating for the Town would decrease by 380 points. Mr. Groce noted that he spoke with the Town's architect advisor, Michael Walker, who explained that there have been variations in the Architectural Review Board-approved designs and the as-built homes. He further explained that property owners are building their houses taller for flood concerns and to accommodate parking underneath the house.

To mitigate the issue, Mr. Groce suggested that new single-family homes need to be more closely monitored during construction to ensure they are following the ARB-approved design. He also suggested that all changes made to the design of the house following the ARB approval should go back to the ARB for final review. Lastly, Mr. Groce suggested creating a checklist for all ARB applications to ensure they are not excessively elevating the house.

Mr. Hildreth requested a motion to recommend changes to the ARB process. Mr. Hawn made a motion to add specific language to the guidelines for the maximum elevation of the first floor, establish a checklist for ARB applicants, establish a more thorough inspection process to ensure new homes are following the approved design, and forego any changes to the DFE requirements that would lower the Town's CRS rating. Mr. Keller seconded the motion. No further discussion. All voted in favor.

6) COMMENTS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mrs. Green asked when the new Town Council members (Mr. Hawn, Mr. Groce, and Mr. LaMaster) will be leaving the Planning Commission to start their new position with Town Council, to which Mr. Newquist confirmed that their first Town Council meeting would be on January 12th.

7) NEXT MEETING DATE

The Planning Commission decided that the next meeting would be combined with the Historic Preservation Workshop on December 10th.

8) ADJOURN



APPROVED

DATE



ATTEST

2-27-2026
DATE