

HARDEEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING AND WORKSHOP MINUTES
JANUARY 22, 2009
1:00 PM

Present: Chairman D. Sue Coulter, Vice Chair Paul Bathe and Commission Member Julie Bowman

Absent: Commission Members Wilbur Aiken and Chris Beach

Staff: Planning Director Brana Snowden, Planner III Nolon Edge, Planner I Chris Damgen, Economic Development Director Ted Felder and City Clerk Lori Pomarico

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Coulter called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

II. INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commission Member Bowman gave the invocation.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. PRESENTATION OF MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2008 MEETING

Chairman Coulter entertained a motion. Vice Chair Bathe moved to approve the minutes from the September 11, 2008 meeting as presented. A second was received by Commission Member Bowman and was approved unanimously.

B. PRESENTATION OF MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 11, 2008 MEETING

Chairman Coulter entertained a motion. Vice Chair Bathe moved to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2008 meeting as presented. A second was received by Commission Member Bowman and was approved unanimously.

IV. NEW BUSINESS - none

V. HARDEEVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORKSHOP

A. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OUTLINE

Planning Director Brana Snowden gave a powerpoint presentation of what was to be discussed during the workshop including a summary of the charrette, the quality of life survey, draft of three comprehensive plan elements – population, economic development, cultural resources, and next steps. Ms. Snowden stated that the State is specific on what is required in a Comprehensive Plan, and that it is a product of the Planning Commission. Ms. Snowden added that at this meeting the feedback from the Planning Commission on each of these items will help in coming up with recommendations and strategies on what is needed to accomplish with this comprehensive plan.

B. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF SUMMARY OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING CHARRETTE

Mr. Ernie Boughman, Senior Project Manager with BP Barber, gave a presentation and summary of the Comprehensive Planning Charrette that was held on October 21-22, 2008. Mr. Boughman reported that over 60 people from various backgrounds including business owners, utility providers, economic development people and citizens participated in the Charrette; there were four focus group sessions; two public input sessions; a work session; and a summary presentation. The overall response to first thoughts of Hardeeville is that it is a great place to live, work, play and a nice place to stay. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOTS) of Hardeeville as it is today were identified. Strengths are location and community character; weaknesses are lack of City center and work needed in K-12 schools; opportunities include the potential for jobs in the not too distant future; threats are the loss of identity with growth and an unprepared workforce to take advantage of potential jobs.

Mr. Boughman reported that the major findings of the Charrette are to create a City Center that has its own identity, is intimate, secure and has a mix of land uses; have recreation/cultural opportunities including more open space, improvements to existing facilities, a cultural center, more trails and pathways; education/training including the continued improvement of K-12 systems, creation of a magnet school or a workforce training center and full utilization of Technical College of the Lowcountry and USC Beaufort ; and job creation/ community investment which is a large part of economic development, capitalize on Hardeeville's location, support the Garden City Terminal and future Jasper Ocean Terminal, and the creation and expansion of industrial parks.

C. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF SUMMARY OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY

Planner I Chris Damgen reported on the Quality of Life Survey. Mr. Damgen explained that a ten question survey was developed which was conducted from October to mid-November. Seventy surveys were received. Over half of the participants have lived in Hardeeville for more than 20 years, and over three

quarters have lived here 5 years or more. There was a balance of white and black citizens and several Latino residents, as well as a good age variety of participants.

Mr. Damgen reported that participants were asked to rate the importance of certain activities that the City of Hardeeville should be concentrating its efforts on and found that improving K-12 education, creating more local jobs, helping small businesses grow and improving downtown Hardeeville were the four top items that were indicated.

In regard to economic sectors for the future, Mr. Damgen reported that participants were asked to rate two industries which they felt were best for the City. The majority of responses indicated retail which was followed by medical services and transportation/logistics.

Mr. Damgen stated that participants were asked to rate the condition of existing community assets. The answers that solicited the worst scores were job training centers, public transportation and the availability of affordable housing.

Mr. Damgen stated that participants were asked to give their impressions of Hardeeville and overwhelmingly very similar answers to the Charrette were given – hometown feel, a place to be, comfortable and location.

In conclusion, Mr. Damgen stated that opportunities have been identified such as creating more local jobs, continuing to improve and assist K-12 public education, improving and building on recreational and cultural opportunities, and supporting downtown redevelopment and small businesses in town.

D. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DRAFT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENT – CHAPTER 2 – POPULATION

Planner III Nolon Edge reported on the population element of the comprehensive plan. Mr. Edge stated that there are many factors that can influence trends in population. Mr. Edge indicated that the population of Hardeeville has grown steadily over the years from 1970 to 2000. The estimated population of Hardeeville today is just over 2,000 based on the year 2000 census, however, we feel that is low. The LUCA project, Local Update of Census Addresses, is being worked on to fix the discrepancies in numbers in preparation for the year 2010 census. Mr. Damgen reported that last year the City received an address list from the Census Bureau that was used in the year 2000 census, and through our investigation, we have been able to identify four hundred (400) addresses in the City limits, both existing and new, that are not on that list.

Mr. Edge addressed the recommendations to accomplish the needs and goals. Improve the census on the local level as much as possible, promote a diverse

distribution of population through emphasis on density and location, and make sure recommendations and strategies are specific to the City of Hardeeville. Vice Chair Bathe suggested that we sector a certain area and get a local person that lives in the area to go with the census taker. Ms. Snowden indicated that it would be possible to make a recommendation in the comprehensive plan that the City promote and become more actively involved in the census process.

E. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DRAFT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENT – CHAPTER 3 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Planning Director Brana Snowden started by saying that Hardeeville is open for business! The City's Economic Development Department is in the process of collecting statistical information about the businesses we already have and hopefully by the time we get to the finalization of the Comprehensive Plan there will be more information to add to existing conditions.

Ms. Snowden stated that there are some comprehensive economic development strategies – quality of life and fiscal perspectives – including what the plan is to bring businesses in, what the City can do for businesses and what businesses can do for the citizens of Hardeeville; and the importance of new jobs. Economic development programs include Business Assistance Program, the use of USC Beaufort and TCL, the Lowcountry Economic Network and the Chambers in the area. The recruiting of new businesses, the importance of the Jasper Ocean Terminal and the existing Garden City Terminal, infrastructure transportation needs, Exit 3, and the creation of the City Center all play into the economic development strategies. There are many attractive incentives offered as well as sites for business and industrial development such as the Hardeeville Industrial Park. Ms. Snowden stated that there are various other projects coming in including Okatie Crossings and Jasper Crossings.

Ms. Snowden offered suggestions to the Planning Commission for possible recommendations including Hardeeville must continue to work regionally with Jasper County and its neighbors to continue to sustain its path to economic success and growth; business assistance program that will help prospective small businesses as well as existing businesses; and to continue incentives.

F. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DRAFT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENT – CHAPTER 4 - CULTURAL RESOURCES

Chris Damgen presented the Cultural Resources element of the Comprehensive Plan and stated that this is where we would like as much community input and involvement as possible. Currently, inside the City limits there is not a single building or property that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1995 a comprehensive survey was conducted by Brockington and Associates and it was found that there are six (6) historic properties listed nationally in the entire county, but none are listed in Hardeeville. A list was provided to the City

of properties that have the potential for historic purposes. A major portion in this element is identifying what resources the City has such as activities and festivals that are provided to the citizenry. In regard to buildings and facilities, City Hall, the Hardeeville Museum, the Hardeeville Community Room, the Hardeeville Library, the Senior Center, Sergeant Jasper County Park, Carroll Park, Millstone Landing, and several churches have all been identified by citizens as places they enjoy.

In the area of community design, Mr. Damgen stated that Hardeeville is typically residential but there are also areas of commerce. As far as recommendations Mr. Damgen stated that we need to do a better in celebrating Hardeeville's history and culture, there needs to be a better effort in cataloging the history for future generations. Ms. Snowden added that working with citizens and getting an oral history will be an opportunity to gain a lot more than just seeing something that is written in a book. As a result of comments made by the Planning Commission, Ms. Snowden interpreted that more outreach and research is needed so that we can preserve the culture of Hardeeville.

Ms. Snowden added that the PowWow is coming back to Hardeeville at Millstone Landing and is something that we need to get the history of and its importance to Hardeeville.

G. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Matt Amman of Tradition, stated that they have been working with a business that has a serious interest in relocating inside Tradition which would begin the development of their downtown and has the potential to offer nearly one hundred (100) jobs.

H. DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 12, 2009

Ms. Snowden stated that there will be a need for a regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on February 12, 2009. Ms. Snowden stated that she would also like to hold a public meeting to present the elements of the Comprehensive Plan and asked the Planning Commission members if they would like to have this workshop following the scheduled meeting or have the public session later in the day. The Planning Commission suggested holding both meetings later in the day and it was decided that the regular meeting would be at 6:00 pm followed by the workshop.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Coulter entertained a motion. Vice Chair Bathe moved to adjourn the meeting. A second was received from Commission Member Bowman and the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.