

COASTAL OBSERVER

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A deputy turns away people who showed up for last week’s public hearings on proposed developments after the Howard Center auditorium reached its 80-person capacity. The limit was later waived, and about 20 people joined the audience.

Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

LAND USE

The tale of three plans

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Gary Weinreich listened to two-and-half hours of public comment and debate on a pair of rezoning requests before he got up to talk to the Georgetown County Planning Commission about his concerns over a proposed development in Murrells Inlet. “It breaks my heart to hear these people from the community come here and beg, literally beg,” he said. Opponents to all three projects told the commission that the Waccamaw Neck can’t handle new, multi-family residential development that will burden roads, drainage and natural resources. What they got were three different outcomes.

Approved

A plan for 10 duplex units at the corner of Waverly and Kings River roads will return to Georgetown County Council next week for the second of three required readings. It will arrive with a 3-2 recommendation for approval from the Planning Commission.

The project, Waverly & Kings, needs a zoning change to allow a “flexible design district” on the 3.3 acres for multi-family dwellings. The site is currently zoned for single-family houses.

The plan will have a smaller footprint.

The commission deadlocked 3-3 in August on a plan for 14 units in three-story townhouses. Bruce Watts, who designed the project for prospective buyers, reduced that to story-and-a-half duplexes. Under the current zoning, up to six single-family lots are allowed.

SEE “APPROVED,” PAGE 3



“This is a desperate need of this community,” Paul Aiesi of Graycliff Capital said of the apartments.

Deferred

Even without development of a 14.5 acre tract on Petigru Drive, the nearby intersection with Waverly Road faces problems. That was the conclusion of traffic engineers in 2008 and again this year after the property was proposed for a change from office and warehouse space to 182 apartments and a single commercial building.

Neither traffic study showed that its respective project would increase those problems.

Members of the Georgetown County Planning Commission aren’t so sure. They want to see more information about the traffic impact of the apartment complex along with stormwater data. They deferred a vote on a zoning change for the project for a month so they can review it.

Georgetown County owns the property through its nonprofit

SEE “DEFERRED,” PAGE 3

The county favors developers who “don’t give two hoots about our community,” said Cindy Person of Keep It Green.

Denied

The property on Highway 707 is already zoned for multi-family development. All the prospective buyer, Bentley Thompson, needed to show the Georgetown County Planning Commission was that his plan for 115 units, a combination of townhouses and duplexes, complied with county regulations.

“It may check all the boxes, but I believe that there are some issues here that need special consideration,” commission member Sandra Bundy said.

SEE “DENIED,” PAGE 3



EDUCATION

Board votes down four-day in-school proposal

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
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A proposal to expand in-person classes for students in pre-K through fifth grade was defeated this week by the Georgetown County School Board.

Known as “hybrid-plus,” the plan was put together by the district in response to a memo from the state Department of Education urging districts to find ways to offer more in-person instruction for students in grades K-5, specific groups of students with special needs and at-risk students.

Instead of two days a week, students would be in classrooms four days a week, with school buildings continuing to be closed on Wednesdays.

Georgetown expanded the state’s proposal to include pre-K and sixth-graders at Waccamaw Intermediate School.

Pat DeLeone

Board Member Pat DeLeone said she received 152 emails in the last two weeks from parents who want their children back in school five days a week.

“There’s no decision that we make at this point that doesn’t come with consequences,” Superintendent Keith Price said. “If we stick with our hybrid mode, or we were to fall back to remote, then there’s an educational cost that goes with that. If we move forward with an all in-person option, then that introduces a health factor, a health risk that goes into play.”

SEE “DISTRICT,” PAGE 4

PAWLEYS ISLAND

Football weekend delays hearing on easements

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The attorney for the town of Pawleys Island and for the three property owners who are challenging the town’s condemnation of easements for beach renourishment agree that time off is important. They disagree about when to take it.

A circuit court this week agreed to postpone a hearing for summary judgment in the lawsuits brought by the property owners so Town Attorney David DuRant can attend a football weekend at Clemson University.

The town needs the easements to enter into a partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers that will allow the agency to participate in a \$14.8 million renourishment project the town completed in the spring. Participation by the Corps, which will involve sand fence and beach grass, will make a portion of the project eligible for federal funds for repairing storm damage and for future renourishment.

The town has easements from 110 beachfront property owners on 1.4 miles of beach at the town’s south end. It needs three more: from Frank Beattie, Barry Stanton and Sunset Lodge LLC.

The three owners, represented by Stanton, filed suit this summer to block the town’s effort to condemn easements. They say the easements are no longer needed because the renourishment project is completed and that the town’s condemnation

SEE “PAWLEYS,” PAGE 6

Public meetings seen as start, not end, of land plan update

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Georgetown County officials say they are willing to continue to work on the future land-use plan in face of criticism from the community that public input is lacking.

“This is a starting point,” said Holly Richardson, the county’s interim planning director, after the first of three public meetings this week to get comment on a draft of the plan.

State law requires the county to update the plan every 10 years along with 11 other elements of a mandated comprehensive plan.

“People want to be involved in the process, and I’m OK with that,” said Carol Coleman, planning director at Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments, which is helping the county with the plan. “It’s a jumping off point.”

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