

# COASTAL OBSERVER

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## Feelings run high as commission votes down rezoning

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

The figure dressed in black and carrying a scythe was only the start.

A timer drowned out speakers who exceeded their three minutes of public comment. Catcalls and false accusations led the chairman to hand over the gavel. And after the Georgetown County Planning Commission voted to recommend denial of a rezoning for a townhouse development, one of the



members received a rebuke from her colleague. The figure of the grim reaper

A costumed figure awaits people heading to last week's hearing.

er stood outside the entrance to the county courthouse as residents filed in for a public hearing last week on a request by the county Economic Development Alliance to amend the zoning of 14.5 acres on Petigru Drive to allow 90 townhouses in place of a planned technology park. A request a year ago to allow 182 apartments in the

"planned development" zoning district was turned down by the commission. The request was withdrawn before it reached County Council.

Common to both requests is an offer to include affordable housing in the mix.

"We are committed to making 20 percent of them more affordable than market rent," said Dan Stacy, the attorney representing the alliance.

The prospective buyer was not named.

"Who is the real, unnamed

applicant behind this?" asked Duane Draper, who chairs the citizens group Keep It Green. He told the commission he believes it is Graycliff Capital Partners, who made the offer to buy the property in 2021. Graycliff developed Litchfield Oaks and the Waterleaf complex in Murrells Inlet. A call to the company seeking comment was not returned this week.

Stacy said the project, which will be rental units, helps meet the shortage identified in

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### ELECTION 2022

## Democrat highlights idea gap in campaign for governor

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

There are several freedoms on Joe Cunningham's platform in his campaign to unseat Republican Gov. Henry McMaster, but the one that earned the loudest applause at a stop in Pawleys Island this week was abortion rights. The former congressman from Charleston is trying to become the first Democrat to win statewide office since 2006.

"It all comes down to freedom. I'll leave it to women to make these decisions. Henry McMaster thinks that decision should be made by politicians. That's a distinct difference," Cunningham said before the event at the True Blue clubhouse. "It will be a very serious issue, and I don't think most



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Joe Cunningham speaks to voters at Pawleys Island this week.

people view it through a partisan lens."

But Democrats believe that the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the guarantee of abortion rights established by Roe v. Wade in 1973 will bring the independent and crossover votes they need for an upset.

"Our campaign is a campaign of freedom," Cunningham

told an audience of about 75 people. "I'm talking about the basic, fundamental freedoms, like giving women the right to control their very lives."

A state law passed in 2021 that would ban abortions after about six weeks is review by the state Supreme Court.

Even without the abortion issue, Cunningham, 40, frames the race as a campaign of ideas

with his 75-year-old opponent.

"Gov. McMaster's been leading South Carolina into the 1950s since the 1980s," Cunningham told voters.

Cunningham wants the state to eliminate its individual income tax, which the legislature cut from 7 to 6 percent this year.

The tax is the largest source

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### EDUCATION

## District plans earlier start to classes in 2023

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI  
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Georgetown County School District is moving forward with a proposal to begin the next school year at the end of July. Teachers would report July 27 and the first day of classes would be Aug. 3, a week and half earlier than this year.

Superintendent Keith Price unveiled a plan for a "modified year round" calendar in January and then hosted public meetings at each of the high



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Students would return on Aug. 3 under the plan.

schools in the spring. Once the meetings were over, a survey was posted on the district's website.

The results showed that 57 percent of the 2,721 respondents favored the modified year-round calendar, including 64 percent of district employees, 57 percent of parents and guardians, 46 percent of community members and 34 percent of students.

Under the proposed calendar, both semesters would have 90 days and the first semester would end before winter break. Schools would be closed for one week in October, November, December, January and April. The last day of school would be May 24, 2024, which is the Friday before Memorial Day.

Under state law, school cannot start before the third Monday in August. If the proposed calendar is approved by the School Board, the district will have to get approval from the state. The district was advised that calling 2023-24 a "modified year round" schedule

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### WACCAMAW HIGH | Athletics Hall of Fame

## For boosters, building a tradition was hands-on

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Calvin Gilmore, Dr. Gerald Harmon and Duff Dawson were inducted into the Waccamaw High School Athletics Hall of Fame last week for being three of the most active and involved boosters when the school first opened.

But their legacies had already been cemented at the school. Between them they are the fathers of seven former Waccamaw athletes and the grandfathers of 13 current athletes.

"It was a real labor of love for all of us — and a privilege to watch our kids grow and thrive on those fields," Gilmore said. "It was so long ago, and for someone to remember that and make note of it, it's really cool."

The school opened in 1990. "I was only a little, small part of that whole movement," Dawson said. "But glad to be a part of it."

Harmon, Gilmore and Dawson were the first boosters inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame, which was started last year.

"I think we did a good job of recognizing the donors that really helped springboard the



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Three booster club members are honored along with athletes and a coach before last week's football game.

start of the Booster Club and the athletic programs here at Waccamaw High School," principal Adam George said. "I think it's a really good job by the committee to come together and really honor the people that may not have actually participated or played on these fields, but made it possible."

Dawson was the second president of the Booster Club. He didn't want to be president when the club was formed, so he nominated Ashley Carter. Carter, in turn, nominated Dawson to be his successor.

Gilmore, Harmon and Dawson all said they were only a small part of the dozens of par-

ents — including their wives Linda, Janis and Liz, respectively — and others who pitched in at the beginning.

"There are a lot more people that ought to be going in," Harmon said. "This is just kind of a sample of dozens of people. We're representative, but it was

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