

COASTAL OBSERVER

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Future undecided for money from tech park sale

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The sale of property once planned for a tech park will repay Georgetown County for covering the \$950,000 mortgage. What happens to any additional funds has yet to be

determined, according to the head of the nonprofit that holds title to the 14.5 acres on Petigru Drive.

County Council voted earlier this month to amend the "planned development" zoning for the property to allow construction of 90 townhouses

in place of a mix of warehouse and office space. The 4-1 vote came after area residents urged the council to deny the request from the Alliance for Economic Development for Georgetown County.

Opponents also questioned the structure of the deal.

"We know the land sale is for a big profit," said Heather Kinder, president of Keep It Green Advocacy, during a public hearing. "Who will get the profit?"

The property was sold to the alliance in 2016. The nonprofit was formed by the coun-

ty under a different name in the 1970s. Its purpose was "to spend money on things that public money can't be spent on, such as wining and dining prospects," said Sel Hemingway, the former county administrator who also served on

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FOOD INSECURITY

Donations of food come in many forms

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

A nonprofit in Georgetown has come up with a unique way to collect food donations.

Friendship Place, which works to lift people in poverty to self-sufficiency, used a large donation to purchase a trailer that can be parked anywhere.

"The mobile food drive trailer brings the donation bin to your community, making it easier than ever to serve the community together," said Charlie Ball, the nonprofit's executive director.

After Friendship Place parked the trailer in DeBordieu for three days, it was filled with more than 1,000 pounds of food.

In the past 12 years, Friendship Place has served more than 200,000 meals from its kitchen in the 1400 block of Front Street in Georgetown as part of its Georgetown Eats program.

American Legion Post 197 delivered more than 600 pounds of food to the Baskerville Food Pantry this week.

This is the fifth year that Glenn Hero, post commander, and a small group of volunteers have driven through Heritage Plantation collecting the donations.

Baskerville also got a boost from a group of employees who stood outside of Peace Sotheby's International Realty office on Highway 17 in Pawleys Island every Tuesday soliciting donations.

Carol Jayroe, Rhonda Sawyer and Lauren Fournier donned costumes – like peanut butter, jelly, Spam and corn on the cob – to get the attention of the passing motorists.



Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer



Evan McCarty, 6, hoists a turkey as Llewel Sampson, 5, carries a bag of groceries during a Thanksgiving food give-away at the Baskerville Food Pantry. At left, Liam McCarty, 8, waits to load a turkey.

The costumes were Sawyer's idea.

"She is the queen of the costumes and making us get out and dance," Jayroe said. "She's

the one with more energy than anybody."

This was the third year Peace Sotheby's collected food, and Jayroe, who is George-

town's mayor, said this was the best one yet.

"It just keeps getting better and better every year," Jayroe said.

LAND USE

Gentrification workshop turns focus to comp plan

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Angela Christian recognized some of the people in the audience last week when she attended a workshop on land use and gentrification at a church in Parkersville.

They had also been in the audience in Georgetown County Council and Planning Commission meetings to oppose three townhouse projects in the area.

"We hear your comments," said Christian, the county administrator.

The workshop, the first in a series sponsored by the Bunelle Foundation at Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, turned into a discussion of the county's comprehensive plan.

Rezoning requests should be in line with the existing character of a neighborhood, said Esther Adams, manager of strategic initiatives for the Center for Heirs Property Preservation. That's something communities identify in their comprehensive plans.

Gary Weinrich, a member of Preserve Murrells Inlet, asked Adams if the county is obligated to update its zoning ordinance if it no longer conforms to that plan.

"That is correct," she said. So what happens if the two are out of sync after 15 years, he asked.

When something doesn't make sense, it's usually due to politics, Adams replied, which

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ENVIRONMENT | Protecting the resources

Size of wetlands buffer left for debate as plan advances

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A plan for protecting Georgetown County's natural resources no longer calls for a minimum 50-foot buffer between wetlands and development.

"We've had input from both sides," said Matt Millwood, the senior planner who compiled six drafts of the plan this year. "We don't want to put a number in that."

Instead, a minimum buffer will be defined when the planning staff starts work on a wetlands ordinance, one of the measures called for in the update to the natural resources element of the county's comprehensive plan.

State law mandates that lo-



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

A minimum buffer of 50 feet was first proposed to protect wetlands and waterways.

cal governments adopt a comprehensive plan with 10 elements that cover topics such as natural resources, housing, land use and transportation. The land-use element gets the

most attention because it establishes the legal basis for the zoning ordinance.

Last year, the county put a revision to the land-use element on hold as it sought a

way to get more public input. A survey conducted as part of that process found 96 percent of respondents rated natural resources as the county's most important feature and over 80 percent favor stronger protection through the zoning regulations.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the natural resources plan last month, but deferred a vote in order to get more input from the rural areas of the county. The planning staff sent information about the plan to 10 people it identified as stakeholders and to churches. It held a workshop in the Choppee community.

"It's a great plan," said Marvin Neal, a Plantersville resident and a former commission member. He said it was impor-

tant to get the additional input from the rural communities because "there's a lot of encroachment on our natural resources."

The commission voted unanimously last week to recommend County Council approve the plan.

The month's delay also provided time for Millwood to add language requested by the S.C. Environmental Law Project that encourages the county to limit the use of septic tanks to treat wastewater.

Earlier this month, the law project filed an action in Charleston County asking the courts to find that the state Department of Health and Environmental Control is required to review septic tank permits for consistency with the

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