

COASTAL OBSERVER

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Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

The County Council chamber (legal capacity 165) is filled for last week's hearing. Many others were turned away due to fire regulations.

LAND USE | Updating the comprehensive plan

Revisions proposed to cut density

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Matt Collison has only lived in Heritage Plantation for a year.

He wasn't here for the charettes, the corridor studies, the online survey or the delays that made up Georgetown County's efforts since 2019 to revise the land use element of its comprehensive plan.

"I'm a newbie," Collison said

as he reached the podium, one of 26 speakers out of nearly 200 people who showed up for a Planning Commission hearing on the draft last week.

The county planning director, Holly Richardson, said the future land use maps and the text of the plan will reduce residential density in some areas of the Waccamaw Neck and maintain medium and low density in others.

"This takes that 'general residential' area and shrinks it," she said, referring to the zoning district with the highest density. It would make over 1,000 acres medium density.

The speakers before Collison disputed that.

"There is no longer a low density category on Waccamaw Neck," said Duane Draper, who chairs the

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PAWLEYS ISLAND

Town shifts protections for historic homes to a fast track

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Owners of nine structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places are being polled by Pawleys Island officials to gauge support for restrictions that would prevent the demolition of those buildings. The town Planning Commission wants to present Town Council with a draft ordinance next month.

"We've just got to preserve our history," said John Hildreth, who chairs the commission.

The commission has discussed historic preservation since the town adopted architectural guidelines for new houses in 2021. After the town added tree protection to the guidelines last year, the commission prepared an ordinance to protect the nine National Register properties.

Town Council members said the commission should look at incentives rather than regulations.

The issue resurfaced last month when the town received a request for a variance from the owners of one of those houses, Liberty Lodge, who want to renovate the 19th century structure, but tear down a 1940 house on the same lot. The newer house is too costly to renovate, they said.

The owners, Brian and Staci Inskip, want to build a new beach house, but need a variance that allows two houses on a single lot or that allows two lots that don't meet the town's unified development code.

There is concern that Liberty Lodge could be torn down if a variance is not granted, said commission member John La-Master.

Hildreth said he doesn't want to see the 1940 house,

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Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer



Household hazards pile up

Traffic backed up in front of Waccamaw High School on Saturday morning as residents took advantage of Georgetown County's annual collection of hazardous household waste. About 700 people dropped off items or had personal documents shredded, which beat the old record of 400 participants, said Maureen Mulligan, the county's environmentalist. The collection started early and ended early when the team of county staff ran out of space. At left, Shatara Duncan of Environmental Services, climbed into a box to stack cans of paint. Mulligan said another collection and shredding event will be held in the fall.



EDUCATION

School board will hire firm to lead search for new leader

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Georgetown County School Board hopes to have an interim superintendent in place by the middle of next month and a permanent replacement named sometime after the start of the new school year.

"That is our goal," Chairman Bill Gaskins said at the board meeting this week.

Superintendent Keith Price accepted the job as superintendent-elect of the Lexington 1 School District last week. The board voted to release him from his contract, so his last day in Georgetown will be June 30.

Doug Jenkins, the district's executive director of human resources, told the board the first step in replacing Price is to hire a firm that specializes in superintendent searches. Only a "handful" of these firms operate in South Carolina, he added.

The board's choices were to put out requests for bids and then choose a firm, or bypass that process and just choose a firm due to a "procurement exemption" in state law.

After learning that requesting bids would add 60 to 90 days to the process because of all the steps that are required before the firm even starts looking for candidates, and discussing the options in executive session, the board voted to choose a firm, which will take between four and six months, according to Jenkins.

"This isn't something that happens overnight," Lindsay

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Keith Price

PALMETTO GIVING DAY | Coastal Montessori Charter School

Space lets students dig into hands-on learning

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Maria Montessori once said: "What the hand does, the mind remembers."

Coastal Montessori Charter School teachers and parents took that to heart three years ago when they started transforming a two-and-a-half wooded lot next to the school's property into an outdoor learning area.

"It is remarkably important. These kids love getting their hands dirty and playing outside," said Amy Miller, a parent who was recently named the school's volunteer of the year. "It's good for kids to be outside. They love the space."

In order to raise money for the project, last year the school's PTO joined Palmetto Giving Day and received almost \$17,000 in donations.

"It's our No. 1 focus. It's really important to the school for kids to

have that usable space," said PTO president April Kaylor. "It's obviously a very costly project and it's going to take several years to see it through completely."

Palmetto Giving Day is a 36-hour fundraising extravaganza started by the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation seven years ago. Since then more than \$14 million has been donated to nonprofits that serve residents of Georgetown County.

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Chris Sokoloski/Coastal Observer

Lyra Isaiah moves mulch while working in Coastal Montessori's outdoor classroom.

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