

**MINUTES OF THE  
SUMMERFIELD ZONING BOARD  
SUMMERFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER  
September 28, 2009  
7:00 P.M. Public Hearing**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Chair Nancy Hess.

**2. IN ATTENDANCE:**

Nancy Hess

Dick Feulner

Ken Dunham

Trudy Whitacre

No other alternates present.

Rich Lovett

Kathy Rooney

Michael Brandt, Acting Planner

Carrie Spencer, Clerk

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

Dick Feulner made a motion to approve the agenda without introductions, Rich Lovett seconded, and the agenda was passed unanimously.

Mr. Dunham inquired about the minutes from the August meeting as he had not been in attendance. He asked who would made the decision as to whether a subdivision or waiver would be heard first in a situation where an applicant is requesting both, and Mr. Brandt stated it would depend on the situation and more thought would have to be given as to the best process to follow.

Mr. Feulner made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 24, 2009 meeting, Nancy Hess seconded, and it passed 4 to 0 with Mr. Dunham and Ms. Rooney abstaining as they had not attended the meeting.

**4. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Discussion of ordinance text amendments (continued from August 28, 2009)**

Mr. Brandt asked the board to review the sign ordinance to keep up with changes in the town. He asked if the board thought changes to the sign ordinance would conflict with the work of the ongoing Comprehensive Plan, and board members who are also on the committee agreed that it would be a good idea to be proactive about sign discussion.

It was suggested that the group think about what their final goal is in considering changes to the sign ordinance. Mr. Dunham spoke of his experience with a sign ordinance revision and suggested that there are several approaches to establishing standards for sign ordinance which include size of sign, type of sign, size of lot, and definitions of signs and flags.

Mr. Brandt asked the board if the 50 sf sign limit we have for our scenic corridors is reasonable for businesses in multi-tenant buildings who must share the sign. He stated that our ordinance is weak in addressing the allowance of sign types. He added that we can get better at enforcing the ordinance when it has more clarity.

It was suggested that the board think of towns with good signage, and look into their ordinances. It was suggested that Hilton Head has attractive, uniform signs, although they are hard to read until you are accustomed to them. The board needs to consider if signs are for passersby or for the community, and take into account the need for more sign visibility once Hwy 220 is widened.

The monument sign at Walgreens was introduced as an example. It is considered to be unattractive even though it meets the height restrictions of the ordinance, since the height restriction is measured from the roadway and not ground level there.

Mr. Brandt stated that the ordinance does have restrictions for wall signs as a percentage of the wall area. When suggesting that the town adopt a standard sign design it was suggested that businesses will object to restrictions against using their logos. It was suggested that red brick is a tradition in the area and would be good to include in ordinance standards. It was suggested that, from a traveler's perspective, too much uniformity would make signs difficult to read and make it difficult to discern what the businesses are. It was suggested that it would be good to see consistency for multi-tenant buildings, and that sign plans should be integrated into the architectural approval process. Mr. Brandt stated that it was difficult to get a signage plan for the whole building at the Old Battleground Shopping Center (Hwy 220 and Auburn Rd.), but they do have a plan that includes a logo, title, and line of text. That plan didn't work the same for everyone, however, as businesses use titles and logos differently in their advertising.

It was suggested that we have a "per business" square footage allowance to ensure each business gets an equal part of a monument sign. It was alternately suggested that businesses will abuse that rule by doubling up on sign space such as for the Big Lots shopping center on Battleground Ave. It was suggested that the ordinance could dictate the size of sign in relation to the size of tenant. Mr. Brandt listed the shopping centers currently in Summerfield: Summerfield Village, Hillsdale Village, Summerfield Renaissance Center, Old Battleground Shopping Center, and Summerfield Square (old Food Lion with Dollar General).

Mr. Brandt told the board that Oak Ridge also has a 50 sf sign limit. The shopping center at Hwy 150 and Hwy 68 is limited to a sign of that size, and businesses have to take turns rotating their signs to satisfy that requirement. That restriction is extremely cumbersome for the businesses there.

There was discussion about consistency in lettering font and size. It was agreed that signage be aesthetically pleasing. It was suggested that if we give businesses a specific and uniform space to fill, they can have individual lettering and designs to fill it.

It was suggested that if our sign ordinance is too strict, it could discourage businesses from locating here.

Mr. Brandt stated that governmental signs follow a color pattern of brown for parks, blue for services, green for town boundaries etc., and white signs with black lettering for regulatory signs.

Mr. Brandt stated that the NCDOT plans to install fencing to define their right of way with the widening of Hwy 220. He pointed out places where the DOT has installed right of way fencing such as Proximity Hotel along Wendover, and Bryan Blvd. Ms. Hess stated that she recently observed very attractive right of way fencing along the main roads in England, made of low concrete posts connected by rails. It was suggested that if the DOT will install fencing that is not like all the other towns in the state, it would set Summerfield apart as a unique and attractive town.

Mr. Brandt asked the boards' thoughts on banners, and where and how they should be used. The board agreed that banners should be temporary, permitted for up to 30 days. It was suggested that every business should get a grand opening banner regardless of how many tenants on the same property. It was agreed that each property, including individual subdivided properties in a group development, should be allowed 3 temporary banners per year (following the standard of the number of temporary events currently allowed). It was suggested that we regulate the number of banners by the building rather than by the tenant. It was suggested that the number of banners be tied to the amount of road frontage.

Mr. Brandt read the ordinance for temporary signs, and for various sign types. He mentioned that the small signs often used to advertise (everything from flu shots to contractors) are not allowed. He added that the current ordinance only allows signs on the same property they advertise. Real estate signs, for example, are restricted only to the properties they are advertising. Mr. Brandt stated that the large

realtor sign and the Red Dog sign, both on Hwy 220, are not allowed. He suggested that subdivision signs could be allowed to include an option to add a removable “home for sale” sign to replace individual signs at subdivision entrances. It was pointed out that, in today’s market, “home for sale” signs are not temporary.

It was suggested that the ordinance include language to prohibit any sign types “not otherwise specified” to cover signs not mentioned in the ordinance.

It was suggested that flag poles be limited in size and number to prevent the use of unreasonably large flags which are currently exempt from the ordinance. The board generally agreed on a maximum height equal to the height of a one or two story building plus 10 feet above roof peak or top of facade, not to exceed 40 feet.

It was suggested the ordinance include restrictions for PODS. Mr. Brandt stated that the planning community generally agrees that PODS can’t be in the street, and that they can only be there for 30 days. He added that there is also a problem with people using them to store materials to operate businesses. He suggested that we educate the POD companies on the town’s restrictions and consider charge the POD companies for violations since they own them. He stated that staff will look into writing a POD ordinance.

## **5. OTHER BUSINESS:**

### **A. Business from the Planner**

Mr. Brandt stated that the Jordon Lake Rules workshop is next Monday and that board members should contact staff ASAP if they want to attend.

Mr. Brandt stated that planners are being interviewed, with one in-person interview and 2 phone interviews scheduled for Wednesday.

He informed the board that next month’s zoning board agenda includes a rezoning request to the NB district, for a property across the street from Laughlin School.

Mr. Brandt informed the board that there have been only 5 new home permits cleared by staff since July. Nancy stated that statistics for new home sales in Guilford County in August include only 157 houses.

Mr. Feulner made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Lovett seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 9:18.

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Nancy Hess, Chair

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Carrie Spencer, Clerk to the Board