

Charleston County
Resilience and Sustainability Advisory Committee (RSAC)
Meeting Minutes
June 27th, 2023

ATTENDEES

RSAC: Joe Boykin, Scott Runyon, Jen Jones, James, Stewart Weinberg, Scott Curtis, Kyle James, Sally Brooks

Absent: Doug Jones

County Staff: Karen Burney-Green, Arielle Gerstein, Sheetal Verma⁺
Absent: Walter L. Smalls

Members of the public: Diamond Curry, Josh Burrill

Charleston County Planning and Zoning Staff: Joel Evans (Director), Andrea Melocik (Deputy Director)

SSG Staff: Naomi Devine

CALL TO ORDER

Stewart Weinberg called the Charleston County RSAC meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS' REMARKS

- Approved meeting minutes at 9:30 a.m. from the March 28th, 2023 meeting.
 - Motion to approve introduced by Stewart Weinberg. Approved by Kyle James and seconded by Scott Curtis with no opposition.

TOPICS DISCUSSED

- Zoning and Planning Presentation introduced by Karen at 9:31am
- Presentation by Zoning and Planning's Joel Evans and Andrea Melocik on the Resilience Ordinance Recommendation Process. They are Charleston County employees who focus on preparing studies and plans regarding the current and future use of land in Charleston County. They also address pertinent concerns in this regard for unincorporated portions of the county. The information provided while in session explained the addressed, adopted, and further investigation status assignments of Resilience Elements that came out of the Resilience Committee that they formerly chaired.
 - Addressed Items – Investigations with case-by-case solutions; discontinuation of wetland development through exclusion in density calculations; reduction in parking requirements located in close proximity to public transportation; retention of natural buffers; parking area reduction with limits on impervious surface coverage limits.
 - Adopted Items – Specific exemptions for under building parking; limited impervious surface coverage with specific guidance for parks/recreation/open space management,

urban residential districts, and nonresidential zoning districts; prohibition of driveways of any surface in OCRM critical line buffers; change from building coverage to impervious surface coverage; review procedures developed and enhanced to require indications and approval for any deviation from limit on impervious surface coverage; changes in definition to “Building Height” and determinations in the definitions of “Base Flood Elevation” and “Design Flood Elevation” in Charleston County Building Code.

- Long Range Recommendations – guidance recommended for parking, trees, elevation-based development, and design standards.
- Andrea announced that they are in the process of working on a Five Year Comprehensive Plan with matters concerning energy, resilience, and sustainability. They will be conducting Public Workshops with opportunities for public comment online. Karen will provide the link and forward questions to Andrea in the future.
- Questions:
 - Stewart asked if there are any examples of parking changes that say that any additional parking has to be pervious not impervious.
 - Joel responded that there are several examples they’ve seen in recent developments. Typically, they have seen a particular type of gravel, grass, and in rare cases, pervious surface coverage to increase the available parking area.
 - Councilman Boykin contributed that he has seen pervious concrete, and Joel confirmed that there is pervious concrete and asphalt that have been around for some time; however, they are working on more industrial forms.
 - Kyle James asked if there’s any discussion as to parking maximums in dense urban areas near transit stops.
 - Joel responded that there is a proper parking reduction measure in place for those close to public transportation, especially in regard to affordable housing. It has been seen that they will sometimes choose not to have a car at all in these cases and just use available transportation.
 - Andrea and Joel continued to contribute that this is handled extensive by Public Works and their Stormwater Division, and it may be a matter of not focusing on the number of parking spaces but on how they’re designed.
 - Andrea confirmed the link between elevation based zoning and building.
 - Stewart asked if the county has the authority to change building codes or if that is regulated solely by the state.
 - Andrea and Joel clarified that the building department has to follow regulations set by the state but may be able to add additional requirements within what the state has legislated.
 - Councilman Boykin asked if there are any regulations or proposals for evaluations of floodplains that exist and might be obstructed by subdivision development/engineering.
 - Joel provided the short answer of yes but indicated that this is addressed by Stormwater within the parameters of their rules.
 - Karen added that Stormwater and Building Services will be presenting at future meetings to provide more in depth information of these topics.
 - Stewart sought clarification as to the role of the resilience committee, which has now been dissolved.
 - Karen confirmed that the long range recommendations will not be considered and further vetted by the Resiliency & Sustainability Advisory Committee, with the selected matters passed along to County Council.

- Councilman Boykin asked Joel/Andrea if they know of any research completed on the welling of grand trees and their survivability. He also inquired of any regulations that define appropriate welling and proximity to the canopy.
 - Joel clarified that the survivability of the tree is variable and depends on the specifics of the ecology of each. Joel explained that they do have minimum distance standards which require consultation of the Zoning board if there are plans of infringement by a development.
 - Sally mentioned the tree ordinances that were discussed and how they may facilitate situations involving trees in provided minimum distances.
 - Joel iterated that even impacts on the groundwater near a tree can cause disruptions and that there are many factors that have to be considered.
 - The Planning and Zoning presentation concluded at 10:32am.
- Arielle introduced Naomi Devine of SSG, and the Climate Action Plan Presentation commenced at 10:03am.
 - The presentation focused on a new interactive workbook that has been developed by Naomi and Arielle. This workbook is dynamic, which means that it will be continually updated as the Climate Action Plan progresses. It will provide opportunities for members of the committee, stakeholders, and interested parties to provide feedback, participate in surveys, and review seminars that take place outside of the quarterly RSAC meetings.
 - Follow-Up: The workbook has a glossary that can be updated as needed. This will meet the requests of members who wanted clarifications for acronyms and jargon that is commonly used within the Climate Action Plan.
 - Expectations: Starting in July, projections and calibrations will begin to tweak business as usual and business as planned models, ranging from year 2020 to year 2050, to scale the project to the specific needs of Charleston County; this will include a broad look into the analysis of what would be required to lower carbon emissions.
 - Members of the RSAC will be able to access all the information discussed in the interactive engagement workbook and provide any feedback as well as participate in surveys.
 - Stewart asked if there's any need for the committee to meet outside of the regularly scheduled meetings in order to facilitate SSG's progress on the Climate Action Plan.
 - Naomi explained that this wouldn't be necessary as the Workbook would be updated regularly, accessible at all times, and a means to provide any feedback and input.
 - Kyle asked if whether the current modeling of mobile source emissions will be geographically limited to Charleston County or go beyond it.
 - Naomi explained that there are three scopes to the modeling that will eventually allow them to consider emissions as variable travel to and from the county, but primarily, the boundaries are set within county lines and its unincorporated areas.
 - Scott Curtis asked if SSG is concerned about using 2020 as the base year given the conditions and state of the COVID pandemic that time.
 - Naomi clarified that through their modeling, they were able to take into account multiple factors that make them confident in the projections that they're developing.
 - Stewart added that they did notice a difference in transportation that actually led to increase in kilowatt usage.

- Arielle explained that another reason for the use of this data was that a Greenhouse inventory had just been completed for year 2018 to 2020, which was a very lengthy process that required a lot of participation and cooperation from various parties and utility providers.
- The SSG Presentation ended at 10:25am

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE

The Chamber of Commerce events, EV Zoning Meetings, Realtor/Homebuyers events, County Hazards Expo, Edisto Minister Alliances were all recommended to Arielle for her outreach initiatives. She will be emailed any further recommendations.

Next Meeting

Karen announced that will be discussing the Vulnerability Assessment amongst other items.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

It was suggested that voting on the meeting minutes be included in the next agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair, Stewart Weinberg, adjourned the meeting at 10:27 a.m. with approval from Scott Curtis and seconded by Kyle James

Sheetal Verma⁺

Ratified by the Charleston County
Resilience and Sustainability Advisory Committee
this 27th day of June 2023.


Chair

Attest:


Administrative Officer - Resilience


Administrative Officer - Sustainability