



**SURFSIDE BEACH PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION  
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
OCTOBER 6, 2015 ♦ 6:00 P.M.**

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6 **1. CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Pruitt called the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting to  
7 order at 6:00 p.m. Commission members present: Chairman Pruitt, Vice Chairman Abrams and  
8 members Crone, Elliott, Johnson, Lauer, and Lowery. A quorum was present. Others present: Town  
9 Clerk Herrmann, Planning Director Morris, and Executive Assistant/Human Resource Administrator  
10 Messall.

11  
12 **2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Chairman Pruitt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

13  
14 **3. AGENDA APPROVAL.** Ms. Abrams moved to approve the agenda. Ms. Johnson seconded.  
15 All voted in favor. **MOTION CARRIED.**

16  
17 **4. MINUTES APPROVAL.** Ms. Crone moved to approve the August 4, 2015 meeting minutes as  
18 submitted. Mr. Lauer seconded. All voted in favor. **MOTION CARRIED.**

19  
20 **5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT.** Ms. Morris said there was only one plat approved last month to  
21 combine two residential lots on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. The property owner wants to add square footage to his  
22 current house and needed additional acreage to meet the setback requirements. The new preliminary  
23 flood maps were received; copies were given to each member. In the majority of cases, the flood areas  
24 were reduced. Public meetings to discuss the new maps and answer the public's questions will be held  
25 on October 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. and at 5:30 p.m. at the fire station. The three ordinances were presented to  
26 Town Council last month; the permitted uses vs. non-permitted uses and the fence/hedge ordinances had  
27 first reading. The water tower/public utilities ordinance was referred back to this commission for  
28 additional discussion and is on the agenda. She was glad everyone survived the storm. She thought  
29 they did an unbelievable job of keeping the town clear from flooding. There were no calls about structural  
30 damage. The town's property was assessed and no damage was found. There were only calls for three  
31 trees that may have been uprooted, which were Cypress and Bradford Pear trees.

32  
33 Ms. Lowery asked if the high velocity zones could be added to the map. Ms. Morris said that  
34 information would be added and distributed to the members. This particular map shows the special flood  
35 hazards existing lines and the new lines.

36  
37 Ms. Elliott asked if they could stop by the office to pick up a copy. Ms. Morris said absolutely, and  
38 the maps were available on [the town website, [www.surfsidebeach.org](http://www.surfsidebeach.org).]

39  
40 Chairman Pruitt said the new website looked good.

41  
42 **6. PUBLIC HEARING**

43  
44 Chairman Pruitt opened the public hearing at 6:04 p.m. to hear comments on the proposed  
45 amendments to Article III, Section 17-396.41 of the Town's Zoning Ordinance regarding Water Tower/  
46 Public Utilities. There were no public comments. Chairman Pruitt declared the public hearing closed at  
47 6:04:30 p.m.

48  
49 **7. BUSINESS**

50  
51 **Article III, Section 17-396.41 of the Town's Zoning Ordinance regarding Water Tower/  
52 Public Utilities.**

53  
54 Chairman Pruitt explained that this ordinance was previously discussed, but there were some  
55 changes for the commission to consider. Ms. Morris explained that the ordinance was to include a 60-  
56 foot natural buffer all the way around the property. She referred to the map in the packets that showed

57 Santee Cooper's proposed substation on a portion of the vacant property behind the Tasty Platter and the  
58 old Taco Bell building. Santee Cooper staff met with staff on several occasions. Santee Cooper was  
59 asked to try to place the substation in the county, but that was not successful. The Surfside Beach  
60 Substation is in Caropines, but it has reached maximum power capacity. Another substation is on  
61 Highway 544, but it does not supply power to the town. She said we certainly hope that Surfside grows  
62 commercially, which would require a stronger substation to provide adequate power. Santee Cooper  
63 asked what staff's concerns were. Staff's main concern was developing the remainder of that property,  
64 and did not want an eyesore there that would prevent a nice commercial business from locating there.  
65 Staff inspected the property and found that you cannot see the substation with a 25-foot barrier of mature  
66 trees. The 25-foot setback area all the way around the location already has developed properties. Santee  
67 Cooper is buy almost two more acres, and we do not want them to expand. Santee Cooper was asked to  
68 create a permanent 60-foot natural buffer where tree cutting would be prohibited. Santee Cooper agreed  
69 to that restriction saying they had no intention of expanding what would already be a very large  
70 substation. Santee Cooper's intent is to sell the property, which would create more commercial property  
71 and keep the 60-foot natural buffer.

72  
73 Mr. Lauer asked if this ordinance was tailored for Santee Cooper. Ms. Morris said it was, but she  
74 did say that anything else, water towers or any other utilities would also have to meet this ordinance. If  
75 there are any existing properties to develop, they would have to meet the 25-foot, and undeveloped  
76 property would have to have a 60-foot barrier. Mr. Lauer asked if a 25-foot barrier was sufficient for  
77 developed properties; he thought it might need to be more. Ms. Morris said 25-feet with mature trees  
78 would prevent you from seeing the substation based on inspection at the site. Staff's opinion is that a 60-  
79 foot natural barrier would promote development of the remaining property. The town does not have many  
80 undeveloped tracts of land.

81  
82 Ms. Abrams asked what zoning district would be assigned to the property Santee Cooper sells,  
83 and whether utility substations were allowed in residential areas. Ms. Morris said they were allowed in  
84 residential areas. The property is zoned C-1 Commercial; any residential use is prohibited. Substations  
85 are allowed in C-1; the buffer would enhance future commercial development.

86  
87 Ms. Elliott asked if Santee Cooper would subdivide the property at the county and what size  
88 property was needed for commercial development on Highway 17 Business. Ms. Morris said 9,000  
89 square feet. The property was not being rezoned. This is just the first step, and the ordinance would  
90 apply to any water tower or substation. The Santee Cooper proposal was mentioned, because it is  
91 actually in the works. If the commission approves the buffers, Santee Cooper still has to come back  
92 before the commission, because it plans to build a street, which has to meet Department of  
93 Transportation (DOT) standards and has to be approved by the planning commission.

94  
95 Ms. Abrams asked if a buffer was required on the right side of the street. Ms. Morris said the  
96 distribution must be underground. Plantings will be required. Ms. Morris approached the video screen  
97 and described how the buffers would be placed. There is sufficient space to have a 25-foot buffer all  
98 around the street.

99  
100 Ms. Elliott asked how the parceled off property would be accessed. Ms. Morris explained that the  
101 road would connect to both parcels so the property would not be landlocked. The property does have  
102 access behind the Plantation Resort building to Platt Boulevard. Ms. Elliott asked if a 20-foot wide road  
103 would accommodate the town's fire trucks. Ms. Morris said the road has to meet DOT regulations; the fire  
104 department has to sign off on the road, as well.

105  
106 Chairman Pruitt asked about the underground power distribution. Ms. Morris said some would be  
107 incoming; the feeders will support Deerfield and other feeders would support town growth. Chairman  
108 Pruitt asked if that lends itself to future development. Santee Cooper could easily tunnel under Highway  
109 17 and continue with underground service into the whole town. He believed the goal would be to  
110 underground all wiring in town at some point. Everyone could see on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue what the underground  
111 looks like. This would be a good access point to undertake that project.

113 Ms. Morris said since the road has to meet DOT standards, it would be nice to have a traffic light  
114 at that location.

115  
116 Mr. Lauer suggested adding language to require fencing pursuant to Town Code. Sometimes  
117 things were a little too broad. Ms. Lowery asked if that was the security fence. Ms. Morris said yes, a 7-  
118 foot fence is allowed/required and what Santee Cooper wants.

119  
120 Ms. Abrams moved to recommend to Town Council that the ordinance be adopted with the  
121 proposed changes to Section 17-396.41 Water Towers/Public Utilities with one change to Section F to  
122 read that fencing around structures shall be required in accordance with Town Codes. Ms. Johnson  
123 seconded. All voted in favor. **MOTION CARRIED.**

124  
125 **8. DISCUSSION ITEMS.**

126  
127 **1. Garages/storage buildings in R-1 District.** This was discussed at the last meeting. Ms.  
128 Morris said a councilmember asked that the commission consider allowing R-1 non-conforming lots to  
129 have less stringent [detached] garage setbacks. There are 1,043 lots in the R-1 zoning district; 745 are  
130 conforming, and 298 are non-conforming. Currently, garage setbacks are the same as for the house.  
131 Garages can be as tall as the house, and the size is based on the size of the home. Garages cannot  
132 exceed 850 square feet or 50-percent of the footprint of the principle building. Sheds must be in the  
133 backyard. The setback for a shed is 5-feet from the property line in the rear and on the side, when the  
134 shed does not exceed 15-feet in height. If the shed height exceeds 15-feet, but does not exceed 25-feet,  
135 the setback is 10-feet. When the shed is over 25-feet the current setback requirement must be met.  
136 Sheds cannot cover more than 20-percent of the rear yard. Stormwater plans are required for any garage  
137 or shed.

138  
139 Ms. Lowery asked if a carport and garage were considered the same. Ms. Morris said no; if the  
140 sides were open on all sides the setbacks were the same as a shed.

141  
142 There was a lengthy discussion about garage and storage building setbacks requirements.  
143 Chairman Pruitt believed it might be best to let residents seek variances from the board of zoning  
144 appeals, because he did not see clearly how the commission could address all the variables at one time,  
145 and perhaps reduce the size allowed for a garage. Ms. Abrams did not support reducing setbacks. Ms.  
146 Johnson was not in favor of reducing the setbacks and believed that the garage size should be reduced.  
147 Mr. Lauer also agreed. Ms. Morris asked if she should bring an ordinance to reduce the size of garages.  
148 Several commission members agreed. Ms. Abrams said storage sufficient for three cars and a golf cart  
149 should be adequate. Chairman Pruitt said garages should be attached to the house; detached garages  
150 were outbuildings.

151  
152 Ms. Elliott said some lots are too small for attached garages, so they are detached so there is a  
153 place to store their vehicles out of the weather. Sometimes they make workshops; the commission was  
154 making decisions for people and believed the size should be based on a percentage of the lot size.  
155 Some people have double lots, or an acre. She believed the height was the problem, to prevent lofts that  
156 turn into housing. Ms. Johnson disagreed saying she did not want an 850 square foot garage by her  
157 house. Ms. Abrams agreed with Ms. Johnson.

158  
159 Ms. Lowery said using a percent of the lot size might prohibit someone with a smaller lot from  
160 having a building large enough to use as a garage. Chairman Pruitt said on a nonconforming lot, the  
161 garage would have to be attached, because there would not be enough room. Ms. Morris said the lots  
162 are still pretty large. If they cannot meet the setbacks, they can always seek a variance from the board of  
163 zoning appeals, because they have a nonconforming lot of record. There is no guaranty that the variance  
164 would be granted; but when a genuine hardship was found, it would be.

165  
166 Ms. Elliott asked if the garage heights could be lowered; a lower metal garage would not be so  
167 imposing. Ms. Johnson asked if metal garages were allowed, and whether garages could be required to  
168 match the exterior of the house. Ms. Morris said that could be done, which would be an overlay in the

169 residential district. There are a lot of residential overlays. That was up to the planning commission to  
170 make a recommendation. Ms. Johnson suggested just prohibiting metal garage construction in  
171 residential areas, because it looks too commercial. Ms. Abrams believed materials should be left alone  
172 until the commission was prepared to discuss residential overlay. The question now is the setback  
173 requirement. Ms. Morris added the size and height.

174  
175 The commission **CONCURRED** to reconsider the following at a future meeting:  
176

- 177 • A reduction in detached garage size to accommodate three cars up in R-1  
178 nonconforming lots and be no higher than the house as long as setback requirements  
179 were met
- 180 • Garage setbacks on R-1 nonconforming lots are to remain the same, variances may be  
181 requested from the board of zoning appeals
- 182 • Sheds heights should be reduced to 15-feet, regardless of setback  
183

184 Chairman Pruitt said outbuildings were not needed in the town limits. Those people with  
185 nonconforming lots could seek variances, if there was a hardship. If the garage was attached to the  
186 house and looked like the house that was not a problem.  
187

188 **2. Amend Article III, Section 17-396.42 regarding Warehouses and Storage Facilities.** Ms.  
189 Morris showed a slide of the town with the overlay district. The C-1 district currently allows warehouses  
190 and storage facilities. Those business could be on Highway 17 frontage, if they meet the conditions. The  
191 commission discussed this section before, but was brought back because there are so few parcels left in  
192 the C-1 district and the future land use is seeking restaurants, retail, or similar businesses on Highway 17.  
193 She suggested that warehouse/storage facilities be limited to the C-1 district not in the overlay area,  
194 which would be on Sandy Lane. The mini-warehouses already in town would be grandfathered. Ms.  
195 Johnson, Chairman Pruitt, Mr. Lauer and others agreed. The commission **CONCURRED** to consider this  
196 at the next meeting.  
197

198 **3. Any other matter of concern to be discussed by the Planning Commission.**  
199

200 Ms. Johnson disagreed with plantings on Ocean Boulevard to prohibit parking. Ms. Morris said  
201 that she, the public works director, administrator, and police chief discussed this, and plantings will  
202 continue to be prohibited in the rights-of-way. The rights-of-way need to remain clear, so people could  
203 pull over during an emergency. If anything comes forward that affects the zoning ordinances, it would be  
204 presented to the planning commission first. Ms. Johnson said that residents on Ocean Boulevard should  
205 understand that people coming to the beach will park everywhere they can.  
206

207 Ms. Elliott said some Century plants were already put in the rights-of-way. Ms. Morris explained  
208 that the town planted those where there is no room for parking. Council was discussing private property  
209 owners planting in the rights-of-way.  
210

211 Ms. Lowery said visitors also leave trash along the boulevard. Ms. Johnson said she never saw  
212 people leaving trash on the boulevard, but they did leave trash on the beach.  
213

214 Mr. Lauer just recently notice action was being taken at the strip mall between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
215 South. Ms. Morris said the building was condemned. Once the asbestos is cleaned up, the building will  
216 be razed, except for the NAPA Auto Parts store. Mr. Lauer asked if the NAPA store was in reasonable  
217 condition. Ms. Abrams said that was a separate building. Ms. Morris said there are two other buildings  
218 behind the strip mall that were also being removed.  
219

220 Chairman Pruitt said he learned some things at the annual training. Any public building that has  
221 Wi-Fi should have an open access point. You should not need a password. It seemed to him that one of  
222 the goals was to make the community a healthy, thriving environment, and to attract younger families that  
223 would take roots here. To do that, we need cheap, high speed internet. One easy way to do that is to  
224 open all the access points that the town actually controls that our tax dollars pay for. He thinks that would

225 be a big help. Chairman Pruitt said they also talked about how to concentrate or zone for the future. He  
226 had been thinking about that a lot, since he began serving on the planning commission. How do we want  
227 the town to look in 20- or 30-years? The dilapidated strip mall coming down is a stepping stone along  
228 that path. The main corridor of the town should be an attractive place to encourage people to stop and  
229 shop, and to entice businesses to rent. We need to have a way to funnel people from the highway after  
230 they shop and dine to the beach. There needs to be an easy, free way for them to park to enjoy the  
231 beaches and make them want to come again next year. Greenways, running paths, and similar projects  
232 were discussed. Chairman Pruitt did not think the town should have a dedicated running path, but  
233 runners and pedestrians should be encouraged to use areas like Dogwood Drive where there is low  
234 traffic. Funnel cars down to the beach on some main streets, and direct pedestrians on to other roads to  
235 separate foot and bike traffic from the vehicles to lead them to the parks and town facilities. He though  
236 the planning commission could set the roots for the next 30-years.  
237

238 Ms. Abrams liked Chairman Pruitt's comments.  
239

240 Ms. Johnson also liked Chairman Pruitt's comments, and added that Surfside Drive should look  
241 like Market Common. It should be rezoned to allow mixed use; stores with residences above. Ms. Morris  
242 was very glad that Ms. Johnson said that. The town's vision meeting is coming up. Plans were just  
243 approved, and bids would be let to put parallel parking on Surfside Drive. That would be done before the  
244 vision meeting. Council will be asked to pursue mixed use on Surfside Drive. There are many vacant lots  
245 on Surfside Drive. Some owners have already discussed taking down their homes, and would love to live  
246 above a business. Some of the vision topics include changing the central business district regulations to  
247 allow living above the business; three people have been turned down. Chairman Pruitt said that was  
248 awful. Ms. Morris said there is an alley between Surfside Drive and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, so the zoning  
249 could stipulate that if parking was available in the rear for the residential unit, then residential could be  
250 allowed upstairs. Conway allows mixed use, and has no vacancy in the upstairs residential units. They  
251 have leased parking spaces for the residents. The goal is to allow mixed use all the way down Surfside  
252 Drive. A round-about is still being considered for Surfside Drive at the pier. Something has to be done to  
253 slow traffic, if there is a walkable community. The right-of-way is available to build it. People passing on  
254 Highway 17 could see the round-about and know that something was down there. Ms. Johnson asked if  
255 Pickled Cucumber had closed. Ms. Morris said no, there was death in their family.  
256

257 Ms. Morris said another topic being taken to the vision meeting was a discussion about 3<sup>rd</sup>  
258 Avenue South. It is like the street that time has forgotten. We are going to ask council to consider taking  
259 over 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South from Highway 17 to Poplar Drive, then parallel parking could be placed on both  
260 sides, and have the same size sidewalk and lights as Surfside Drive to really make it part of our walking  
261 community. She would also ask for a façade grant so the properties on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue could get awnings  
262 and beautify their buildings. Chairman Pruitt said that was the key. Somebody had to build something to  
263 give other inspiration to improve their property. Ms. Crone asked if sidewalks could be large enough to  
264 accommodate bicycles. Ms. Morris said the sidewalk would be wide enough to share the road on that  
265 section. That particular street really needs some attention, and she thought this was the only way it  
266 would happen.  
267

268 Chairman Pruitt said people have to see things happening so they could get behind them. Very  
269 commendable recommendation. He also thought it would be beneficial for all the municipalities and  
270 county planning commissions to meet to determine if some regional goals could be established for the  
271 benefit of the entire community. Ms. Morris said that was a great idea. Chairman Pruitt jokingly said that  
272 was the 80-year plan. *(Laughter.)* Mr. Lauer liked the way they were thinking.  
273

274 Ms. Morris hoped that the commission would eventually reconsider the overlay. Chairman Pruitt  
275 said this commission exists for the overlay, because they were like-minded, along with Ms. Morris. If it  
276 would happen, now might be the time. Several members agreed. Ms. Abrams said recommendations  
277 would need to be written carefully, so council would accept them.  
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279 **10. PUBLIC COMMENTS - General.** There were no public comments.  
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**11. COMMISSION COMMENTS.**

Chairman Pruitt said the town did a great job managing the flooding during the recent rain event. He knew Ms. Morris was responsible for it all. *(Laughter.)*

Ms. Morris introduced Ann Messall, the town's human resource administrator and executive assistant for the town administrator. She attended to see how the planning commission worked.

**12. ADJOURNMENT.**

Ms. Johnson moved to adjourn at 7:07 p.m. Mr. Lauer seconded. All voted in favor. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Prepared and submitted by,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Debra E. Herrmann, CMC, Town Clerk

Approved: November 3, 2015.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mikey Pruitt, Chairman

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