

William C. Collins, Mayor

Council Members:

Terry Jenkins, Mayor Pro Tem
Walter Bailey
Aaron Brown
Kima Garten-Schmidt
Bob Jackson
William McIntosh



Clerk-Treasurer

Lisa L. Wallace

Town Attorney
G. Waring Parker

Town of Summerville
SPECIAL
INFORMATIONAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 12, 2014
6:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Mayor Bill Collins and Council members Walter Bailey, Aaron Brown, Bob Jackson, Terry Jenkins and Bill McIntosh. Kima Garten-Schmidt was absent. Also present were Lisa Wallace, Director of Administrative Services & Clerk-Treasurer, and G.W. Parker, Town Attorney. Members of the press and the public were duly notified of the meeting and were also present.

CALL TO ORDER AND PRESENTATION

Mayor Collins reported that this is an informational meeting to provide information to the public about the proposed boutique hotel project and introduced Arthur Applegate, the developer of the project. Mr. Applegate gave an overview of the project and provided renderings of the proposed hotel, condominiums, conference center and parking garage. Planning and Economic Development Director, Madelyn Robinson, provided the audience with the history of the project including the process that has taken place up this point. Julie Lawrence, formerly of the Lawrence Group and contributor to the Town's Vision Plan, explained the reasons the town followed the example of several other municipalities and created a redevelopment commission to help facilitate development and redevelopment projects.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Following the presentation, Mayor Collins asked if there were any comments from the public. Brad Mallet, owner and operator of Coastal Coffee Roasters, reported that he knows that the process of trying to locate a boutique hotel in Summerville has been going on for quite some time. He added that progress takes many forms and we should not look at the past but toward the future and identify some common ground. Converse Chellis gave a history of the historic downtown business district and the struggles they have faced for many years. He reported that many years ago, a group of citizens came together in an attempt to revamp and revitalize the downtown business district which has since seen great improvements. However, these times of growth are cyclical and it is time once again to add new energy to the area. He added that perhaps the developer could utilize the wood from the large pine tree for the interior of the hotel. Bob Whitten, President and CEO of Showa Denko Carbon and Past Chairman of the Charleston Regional Development Alliance reported that he often has visitors from all over the world and finds that he has to send these visitors to Charleston because Summerville does not currently have adequate facilities for his guests. The hotel will be an asset to attract people and businesses

to this area. Brian Butler, President and CEO of Linde Material Handling, echoed Mr. Whitten's comments stating that he currently has to house and feed his guests in downtown Charleston and welcomes the opportunity to spend more time with his guests in Summerville. He added that municipalities are under a lot of pressure to find new funding sources other than raising taxes and this is a way to help bring economic and financial growth to the area since Summerville already has to deal with the traffic and infrastructure needs from growth that is already happening all around it. Dave Comer of 708 W. Richardson Avenue stated that he has been to the two recent Board of Architectural meetings and the meeting put on by Heyward Hutson. Some of the items he took away from the meetings, aside from the mass and scale of the project that is out of place, is the traffic and safety concerns that warrant moving the project to a different location and asked that the town consider moving it. He asked if a hotel is more important than providing pedestrian access to the businesses that already exist. Rudd Smith, who lives about 3 blocks away and has a business 1 block away, thanked the council and Mr. Applegate for entering into the contract for the project. There were some good issues that were raised and he believes it got the attention it needed and Mr. Applegate has been very responsive to the comments made at the Board of Architectural Review meeting. There are some things he doesn't like about the project but those are the details that still need to be worked out and we should not let the details or disagreements make us lose sight of the woods through the trees because it is a good project. He also spoke about the importance of foot traffic for the businesses in town square and that this project is a good way to create it. Faye Croft owns property near the condominium side of the project and has several concerns. She stated that she is also a Lutheran and is quite concerned about parking for the Lutheran church. She added that the street parking is not just for Sunday mornings because they have weddings, receptions and funerals that utilize the parking. She also asked what studies have been done to see if the ground beneath the old gas station is contaminated and, if so, who will pay for the clean-up and at what cost. Nancyjean Nettles, a member of the group that helped develop D.R.E.A.M. and helped with the downtown restoration project, reported that she worked for the Southeastern Wildlife Expo when the Mayor of Charleston was looking into creating the Omni Hotel (Charleston Place). She explained that the merchants and restaurant owners were terrified of what was going to happen adding that people are naturally afraid of change. She stated that the hotel is still there and is doing great and that everyone in that area has benefitted from that project. She also gave an example of the successful project in the City of Greenville that has brought tremendous life to that area. She expressed concern about Summerville's downtown with all of the other growth going on around it which might cause it to disappear if we don't do something about it and feels confident that the hotel project will benefit the whole community. Christina Czarnich of 406 S. Gum Street read quotes from the town's website regarding growth management and from the town's vision plan report that states that the overwhelming concerns of the residents were growing traffic congestion and how the growth around Summerville will affect their quality of life. The vision plan proposes to create density within the historic downtown area which will destroy the special small town atmosphere. She asked who is representing the residents' interest when the Mayor and Council are in a partnership with the developer adding that the oversight is missing. She asked whether all of those components of the hotel project will fit on a barely 2 acre lot in the heart of downtown Summerville and stated that council should consider the input of the residents. Heyward Hutson asked if anyone on the council knew who the equity partners are for the project and he also asked to see a financial statement. An unnamed citizen from Pine Forrest asked if anyone has done a feasibility study for this project. Peter Gorman on behalf of the East

Historic District Association and a resident of the historic district stated that he would rather have the people who support the project put their money into it rather than taxpayer money. He stated that there are many plans that have been adopted by the town without adequate public hearings. He added that the vision plan included a list of top 10 priorities and that a hotel was not on that list. He stated that the report mentioned that a previous study showed that a hotel was not economically feasible because it would only attract tourists which is subject to cyclical economic cycles. He asked why it was the Mayor's top priority.

ADJOURN

The informational meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Wallace, Director of Administrative Services
Clerk and Treasurer

APPROVED:

William C. Collins, Mayor