

CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

MPC COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING MEETING MINUTES

**MPC HEARING ROOM
110 EAST STATE STREET**

November 13, 2007

1:00 PM.

Members Present: Jon Todd, Chairman
Susan R. Myers, Treasurer
W. Shedrick Coleman, Secretary
Stephen Lufburrow
D. Douglas Bean
Ben Farmer
Lacy A. Manigault
Adam Ragsdale
Russ Abolt
Michael Brown

Members Not Present: Robert Ray, Vice-Chairman
Timothy Mackey
J. David Hoover
Freddie Gilyard

MPC Staff Present: Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP, Executive Director
Charlotte Moore, AICP, Director of Special Projects
Courtland Hyser, AICP, Land Use Planner
Amanda Bunce, Development Services Planner
Geoff Goins, Development Services Planner
Constance Morgan, Administrative Assistant
LaToya Bynum, Administrative Assistant

I. Call to Order

Chairman Todd called the meeting to order and asked that everyone stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation. He explained the agenda for the benefit of those who were attending the meeting for the first time.

II. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

A. Notice(s)

1. To avoid conflict with the City Council Meeting, the next Regular Scheduled MPC Meeting will be **November 20, 2007 at 11:00 A.M.** in the MPC Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room, 112 East State Street.

2. The next Regular Scheduled MPC Meeting will be December 4, 2007 at 1:30 P.M. in the MPC Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room, 112 East State Street.
3. The MPC Special Planning Session Meeting will be December 11, 2007 at 11:00 A.M. in the MPC Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room, 112 East State Street.

B. Acknowledgment(s)

Chairman Todd presented a plaque to Mr. Stephen Lufburrow in appreciation for his service as Chairman. Mr. Todd commended Mr. Lufburrow for his selfless service. The MPC Board and Staff joined in thanking Mr. Lufburrow.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Coleman **moved** to approve the September 11, 2007 Planning Meeting Minutes as presented. Mr. Lufburrow seconded the motion.

MPC Action: The motion to approve the September 11, 2007 Planning Meeting Minutes as presented carried with none opposed. Voting were: Mr. Todd, Ms. Myers, Mr. Lufburrow, Mr. Bean, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Farmer, Mr. Abolt, Mr. Manigault, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Ragsdale.

IV. Old Business

None.

V. Regular Business

A. Parking: Educating and Framing the Issues (at the request of Mr. Brown)

Amanda Bunce gave a slide presentation on the current parking issues and the possible ways to correct these issues. She stated that a parking problem consists of inadequate supply of parking, inefficient management of parking and insufficient information about where public parking is located. She explained that parking requirements should reflect particular situations and should be flexible. She also spoke briefly on the costs and pricing of parking in the downtown area, as well as shared parking. Mr. Thomson also provided additional information on the issue.

Discussion

Mr. Manigault stated that the problem with handling each case on its own is that the MPC staff and Board Members are then at risk for being accused of showing favoritism. He suggested that the MPC staff come up with a plan to use until a solid strategy is formally in place.

Ms. Myers expressed concerns regarding the placement of buildings in the future due to rezoning because of parking issues.

Mr. Brown commented that parking districts could be very beneficial to the downtown area, where the commercial aspect is very vital to the character of the area. He spoke of his concerns with future requests for rezoning for parking. He questioned the staff regarding the length of time it would take to develop a strategy and plan to handle the parking issues that would arise within the next year as requests for rezoning came about. He stated that the traditional model of parking has been to add the square footage and cubic footage of particular land uses, whether it is residential or retail, then add the total parking demand and the amount of parking available and the difference is the parking deficit. The deficit is changing now because; a) the residential ratio used to be at least two cars per household, in some households it is more or less depending on the number of legal age drivers, b) the distance that people will go to a parking facility. He suggested that when developments are asking for relief because they will have transit, the MPC should ask certain questions such as; 1) do they prohibit student parking in this particular area, 2) do they regulate student parking passes, 3) is every student paying for transit, 4) what is actual transit ridership to comparable classroom costs. He spoke of several standards that should be applied to particular locations that included; a) putting in lower assumptions about residential parking demand, after seeing if the trends are leading that way, b) the primary nature of the development should be looked at, and if their use requires a certain percentage of parking use on an average day, they should be able to demonstrate it based on comparable properties in the area. He explained that while the main parking rules are in the development stages, the MPC could apply specific parking rules, such as these, to future developments to show that they would pertain to particular cases. He also suggested that when requests for rezoning come forward, the developers should be required to answer the same questions in the preparation stages that they will be required to answer later on. This, he felt would be helpful in determining the rezoning.

Mr. Lufburrow had questions concerning the parking and traffic issues near the hospitals. He asked if employee parking and transit was being researched.

B. Coastal Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

Mr. Thomson reminded the Board that he is a member of the Coastal Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. He explained that this committee was formed at the request of the Governor of Georgia after he asked the Department of Community Affairs to lead a planning program to look at the six coastal counties and develop a comprehensive plan to guide development on the future. He made note of the 34 members that make up the Advisory Committee. He provided the Board Members with handouts to update them on the work of the Committee.

C. Hutchinson Island Master Plan Process

Christian Sottile, of Sottile & Sottile, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Civic Master Plan for the Hutchinson Island Riverfront. He explained the relation of this Master Plan to that of the Downtown Master Plan.

D. Southwest Chatham Sector Plan

Mr. Thomson introduced Ms. Beverly Davis, of Reynolds, Hills and Smith, who gave a brief overview of the Southwest Chatham Sector Plan. Ms. Davis referred the members to the information in their packets and gave a PowerPoint presentation that further explained the information provided.

E. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Thomson gave an update on the activities of staff. He thanked Charlotte Moore for her volunteer work regarding the United Way Campaign and also for nominating Bull Street that was recently named One of the 10 Greatest Streets in America by the American Planning Association. He also commended the MPC Staff for their contributions to the United Way that totaled a 100% participation. He reminded everyone of GIS Day and the activities that will take place on November 14, 2007.

VI. Other Business

Mr. Todd made comments in reference to the Regular MPC Meeting on November 6, 2007. He explained that due to the anticipation of an overflow of attendees in relation to one of the items on the Final Agenda that day, an off-duty police officer was there to ensure proper enforcement of the buildings' fire code, due to a limited building capacity. He commended the Staff on their handling of that meeting.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the November 13, 2007, Comprehensive Planning Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP
Executive Director

Note: Minutes not official until signed