

Summary of Comments from Zoning Workshop

October 5, 2019

The following text documents raw, unedited comments and has not been checked for spelling, accuracy, or feasibility. Neither the TSW team nor Glynn County makes any endorsement of a specific idea. Comments will be considered as the zoning update process continues.

Topic 1 Questions (Density)

1. There is currently a three-story height limit on all of St. Simons Island except in the VR Village Residential Zoning district, where the maximum height is 2 stories. Is this appropriate?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes
- 3 story height limit in Village
- Everyone agreed 3 stories and 2 in village was appropriate
- Yes—in all areas, zoning, police, etc. all rules and regulations need to be enforced
- Stop lot of record once built along lot line
- 3 story - keep
- We all agree that it is correct as it is now

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- YES
 - Do we want condo zoning? Diffic. Issue. FA - green space / open space (can't read writing) - per PD? Character of North and of the Island. Is it possible to take away some of landowners rights. OI - work on the roads, traffic sewers, infrastructure. Should be the context. AND: rising sea level. Desired: set current density where's set. First need to know where it's at. Is it 8K or 1K. Need more transparency. Land not developed. Infill: houses currently on 2 lots, take it down and build 3.
 - Re PDs: (can't read word) practice. Built out but number of units allowed? Currently built. Can we ask them to limit that to new. Take golf course down and build more. Already been done for Sea Palms. Last golf course can never be other than a golf course. FAs on SSI. North of the traffic down Lawrence Road.
 - Needs a real, clean, honest look at what can be done, not pie in the sky. Trees only protected by the ordinance on SSI. Are lot infrastructure issue > tree ordinance.
 - Biggest single import change: density is fixed. Need to know what it is. Short term rentals: public safety, \$\$, should be limited to certain zoning districts.
 - Need a real survey. Need a real traffic study. Align all around infrastructure.
- Yes

- Once built over side line that lot becomes lot of record not return to smaller lots. Stop lots of record once built on lot.
- Yes!
- Yes!

2. Should maximum height continue to be measured based on flood level or should it be measured based on ground level?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Flood Level
- Use flood level as basis for height
- Flood Level
- Majority was for flood level
- We need to keep height as is from ground level

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Measure for base flood level only to max height allowed
- Yes - to the measured based on flood level
- Flood Level - set a benchmark for flood order (?) over - across the board
- 2 stories above
- Flood Level!
- It is appropriate
- Ground level not flood level

3. Should minimum standards or district sizes be established for the PD Planned Development zoning district?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes
- Minimal standards. Eliminate future PD's. PD's should revert to prior zoning if not built. Require rezoning app's (PD's) to have community meetings prior to it going to the board.
- Yes
- Yes
- The zoning ordinances need to be more exact instead of everyone doing a PD.

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Yes
- Yes, consistent with contiguous properties. If PD should be allowed PERIOD, going forward. Wish we could remove them all together.
- Yes
- Exception to zoning - yes. Standards -. Keep (can't read words)
- Yes

4. Should site plans (including site plans in PD Planned Development districts for developments over 3 acres) continue to expire after two years?

Group Summary Page Comments

- 2 years
- Yes expire, must reapply
- Yes
- Yes
- The zoning ordinances need to be more exact instead of everyone doing a PD

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Yes
- Yes, after 2 years
- Expire after 2 years
- Yes, future no more PD. Commercial vs. residential must be vested Phase 1 - but ? PD reverts to previous zoning after 27 years if vesting has not been done.
- Less PD and more lotside zoning
- Yes more overlay type development creating new Village-type development as Christ Church area - Sea Palms area. Old Demere - this could be done in Mainland.

5. Under certain circumstances, residential lots on wells and septic tanks are required to be larger than lots on public water and sewer. Should this requirement be expanded?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes!
- Expand 2 acres +
- Yes
- Yes
- Septic lots should be at least 1 acre

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Require primary and secondary drain fields
- Yes, we are in favor of larger lots
- The state regulates this. County doesn't always align. Sea Island grandfathered in. Going forward, County won't allow. Problem is "existing." Answer: Yes!
- Should be restricted - discouraged from using SEPTIC except on huge property lots. Reason because of rising sea levels, hazard.
- Larger (1 acre) on septic lots.

6. Should residential subdivisions with half-acre lots continue to be allowed in the FA Forest Agricultural zoning district, or should it be restricted to farms or homes on larger lots?

Group Summary Page Comments

- FA restricted to homes with larger lots
- Yes
- Larger Lots
- Larger Lots
- Farms and larger acreage lots in FA zoning

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Circled "farms or homes on larger lots" and wrote "yes"
- Yes - restricted to farms or homes on larger lots. Lots should be 2 acre minimum.
- YES. FA should be restricted to farms or larger lots.
- No - no more 1/2 acre lot septic. Must include more land in system. Example: 1, 5, 10 acres. Farms and homes on large lots. Forestry taxes are lower. Restricted to F&A not developed subdivisions.
- Farms and larger lots
- No

7. A single house is allowed to be built on any substandard size lot platted before 1966 countywide. On St. Simons Island, a new house on a substandard lot smaller than 6000 square feet or narrower than 60 feet has height limits and a maximum number of bedrooms based on a sliding scale tiered to the size of the lot. Should this rule be altered? Should the size of the houses on other substandard lots also be regulated? Should this rule also apply on the Mainland?

Group Summary Page Comments

- smaller lots = smaller house sizes
- Yes
- #1 – Requires more discussion. #2 – Yes. #3 Island – Yes. Mainland - ?
- Yes. You should have buffer at rear of all lots.

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Wrote "no" next to Mainland question. Wrote "yes" about other substandard size lots. Limit also by square footage and enforce setbacks
- Houses on small lots should stay small. The rule on the mainland we can't answer.
- YES
- No - made more difficult to build
- Yes - yes
- Yes!! Yes!!

8. Should subdividing lots smaller than one acre continue to be prohibited?

Group Summary Page Comments

- yes and please eliminate historic lot lines
- depends on the context
- Yes
- Yes

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Yes!
- Depends on the context of where it is
- Yes
- Yes and please eliminate historical lot lines
- Yes because of flooding (stormwater)
- Yes

9. How should short-term rentals, bed and breakfasts, time share units, and similar uses be regulated, and where should they be allowed?

Group Summary Page Comments

- yes they should be regulated. Separate meeting to discuss those regulations.
- yes - regulated by specific districts, safety issues, noise, trash, sewer, limit # of vehicles, limit # per bedroom, minimum days of rentals
- Yes everywhere
- Occupancy, permit less than 30 days, number of vehicles / golf cars for regulations and not allowed in residential subdivisions. Should be strictly monitored.

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Yes.
- Yes - regulate based on: total occupancy, total parking, responsible party managing, no commercial use in residential area (e.g. "Party Houses" on East Beach), signage restrictions, noise, fire codes (?)
- This needs a lot of discussion. We understand there are currently no rules or regulations at this time. Please coordinate your traffic study with TSW!!
- Should be regulated. Should be allowed in specific zoning districts. Safety issue - get off the island with fire, flood...; police should be able to handle; limit on number of vehicles allowed; i.e. no short-term rentals - longer periods of time.
- Nowhere, on our 6 zones. Should be more regulated and more tightly regulated.
- Regulated but allowed. Buffers - preserving trees and canopy.

Topic 2 Questions (Design)

1. Minimum site design and architectural standards exist for certain types of development. Should these be strengthened in certain areas or countywide?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes, SSI vs. Mainland & Islands. Soften hardscapes and parking lots on SSI
- Yes some design standards, but with diversity in choices i.e. coastal / historical architecture
- Yes for certain areas
- Yes

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Yes - like form-based countywide but certainly St. Simons. Moderate to significant.
- Strengthened for the island. Especially the Village. Form Based is a good idea
- Yes. Too broad of a question. St. Simons Sea Island's different regs vs. County. Strengthened depending on WHERE we are in the County. More applicable to Brunswick. Soften the hardscapes. Parking lots such as Longview, Red Fern, Retreat Village on SSI. "Coastal Design for Fast Food."
- Yes
- Yes / county
- Want to strengthen design & architectural designs - not countywide - each to meet area height and size restrictions. Village Overlay for SSI is good - each should meet the character of that area.

2. Should specific design standards be provided for the St. Simons Village Overlay or are the existing general principles appropriate? Should the Village Mixed Use district include additional design standards?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes, specific for SSI. Yes - setbacks, sidewalks, tree canopy, no cookie cutter
- The village needs to stay a cute, quaint town and not become a development nightmare. We want design standards that are not so stringent that it is limiting. NO boutique hotel. NO museum. NO parking garage.
- #1 – Need more information. #2 – Yes.
- Yes to 1. Yes to 2.

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- "Yes" to Village Mixed Use question. Don't know about St. Simons Overlay, but need to beef up design and landscaping requirements but keep eclectic look and feel
- We don't know the standards are at this time, but would like maintain the character of the Village
- 1 - specific design for SSI - yes. 2. Existing general principles: Yes - setbacks, sidewalks, tree canopy, not dictate "cookie cutter style"
- Yes
- Yes

3. Should design standards be established near I-95 exits or for other commercial areas?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes, attractive redesigned gateway to the islands!
- None needed.
- No to I-95, but yes to other commercial areas
- Yes

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Yes. Main access points to county should look good.
- No.
- Yes. Gateway less commercial. Gateway on I-17 needs to be reworked like Beaufort, SC
- Yes
- Yes

4. Should a Mixed Use or Traditional Neighborhood Development district be established to allow for new village-type development in appropriate areas?

Group Summary Page Comments

- In existing commercial only. No rezoning of residential and not in Village
- Yes!
- Yes
- Yes

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Well done mixed use if there is an appropriate area
- Yes it generates community on the Mainland and far north on the Island.
- In existing commercial shopping areas only. Not new residential development. Not the village on SSI.
- Yes

5. Should uses and regulations be updated to appropriately allow and regulate "Missing middle" housing types in suitable areas? These include quadplexes, small apartment buildings, etc.

Group Summary Page Comments

- No not on SSI. Ok in Brunswick.
- South end has so little land anyway. North end, yes, regulate.
- Yes
- Yes

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- If this would help keep density down, these should be.
- Not on St. Simons Island
- NOT on SSI. Appropriate for BQK.
- Yes
- Missing Middle types in Mainland - what happens in SSI is it becomes rental

6. Where should carriage houses and similar accessory dwellings be allowed, and how should they be regulated? Should there be a maximum size?

Group Summary Page Comments

- MAX size on separate carriage houses
- Maybe - needs to be used for "aging in place;" need for affordable housing; NOT more AirBnB
- #1 – If permitted by maximum lot coverage per square feet. #2 – Yes.
- Yes to accessory dwellings on the mainland only? NOT on the islands.

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Don't think these are appropriate. Another short term rental.
- Split decision in our group. However strict regulations if approved on SSI.
- This could work but it drive business to rentals and AirBnB. Affordable housing a problem on SSI. Build more affordable housing on the mainland and improve transportation.
- Yes
- Anywhere, yes

7. Should the demolition or significant alteration of historic structures in the St. Simons Village or elsewhere in the County be regulated? Should there be incentives to preserve cultural or historic resources?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Hist. structures demo should be regulated.
- Give incentives to preserve historic districts and value
- #1 – Yes. #2 – Yes.
- Yes. Yes to incentives.

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Less of an issue on SSI. But preservation incentives good idea.
- Yes it should be regulated in the historic district of SSI. Yes to the incentives
- In historic districts, make it difficult to demo. Incentive anyone who want to demo to keep the historic component to retain. In the SSI village, retain the "feel" of the area.
- Yes, yes
- Yes

8. Should sign height, size, illumination, electronic signs, billboards, and other sign regulations be updated, including in specific areas such as along certain corridors or near scenic or historic areas?

Group Summary Page Comments

- There should be some regulations, but again keeping with the coastal / historic theme
- Hell Yes!!!
- Yes
- Yes – lighting must be regulated to avoid light pollution

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- YES!
- Yes along 17
- Hell yes!
- Yes, lighting and material
- Yes

9. Should sidewalks and street lights be required on new streets in certain zoning districts?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes, but dark sky approved
- Hell yes to sidewalks, and softer residential, and better design for commercial
- Yes
- What certain zoning districts? Street lights should offer ambient light, no LEDs.

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Sidewalks should be required; however, lighting - good ONLY where does not affect turtles and other wildlife
- Yes
- Hell yes to sidewalks
- Yes!
- Yes

Topic 3 Questions (Environment)

1. Should a minimum amount of private open space be required for new developments? Should there be incentives for the preservation of natural or open areas?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Hell Yes! Hell Yes!
- Yes
- #1 – Yes. #2 – Yes.

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Should have minimum and criteria set for such things as retention ponds. Add incentives as well.
- Yes, but not to reduce the lot size
- Hell Yes!!! Hell Yes!!!
- Yes, yes
- Yes - Yes.

2. Are existing light pollution restrictions appropriate or should they be revisited? Should lights that affect marine wildlife also be regulated?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Should be revisited. No commercial encroaching on residential. Less ugly poles. More strategic lighting. No neon. Marine life, yes.
- Light pollution should be restricted and revisited not just for wildlife, but so we can see the stars. No LEDs.
- #1 – Needs to be revisited; mimic Jekyll Island as model. #2 – Yes.

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Revisit - e.g. lighting for safety without spillover consider
- We do not know what SSI restrictions are but have them revisited and changed if needed. Yes to the lights that affect marine wildlife to be regulated.
- Should be revisited. Commercial encroaching on residential. Less poles. More strategic lighting. Marine life yes.
- Yes
- Yes - Yes

3. Should tree planting requirements be established for new developments, including parking lots?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes!!
- Yes
- Yes

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- YES. Should be established for new development and redevelopment. The more trees and landscaping the better.
- Yes
- Yes!
- Yes!
- Yes - Keep trees!! Add trees.

4. Should elements of conservation subdivisions be required on all of St. Simons Island?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes!!
- Yes
- Yes

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Yes - hypothetically depending on the regs. Any way to establish BASIC requirements for a conservation subdivision?
- Conservation subdivisions are fine but DO NOT reduce lot size or other development restrictions.
- Yes
- Yes!
- Yes

5. Currently, there is a state-mandated 50-foot marsh setback for all development. Should this be increased, or should additional standards or incentives related to coastal development be considered?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Enforce it! 😊
- Marsh setback. Adhere to state mandated or add to it.
- 50 feet acceptable if enforced. Yes.

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Should insure that we comply with state 50'. AND investigate other ways to prepare for the impeding sea level rise.
- Enforce the 50' marsh setback. Setback: should be considered on new residential subdivisions on the Island and WITHOUT reducing lot size.
- Obviously not enforced now. Enforce it!!!
- Yes!
- The Buffer should be enforced. We should protect the marsh and beach - 50' enforced.

6. Should stream buffers be increased beyond the state-mandated 25 feet?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Define a stream; farther away from potential flooding
- Yes
- Yes

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Go to 50' at least
- Same answer as question #5 [Enforce the 50' marsh setback. Setback: should be considered on new residential subdivisions on the Island and WITHOUT reducing lot size.]
- Year-round running water. Define a stream, NOT a ditch.
- Yes!
- Increased, enforced 25' buffer.

7. Should a Climate Adaptation Zone be established to reduce the impacts of flooding and sea level rise?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes!!
- Yes
- Yes

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Yes.
- We do not understand the question and cannot answer, but the consensus now says no.
- Yes!
- No redevelopment or add density in zone prone areas.

8. Non-conforming buildings that are damaged or destroyed by an "act of God" such as hurricane must be rebuilt to conform with all zoning requirements if the repair or re-construction cost is more than 50% of the value of the building and certain other criteria apply. Is this appropriate?

Group Summary Page Comments

- Yes!!
- Yes
- Yes

Detailed Note Sheet Comments

- Yes
- No! But conform with Building Code.
- Yes!!!
- It should need to be less than 50% of the trees. It has need to be reconstructed to be safe. Yes!

Comment Cards

- Speed limit from Sea Island Rd to Frederica - it's 35 MPH, but from Frederica going onto "New Demere" it's 25 MPH, even tho' it's less dense. I would like the limit raised to 35 MPH until Demere. Connects to Old Demere.
- Bicycles!!! ?
- Design standards should include lighting to avoid light pollution - also to include permeable surfaces. Preservation of our environment should be foremost.
- Island and Mainland have different needs and issues - need overlays separate for each. 2. Mainland and Island planning commissions should have decision, not recommendation, authority. 3. All ordinance updates should have resiliency from sea level/ climate change as an overarching concept. If it takes away from resiliency (i.e. septic tanks coverage, imperviousness), then it needs to be changed.
- Townhomes and condos should not be allowed to have a single car garage - must be 2 car and required size. Example is at Gasoign (?) Park area. A tree survey should be required prior to grading a lot on SSI. On SSI, impervious surfaces should be addressed.
- No high rises allowed on SSI.
- Density - should be kept at present 3 stories. Greenery - should be part of every new subdivision plan. Island Planning Commission should also approve or disapprove all plans.
- Please define "Affordable Housing." In Atlanta: Section 8. In Chicago: high-rise south side. Here it is used to mean smaller lots with small homes on them. But our developers are requesting variances on these lots to build "up" so they can build larger homes. Of course, this reduces the availability of affordable housing on the island. Also, homes are now built with virtually no setback - again making larger, more expensive homes on lots intended for affordable housing.
- I note that in several cases your questions do not imply differing needs or ordinances for varying areas of the county. "One size fits all" planning should be avoided in all questions and plans. At the September 24th meeting, one of the Mainland Planning Commissioners suggested allowing taller than 3-story condos on SSI, just not on the beach. This is UNACCEPTABLE! But typical of conflict between mainland contractors and island residents. Density problem!
- Need a (can't read word) traff. Study. Proj. growth 25 years