

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 8, 2014

TO: Planning and Zoning Board

FROM: Jack Daly, Vice Chair
Planning and Zoning Board

SUBJECT: PLANNING ROLE OF PLANNING & ZONING BOARD

The purpose of this memorandum is to engage a discussion among the Planning and Zoning Board (P&Z) members with respect to its substantive planning role, leading to a consensus and a recommendation to the Town Commission (Commission) to convene joint Commission / P&Z public meeting(s) to formalize such planning role.

As I briefly stated at the March 18, 2014, P&Z meeting, during the almost three years since I have been on the P&Z, we have performed very little, if any, substantive planning, notwithstanding the "Planning" caption in our official name. In my view, a more accurate description of our role during this period has been only to react to some of the various planning activities that has been conducted on behalf of the Town.

I suggest, particularly after the recent formal recommendations of the ULI Study, that now is the time for the Commission to formalize and articulate the substantive planning role of the P&Z. To-date, the Commission has assigned planning tasks to an Advisory Committee (which seems to me to be somewhat uncertain of its role) and the Staff, which has engaged experts in support thereof; and while all may be consistent with appropriate planning procedures, no planning activities or discussions have been discussed with or assigned to the P&Z. Again, as I briefly stated, while my only public sector experience has been with the P&Z, during my somewhat extensive corporate experience with strategic planning activities, I suggest that corporate procedures and structures are equally applicable to the public process. Simply stated, in many corporations, the Board / Management / CEO establishes a mission / vision and sets forth specific prioritized business objectives, and a standing Department / Entity is directed to develop strategies to achieve such objectives by utilizing staff throughout the organization, and to monitor such planning activities to ensure achievement of their objectives. I suggest a similar more formal structure and process would serve the Longboat community well.

From a distance, to-date, it seems to me that the Commission is conducting the Town's planning activities in a manner similar to what I outline above, but without a formal structure and without defining a planning role for the P&Z. I suggest the

objectives of the Commission and the Town could be better achieved by doing so and taking advantage of the talents of the entire P&Z. This could be in the role of coordinating some or many planning activities, or as an entity responsible for developing strategies prioritized by the Commission to achieve certain specified objectives, all as deemed appropriate by the Commission.

Not entirely as an aside, but perhaps relevant for discussion at this time, is to also define certain applications where it may be appropriate for final P&Z actions, to alleviate the need for duplicative Commission hearings, rather than solely a recommendation role. I am aware of the current plan on the agenda to do so for certain site plan applications such as recently approved for the Hilton expansion. Accordingly I suggest the P&Z role should be expanded and formalized to enable some of its decisions to be final, subject to appeals to the Commission by entities with standing. Perhaps the staff could be asked to define the applications that may be appropriate for such consideration.

In summary, after discussion, I recommend the P&Z recommend that the Commission conduct a joint public Commission / P&Z meeting to formalize the P&Z planning role as deemed appropriate. At a minimum, such role should include periodic joint public Commission / P&Z planning sessions.

Cc: Alaina Ray, Planning, Zoning & Building Director