

**MINUTES**  
**PLANNING BOARD**  
**BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NC**

**6:00 P.M. Monday**  
**January 8, 2018**

**Commissioners Chambers**  
**David R. Sandifer Administration Bldg.**  
**County Government Center**  
**Old U.S 17 East**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Eric Dunham, Chair  
Joy Easley, Vice Chair  
Richard Leary  
Ron Medlin  
Troy Price  
Randy Ward  
William Bittenbender, Alternate

MEMBERS ABSENT

Tom Simmons

STAFF PRESENT

Kirstie Dixon, Director  
Helen Bunch, Zoning Admin.  
Connie Marlowe, Admin. Asst. II  
Marc Pages, Senior Planner  
Bryan Batton, Asst. County Attorney

OTHERS PRESENT

Mark Brambell  
John Hankins  
Brian Slattery, Brunswick Beacon

Terry Pope, State Port Pilot  
Lewis Dozier

I. CALL TO ORDER.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Mr. Dunham said a prayer. The Chair asked everyone to stand and face the U.S. Flag to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL.

Mr. Tom Simmons was absent.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF THE 11-DEC-17 MEETING.

Mr. Leary made a motion to approve the minutes as written and the motion was unanimously carried.

V. AGENDA AMENDMENTS.

There were none.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS.

There were none.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS.

A. Planned Development Conceptual Plan Approval – PD-14.

Name: St. James Center  
Applicant: Canal Associates, LLC and Harbor Development Corporation  
Tax Parcels: 20400018, 20400019, 20400020, 20400022, 2040002201, 20400023, 20400024, 20400025, 20400039, 20400040 and 20400058  
Location: Located on Southport-Supply Road SE (NC 211) adjacent to its intersection with St. James Drive SE and fronting Committee Drive SE  
Description: St. James Center Planned Development is proposed to consist of 139.86 acres with an overall density of 13.6 units per acre. A total of 53.29 acres are planned for multi-family development, with an additional 39.45 acres of commercial development. Based upon the permissible density, a total of 1,902 units are proposed for development.

Ms. Bunch addressed the Board. Ms. Bunch read the Staff Report (attached). Ms. Bunch identified the proposed area on a visual map.

Ms. Bunch said staff recommends approval based on the following conditions:

- That the development shall proceed in conformity with all plans and design features submitted as part of the planned development application and kept on file by the Brunswick County Planning Department;
- That the development of the parcel(s) shall comply with all regulations as specified in the Brunswick County Unified Development Ordinance;
- Indicate on the concept plan that at site specific review, required open space acreage and recreation acreage will be addressed for each phase; and
- State on the site plan encouragement for the development of upper story residential over the proposed commercial areas.

Mr. Dunham asked staff if Tax Parcels 2040002101 and 20400021 were previously in the County's planning and zoning jurisdiction? Ms. Bunch stated that the Town of St. James (Town) governmental offices are located on those parcels and they were annexed into the Town. Mr.

Dunham asked staff if the parcels off Executive Park Blvd were previously in the County's planning and zoning jurisdiction? Ms. Bunch replied, yes.

Ms. Easley made a motion to open the Public Hearing and the motion was unanimously carried.

Mr. Mark Brambell, Vice President of Development for St. James Plantation, addressed the Board. Mr. Brambell said the proposed project has not been completely developed due to the uncertain time of when the widening of NC 211 (Southport-Supply Road SE) will occur. He stated that there is an access agreement between the Town and Canal Associates that allows access at the traffic light with a left turn, a right turn and another left turn into the Town. He further stated that the access agreement contemplates crossing to the west of the Town's parcel and the proposed plan will continue to allow for such to happen. Mr. Brambell said they are working with the Town to procure access at the rear of the Town's parcel where the road cuts through the left rear corner of the Town's parcel. Mr. Bramble reiterated that water and sewer will be provided by Brunswick County and roads will be both public (Street A and St. James Drive will be dedicated to the North Carolina Department of Transportation) and private (will be maintained by a Property Owners' Association).

Mr. Bittenbender asked how the town center will be designed and relate to the Town's community center and office buildings? Mr. Bramble said it is too early to predict how the area will be designed until NC 211 widening occurs. He felt that there will be mixed uses in that area, which could potentially include a grocery store. Mr. Dunham asked if this property will become part of the towns planning and zoning jurisdiction? Mr. Bramble said there has not been any discussions of such.

With no further comments, Mr. Bittenbender made a motion to close the Public Hearing and the motion was unanimously carried.

With no further discussions, Mr. Bittenbender made a motion to approve St. James Center Planned Development with the noted conditions by staff and the motion was unanimously carried.

## VIII. OTHER BUSINESS.

- Solar Farm Text Amendment Discussion

Ms. Dixon addressed the Board. She stated that the Board previously received a memo from her as well as several attachments that included the Planning Board's proposed solar farm amendment that was sent to the Board of Commissioners for their approval, the Planning Board's 09-Oct-17 minutes, the Board of Commissioners' 20-Nov-17 minutes, letters and emails from the solar industry and citizens of Brunswick County supporting clean energy. Ms. Dixon said the Board of Commissioners voted to send the matter back to the Planning Board on 20-Nov-17 for further review and discussion. Ms. Dixon discussed a PowerPoint presentation (attached) summarizing the issues addressed by staff. Ms. Dixon said the speakers at the Board of Commissioners public hearing were not in favor of the proposed size limitation, requiring a 3 year update on solar farms, and bonding requirements. Ms. Dixon further stated that there have been 11 solar farms approved thus far and 4 of those have been built. She further stated that the average size of the approved solar farms is 20 acres and the largest solar farm is 47.62 acres, which was recently approved. Ms. Dixon said the Board can recommend no changes to the current ordinance, or recommend changes as proposed, or recommend additional changes to accommodate the public's concerns.

Ms. Easley clarified that there were 6 people that spoke at the Board of Commissioners' 20-Nov-17 meeting as well as emails from the public and the solar farm industry addressing their concerns and Ms. Dixon concurred. Ms. Easley asked if the Board of Commissioners could have made a decision without further review from the Planning Board and Mr. Batton concurred.

The Board proceeded to discuss the proposed changes that were previously recommended to the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Easley asked what the Board of Commissioners is expecting from the Planning Board that is different from what was initially recommended at their 20-Nov-17 meeting? Ms. Dixon said the Board of Commissioners want the Planning Board to review the proposed changes to see if additional adjustments need to be made based on feedback the Board of Commissioners received at their public hearing on 20-Nov-17. Mr. Price asked what were the major concerns of the public that spoke at the Board of Commissioners' public hearing on 20-Nov-17? Ms. Dixon said the public wanted to exclude the proposed size limitation for solar farms, the 3 year update requirement in the decommissioning plan and the financial guarantee. Mr. Price asked if the Board of Commissioners have a preference on the maximum size a solar farm should be? Ms. Dixon said she was under the impression from that meeting that some of the Board of Commissioners want to remove the maximum size for solar farms.

Mr. Leary said he attended the Board of Commissioners 20-Nov-17 meeting and he reiterated that the majority of the commissioners were not in favor of limiting solar farms to 35 acres. Mr. Batton interjected that it is his understanding that the majority of the Board of Commissioners were not in favor of the bonding requirement, or the size limitation, or the frequency of revisiting the decommissioning plan. Mr. Leary agreed that the financial guarantee requirement was also unfavorable with the Board of Commissioners.

After lengthy discussion regarding the frequency of revisiting the decommissioning plan, the Board agreed to remove the 3 year update requirement in the decommissioning plan. Mr. Dunham suggested that no financial guarantee be required and Mr. Bittenbender concurred. He also suggested that the size limitation be omitted and a special use permit be required in any zoning district that currently allows for solar farms and the other Board members agreed. Ms. Dixon clarified that the Planning Board proposes to not include a size limitation for solar farms, require all solar farms to obtain a special use permit, eliminate both the financial guarantee and the 3 year update requirement in the decommissioning plan and the Board members concurred.

Mr. Price made a motion for staff to make the proposed revisions as stated above and bring back for a Public Hearing at the Planning Board's 12-Feb-18 meeting.

- Planning Board Cases Update

Ms. Dixon addressed the Board. She stated that Z-758CZ was approved at the Board of Commissioners 18-Dec-17 meeting and there were no rezoning cases at the Planning Board's 11-Dec-17 meeting.

## IX. ADJOURNMENT.

With no further business, Mr. Leary made a motion to adjourn and the motion was unanimously carried.