



City of Liberty Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 23rd, 2024
Rosewood Center

Board Members Present:
Gerald Wilson
Bo McDonald
Hester Rose Elrod
Karin Shore

Staff Present:
Jennifer Vissage
Jake Whitmire
Philip Trotter

Opening Comments, Establishment of a Quorum

Mr. McDonald opened the meeting at 6 PM and stated that a quorum was established. No one signed up to speak therefore no public comments were received. Mr. McDonald let the board know that Mr. Bill Smith has resigned from the Planning Commission and that staff and council are currently taking applications to fill his spot.

December 12th, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Mr. McDonald asked if the December 12th, 2023, meeting minutes have been reviewed and if so, could he receive a motion to approve. Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes and Mrs. Elrod seconded the motion. The board voted 4-0 to approve. Mrs. Vissage stated two items that needed to be changed. Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve the amended minutes and Mrs. Elrod seconded the amendments. The board voted 4-0 to approve the amended meetings.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Mrs. Vissage stated that Jake Whitmire and herself have done their part with data and research. It is now the board members' turn to have their input with goals, issues, and the future land use map. The remaining elements were given to board members to review, and discussion was as follows:

- 1) Community/Cultural Facilities:
 - a. Mrs. Elrod volunteered to rewrite the History Museum part to not be written in first person.
 - b. Mrs. Elrod asked that Southern Wesleyan be added to the list of nearby colleges.
 - c. Mrs. Elrod asked that the two adult day care being added.
 - d. Mrs. Elrod asked to expand on the information concerning the Pickens County Performing Arts Center. Mr. Wilson will share the contact information of the director.
 - e. Mr. Wilson mentioned the plans for the former city hall which could include demolition and using the property for future EMS.
 - f. Mr. Wilson asked that Meals on Wheels be added

g. Mrs. Shore was interested in plans for the old stadium.

2) Housing:

- a. Mr. Whitmire shared his finds with the housing elements which included the 200% increase in rental and mortgages since 2020.
- b. Fifty-seven percent of people in Liberty in rentals units are spending more than one-third of their income on rent.
- c. Eighty-seven percent of residents are owner occupied which 23% are rental in Liberty. This is one of the lowest rental occupied percentages compared to other similar sized cities in the Upstate.
- d. Mr. Trotter stated there needs to be balance between rental and homeowners. Townhomes could be an option to add to the variety of homes type in Liberty.
- e. Mrs. Shore stated that we should look into developments that can attract Clemson students.
- f. Mr. McDonald asked to investigate homeownership goals in other towns and compare Liberty to others.
- g. Mrs. Elrod stated that the goal for homeownership needs to be investigated more. Should it be similar to the 80% that was set in 2003?
- h. Everyone agreed that affordability and variety of housing types are the biggest concerns for housing in Liberty.
- i. Mrs. Elrod mentioned the annexation moratorium that Pickens County is asking all the municipalities to set. She said it could hurt the town if a business (for example Sphinx) wanted to come in and the city would have to delay because of an annexation moratorium. Mrs. Vissage stated that the city council has made no decision on the moratorium and that any moratorium would be a council decision. Mr. Wilson stated that he sees both sides (city and county) for annexation and feels that more communication needs to be between the two before any annexation could occur. Annexations guarantee money for Liberty, but someone must pay for the infrastructure improvements. Impact fees are one way to address that.

3) Priority Investment:

- a. Mrs. Vissage stated that Priority Investment is a big wish list of items that the city would like to obtain in the next 5 to 10 years. It could be anything from new sidewalks to a new fire truck. Most cities used a capital improvement plan for this element, but Liberty is still working on a plan. Therefore, it will be added to the comprehensive plan with completed.

4) Natural Resources

- a. Mrs. Elrod asked that the Foothills Trail be edited to be 76.4 miles.
- b. Mr. Wilson asked that Twin Lakes be edited so that it is city maintained.
- c. Mrs. Elrod asked that the natural springs be added.

Mrs. Vissage then asked the board to review the zoning map and existing land use map to begin the process of future development. She also asked for any goals that need to be listed in the document. Mrs. Elrod asked for the zoning map to have an overlay of where the vacant properties are to make it clearer for the board to review. Mr. Whitmire stated he could send everyone by the end of the week.



The board agreed to review the maps again and come ready at the February meeting with the map ideas as well as more goals.

Adjournment

Mrs. Elrod made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Shore seconded the motion. The board voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM.