

**PLANNING and ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 11, 2012**

The Planning and Administration Committee met on Tuesday, September 11, 2012 in the Committee Room, located on the second floor of the Administration Building beginning at 2:00 p.m. Ms. Summers, Committee Chair, presided.

Members Attending:

Debra B. Summers, Chairman
James E. Kinard, Jr.
M. Todd Cullum

George H. Davis, V Chairman
K. Brad Matthews

Also attending: Joe Mergo, III, County Administrator; John Fechtel, Deputy County Administrator; Larry Porth, Finance Director/Assistant County Administrator; Jeff Anderson, County Attorney; other staff members, citizens of the county and representatives of the media.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda was sent to radio and TV stations, newspapers, and posted on the bulletin board located in the lobby of the County Administration Building.

History of Off-Site Signage (Goal 2) - Planning & GIS - Charlie Compton, Director of Planning and GIS - Mr. Compton presented the history of off-site signs in Lexington County with a Power Point presentation. He reported most signage can be categorized by two traits, either 1) on-site signs or business signs, or 2) off-site signs or advertising signs with the majority referred to as advertising signs. During 1979, Lexington County began to expand its zoning restrictions areas and at that same time entrances to Lexington County towns typically had several small signs for the local bank, grocery store, or only insurance agency in town. Mr. Compton said what concerns him about what is being proposed now is it would eliminate that basic tradition and that is why the language for small advertising signage was written in 1979. Mr. Compton reported the County Ordinance refers to the South Carolina Code of Laws to ensure the public understands it is in compliance with state laws. As the County reviews the signage chapter, we need to consider how to match the County's sign requirements to those of the adjourning municipalities. Mr. Compton said the County's small advertising sign text had outlived its original purpose and the decision was made to remove it as an option in the zoning ordinance. He outlined new off-site sign options created to add to some of the specialty categories already in the ordinance: 1) Short-Term Personal Information Signs for garage sales, lost and found pets, wedding directions, etc., do not require a permit; 2) Temporary Directional Signs are used with seasonal activities to address civic, church and community special events and not associated with permanent business activities and utilizing small signs for limited length of time; 3) Off-Premise Real Estate Signs are allowed provided they are on private property with the owner's permission and must be removed within seven days of the conveyance or lease of the property; 4) Off-Premise Subdivision/Development Signs are allowed provided they are on private property with the owner's permission and must meet certain requirements. 5) Public Service Signs are

used to display information about public service activities including the location of events i.e churches, public education, recreation, etc. and other not-for-profit type activities and must comply with same requirements as the Business Signs on private property with the owner's permission, no timeframe restriction. Mr. Compton said the only two things that must be kept in mind with signage are not to conflict with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) rules and to coordinate with municipalities. The Committee expressed concerns about yard signs, especially real estate signs, set out on the weekends in the road right-of-way or driveways that pose safety issues for drivers. Mr. Compton replied that issue needs to be addressed head on because signs are not allowed in the right-of-way. Mr. Compton said the Planning Commission has had those issues and there are provisions allowing signs to be placed on private property with the owner's permission. Staff was asked to find ways to enforce the ordinance. The Committee asked about a long standing discussion concerning overlay zoning districts for municipalities in the County that may pose a conflict between the two entities. Staff was asked to check if municipalities would compromise to some degree to allow charitable organizations, such as schools and churches, to place signs or banners on their property. The Committee continued discussions on sign regulations and suggested coordinating with the municipalities to be more uniform. Staff will return to the September 25th Committee meeting with proposed guidelines for political signs and information collected to update the current ordinance. For information only, no action taken.

Old Business/New Business - None.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy R. Busbee
Assistant to the Clerk

Debra B. Summers
Chair

Diana W. Burnett
Clerk