

The Planning Commission met in person on Thursday, June 10, 2021 at 6:36 p.m. at the Town of James Island Town Hall, 1122 Dills Bluff Road, James Island, SC. Commissioners present: Deborah Bidwell, Ed Steers, Vice Chair, Zennie Quinn, and Bill Lyon, Chairman, who presided. Absent: Commissioner Mark Maher (gave notice). Also: Kristen Crane, Planning Director, Town Administrator, Ashley Kellahan, Frances Simmons, Town Clerk and Secretary to the Planning Commission, and Town Councilwoman Cynthia Mignano.

Call to Order: Chairman Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. and asked those who wished to stand for the prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. A quorum was present to conduct business.

Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act: Chairman Lyon announced that this meeting was noticed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

Introductions: Chairman Lyon introduced the members of the Planning Commission and staff.

Approval of March 11, 2021 Minutes: The minutes of March 11, 2021 were approved upon a motion by Commissioner Quinn, seconded by Commissioner Bidwell and passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

Karen Beard, 537 White Chapel Circle, James Island Planning Commission Meeting, June 10, 2021 – Karen Beard’s Remarks:

Myself and my colleagues are representing the James Island members of the Charleston Coalition for Wireless Safety Standards regarding the drafting of a Small Cell Ordinance for James Island.

In your agenda packet, you received the MASC Model Ordinance, and copies of the Charleston, Greenville, Bluffton, and Summerville small cell ordinances. Those ordinances provide no safeguard for residents from the microwave radiation that will be emitted from small cell antennas. In the Charleston ordinance, small cell antennas will be allowed every 300 feet. On James Island, that would be an antenna on almost every utility pole and lamp post in our neighborhoods.

We don’t want that, nor do we want it for our children. The 5G technology has not been tested for safety, and we do not want our children to be the long-term test studies.

So, we’re presenting to you tonight a folder containing an alternative small cell ordinance written by the Americans for Responsible Technology organization. They are an organization made up of people like us who are saying, “Wait a minute. Let’s apply the Precautionary Principle here, and not rush into something that could be a hazard for our children, and maybe is not even needed.”

The benefactor of installing small cell infrastructure is the telecom industry. 5G is not about public safety. It’s **not** about closing the digital divide or addressing broadband inequity issues. 5G is about faster video streaming, self-driving cars, the Internet of Things, and allowing telecom companies to compete with cable companies to generate more and more profits.

We ask you to take a strong stand and write a small cell ordinance protective of James Island residents. No, it will not be as easy as using one of the sample ordinances, and yes, there may be legal entanglements, but what better use of our attorney’s time could there be than searching for and fighting for every possible way to protect James Island residents from technology whose safety has been disputed?

In your folder, you will find all information I sent you via email including a list of reasons small cell applications can be denied, and a list of what other cities are doing. Thank you for your work on this and for taking the time to consider what is best for James Islanders.

Sarah Pursell, 1071 Harborview Rd., I am Sarah Pursell, mother of four who lives in the town of James Island, and a self-educated researcher on the topic of 5G. I'm very concerned about 5G technology. The safety has not been tested for safety in close proximity to the public, and we already know that radiation in any form is hazardous to our health. Some testing has been done on 4G, but a lot of testing has been done on 2G and 3G, (National Toxicology Program, 2019). The National toxicology program concluded there is clear evidence of a connection between non-ionizing radiation and cancer. 4G and 5G are higher frequencies of the same microwave radiation as 2G and 3G, so we can only assume that if 5G is tested, the results will be just as bad, if not worse. We cannot let James Island children be the long-term studies for this new technology.

The wave-length of 5G is different than any other previous radiation we've used, and many experts believe it will be even more damaging to our health, especially in regard to cancer.

Cities all over the country and the world are banning 5G. Why would they do that if it is so safe? Schools are removing wireless technology. Why would they do that if it were safe? The answer is, it's not safe. Especially for our children, with growing, forming bodies and brains. I will not allow my children to play near any cell tower that I am aware of, but unfortunately the awareness and ability to have informed consent is rapidly being removed from me.

I urge you to take a strong stand when writing the Small Cell Ordinance for James Island. Please put measures in place that protect us and allow for choice when it comes to 5G exposure. If I am given informed consent, and choose to expose my family to it, that is one thing. If I don't even know we are being exposed, because the antenna are ubiquitous, that's another thing. Thank you for considering the protective measures that we have given you in our folder tonight.

Alison Van Horn, 860 Stiles Dr. mother of two stated her health conditions and that for the better part of two years have not used WIFI at her property. She is very concerned about the health concerns of the 5G radiation. She asked the Planning Commission to look at other options because there are better ways this can be done.

Brook Lyon, 669 Port Circle: Thanked the Planning Commission for addressing this issue and for looking at other and better options. She also thanked Karen Beard and mentioned that they had worked closely together years ago fighting the cell tower on the soccer field. Mrs. Lyon expressed that she has concerns about 5G; one side says it is ok, and the other says it is harmful. She doesn't think that we know enough about it and believes some are sensitive. She mentioned that Green Bank, a community in West Virginia/Virginia border, where there are no cell phones or Wi-Fi due to a high tech government telescope, and people move there to get away from radio waves. She asked the Planning Commission to be as restrictive as they could, understanding that their hands are tied on some things.

Staff Comments: None

Discussion on ZLDR Amendments to Regulate Small Cell Wireless Facilities: The Planning Commission discussed potential amendments to the Town's Zoning and Land Development Regulations regarding regulations and guidelines for placement of small cell wireless facilities.

Planning Director, Kristen Crane, gave an overview by Power Point on Small Cell Wireless Facilities and when the Act became effective. She noted in her presentation that even though the new law prevents most

local control within ROWs, there are ways to regulate these facilities. She showed examples of various types of cell utility poles and engaged the Planning Commission with in-depth discussion on the ordinances presented to them in their packets. The Ordinances reviewed were: MASC Model Ordinance, City of Charleston, City of Greenville, Town of Bluffton, and the Town of Summerville. A copy of the Power Point Presentation is here: <C:\Users\fsimmons\OneDrive - Town of James Island, SC\Documents\Clerk Backup\Planning and Zoning\Presentation on 5G Small Cell Ordinance.pptx>

Mrs. Crane informed the Planning Commission that this process would probably take a couple of months for them to go through options and to be able to answer questions that were not able to be answered tonight. After Mrs. Crane presentation and discussion, the Planning Commission posed questions of which some were answered. Mrs. Crane will further research by obtaining information from other entities and/or experts by the next Planning Commission meeting.

The Planning Commission thanked Mrs. Crane for the presentation and the work that she did in getting this information to them.

Chairman's Comments: None

Commissioners Comments: None

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Planning Commission will be held on Thursday, July 8, 2021 at 6:35 p.m.

Adjourn: There being no further business to come before the body, the meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Frances Simmons
Town Clerk and Secretary to the Planning Commission