



**JAMES ISLAND PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA
1122 Dills Bluff Road, James Island, SC 29412**

**October 14, 2021
6:35 PM**

NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS POSTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Face Coverings are required inside Town Hall facilities for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.

**This meeting will be live-streamed on the Town's YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm9sFR-ivmaAT3wyHdAYZqw/featured>**

**Public Comments need to be received via email by noon on Thursday 10/14/2021 to
kcrane@jamesislandsc.us**

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. COMPLIANCE WITH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
- III. INTRODUCTIONS
- IV. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2021 MINUTES
- V. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- VI. STAFF COMMENTS
- VII. ZONING MAP AMENDMENT
 - a. Case #ZCC-8-21-012:
Request to rezone property located at 1622 Camp Road from the General Office District (OG) to the Community Commercial District (CC) for Beverage or Related Products Manufacturing and Retail Sales and Services uses.
Planning Commission will vote on a recommendation to Town Council
- VIII. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN OF JAMES ISLAND ZONING AND LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS ORDINANCE (ZLDR) AND THE LIVABILITY ORDINANCE INCLUDING:
 - a. Table 153.110: Replacing the Special Exception (S) requirement in the RSL Zoning District for Apiculture (beekeeping) with Conditions (C).
 - b. Livability 90.18 and ZLDR Section 153.211: Adding provisions for apiculture (beekeeping) on residential property.
Planning Commission will vote on a recommendation to Town Council
- IX. CHAIR'S COMMENTS
- X. COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS
- XI. NEXT MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 11, 2021
- XII. ADJOURN

The Planning Commission met on Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 6:35 p.m. virtually on Zoom. Commissioners present: Ed Steers, Vice Chair, Zennie Quinn, Deborah Bidwell, and Bill Lyon, Chairman, who presided. Absent: Mark Maher, and Planning Director, Kristen Crane. Also present: Flannery Wood, Planner II, Ashley Kellahan, Town Administrator, Bonum S. Wilson, Town Attorney, and Frances Simmons, Town Clerk and Secretary to the Planning Commission.

Call to Order: Chairman Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m., led in prayer which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act: Chairman Lyon announced that this meeting was duly noticed in compliance with the SC Freedom of Information Act. The public was provided a link to participate, and the meeting was live-streamed on the Town's YouTube channel.

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

Approval of August 12, 2021 Minutes: Minutes of the August 12, 2021 meeting were approved upon motion by Chairman Lyon, seconded by Commissioner Quinn. Passed unanimously.

Public Comments: None

Staff Comments: None

Zoning Map Amendment:

Case #ZOG-7-21-011: Chairman Lyon introduced the case that the Planning Commission would hear a request to rezone property located at 1715 Oak Point Rd. from the Low-Density Suburban Residential District (RSL) to the General Office (OG) for a Fishing & Hunting Guide Service and Office Uses.

Planner II, Flannery Wood, gave a summary of the property located at 1715 Oak Point Road (TMS #343-09-00-009) stating that the applicant, Mr. Joel LeVine, and architect, Ms. Catherine Cusick are seeking to rezone the parcel from the RSL Zoning District to the OG Zoning District for a Fishing and Hunting Guide Service and the lease of office space. The property is close to the intersection of Folly Rd. and is across Oak Point Rd. from the Harris Teeter grocery store. The property currently has no structures on it, but it does contain an access easement to the residential parcel to the south. The parcel is 0.476 acres in the RSL zoning District and is considered a legal conforming lot. Ms. Wood reviewed the adjacent zonings: to the east in the Town of James Island is zoned Community Commercial (SpeeDee Oil Change & Auto Service); to the west in the City of Charleston's jurisdiction is zoned General Office (Oak Point Pediatric Dentistry); to the south and in the Town of James Island is zoned RSL and is under the same ownership as the subject parcel. The remaining surrounding areas includes parcels in the City of Charleston zoned General office, SR-1, and General Business, as well as several parcels in the Town of James Island zoned RSL.

Ms. Wood reviewed and responded to the five (5) approval criteria under Section §153.043 of the Town of James Island's Zoning and Land use Development Regulations Ordinance (ZLDR), for Zoning Map Amendment Re-zonings stating that approval may be granted only if Town Council determines that the following criteria are met:

1. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the stated purposes of the Ordinance;
2. The proposed amendment will allow development that is compatible with existing uses and zoning of nearby property;

3. The Town and other service providers will be able to provide adequate water and sewer supply, storm water facilities, waste disposal and other public facilities and services to the subject property, while maintaining adequate levels of service to existing development;
4. The applicant provides documentation that the proposed amendment will not result in significant adverse impacts on other property in the vicinity of the subject tract or on the environment, including air, water, water, noise storm water management, traffic congestion, wildlife, and natural resources;
5. The subject property is suitable for proposed zoning classification considering such things as parcel size, parcel configuration, road access and the presence of resources and amenities.

Questions to Staff:

Commissioner Bidwell's question was to clarify whether the parcel behind is owned by the same person who is requesting the rezoning. Ms. Wood replied that the parcel up for sale and the one behind it is owned by the same person. The applicant requesting the rezoning owns Red Fin Charters and is in the process of buying the lot.

Commissioner Quinn asked if the lot 1715 were split, what number would be given for the other parts. Ms. Wood said according to GIS, an address has already been assigned to them. The two houses on the back are 1715A & 1715B. The front parcel is 1715 and she did think there would be addressing issues.

Commissioner Quinn said he understands that the person in the back would have a right-of-way through the front lot for a driveway to her house. Ms. Wood said the current driveway goes through the center of the lot because she owns it, but the applicant could speak more to this. They are proposing an access easement to the far right side of the property from the street. Commissioner Quinn said that is better because he noticed a lot of traffic from the Harris Teeter.

Commissioner Steers said he visited the site twice and the request appears to be a positive addition to the neighborhood. Commissioner Quinn spoke of the heavy wooded lot next to SpeedDee and it looks as though the applicant is leaving a lot of trees. Commissioner Bidwell added that she is pleased about how the applicant explained how they would handle storm water drainage and water run-off issues in a way that maintains the natural ecosystems. She said that is a good fit for a wooded lot in trying to make sure it absorbs and reuse as much water as possible. Commissioner Quinn said he hopes the applicant sticks with the plan because it looks good.

Applicant Presentation

Catherine Cusick, architect, working with Mr. LeVine expressed her excitement about the request. She is very impressed with Mr. LeVine's commitment to the sustainability and viability of the neighborhood and the project.

Applicant, Joel LeVine, said he is excited about the project; that James Island means the world to him. He said the connector was named after a cousin and his first apartment was directly across the street at Ellis Oaks 30 years ago. This area is very centralized for his life, and he hopes it works out. He said sustainability means a lot to him. His background is fishing, and they do a lot of phone bookings, but also sustainability.

Opposition: None

Questions to the Applicant:

Chairman Lyon asked who would be leasing a part of the building. Mr. LeVine said his leasing agent has a list of businesses that are low impact. He does his business by appointment and does not foresee a lot of foot traffic. There will be 3 people working out of the building, but down the road they may work with families headed to Folly Beach. They would be looking for the same type of tenant to lease space; perhaps an architect, shipping/receiving or an internet business that does not have a lot of foot traffic.

Chairman Lyon asked how many parking spaces would be provided. Ms. Cusick said according to the provisions of the Land Use Regulations, they have 9. They have not spoken to Harris Teeter or Speedee about off-site parking as yet. There is a provision that they could have 10 or 20 percent off-site parking within 600 feet, so the answer is they do not know yet; but they are confident of at least 9.

Commissioner Quinn said he did not see it on the draft, but understands the driveway may be away from Folly Rd. He was at the location and took pictures of the constant traffic coming in/going out of Harris Teeter. He said if a street is directly there, he could see problems. Ms. Cusick said they are in discussion with the SC DOT because they are requesting a zoning change from residential to commercial and would need to file an encroachment permit for the specific regulations in their ARMS Manual.

Commissioner Quinn went on to say that there is an existing driveway 70% opposite of Harris Teeter's. Ms. Cusick said SCDOT prefers the new ingress and egress to line up center line to center line because it makes coming/going of the two, north and south properties more workable. The existing driveway is 10 or 12 feet and the new one will be 28 feet at the throat to allow for easier egress, but it will be in the same general area. The easement is on the extreme west side of the property. It is a platted easement at this time that is 10 ft. wide and meets the current SCDOT minimums. There will be two distinctly different exists; one for the residential on the far west by the dentist office, and the applicant's would be in the center of the lot. Commissioner Quinn asked if the driveway would be opposite of Harris Teeter and Ms. Cusick said that is what SCDOT prefers, center line to center line. It would not be as wide as Harris Teeter's (because their volume is greater) and a private fence would be installed to separate the properties.

Commissioner Bidwell asked if the charter business would park boats and trailers there or would the space used for office business only. Mr. LeVine said he has 150 ft. of dock space at the Bristol Marina downtown and all their boats are kept there. He said there is space in the building if they need to use it, but the primary purpose is bookings by phone, sustainability, and his office space. Commissioner Quinn asked about space there for maintenance and Mr. LeVine said no work would be done in the yard; that is done at the Marina.

Town Attorney Wilson asked if there were signed agreements for off-site parking in place. Ms. Cusick said no. Mr. Wilson asked if she was aware of the municipal ordinances on shared parking. Ms. Cusick said she had looked at it but could not recall that to mind. She knows that there is a very small percentage that is allowed off site within 600 feet; either 10 or 20 percent. Mr. LeVine said he did not think they would need it.

Commissioner Steers commented again that he visited the site twice and did not notice back up traffic coming out of Harris Teeter. He said at most one car was coming out and another behind it. There were no bottle-necks and the traffic flowed freely.

After questions were addressed, Chairman Lyon moved to approve Case #ZOG-7-21-011: Request to rezone property located at 1715 Oak Point Rd. from the Low-Density Suburban Residential District (RSL) to the General Office (OG) for Fishing/Hunting Guide Service and Office Uses, based on the staff's

recommendation. Commissioner Quinn seconded. All Planning Commissioners spoke favorably that the business would be a good fit for the location. Commissioner Bidwell agreed and stated that her concerns were clarified. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Comments: None

Commissioners Comments: None

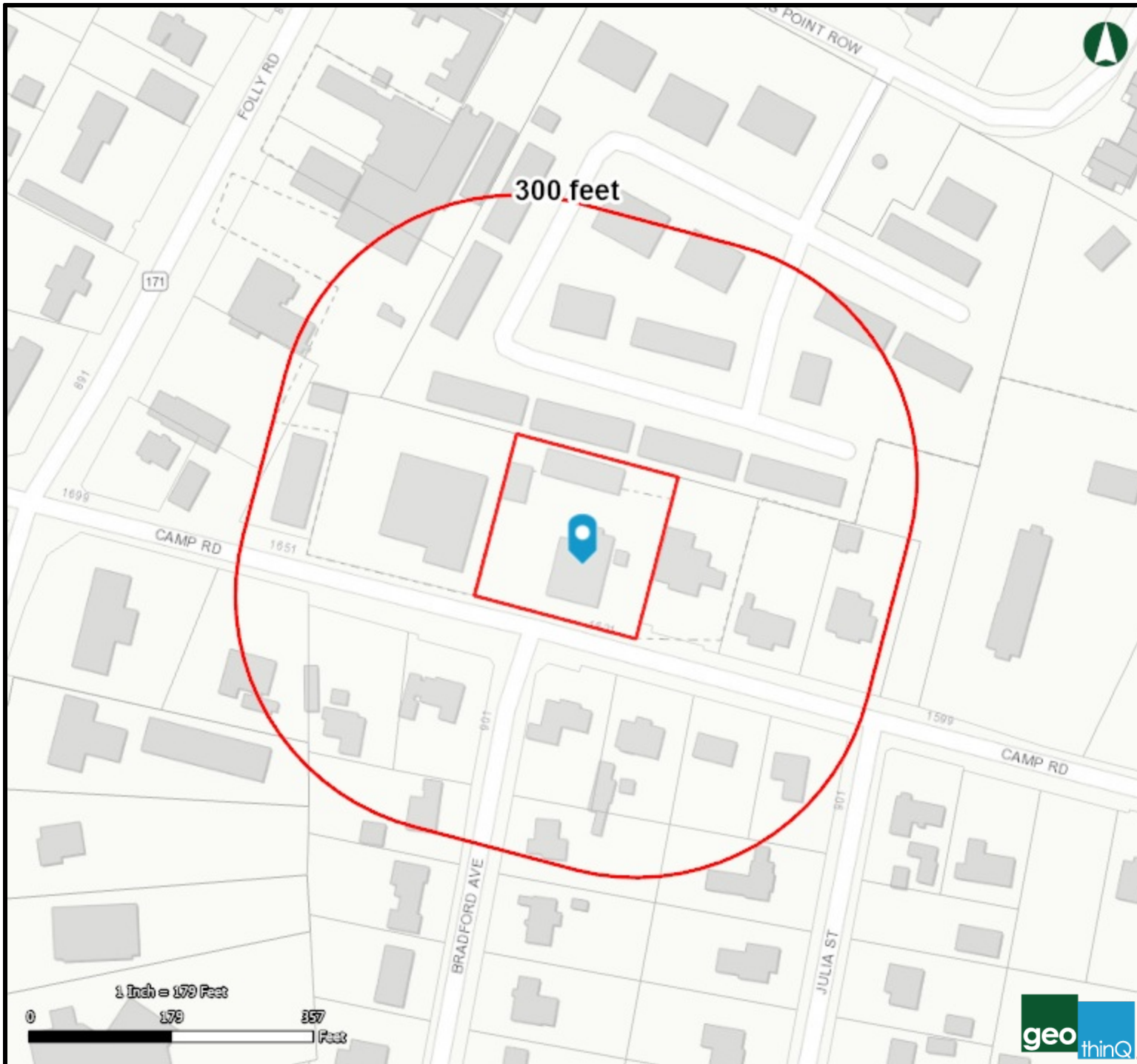
Next Meeting Date: October 14, 2021

Adjourn: There being no further business to come before the body, the meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Frances Simmons
Town Clerk

DRAFT



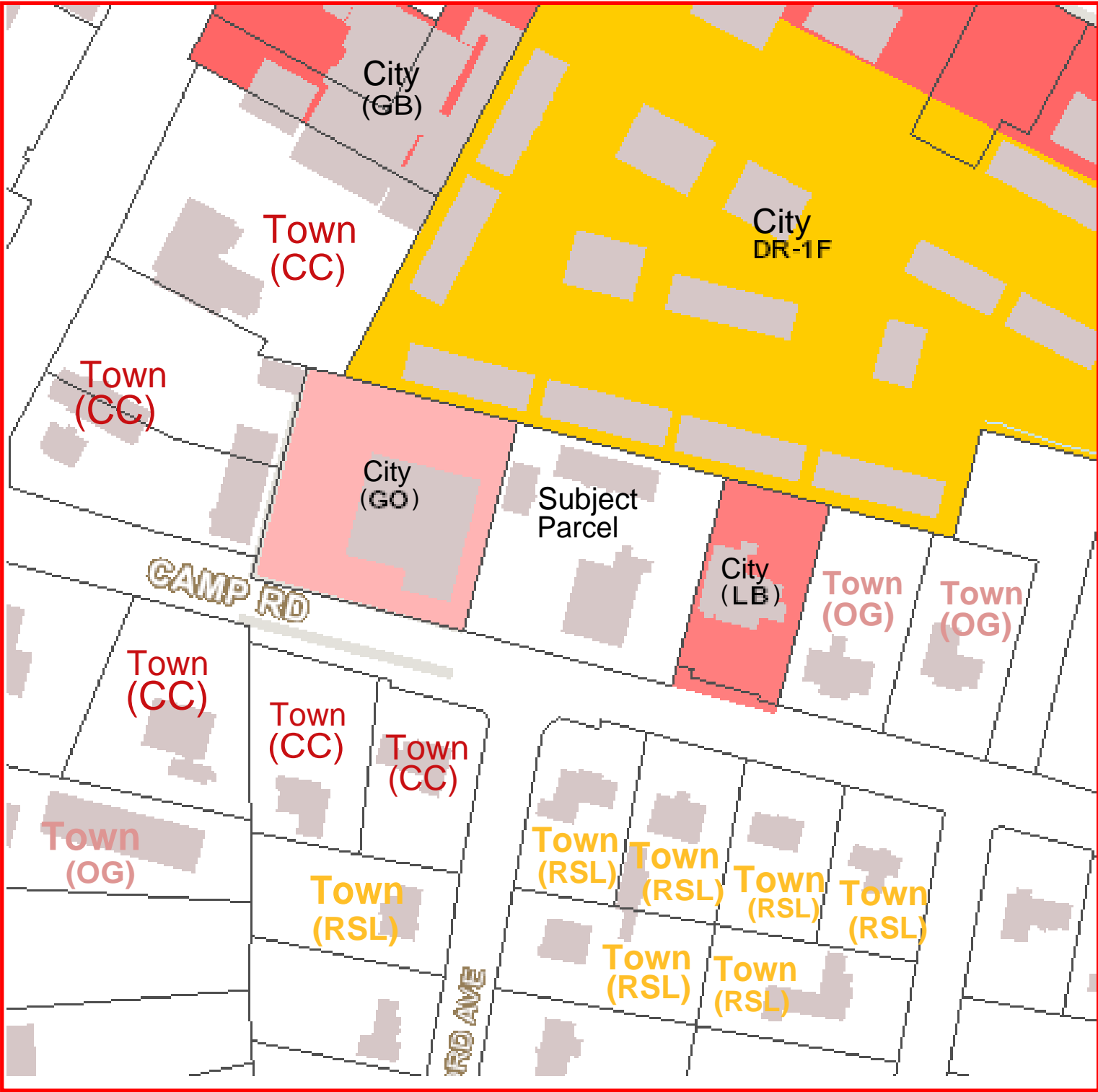
Town of James Island
South Carolina



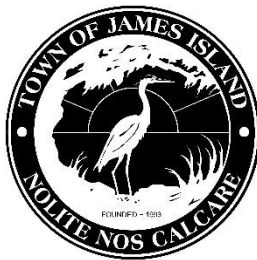
Radius Map

1622 Camp Road Rezoning
09/24/2021





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**ZONING/PLANNING
DEPARTMENT**

TOWN OF JAMES ISLAND PLANNING COMMISSION

October 14, 2021

Case Summary: ZCC-8-21-012

**Request to rezone from the General Office (OG) Zoning District to the
Community Commercial (CC) Zoning District**

History and Overview:

1622 Camp Road (TMS #425-06-00-096) is located adjacent to the intersection of Camp Road and Bradford Avenue. The property was formerly utilized by the James Island Public Service District as a fire station, and currently has three structures located on it with one of those being a covered truck/carport. The parcel included in the current Zoning Map Amendment Request is 0.932 acres in size and is in the OG Zoning District. The parcel is considered a legal conforming lot.

The applicant, Mr. Roman Rozek, is seeking to rezone the parcel from the OG Zoning District to the CC Zoning District to enable the use of the property for his existing homebrew supply store, “Beer Engineer Supply”, as well as adding a brewery, taproom, and restaurant to the property. 1622 Camp Road, LLC is the current owner of the subject parcel.

Adjacent Zoning:

The adjacent parcel to the east is in the City of Charleston and is zoned Limited Business (Tiger Lily Florist). The adjacent parcel to the west is in the City of Charleston’s jurisdiction and is zoned General Office (Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company, utilized by AT&T). To the south and across Camp Road, the adjacent parcels are in the Town of James Island, zoned CC (Sanctuary Recovery Centers) and RSL (residential). To the north the parcel is zoned DR-1F in the City of Charleston and is multi-family residential. The remaining surrounding area includes parcels in the City of Charleston zoned General Business, as well as parcels in the Town of James Island zoned CC, OG and RSL.

Approval Criteria:

According to Section §153.043 of the *Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance (ZLDR)*, applications for Zoning Map Amendment (Re-zoning) approval may be approved only if Town Council determines that the following criteria are met:

1. The proposed amendment is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and the stated purposes of this Ordinance;

Staff's response: *The Comprehensive Plan*, Land Use Element states a need as, "encouraging sensitive and sustainable development practices." Additionally, the Economic Development Element states a strategy as "encouraging a variety of diverse commercial uses that will benefit the Town as a whole". The applicant states in his letter of intent that "BES is passionate about education for our homebrewers and our expanded location on James Island will allow us to provide classes, competitions, and other outreach programs for the local Charleston Community". The applicant also intends on utilizing the existing buildings, therefore, this request may be consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and the stated purposes of this Ordinance.

2. The proposed amendment will allow development that is compatible with existing uses and zoning of nearby property;

Staff's response: Nearby properties have a wide range of existing uses (florist, communication services, transitional housing, single-family and multi-family residential, retail sales, mailing/packaging services, garden supply, bank, and social club) and zoning (commercial, general business, general office, limited business, and residential). The immediate adjacent properties are mixed between commercial, office, and residential uses. Uses that are allowed in the CC Zoning District may be compatible with some of the existing uses in the vicinity, including parcels that have the possibility to be utilized/redeveloped with their current commercial zoning. However, the subject property is bordered by multi-family residential to the north and single-family residential across Camp Road.

3. The Town and other service providers will be able to provide adequate water and sewer supply, storm water facilities, waste disposal and other public facilities and services to the subject property, while maintaining adequate levels of service to existing development;

Staff's response: The subject property has previously been serviced by public facilities and the Town and other service providers will be able to continue these public facilities.

4. The applicant provides documentation that the proposed amendment will not result in significant adverse impacts on other property in the vicinity of the subject tract or on the environment, including air, water, noise, storm water management, traffic congestion, wildlife and natural resources; and

Staff's response: The applicant's letter of intent states that they "are a family operation that will have ample parking and sidewalks for our neighbors nearby". Additionally, the applicant's site plan shows the restaurant and brewery being housed in the building closest to Camp Road. The parcel is fully developed with no changes being proposed to existing building footprints or vegetation.

- 5. The subject property is suitable for proposed zoning classification considering such things as parcel size, parcel configuration, road access and the presence of resources and amenities.**

Staff's response: The subject property is a legal conforming lot in its current zoning designation of OG. The subject property also meets the minimum standards for a Community Commercial zoning designation including parcel size and parcel configuration. The parcel has two direct accesses from Camp Road.

BEER ENGINEER- Brewery & Supply

RE: 1622 Camp Rd Brewery, Store, Restaurant.

Roman Rozek

1923 East Montague Ave
North Charleston, SC 29405
215.601.9852
Rj.rozek@gmail.com

10/14/21

To the JI Zoning Board,

Beer Engineer Supply (BES) is looking to expand its homebrew supply store operations in North Charleston to bring a production brewery, taproom, and restaurant to James Island. Our supply store will also be in our new location for the Charleston area beer and wine making hobbyists.

BES will provide an inviting atmosphere for family, friends, and community to gather and share experiences over a few pints and great food. With our extensive knowledge in the beverage industry, we promise to provide drinks to satisfy everyone's different pallets. BES is passionate about education for our homebrewers and our expanded location on James Island will allow us to provide classes, competitions, and other outreach programs for the local Charleston community.

Most importantly, BES at the Camp Road firehouse location will bring a much-desired environment to the James Island community. We are a family friendly operation that will have ample parking, sidewalks for our neighbors nearby, and live music. It will be a place to safely unwind and celebrate a productive day, or a lazy day with your loved ones and new friends you will meet here.

We hope you will accept our request to bring our business to James Island at 1622 Camp Rd and we look forward to being a part of the JI community.

Sincerely,

Roman J. Rozek



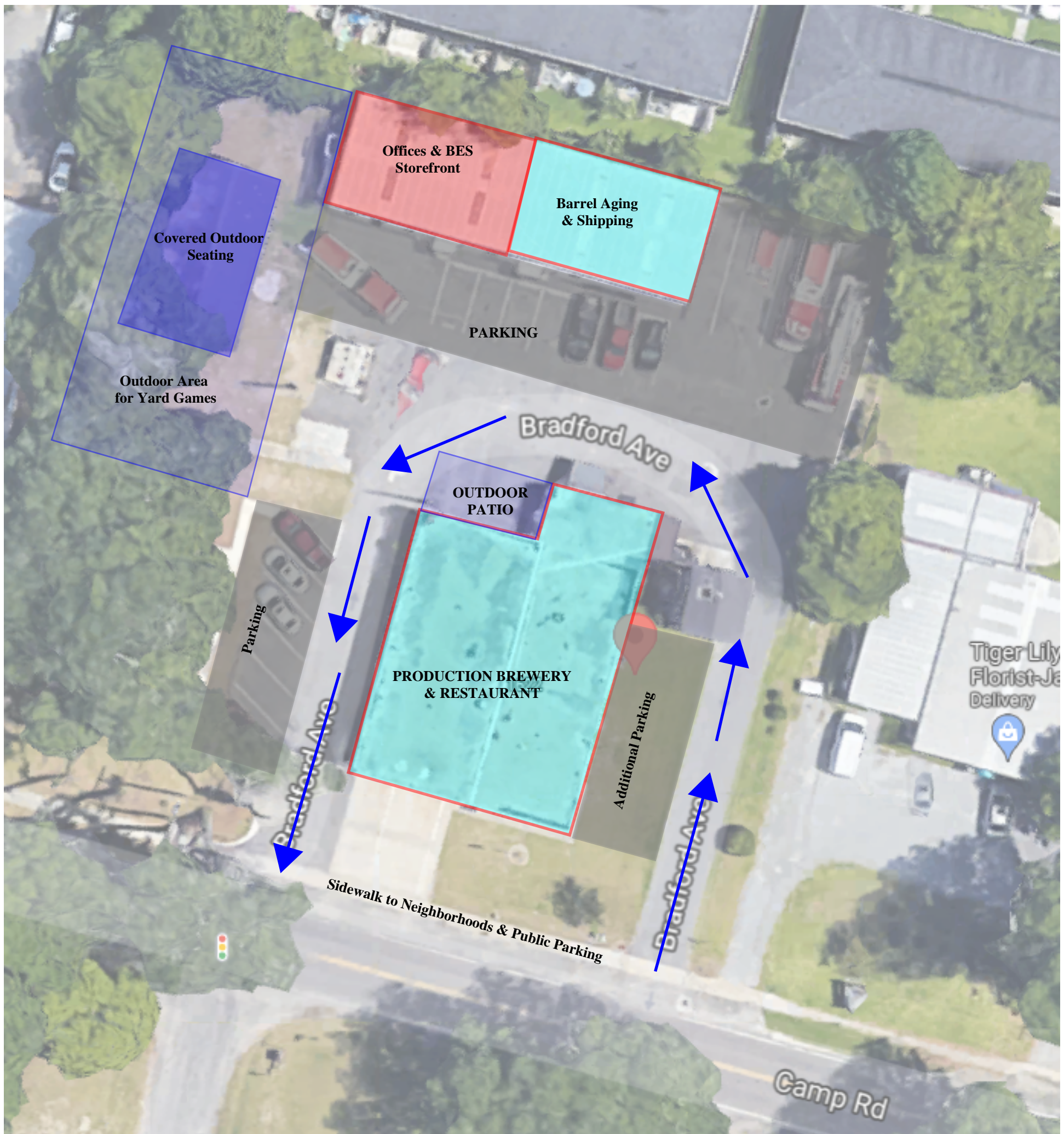
High Level Site Plan 1622 Camp Rd for Beer Engineer's Use

- Access:**
- *~20 on-site parking spots. Additional public parking nearby.
 - *One way traffic.
 - *Pedestrian and thus neighborhood access.

- Use:**
- *New & primary location for Beer Engineer Supply -Charleston's only homebrew shop.
 - *New Production Brewery- James Island's first.
 - *Full fledged restaurant.
 - *Live music, games, and of course college football.

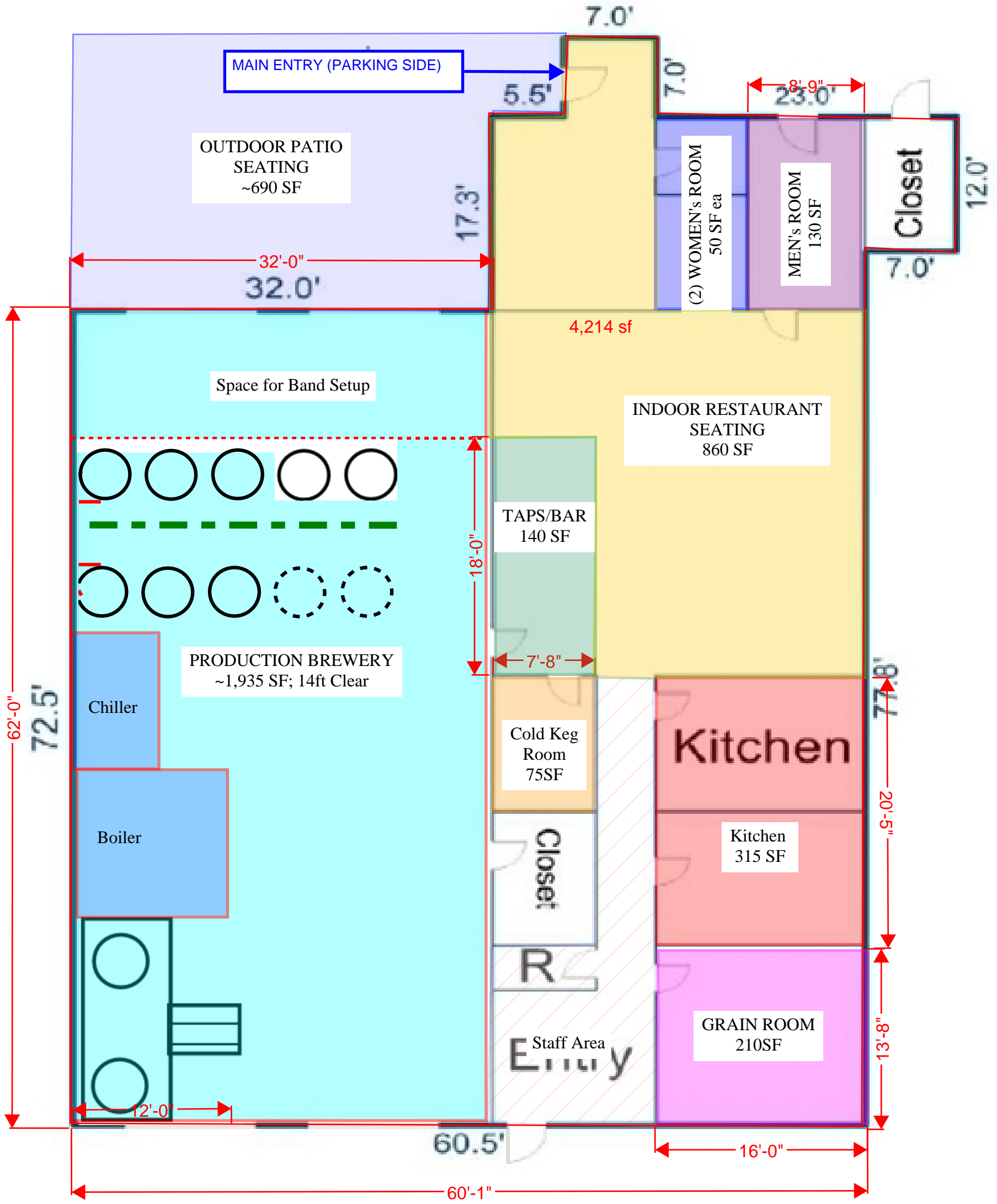
- Brewery Taproom and Restaurant Closing Hours:**
- *Sunday through Thursday ~10pm
 - *Friday and Saturday ~12am

- Homebrew Shop Hours:**
- *Wednesday through Sunday 10am - 6pm



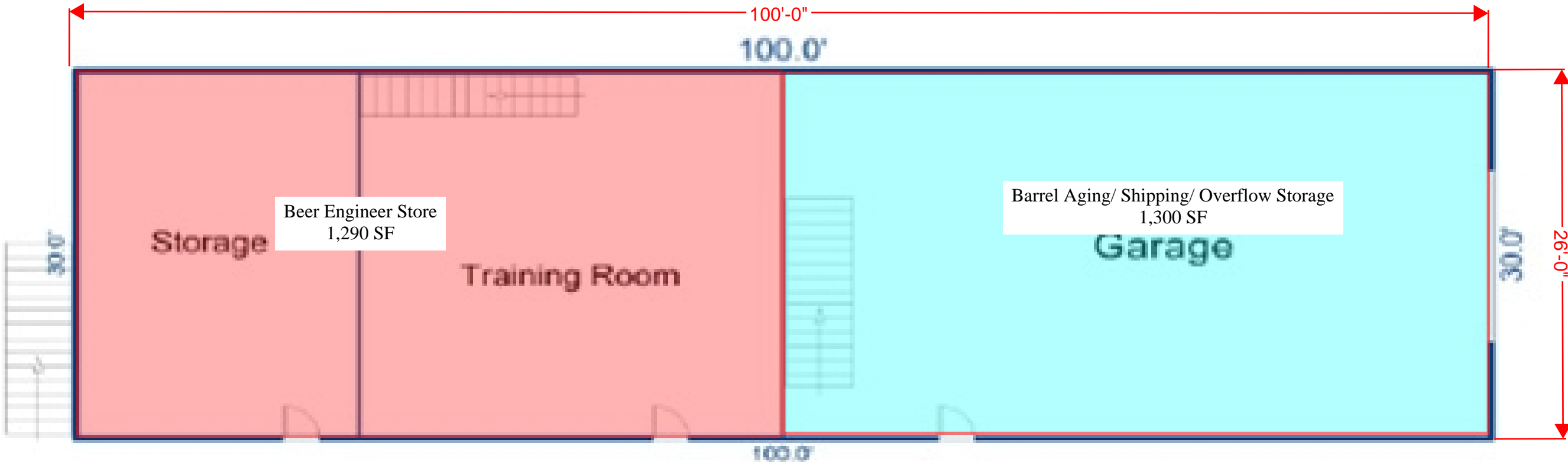
Potential Massing Floor Plan- Main Fire House ~4,215 SF

Scale: 1/8" : 1'0" on 11x17

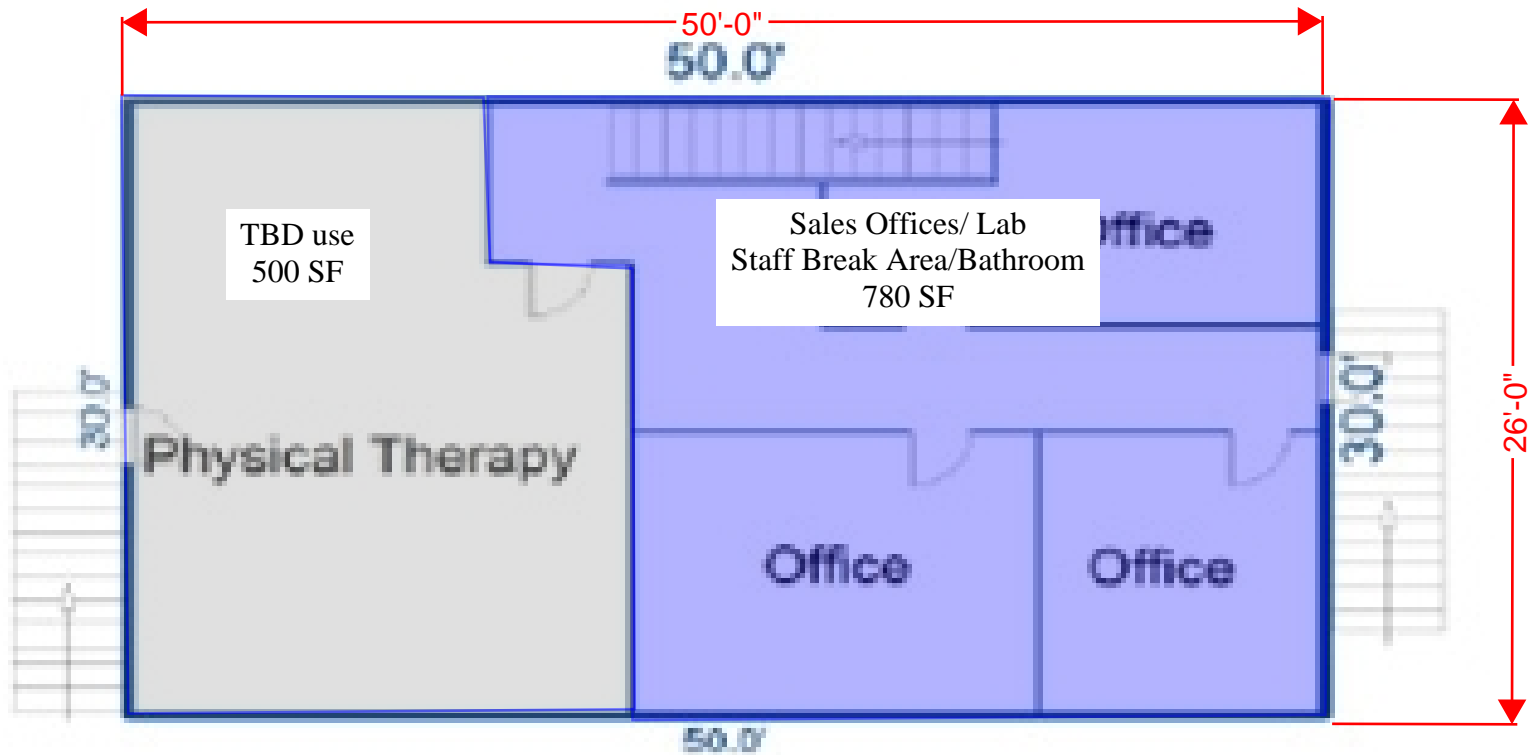


Potential Massing Floor Plan- Rear Building- 3,870 SF

Scale: 1/8" : 1'0" on 11x17



First Floor; 2,590 SF



Second Floor; 1,280 SF

OFFICE-WAREHOUSE BUILDING FOR LEASE

1622 CAMP ROAD - JAMES ISLAND, SC



CONTACT INFO

CHIP SHEALY, SIOR
First Vice President
+1 843 577 0702
chip.shealy@cbre.com



§ 153.211 ANIMALS.

(A) The keeping of household pets shall be allowed as an accessory use in all zoning districts in which residential dwelling units are permitted.

(B) The keeping of exotic or wild animals shall not be allowed as an accessory use and shall only be allowed if approved as a special exception in accordance with the procedures contained in §§ 153.040 through 153.055 of this code.

(C) The keeping of chickens shall be allowed as an accessory use in accordance with the conditions contained in § 90.17 of this code.

(D) The town may issue a special permit to allow for more chickens otherwise prohibited by § 90.17 with consideration given to the following:

(1) The number of chickens allowed by § 90.17 based on the size of the requesting party's residential lot, number of additional chickens the party is requesting to house beyond the chickens allowed by § 90.17 and geographical location (including the suburban/rural character of the surrounding neighborhood) of the residential lot where the requesting party desires to house more chickens than allowed by § 90.17 and the requesting party's means of isolating all chickens on their property so as to not become a nuisance to the surrounding homeowners.

(2) Homeowners within 150 feet of the property (closest property line to closest property line) of the requesting party must sign a letter consenting to the number of additional chickens to be housed at that location.

(3) The town may revoke the special permit at its sole discretion.

(E) The keeping of bees/hives (apiculture) shall be allowed as an accessory use in accordance with the conditions contained in § 90.18 of this code.

(1) The town may issue a special permit to allow for more hives otherwise prohibited by § 90.18 with consideration given to the following:

(2) The number of hives allowed by § 90.18 based on the size of the requesting party's residential lot, number of additional hives the party is requesting to house beyond the hives allowed by § 90.18 and geographical location (including the suburban/rural character of the surrounding neighborhood) of the residential lot where the requesting party desires to house more hives than allowed by § 90.18 and the requesting party's means of isolating all hives on their property so as to not become a nuisance to the surrounding homeowners.

(3) Homeowners within 150 feet of the property (closest property line to closest property line) of the requesting party must sign a letter consenting to the number of additional hives to be housed at that location.

(4) The town may revoke the special permit at its sole discretion.

(Ord. 2012-06, § 6.5.12, passed 10-18-2012; Ord. 2013-02, passed 4-18-2013; Ord. 2016-10, passed 10-20-2016; Ord. 2016-11, passed 1-19-2017)

§ 90.17 RAISING/KEEPING CHICKENS ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY.

Chickens may be permitted for personal use only, subject to the following conditions.

(A) One chicken per 2,500 square feet is allowed per parcel, with a total maximum of 12 chickens allowed per parcel regardless of lot size.

(B) Roosters are prohibited.

(C) Chickens shall be confined to the back yard of the property and shall not be allowed to roam off the owner's property. Should a property owner keep chickens without a pen/coop/enclosure, the area where the chickens are kept must be fenced. Fences shall comply with all applicable provisions of the zoning ordinance and may require a permit.

(D) Chickens shall be maintained in a healthy and sanitary manner to avoid potential health hazards or offensive odors.

(E) Pens/coops/enclosures shall meet all applicable provisions of the Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance relating to accessory structures and shall be at least five feet from any property line. The structure may require a permit.

(F) Nothing in this amendment to this chapter shall be deemed to override private deed restrictions or homeowner/neighborhood association requirements that prohibit or regulate chickens or farm animals on the affected property.

(Ord. 2016-10, passed 10-20-2016)

§ 90.18 KEEPING BEEHIVES ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY.

Beehives may be permitted for personal use only, subject to the following conditions.

(A) Must be located on properties of detached single-family homes.

(C) Two hives per 10,890 square feet (1/4 acre) is allowed per parcel.

(C) Hives shall not extend into the front setback.

(D) Hives shall be maintained in a healthy and sanitary manner with a clean and convenient water source on site.

(E) Hives and any associated structures shall meet all applicable provisions of the Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance and shall be at least fifteen feet from any property line.

(F) Nothing in this amendment to this chapter shall be deemed to override private deed restrictions or homeowner/neighborhood association requirements that prohibit or regulate apiculture on the affected property.



Reversing Pollinator Decline is Key to Feeding the Future

Posted by Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture In [Food and Nutrition](#)
Feb 21, 2017



About 44 percent of managed honey bee colonies have been lost over the past year.
(iStock Image)

Without pollinators, we don't eat—it's simple as that—and, at the moment, large numbers of pollinators are dying. With the world's population projected to exceed 9 billion in just the next 30 years or so, that is not a good position for us to be in.

More than 90 species of U.S. specialty crops require pollination, and various animals, including bees, butterflies, moths, bats, and birds are a critical part of the pollinator-plant ecosystem. Despite the myriad species of pollinators available, American farmers rely on one species of honey bee, *Apis mellifera*, for most of the pollinator services to pollinate their crops. Wild and managed bees together add \$15 billion in crop value each year.

During the past 30-plus years, our nation's pollinator populations have suffered serious losses due to invasive pests and diseases, such as mites and viral and fungal pathogens, exposure to pesticides and other chemicals, loss of habitat, loss of species and genetic diversity, and changing climate. Numerous species of butterflies, moths, and native bees are either extremely rare or are extinct. A [recent report](#) states that 44 percent of managed honey bee colonies were lost in 2015-2016, largely due to infectious diseases carried by varroa mite larvae.

Recognizing the importance of honey bees and other pollinators to agriculture and the health of natural systems, President Barack Obama established the [Pollinator Task Force](#) to develop a national strategy to protect and promote health of pollinators. The task force, co-chaired by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, released the [Pollinator Research Action Plan](#) in May 2015. This comprehensive plan guides the federal agenda, including research, to restore and increase pollinator habitat and populations.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is making major investments to protect and promote pollinator health and protect U.S. agriculture. Between 2008 and 2014, NIFA invested approximately \$40 million in competitive and capacity grants devoted to research, extension, and educational programming on bee health. Just this past month of May, NIFA announced a new, stand-alone \$6 million funding opportunity through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative's Food Security Challenge Area to address some of the priorities of the Pollinator Research Action Plan. In fiscal year 2017, NIFA plans to dedicate \$10 million in funding for pollinator health research.

The following are a few, recent accomplishments resulting from NIFA funding provided to university, government, and private partners.

1. The [Bee Informed Partnership](#) (BIP), an extension-led consortium of bee researchers and extension specialists, is working closely with beekeepers and queen breeders to demonstrate monitoring techniques for disease and mite management. The partnership is also working with queen breeders to use regionally appropriate practices for selecting mite and disease resistance traits. Recent findings show that beekeepers who follow BIP guidelines to manage varroa mites have a 20.4 percent annual colony loss rate, which is a remarkable improvement.

2. **Washington State University (WSU) researchers successfully recovered germplasm from a unique honey bee strain from Kazakhstan to enhance the high quality genetic traits in honey bee stock. The WSU Honey Bee Germplasm Repository will use cryopreservation (deep freeze) methods for long-term storage of bees to be used for breeding improved honey bee strains and for distribution to major honey bee queen producers in the United States.**
3. **American foulbrood (AFB) is a prevalent and serious bacterial disease that affects honeybees. University of Nevada-Las Vegas researchers used NIFA funding to identify a virus that attacks AFB. Experimental trials to treat AFB infections have significantly reduced AFB levels and increased overall honey bee colony health.**
4. **NIFA awarded \$9 million to a team led by [Michigan State University](#) to study the performance economics and farmer perceptions of different pollination strategies. Most recently, investigators provided the first-ever quantitative assessment of the status and trends of wild bees the United States. Estimates showed that wild bees declined 23 percent across the United States between 2008 and 2013. The declines appear to be a result of conversion of natural habitats to row crops, such as corn and soybeans, in the Midwest.**
5. **NIFA-funding helped develop and distribute Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)-based K-8 lesson plans—"Local Heroes: Your Hardworking Pollinators"—to 3,000 formal and non-formal educators.**
6. **More than 100 land-grant colleges and universities receive national program leadership and funding support from NIFA to create extension education programs for their communities. One example is the [integrated pest management program](#) at Lincoln University that helps farmers minimize pesticide use.**

NIFA invests in and advances agricultural research, education and extension and seeks to make transformative discoveries that solve societal challenges.

Category/Topic:

Food and Nutrition

Tags:

#PollinatorWeek Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Bees EPA Food security Honeybees
Lincoln University Michigan State University NIFA pollinators President Obama

Being Serious about Saving Bees

Posted by Dr. Ann Bartuska, Acting Chief Scientist and Acting Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics in [Animals, Research and Science](#)
Aug 04, 2021



Secretary Perdue and Karen Pence unwell a honey bee hive at the Vice President's residence. Steps like this, combined with research, are vital to pollinator health.

Pollinators are a vital part of agricultural production. In the United States, more than one-third of all crop production – 90 crops ranging from nuts to berries to flowering vegetables - requires insect pollination. Managed honey bee colonies are our primary pollinators, adding at least \$15 billion a year by increasing yields and helping to ensure superior-quality harvests.

However, our beekeepers have been steadily losing colonies. The number of honey bee hives in this country has decreased from 6 million in the 1940s to about 2.5 million today.

Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue declared June 19-25 as “National Pollinator

Week” to help call attention to these losses, which are caused primarily by biological and environmental stressors. Confronting this diverse mix of challenges requires a mix of solutions, and the odds are that we won’t find one magic fix to help our honey bees.

On June 6, Secretary Perdue joined Karen Pence, wife of Vice President Mike Pence, to announce the [installation of a honey bee hive](#) on the grounds of the Vice President’s residence in Washington ([watch video](#)). They encouraged Americans to also consider setting up hives where possible, or at least to plant bee-friendly flowers and flowering herbs in their gardens and yards.

While these are helpful steps that people can take in their own communities, there is also a need for research to better understand this problem and how we can best address it. USDA was one of the co-leaders of a task force that developed a national strategy that laid out a research and management roadmap that we are busily implementing.

Our Agricultural Research Service is conducting research to improve the nutritional health of bees, to control the *Varroa* mite and other pests and pathogens, and to understand the effects of pesticides on colonies. We are setting up long-term studies to determine causes and evaluate treatments for Colony Collapse Disorder and other kinds of bee mortality, and we are establishing a bee gene bank to help breed traits such as resistance to pests or diseases and pollination efficiency.

Our National Institute for Food and Agriculture is funding important research at our land-grant universities in this area. For example, University of Nevada researchers have are experimenting with a virus that attacks a bacterial disease that affects honey bees. Meanwhile, Michigan State University scientists are developing sustainable pollination strategies such as enhancing the effect of bee-friendly wildflowers.

Our National Agricultural Statistics Service, working with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service have begun taking a nationwide survey of bee health that sets baseline values for pest and disease prevalence. The U.S. Forest Service and the Farm Service Agency has been creating and restoring hundreds of thousands of acres of pollinator habitat, while the Natural Resources Conservation Service has provided financial assistance to landowners to protect or restore 30,000 acres of private lands.

Honey bees may be some of the hardest workers you’ll ever see, but they need our help. At USDA, we are making sure that they get it.