The Planning Commission of the Town of James Island met on Thursday, May 14, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at the James Island Town Hall, 1122 Dills Bluff Road, James Island, SC 29412.

Commissioners present: Patrick Broderick, Kelly Hall, Vice Chair, Megan Dean, and Chair Deborah Bidwell, who presided. Absent: Comm'r Ed Steers (gave notice) Also present: Kristen Crane, Planning Director, Mayor Brook Lyon, Town Council Liaison, and Frances Simmons, Town Clerk and Secretary to the Planning Commission.

Call to Order: Chair Bidwell called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A quorum was present to conduct business.

Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance: Chair Bidwell asked the Commission to join her in a moment of silence, after which the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act: Chair Bidwell announced that this meeting was duly noticed and is being held in compliance with the SC Freedom of Information Act. This meeting was also live streamed on the Town's website: www.jamesislandsc.us and notification was provided to the public.

Introductions: Chair Bidwell introduced herself as the chair, the members of the Planning Commission, staff, and Mayor Lyon. A special welcome was extended to Megan Dean, the new Planning Commissioner.

Approval of April 9, 2026, Meeting Minutes: Chair Bidwell called for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2026, meeting. Vice Chair Hall moved for approval, seconded by Commission Broderick. No discussion. Passed unanimously.

Public Comments: No one signed in to speak.

Zoning Map Amendment:
Case ZAGR-3-26-017: Request to Rezone property located at 1123 Fort Johnson Road from the Low-Density Single Family Residential (RSL) Zoning District to the Agricultural Preservation (AG-5) Zoning District (TMS #428-06-00-069)

Kristen Crane, Planning Director provided the staff review:

History and Overview:

1123 Fort Johnson Road is located near the intersection of Honey Hill Rd. and Ft. Johnson Rd. and is currently vacant. The parcel included in the Zoning Map Amendment Request is 2.23 acres in size, is in the RSL Zoning District, and is considered a legal conforming lot. The applicant and owner (Blake Smith) is seeking to rezone the parcel from the RSL Zoning District to the AG-5 Zoning District to keep the low-density residential capability, and to allow for service/agricultural uses not allowed in the RSL Zoning District.

Adjacent Zoning:

Surrounding properties to the north, south, east and west are in the RSL Zoning District in the Town of James Island. Most adjacent properties are of a larger lot size than the minimum size required in RSL. Several adjacent properties are vacant, residentially utilized, or used agriculturally. Other uses within 300' are mostly residential but also include parks/recreation in the City of Charleston.
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 proposed zoning map amendment is consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Land Use Element Goal which states the Town will, "*encourage the orderly and environmentally sound development of the land with special consideration to maintaining the suburban character and natural ecosystems of the area,"* and a strategy to "*implement sustainable and flexible development guidelines and integrate development with growth to maintain the suburban character and natural ecosystems of the area,"* and a strategy to "*implement sustainable and flexible development guidelines and integrate development with growth to maintain the suburban character of the Town*", amongst other purposes and intents in the Ordinance.

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

Staff's response: Existing uses and zoning may be compatible with the proposed amendment; the amendment will allow the property to retain its residential character with a lower density allowed (1 unit per 5 acres in AG-5), and greater setback standards than in the RSL Zoning District for residential uses and for agricultural/service uses.

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 Town and other service providers will be able to continue and provide public facilities and services 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, noise, storm water management, traffic congestion, wildlife and natural resources; and**

Staff's response: The proposed amendment should not result in significant adverse impacts on other property in the vicinity or on the environment.

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 RSL. The property also meets the minimum standards for an Agricultural Preservation (AG-5) zoning designation including parcel size and parcel configuration. There is potential for direct access from Fort Johnson Road, and it is suitable for the proposed zoning classification.

Questions from the Planning Commission:

Comm'r Dean asked if there would be impact to the wetlands or significant tree removals. Ms. Crane answered that any change to the request would need to go through the site plan review process.

Applicant Presentation:
Mr. Blake Smith
705 Whispering Marsh Drive
Charleston, SC 29412

Mr. Smith stated that he understood the community's desire for improvements in the area and would like to enhance the property with landscaping.

In Support: No one spoke.

In Opposition: No one spoke.

Chair Bidwell called for a motion and second in order to have discussion on the request.

Comm'r Broderick moved to approve Case ZAGR-3-26-017: Request to Rezone property located at 1123 Fort Johnson Road from the Low-Density Single Family Residential (RSL) Zoning District to the Agricultural Preservation (AG-5) Zoning District (TMS #428-06-00-069); Vice Chair Hall seconded the motion. During discussion, Comm'r Broderick asked if the request would strictly be used for staging and not for single family residences and Ms. Crane confirmed that the intent is not to be used for single family residence.

Vote

Commissioner Broderick	Aye
Vice Chair Hall	Aye
Commissioner Dean	Aye
Chair Bidwell	Aye

UNANIMOUS

Town Council will hold a First Reading and Public Hearing on this rezoning at its May 21, 2026, meeting and Second Reading at the June 18, 2026, meeting.

Chair's Comments: None.

Commissioners' Comments: None.

Next Scheduled Meeting Date: June 11, 2026.

Adjourn: There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Frances Simmons
Town Clerk/Secretary to the Planning Commission