

**TOWN OF RAVENEL  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 2024  
6:00 P.M.**

The Public Hearing and Regular Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting of the Town of Ravenel was held Thursday, January 4, 2024, 6:00 p.m. at 5962 Highway 165, Ravenel, South Carolina. The following members of the Planning and Zoning Commission were present: Nicole Barron, Eric Grant, Laurie Infinger (Vice-Chairperson), Thomas Masi, and Jim O’Gallagher. Also in attendance was Town Administrator and Planner Michael Hemmer and Clerk-Treasurer Tammy Wood.

The media and public were duly notified of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

**Public Hearing for Map Amendment 2024-01:**

Vice-Chairperson Infinger called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present to conduct business.

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to consider changing the zoning district for a 96.54-acre parcel with TMS #: 188-00-00-116 located off Drayton Street from Agricultural Residential (AR) to Residential Three (R-3).

Mr. Hemmer explained that the parcel in question is adjacent to the Rice Hope Subdivision and located behind Ravenel Community Hall (5700 Connors Street). The property is currently zoned AR which requires a 1-acre minimum lot; the request is for the property to be zoned R-3, which requires a 12,500 square foot minimum lot. The property is neighboring AR parcels on the East, West, and South, and R-3 on the North. While there is no proposed development or subdivision currently, the Comprehensive Plan makes no recommendation for the area other than general planning standards. Mr. Hemmer shared that a Proposed Development requires a Site Plan with Planning and Zoning Commission approval, a plat approved by Charleston County (septic, draining, and roadway permitting), and approval from the Army Corps of Engineers for disturbance of any wetlands. Before zoning can be issued, a traffic impact study is required at the time of the Site Plan. Lastly, water is available through Charleston Water System, and the Town will not provide sewer capacity.

**Public Comments:**

*Roy Smith of 5982 Drayton Street*, has lived in Ravenel since 1969 and is against the rezoning. He chose to live in the Town due to its rural character, low congestion, and minimal traffic.

*Olivia McCarty of 5634 Golden Rice Lane*, shared some of the numerous advantages of living in Ravenel that she and her family have enjoyed and come to love over the years. McCarty shared that the rezonings intentions go directly against the Town’s Code of Ordinances and stated that she is an advocate for one’s right to develop their property, however, it must be done in ways that benefit the community as a whole. McCarty provided Commissioners with packets she created including additional data regarding the request and items such as environmental impacts, traffic and congestion, sewer matters, the agricultural economy, cost of living, and more. The packet also included a petition with over 150 signatures of those in opposition of the request.

*Kelly Cooper of 6049 Drayton Street and 5577 Highway 165, believes that this rezoning is not a benefit to the community or current residents of Ravenel. In addition, Cooper stated that this rezoning is inconsistent with the Town's current Comprehensive Plan and shared several elements of the plan that do not coincide with the rezonings objectives. She shared that this request does not promote careful growth and urged Commissioners and Council to listen to the concerns of their constituents.*

*Michael Felix of 5625 Golden Rice Lane, questioned at what cost will the community have to pay for allowing this rezoning to pass, as well as future ones. He is concerned about the loss of countryside, increased traffic, and the negative effects that could come with rental properties once homes are built.*

*Frederick Harris of 5545 Golden Rice Lane, is the HOA President of the Rice Hope Subdivision. Concerns from him and his neighbors include the number of homes that will be built, the loss of privacy, and increased traffic. Harris shared that if homes are built, he recommends only allowing owner-occupied single-family homes, and creating buffers to protect the privacy of neighboring properties. He is aware that development is coming, but says it is crucial to limit it.*

*Juliet Collins of 5965 Drayton Street, feels let down by the Town Council and shared that during a recent interaction with a Councilmember, she was assured that there would be no more residential development in Ravenel. Collins believes that this rezoning has been in the works and thinks it will ruin the way of life for many current residents and is devastated by the adverse effects this will have on wildlife. She told Commissioners that they have the power to stop this from happening.*

*Susan Hendricks of 6594 Hyde Park Road, is one of the four Tumbleston siblings who all recently inherited the property in question due to their mother's passing. She shared a brief history of the parcel which the family calls "the pasture" and stated that her grandfather purchased the property somewhere between 1938 and 1940. Hendricks stated that in the time leading up to her mother's passing, she said on multiple occasions "When I'm gone, sell the pasture". Hendricks spoke about the memories she has of Ravenel years ago when it looked nothing like it does today and more than half of the current neighborhoods that are here today were not present. She said that the addition of those neighborhoods that most Ravenel residents call home today, brought families, diversity, and a sense of strengthened community to the Town that we know and love. She hopes that voting persons will make the best decision possible.*

*Matthew Collins of 5965 Drayton Street, believes that the Mayor ran for office under false pretenses by agreeing to not increase development during his campaign efforts. Collins is concerned about the density and influx of traffic which he doesn't think the Town can handle and says that road and site plans need to be conducted. He stated that if this rezoning is approved, there should be a recall for the Mayor.*

**Submitted Statements:**

*Donald Baldwin of TMS #: 188-00-00-179 – Attachment 1*

*Mike Rakoske of 5776 Whistle Stop Lane – Attachment 2*

This Public Hearing closed at 6:56 p.m.

**Regular Meeting Agenda:**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairperson Infinger called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:56 p.m. A quorum was present to conduct business.

## **2. INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance were recited by attendees.

## **3. INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER**

Mr. Hemmer welcomed the newly appointed Commissioner Jim O'Gallagher who Council selected to serve at their previous meeting.

## **4. REVIEW OF P&Z ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Mr. Hemmer briefly discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Planning and Zoning Commission, which are also displayed on the Town's website.

Commissioner Masi made a motion to adjust the agenda for time's sake and switch Items #5 and 9a; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Infinger. All voted in favor. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

## **5. ELECTION OF CHAIR & VICE-CHAIR**

Commissioners completed ballots with results appointing Commissioner Laurie Infinger as Chairperson and Eric Grant as Vice-Chairperson of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

## **6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

### **a. Recusals/Conflicts of Interest**

None.

## **7. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES**

### **a. November 2, 2023**

Commissioner Barron made a motion to approve the November 2, 2023, Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting minutes; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Masi. All voted in favor. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

### **b. December 7, 2023**

Commissioner Grant made a motion to approve the December 7, 2023, Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting minutes; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Masi. All voted in favor. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Request MA2024-01**

Attorney Nicole Scott, representing the Tumbleston Family Trust, shared that most concerns from the public are simply speculation. At this time, the family is only requesting a zoning change, and future plans such as the number of homes being built, site plans, infrastructure, and other topics expressed during public comments are not pertinent to the decision being made currently.

Grace Tumbleston, family representative of the Tumbleston Family Trust, provided a visual presentation, noting that the history of the property goes back to 1938. Of the 96.54 acres, about 12 acres are wetlands, 11 acres would be required for stormwater ponds, and nearly 10 acres for right-of-way commitments, leaving around 63 acres for housing. Ms. Tumbleston described the difference between AR and R-3 zoning and stated that given the number of wetlands and what would be

designated for roads and drainage, the family estimates that approximately 70-75 homes would fit on the property under its current zoning. She also compared R-3 zoning and Planned Development and shared that traditional zoning provides the owners the ability to gain best utilization of the property without adding a commercial component which is often required by laws that govern Planned Developments. Ms. Tumbleston spoke about affordability and explained how large tracts have become unaffordable and described how clustering homes into “pods” with wetlands and woods in between could greatly reduce development costs which would mean more affordable homes. Regarding traffic, there could be multiple access points provided on the existing public right-of-way to help minimize any traffic impact to Drayton Street. She stated that the maximum number of homes built on the property would not exceed 160 houses.

Inquiries and discussion arose regarding the property’s wetlands and their locations interfering with potential entry and exit points, traffic impacts, what exactly “affordable” means, who the buyer or developer will be, what allowances are acceptable with the parcels current zoning, and price points.

Commissioner Masi made a motion to recommend approval of Request MA2024-01 as requested; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Barron.

Commissioner Masi shared that he believes the request is reasonable for a parcel of its size, and that it is only fair to allow the family to do as they wish with their property. Commissioner O’Gallagher questioned why the property can’t be sold as is without the rezoning. Commissioner Infinger detailed that the family and this parcel has been in the community for nearly 100 years and doesn’t think that the property will be sold to anyone without the best intentions for Ravenel. Commissioner Grant revisited the topic of affordability and discussed how many individuals who work in the Town can’t afford to live here. Commissioner Barron shared that this prospect would create a fair opportunity for more affordable homes in the community.

All voted in favor of recommending approval of Request MA2024-01 except Commissioner O’Gallagher. Motion passed (4-1).

#### **10. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*Juliet Collins of 5965 Drayton Street*, reiterated her recent comment and told Commissioners that they have the power to do what is right.

#### **11. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

None.

#### **12. NEXT MEETING**

The next Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting will take place on Thursday, February 1, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

#### **13. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Masi made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m.; this motion was seconded by Commissioner Barron. All voted in favor. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

**Mike Hemmer**

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**From:** Donald Baldwin  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 3, 2024 8:07 PM  
**To:** Mike Hemmer  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Zoning Request MA2024-01

I have reviewed the subject zoning request and am writing to inform all concerned that I am adamantly opposed to any rezoning of this property. I own 99 acres TMS #1880000179 joining this property and this proposed rezoning would have a negative effect on my property value.

A high density subdivision in the town of Ravenel in my opinion would have significant adverse effects on the town and its residents and the surrounding communities. Ravenel residents will experience traffic increases that are not needed or wanted. I do not believe Ravenel needs a vinyl high density subdivision eyesore to destroy the tranquility that presently exists.

The duty of the elected/appointed officials of any town is to act in the best interests of the town, not in the interests of themselves or a select few. In considering this rezoning request there appears to be the potential of serious conflicts of interests in light of the mayor having a vested interest in this rezoning request. The mayor and/or any others having conflicts of interests must recuse themselves of any action on this request.

It is requested that this email be presented during your meeting scheduled for 4 January 2024.

Respectfully,  
Donald Baldwin

**Mike Hemmer**

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**From:** Mike Rakoske  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 4, 2024 3:16 PM  
**To:** Mike Hemmer; Mike Rakoske  
**Subject:** My comments Please read aloud during public comments

My name Mike Rakoske  
 I live at 5776 Whistle Stop Lane Ravenel

**WHAT THIS ZONING CHANGE WILL DO FOR THE RESIDENCE**

1. Based on raw land square footage (97 acres equals 4,225,320 square feet) the total \* square footage will be reduced based on the roads to be installed, wet lands that can not be built upon, designated community recreational ares, and buffers. Actual number would be slightly less.

The property is currently zoned AR and this Zoning allows for 1 house per acre of land or 43,560 square foot lot. \*Not removing the required roads, wetlands, and buffers the maximum number of houses to be built would be \*97 lots/houses total. \*Actual would be less.

IF THE ZONING REQUEST IS PASSED TO R3 this would allow a MAXIMUM OF 338 LOTS/HOUSES. \*Not taking into account the loss of acarage for roads, wetlands, and buffers. Lot sizes would be 12,500 sq feet if Zoning is changed to R3.

2. This Zoning change is for Mayor Tumbleston's family and himself. Seems like this would be a conflict of interest.
3. This development will increase the traffic on these small rural secondary designed roads.
4. Based on #3 above has a traffic study been performed? That is all the town needs is more traffic with out infrastructure in place to accommodate it. Just look at John's Island and that traffic nightmare.
5. Loss of green space. They are not making anymore of that for sure.
6. The mega Subdivision being built off hwy 17 is designed for small families with 2 cars. Fast forward into the future and now the teenagers have a vehicle also. Where are they going to park the extra vehicles? I guessing in the road or in the front yard. The lots are designed where you can't put anything in the backyard.
7. The town will grow but it dosent need to grow at leaps and bounds. The more I think about it; Hwy 17 and Tea Farm developments was a huge mistake for the town.
8. Has there been a site plan review that would show all the wetlands and proposed lots, infrastructure, and type of neighborhood roads?
9. Has a traffic study been done for the current zoning, the proposed zoning, and in the future when teenagers have a vehicle?



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**Nicole Barron**

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**Eric Grant**

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**Laurie Infinger**

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**Thomas Masi**

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**Jim O’Gallagher**

**Minutes transcribed from tape and respectfully submitted by: Mikayla White, Clerk-Receptionist**