CITY OF CONWAY
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2013
CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM – 5:30 P.M.

Present: Gerald Wallace, Hank Grabarz, David Jordan, Tammy Hughes, Brantley Green, Chris Guidera, Larry Foye

Absent: Bill Gobbel, Fran Humphries

Staff: Michael Leinwand, Planning Director; Barbara Tessier, Secretary; John Hare-Grogg, Planning Department Intern from Duke University

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

At this time, Wallace welcomed the newest Planning Commission member, Tammy Hughes.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Green made a motion, seconded by Grabarz, to approve the April 4, 2013 Planning Commission minutes as written. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

III. TEXT AMENDMENT

A. Amendment to Article 4 Use Tables of the City of Conway Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) relating to the Professional (P) Zoning District.

Leinwand said there had been a request made to the Planning Department in May 2013 from the property owner to lease space for a photo studio at 702 Main Street. He said that location was zoned Professional, and photography was not permitted in that zone.

He said staff looked at the uses that were permitted, and came up with several more they felt could be permitted. He said gift shops were already permitted, and staff was recommending antique stores, artists’ studios and galleries, frame shops, hobby/craft shops, photography sales and studios, and film developing also be permitted.

Wallace asked if this was for the areas past the downtown area. Leinwand said it would be permitted in any Professional Zoning District.
Guidera asked if artist studio was defined. Leinwand said there was no definition for artist studios. Guidera said the definition was then open for interpretation. Guidera said that meant a chain saw carver could open a shop. Leinwand staff would have to use their discretion. He said if a use was denied, the applicant could appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Jordan said he agreed with Guidera in that artist studio should be removed from the potential permitted uses.

Wallace asked what their worry was. Hughes said sound. Leinwand said there was a sound ordinance. Grabarz said the sound ordinance was for a night. Leinwand said there was a decibel level requirement for daytime hours too. Green asked what the difference was between a craft shop and an artisan shops. Guidera mentioned bird house builders. Leinwand said there was a section for custom made items. He said that would not be permitted in the Professional Zoning District.

Grabarz asked if they could put an asterisk addressing the noise issue. He said it would bring it to the applicants attention. Leinwand said staff would mention the noise ordinance.

Guidera said maybe they should go ahead with the amendment, but clarify a definition for artist. Grabarz said artist was a broad definition.

Wallace said the Board could direct Leinwand to come up with a definition of art studio or at least allowable art work.

Jordan made a motion, seconded by Guidera, to allow antique shops, frame shop, hobby/craft shops, the photography sale and studio, and film developing to be permitted in the Professional Zoning District and not permit artists' studios and galleries. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

IV.  CITY OF CONWAY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A.  Update Relating to the Cultural Element

Leinwand said in the beginning of 2013, the city was approached by Dr. Veronica Gerald, a professor at Coastal Carolina University. He said she also had the Ultimate Gullah shop downtown on Third Avenue. He said she had been in contact with Duke University who has an internship program. He said part of the requirement for an intern in the program is to work in different communities doing community service. He said this year a group of students from Duke University were working in Conway and throughout the county. He said the intern working within the Planning Department was doing research on the Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor. He said the city hoped some of the findings would be incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan. He said the intern was working to come up with goals and strategies to accomplish that.
Leinwand introduced John Hare-Grogg who had a short PowerPoint presentation to show the Board.

Hare-Grogg started by giving the Board a little information about himself. He is a rising sophomore at Duke University. He said 13 colleagues had been placed throughout the area at sites such as the County Planning and Zoning Office, Brookgreen Gardens, Conway Downtown Alive!, the Horry County Museum as well as with the City’s Planning Department.

Hare-Grogg said the Gullah culture was maintained by descendants of West African plantation slaves. He said Federal legislation in 2006 under the Department of Interior created the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor that runs from Jacksonville, FL to Jacksonville, NC.

Hare-Grogg said how this related to the Comprehensive Plan was that it would preserve basic historic information in the official record, set community goals for historic preservation initiatives, and support those goals through promotion of cultural tourism.

Hare-Grogg talked about the research opportunities available. He said there were oral history interviews with community contacts, and the possibility of a city-wide Oral History Project. He said they could re-examine existing sources such as newspapers, the Independent Republic Quarterly, and literature on Conway and Horry County communities. The third opportunity available was genealogy and record examination. He said area plantations and cemeteries might hold significant information of the Gullah heritage.

Hare-Grogg talked about exciting progress. He said information may have been found revealing an African-American, possibly Gullah, owned several tracts of downtown property at one time. He said there was evidence of Gullah presence in Conway communities. He said there was also a basket at the Horry County Museum made from river grass that might hold clues to Gullah presence in the area.

Hare-Grogg finished by giving his thoughts for the additions to the Comprehensive Plan. He thought the expansion of the “Existing Condition and Background” section to acknowledge Conway’s location within the Corridor would be beneficial, and to provide information about the presence of Gullah culture. He said the goal would be the preserving citizens’ histories. He said the strategy would be to establish and promote an official project, including guidelines and procedures for taking oral histories, and to encourage submissions from citizens.

Hare-Grogg said for the Tourism Element, he would suggest for Goal 1, Objective 1 to add the strategy of promoting digital tours and other efforts of Conway Downtown Alive!
Wallace asked Hare-Grogg if he would be providing the verbiage. Hare-Grogg said he probably would be doing that.

Wallace asked Hare-Grogg if they had found Gullah culture in Horry County. Hare-Grogg said they had, but it certainly was not as prevalent as it was in Georgetown or Charleston because there had not been as many plantations in Horry County.

Foye asked if he had talked to anyone in Conway with Gullah descendants. Hare-Grogg said he would be talking with Margie McIver.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

VI. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, Green made a motion, seconded Foye, to adjourn the meeting. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

Approved and signed this 28th day of June, 2013.

[Signature]

Gerald C. Wallace, III, Chairman