

**PICKENS COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MINUTES  
of  
September 27, 2023  
6:30pm**

**PICKENS COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
Main Conference Room**

**NOTICE OF MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING:** Pursuant to Section 30-4-80 of the S.C. Code of Laws, annual notice of this Commission's meetings was provided by January 1, 2023 via the Pickens County Website and posted next to the Offices of the County Planning Department. In addition, the agenda for this meeting was posted outside the meeting place (Pickens County Administration Building Bulletin Board) and was emailed to all persons, organizations, and news media requesting notice. Notice for the public hearings was published in the *Pickens County Courier*, posted on the properties subject of public hearing(s), and emailed to all persons, organizations, and news media requesting notice pursuant to Section 1205(d)(1) of the Pickens County Unified Development Standards Ordinance.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

David Cox, Vice Chairman  
Phil Smith  
Jon Humphrey  
Clay Counts  
Mike Watson

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Todd Steadman, Planner  
Trad Julian, Planning Supervisor

***Election of Officers***

Vice Chair Cox called the meeting to order and asked for nominations for the Chair. Mr. Smith nominated Gary Stancell. Mr. Counts seconded. Mr. Cox called for a vote and Mr. Stancell was elected unanimously (5-0).

Mr. Cox then asked for nominations for vice Chair. Mr. Watson nominated Mr. Cox. Mr. Counts seconded. Mr. Cox called for the vote and the vote was elected unanimously (5-0).

The Commission then unanimously appointed the Planning Director as the Recording Secretary.

***Welcome***

Mr. Cox then asked those in attendance to join in a moment of silence and then asked everyone to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Cox then asked for the members of the Commission to introduce themselves.

***Approval of Minutes***

Mr. Cox called for approval of the minutes of the July 10, 2023 meeting.

Mr. Humphrey made a motion to approve the minutes with a date correction to the preamble and to correct the number of people voting as shown on line 28 of Page 1. Mr. Smith seconded. Mr. Cox called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

1 **Public Comments**

2  
3 Chairman Cox asked if there was anyone present who wished to make a public comment  
4 regarding an item not on the agenda. There were no public comments provided and public  
5 comments were closed.

6  
7 **Public Hearings**

8  
9 Mr. Cox then opened the public hearing portion of the meeting and called for the first case to be  
10 heard.

11  
12 **LU-223-0021:** Land Use Review for a 26-lot single family subdivision on Tax map 34171-00-02-  
13 3739

14  
15 Due to the applicant running late Mr. Cox began the hearing by asking for public comments.

16  
17 Russ Smith spoke in opposition to the project. His objections included maintaining the public  
18 safety, health and welfare of the community. In particular he was concerned about traffic and  
19 sight lines along these roads. And he hoped the Planning Commission would take into account  
20 that the proposed project is across the street from a known sex offender.

21  
22 Bruce Noble spoke about his concerns about the amount of growth occurring in Pickens County  
23 in general. Afraid this type of development will result in higher taxes to pay for the services. He  
24 would like to see an environmental impact statement be done. He said Easley is growing too  
25 fast and so is the rest of the County.

26  
27 Mary Locklair spoke about her moving here due to the rural nature of the area and she wanted it  
28 to stay that way. She was concerned about the septic fields being so close to the creek and had  
29 concerns in general about stormwater runoff, reduced water pressure for their homes, and the  
30 general impacts on the infrastructure.

31  
32 Mr. Smith asked if it was the number of homes causing her concern or the fact that there were  
33 any homes at all being built.

34  
35 Ms. Locklair said that the growth in general was just too much too fast.

36  
37 Tina Beason spoke about her concerns for traffic and believes that the roads will have to be  
38 widened.

39  
40 Mr. Noble spoke again on the impact on infrastructure and that he was in favor of no growth.  
41 Does not want the rest of the County to become another Clemson or Easley.

42  
43 Mr. Smith said the County was facilitating growth.

44  
45 Mr. Cox pointed out that growth is happening across the South and that the County would  
46 benefit from taking a proactive approach to planning rather than a reactive one and that is what  
47 the leadership is trying to do with the moratorium.

48  
49 Mr. Smith asked if staff had received anything from the School District regarding this project and  
50 staff said they had not.

51  
52 Russ Smith asked about the moratorium and Mr. Julian pointed out that the moratorium only  
53 impacted projects with 49 or more dwelling units so it did not impact this project and that the  
54 moratorium was being extended until January 3.

1 Mr. Cox asked if there were any further comments from the public. Hearing none he closed the  
2 public input session on the matter.

3  
4 Mr. Cox then called Randy Solomon – the Applicant – forward to speak about the project.

5  
6 Mr. Solomon said he had lowered the number of lots from 26 to 21. He said he wanted to  
7 provide an affordable housing product for the County. He said these would be in the 1200-1900  
8 square foot range and would sell between \$220K and \$250K, He has spoken to the DOT and  
9 County Engineer about the curb cuts and they have signed off on the plan with shared drives.  
10 And he reiterated that he had not heard back from the School District.

11  
12 Mr. Smith asked if an internal roadway system had been considered.

13  
14 Solomon said that was cost prohibitive and that driveways are going to be 30' – 40' long.

15  
16 Mr. Cox asked about the roadway widths of the County and State roads and Mr. Solomon said  
17 he was not sure of the widths.

18  
19 Mr. Watson asked if he had considered making the lots larger.

20  
21 Solomon said that would make the homes too expensive.

22  
23 Mr. Cox asked about lot widths and Mr. Solomon said they were 55'.

24  
25 It was pointed out that some of the drawings showed the lots at 49' and some at 50' but  
26 Solomon said they were 55'.

27  
28 Mr. Cox and Mr. Watson then expressed concern about guest parking and how that would be  
29 handled and expressed concerns about there being adequate space.

30  
31 Mr. Cox then raised the question of how a vehicle could get into the backyard if the lot was 55'  
32 wide and the house was 40' wide and the side setbacks were 7'. He was concerned about  
33 cleaning out the septic system or having a garage or anything in the back that needs vehicular  
34 access.

35  
36 Mr. Watson said he didn't think he could support this based on the lot widths alone.

37  
38 Mr. Solomon said he was not under the impression that this meeting required a site plan and  
39 that design features such as parking and driveways and access to the rear yard would all be  
40 worked out with the encroachment permit.

41  
42 Mr. Cox reiterated his concern about getting DHEC approval for a septic system you can't work  
43 on.

44  
45 Mr. Solomon said what he was proposing was a rare opportunity to provide affordable housing  
46 to Pickens County residents.

47  
48 Mr. Smith asked if some of the large lots could be made smaller so you still end up with the  
49 number of lots you want but those long skinny ones can be made wider.

50  
51 Solomon said he thought about it but that DOT made it hard by limiting his curb cuts on Concord  
52 Church Road.

53  
54 Mr. Steadman asked the applicant if access to the detention pond required an easement from a  
55 property owner who was in opposition to the project. Solomon said yes. Mr. Steadman also  
56 clarified that as proposed there would be no vehicular access to the rear of the properties and

1 said that an actual site plan that showed what was being proposed might be helpful to the  
2 Planning Commission in making a decision.  
3  
4 Mr. Solomon said he does these kind of projects all the time and can make this work. He wants  
5 to do this for \$250K or less per unit. It is a specific market and not for everyone.  
6  
7 Mr. Cox said this layout is, in a way, deceiving because while it is technically homes on ½ acre  
8 lots, when the lots are 55' wide and 400' feet deep and pulled up to the road as they are they  
9 "read" a lot denser than they really are and are not in keeping with the character of the area.  
10  
11 Mr. Cox called for a motion to discuss.  
12  
13 Mr. Counts made a motion and Mr. Cox seconded.  
14  
15 Mr. Watson said this was just too tight and that traffic was a concern. He really feels this needs  
16 a rear access drive and it does not fit the character of the neighborhood.  
17  
18 Mr. Humphrey pointed out that there are some similar smaller lot developments further down  
19 Stephens Road toward Walhalla but the lots are a lot wider and it feels different. He also is  
20 concerned about the lack of street lighting in this area.  
21  
22 Mr. Smith asked for a more detailed and accurate site plan that could show how a home would  
23 fit on one of these lots and what it would look like.  
24  
25 Mr. Humphrey pointed out that the application submitted was not what was being presented and  
26 that we needed more detail before we could make a decision.  
27  
28 Mr. Count agreed with all he was hearing and suggested tabling the project.  
29  
30 Watson said he liked the idea of the developer coming back with a more detailed plan.  
31  
32 It was discussed that tabling would require the Commission to act on the matter at their next  
33 meeting and that another option would be to vote on it tonight and if it was denied the applicant  
34 could bring it back for a review when they had the information the Commission was requesting.  
35  
36 Mr. Counts asked about water availability and Mr. Solomon said this site was serviced by a 12"  
37 main from Six Mile Water so pressure would not be an issue.  
38  
39 Mr. Solomon went on to say that this project meets or exceeds the standards of the UDSO and  
40 should be reviewed based on the rules that are in place today.  
41  
42 Mr. Humphrey said it was hard to approve something you can't see. It is still unclear on how you  
43 will access the detention pond, unclear on the exact acreage of each parcel, the number of  
44 parcels, and the widths of the parcels. The application is not what is being presented. This is not  
45 being petty - we just need it cleaned up.  
46  
47 Mr. Solomon said he would be glad to, he was just not used to having to do this.  
48  
49 Mr. Cox asked if there had been a topo done.  
50  
51 Mr. Solomon said yes.  
52  
53 Mr. Watson asked who would maintain the detention pond and Mr. Solomon said the County  
54 would. Staff pointed out that typically it is responsibility of the developer, HOA, or property  
55 owners to maintain a detention pond.  
56

1 Mr. Julian pointed out that the project, as presented, did not meet the standards of the UDSO.

2  
3 Mr. Solomon continued to stress that he would like the Commission to approve the project and  
4 he would work out the details later and stay within the UDSO standards.

5  
6 Mr. Cox called for a motion to end discussion. Mr. Counts moved and Mr. Watson seconded  
7 the motion to end discussion.

8  
9 Mr. Cox then called for a motion. Mr. Watson made a motion to deny the project. Mr. Counts  
10 seconded. Mr. Cox called for further discussion and hearing none called for a vote and the vote  
11 to deny was unanimous (5-0).

12  
13 Mr. Humphrey wanted to clarify what is needed going forward.

14  
15 Mr. Steadman summarized that the next Commission deadline is Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> for the  
16 November meeting and that whenever the applicant comes back we will need:

- 17
- 18 • A new application that reflects the actual product.
- 19 • Show how the detention pond will be accessed.
- 20 • Show that all lots are at least ½ acre (excluding any easement or rights of way).
- 21 • Show all lot widths
- 22 • Show how the parking pads and drives and garage will work
- 23 • The Commission has requested a typical layout of the proposed 25'-40' house on a 55'
- 24 wide lot and how it will work with the setbacks and would like to see a home
- 25 layout/elevation sample from one of the other projects the developer has completed.
- 26

27 Mr. Solomon said he thought the Commission was asking for things that are not required.

28  
29 **New Business:** There was no new business.

30  
31 ***Commissioners and Staff Discussion***

32  
33 There were no topics for discussion.

34  
35 ***Adjourn***

36  
37 There being no additional matters to be taken up by the Commission, Mr. Cox called a motion to  
38 adjourn. Mr. Humphrey made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Count seconded. Mr. Cox called for  
39 discussion. Hearing none he called for a vote. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously (5-0).

40  
41 The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 pm.

42  
43  
44 Submitted by:

45  
46 \_\_\_\_\_  
47 Secretary Date

48  
49  
50 Approved by:

51  
52  
53  
54 \_\_\_\_\_  
55 Chairman Date