



MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Dan Frazier, AICP, Planning Manager

RE: 328, 330 and 332 Buck Island Road Zoning Map Amendment (ZONE-06-24-019188) and Comprehensive Plan Amendment (COMP-06-24-019187)
Planning Commission Workshop (UDO Section 3.2.2.F)

DATE: July 24, 2024

CC: Kevin Icard, AICP, Director of Growth Management

INTRODUCTION: On June 17, 2024, the Town of Bluffton (the "Applicant"), on behalf of the property owners Rose Kitty and Ferrellgas Inc, submitted applications (ZONE-06-24-019188 and COMP-06-24-019187) requesting approval of an Amendment to the Town of Bluffton Official Zoning Map (Attachments 1, 2 and 3). The two subject parcels total +/- 1.38 acres and are identified by Beaufort County Tax Map Numbers R610 03 000 0016 0000 (328 and 330 Buck Island Road) and R610 039 000 018C 0000 (332 Buck Island Road). The parcels are contiguous and located on Buck Island Road approximately 370 feet north of the Buck Island Road at Simmonsville Road intersection.

The request includes two concurrent applications. The Applicant is requesting an amendment to the Official Zoning Map for the Town of Bluffton to rezone the two (2) subject parcels from the Residential General (RG) zone district to the Light Industrial (LI) zone district. The Applicant is also requesting to amend the future land use designation for the subject properties from the Suburban Living designation to Neighborhood Center.

BACKGROUND: On May 14, 2024, the Town of Bluffton adopted an update to the Buck Island-Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan. As part of the neighborhood planning process leading up the drafting of the plan update, these two parcels were identified properties containing long-time commercial non-conforming uses. As a result, an Action Plan strategy included in the updated neighborhood plan was to "explore the possibility of rezoning two residentially zoned properties with long-time commercial non-conforming uses on Buck Island Road to an appropriate commercial zoning district" (Attachment 4).

A more regional view of the Town's Zoning Map and Future Land Use Map show that the current non-conforming use of the properties are more compatible with the zoning and future land use designations of the adjacent properties to the south

(Attachments 5 and 6).

A description of the current and proposed zoning districts are as follows:

Zoning (Current)

Residential General (RG) - The RG district is intended to provide for moderate-density residential neighborhoods. This district will include a range of dwelling types in an integrated neighborhood setting with other civic and recreational uses. The regulations are designed to promote neighborhood character and accommodate a variety of dwelling types.

Zoning (Proposed)

Light Industrial (LI) - The LI district is intended to provide locations for light industrial, research and development, assembly, high technology production, precision manufacturing, and similar primary employment uses. This district can be used to integrate a number of mutually supportive uses within the district to create employment centers.

Blueprint Bluffton Comprehensive Plan - Future Land Use Map – The Future Land Use Map contained within the Town of Bluffton’s Comprehensive Plan identifies nine future land use categories that provide generalized recommendations as to where and how development should occur. The descriptions that accompany these categories prescribe the general character and types of development that are most appropriate in each category.

A description of the current and proposed future land use designations are as follows:

Future Land Use Designation (Current)

Suburban Living - The Suburban Living category is intended to include low density single-family neighborhoods. Much of this category includes portions of large Planned Unit Developments that are under active construction or are built-out. Allowable density is up to three dwelling units per acre and must be at least one dwelling unit per acre. Community amenities such as trails, parks, and centralized swimming pools are encouraged.

Future Land Use Designation (Proposed)

Neighborhood Center - The Neighborhood Center category is intended to guide emerging neighborhood-focused retail clusters throughout the community. These centers, such as Buckwalter Place, provide the opportunity for residents to be within walking distance of grocers, restaurants, retailers, and medical offices. These centers help establish neighborhood identity and are best served when supported by a mix of middle housing and single family residences within walking or biking distance.

PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP: Unified Development Ordinance Section 3.2.2.F states that the first step in the Zoning Map Amendment and Comprehensive Plan Amendment review process is to hold a Planning Commission Workshop for the request.

“Planning Commission Workshops are intended to be the first official presentation of a proposed project to provide the public with information and a forum to initially review the application and identify applicable application review criteria. Meetings are encouraged as opportunities for informal, non-binding communication between the Applicant and neighboring property owners who may be affected by the application.”

Following this Planning Commission Workshop, the application will return to the Planning Commission for a Public Hearing (tentative August 28, 2024) and to provide a recommendation to Town Council. Town Council will hear the request twice, with the second reading being the Public Hearing for the Zoning Map and Comprehensive Plan Amendments (see Attachment 7 - *Tentative Schedule*).

When reviewing the Zoning Map Amendment, Planning Commission should be considering the following criteria in the Unified Development Ordinance.

Unified Development Ordinance Section 3.4.3 Application Review Criteria – Zoning Map Amendment

The Planning Commission and Town Council shall consider the following criteria in assessing an application for Zoning Map Amendment:

- A. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan or, if conditions have changed since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted, consistency with the overall intent of the Comprehensive Plan, recent development trends and the general character of the area.
- B. Capability of the site’s physical, geological, hydrological and other environmental features to support the breadth and intensity of uses that could be developed in the proposed zoning district.
- C. Compatibility of all the potential uses allowed in the proposed zoning district with surrounding uses and zoning districts in terms of suitability of location, impacts on the environment, noise, density, nature of use, traffic impacts, aesthetics, ability to develop adjacent properties under existing zoning, and potential influence on property values.
- D. Capacity of public infrastructure and services to sufficiently accommodate all potential uses allowed in the proposed district without compromising the public health, safety and welfare of the Town of Bluffton.
- E. Public need for the potential uses permitted in the requested zoning district.
- F. Compliance with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

When reviewing the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Planning Commission should be considering the following criteria in the Unified Development Ordinance.

Unified Development Ordinance Section 3.3.3 Application Review Criteria – Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The Planning Commission and Town Council shall consider the following criteria in assessing an application for Comprehensive Plan Amendment:

- A. Consistency with the intent of the overall policies in the Comprehensive Plan.
- B. Consistency with demographic changes, prevailing economic trends and/or newly recognized best planning practices that would deem the proposed amendment necessary and proper for the advancement of the Town of Bluffton's goals.
- C. If applicable, the ability of public infrastructure and services to sufficiently accommodate the requested amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.
- D. Appropriate and efficient use of public funds, the future growth, development and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction, and consideration of the fiscal impact on property owners.
- E. Enhancement of the health, safety, and welfare of the Town of Bluffton;
- F. Consistency with applicable South Carolina Planning law and consideration of case law.
- G. Impact of the proposed amendment on the provision of public services; and
- H. The application must comply with applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Applications
- 2. Zoning Map
- 3. Future Land Use Map
- 4. Buck Island-Simmons ville Neighborhood Plan (Action Plan)
- 5. Zone Map (Regional)
- 6. Future Land Use Map (Regional)
- 7. Tentative Meeting Schedule