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STAFF REPORT

TO: Town Council

FROM: Justin Westbrook, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Annexation (AN-24-03) – Dream Finders

DATE: September 16, 2025

Background: The applicant, Dream Finders, has applied for an Annexation (AN-24-03) for four (4) complete parcels; the “Reid” parcel (TMS# 162-00-01-029), the “Callum” parcel (TMS # 162-00-01-020), the “Flarisee” parcel (TMS # 162-02-00-019), and the “Morgan” parcel (TMS # 162-02-00-017). The application also includes a future portion of another parcel, the “church” parcel (TMS # 162-02-00-015). The parcels are currently zoned within Berkeley County, zoned as their **Heavy Industrial (HI)** zoning district, and total approximately 96.01 acres. The applicant is seeking the parcels to be annexed and zoned **Planned Development (PD)** which will provide a mix of uses, including residential and commercial, with various housing types, to include single family attached (townhomes) and a mix of single family detached dwelling with varying lot sizes.

Existing Zoning: The subject parcels currently reside in Berkeley County with their **Heavy Industrial (HI)** district designation. The County’s Zoning Ordinance specifies that their **HI** District is intended to:

“Provide for areas within the county where heavy industrial uses and compatible uses may take place, including, but not limited to, the mechanical or chemical transformation of organic or inorganic substances into new products.”

Adjacent Zoning		Adjacent Land Use
North	Flex-1 (Berkeley County)	Single-family Residential
South	Planned Development Residential (PD-R)	Industrial Use
	Light Industrial (M-1)	Concrete Plant
	Heavy Industrial (HI) (Berkeley County)	UNDEVELOPED, Industrial Use
East	Planned Development – Commercial (PD-R)	UNDEVELOPED
	Heavy Industrial (HI) (Berkeley County)	UNDEVELOPED
West	Residential (R-2) (Berkeley County)	Single Family Dwellings
	Heavy Industrial (HI) (Berkeley County)	Church, Used Car Sales, RV Sales

Existing Site Conditions: The subject parcels total approximately 96.01 acres, which are currently undeveloped. Per the National Wetlands Inventory map, there does appear to be a significant number of wetlands shown,

spread throughout the parcel. However, per the applicant's PD Document, the wetlands seem to be minimal, with the applicant proposing very limited if any disturbance of the wetlands delineated in their documentation. The application's intact parcels are currently accessible by US-52, and benefit from approximately 488-feet (TMS # 162-02-00-017) and approximately 105-feet (TMS # 162-02-00-019) of road frontage. The portion of the parcel owned by the Grove Christian Church, will be created prior to the public hearing before Town Council. This new parcel will be approximately 50-feet in width with similar road frontage along Ben Baron Lane.

Proposed Zoning Request: The applicant has requested to annex and apply a **Planned Development (PD)** district to the subject parcels. Per the Town's Zoning Ordinance, the **PD District** is intended to:

"...encourage the development of mixed-use communities which provide a range of harmonious land uses (residential, commercial, cultural, educational, etc.) which support the mixed uses within the planned unit development (PD District)."

The proposed PD Document divides the 96.01 acre project into four (4) phases. The first phase will include what Staff considers the main development entrance through the "church" parcel. This roadway is prescribed to have a typical cross section, 10-foot multi-use path and enhanced landscaping that is more intensive than other streetscapes through the development. This phase will also see the other two (2) entrances installed, both along US-52. The first phase will also include a section of single family attached dwelling units, single family detached dwelling units and a pickleball facility constructed by the developer, to the Town's specifications and dedicated to the Town for ownership and operation.

Phase 2 will include additional single family detached units, including the Series A residential lots, which serve as the large-lot units for the development. Phase 3 will include the remainder of the single family attached dwelling units, with Phase 4 including the remainder single family detached units and commercial portions of the project.

Staff does have concerns with the development of the commercial aspect of the project, as it appears a minimum number of lots are included in this phase, and is obviously after the lion's share of the development. The Town has experienced several instances of commercial inclusion for **Planned Development** districts, which have yet to materialize or be significantly marginalized by the developer. While Staff can appreciate the applicant is a home builder and not a commercial developer, it is still a concern on when and if the commercial aspect will ever develop and is the number of residential units enough to incentivize the commercial development from ever benefiting the new and existing residents of the Town.

Staff is also concerned with the amount of commercial development planned. Staff typically run a financial analysis on all potential projects, including the number of residential units, square footage of units, projected price points and build out timelines. Staff compare this to the amount of services needed for the Town to include this in our service areas, and the projection typically indicates a long-term loss for the Town. An easy offset to a loss is the inclusion of commercial space, which takes considerably less resources to serve by the Town, but has a higher tax income for the Town's budget. After some conversations with the applicant, Staff believes the amount of commercial, the only meaningful variable to the analysis, is not big enough to offset the residential loss incurred by this development.

The project does benefit from a dedicated pickleball facility, as previously mentioned, as well as the extension of a 10-foot trail that extends south through Carolina Groves subdivision and through the Berkeley Electric Cooperative property. Staff does have concerns about the addition of any amenities for the existing and future residents beyond these two prospects. Staff requested, with the applicant providing, an additional trail system be included in the PD Document to help activate the scattered wetland areas and around the project, which we believe would be a great benefit to the residents and community as a whole.

Density: The subject parcels consist of approximately 96.1 acres. With up to three hundred seventy-five (375) units, this results in a 3.9 dwelling unit/acre for the entire project. This density includes a large section for commercial, while also including single family attached homes, and three (3) types of single family detached homes.

The single family attached homes will have a minimum lot size of 2,200 ft² for the middle units, with end units being at least 3,200 ft². The project does not prescribe a minimum number of single family attached; however, the PD Document indicates this project will not utilize more than one hundred sixty-two (162) attached dwelling units. This constitutes at most approximately 43% of the total allowed number of residential units for the project.

The three (3) types of single family detached lot sizes are referred to as Series A, Series B and Series C. The setbacks for these lot sizes are all the same, with a 25-foot front setback, 15-foot rear setback, and a 7.5-foot side setback from property lines. The prescribed front and rear setbacks are typical, however the 7.5-foot side setback, requested by Staff, constitutes a large side than typical of a **Planned Development (PD)** district.

- Series A lots will have a minimum lot size of 8,500 ft², and the project will see at least nine (9) of these lot types.
- Series B lots will have a minimum lot size of 6,600 ft², and the project will utilize at least forty (40) of these lot types.
- Series C lots will have a minimum lot size of 5,400 ft², and the project will utilize at least one hundred fifty (15) of these lot types.

These different lot sizes, or series, equate to a minimum of one hundred ninety-nine (199) single family dwelling units. Added to the maximum number of single family attached dwellings, this only equals three hundred sixty-one (361) units, meaning that the project may not see the maximum number of units previously mentioned. To be clear, at no point can there ever be more single family attached homes than one hundred sixty-two (162), and there will never be more than three hundred seventy-five (375) total residential units for the project.

While some of the residential units are smaller than what is typically seen, this is offset by a significant number of commercial space and civic space to be dedicated to the Town of Moncks Corner.

For context, the nearby Riverstone community consists of approximately 31.3 acres with entitlements for one-hundred nine (109) dwelling units. This equates to 3.48 dwelling units per acre. Further south on US-52 is the Oakley Point subdivision of single-family dwelling units. This project was constructed on approximately one-hundred thirty-four (134) acres with up to three-hundred seven (307) dwelling units. This equates to a density

of 2.28 dwelling units per acre. It is important to note that both developments utilize a traditional single-family detached use and not a single-family attached townhome product.

Transportation & Parking: The PD Document prescribes a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) for each phase listed in the PD Document and will be required prior to Preliminary Plat approval for any phase of the project. This is sufficient and necessary to judge the growth and manage the traffic impacts accordingly and appropriately time.

Staff and the applicant agree per the Town's usual operation, that all TIA recommendations will be funded and installed by the developer prior to Final Plat approval for each phase. This can ensure the Town is achieving the best connectivity as prescribed by a licensed traffic engineer prior to the development of the subject parcel.

Staff is concerned about adjacent parcels, particularly to the east, which may be landlocked from adequate transportation connectivity, should this development continue. Staff recommends a dedicated right-of-way with a constructed stub out to the eastern edge of the project, to ensure future growth could access this project and its connection to Ben Baron Lane and US-52.

Environmental: Per the National Wetlands Inventory, the parcels appear to have significant number of wetlands, covering the majority of the parcels. The applicant's PD Document shows considerably less amount of wetlands, and appears to be scattered throughout the development, however the PD Document appears to keep development impact to a minimum. When a Preliminary Plat for each phase is applied for, Staff will ensure all environmental concerns are addressed per the Zoning Ordinance, Stormwater Ordinance, and all other Town adopted policies and procedures.

Consistency with Plans: Adopted in 2024 as part of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the Future Land Use Map identifies the subject parcel as "Highway Commercial". The Plan calls for this land to be designated for:

"Intended to promote and enhance smaller lot, town mixed residential type neighborhoods near the downtown, commercial corridors and transportation nodes. A mixture of densities should be promoted to include single-family houses, duplexes, triplexes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and small-scale apartments."

The requested zoning designation *may not* be congruent with this designation of the Future Land Use Map as the request includes commercial, as well as higher density residential and civic space. The subject parcel also appears to be within the aforementioned "Highway Commercial Overlay", which the Plan defines as:

"A 1000 ft commercial buffer (2000 ft in total width) along the US 52 Corridor is approximately eleven miles in length and is intended to allow for low intensity (ideally service based) commercial businesses such as medical offices, banks, pharmacies, etc. along the highway corridor while permitting residential units behind. Higher density residential units such as multi-family apartments would be permitted, however, should be part of a larger planned development."

The requested parcels are all within the "Highway Commercial Overlay", which does include a significant commercial element, and appears to comply with all aspects of the Future Land Use Map.

The Comprehensive Plan also lays out various goals and implementation strategies to help in decision making for land use requests. Staff believes the applicant and request generally adhere to the following policies listed in the plan.

1. Maintain a sustainable community by ensuring current infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate for current and future growth.
2. Allow for a range of residential uses to support housing opportunities for residents of all ages and socio-economic statuses.
3. Enhance economic opportunities by improving the retention of businesses and encouraging a range of uses and services.
6. Provide high quality public services, infrastructure, facilities, and programs that meet the needs of current and future residents.
9. Enhance the quality and range of parks and recreational opportunities while adequately maintaining existing facilities.

Procedural Issues: As the subject parcels are requesting annexation by 100% of the property owners, and have signed annexation petitions, the request will be presented for approval at two (2) separate Town Council meetings. As part of this request, the applicant is also seeking to apply Town of Moncks Corner zoning to the subject parcels.

As part of any Zoning Map Amendment, the request must be at least two (2) acres, an extension of an existing district boundary, or additional C-1 zoning contiguous to existing commercial. In this case, the subject parcel exceeds two (2) acres in size and is adjacent to an existing district boundary.

Staff Analysis: Staff believe the PD Document is generally complete and covers most concerns raised by Staff during this application process. The applicant has showed a good-faith effort to find solutions to challenges a complex project such as this has raised. While Staff still has concerns, this application leaves little open-ended questions that Staff believe could damage or harm the Town, this development, and more importantly the current residents in the area.

There are still a few Staff concerns, which we anticipate the applicant will continue to work with us to achieve some closure on. These concerns include a future stub out within dedicated right-of-way to the east, connection through the “church” property and Ben Baron Lane, the potential financial strains incurred by the Town after buildout, and the prospective commercial aspect of the development.

Since the Planning Commission meeting, the applicant has proposed and presented an exhibit showing the elimination of two aspects of the plan that appears to significantly reduce the financial burden to the Town by the project. The two changes appear to be the complete elimination of the townhome section of the project, and also the elimination of the larger Series A lots (8,500 ft²). This reduction in housing types helps with the financial analysis, but also reduces the number of maximum units from 375 down to 315 units.

Staff does acknowledge several positive impacts this project may have on the Town, such as the inclusion of commercial area and a dedicated, constructed pickle ball facility to be used by all residents of the area, as a Town-owned and operated recreation facility. The commercial portion of the project may provide a positive

financial impact to offset the residential costs of servicing the future area, and the inclusion of additional retail, dining and entertainment facilities in the Town may be to the benefit of existing residents.

Planning Commission Recommendation: The Planning Commission heard the request at their August 26th meeting. The Commission voted 7-0 in favor of recommending APPROVAL of the requested **Planned Development (PD)** designation for the subject parcels, however they had several concerns. The two most prominent concerns voiced by the Commission was the density and the impact on the Town by the development, specifically the financial, traffic and other strains on the Town and community services this many proposed units may impose. The applicant spoke in favor of the request, however no other attendees spoke regarding the application.

Staff Recommendation: Currently, Staff generally recommends approval for the requested **Planned Development (PD)** zoning district designation for the subject parcels. Staff has reached this recommendation due to the PD Document being thoughtful and complete. While there are some questions that need to be addressed, such as the commercial buildout size and timing, Staff believes that this application and the submitted documentation will serve the Town as a potential satisfactory base to move forward. Staff believes the compliance with the application and the 2024 Comprehensive Plan with a mix of housing types, commercial opportunities and pickleball facility, meets the spirit and intent of our long-range planning documents and vision for the US-52 corridor.

Since the Planning Commission meeting, the applicant has worked with Staff to address the two prominent concerns of the Commission. By reducing the number of units from 375 to 315 and eliminating the townhome section of the project, Staff believes that these changes positively influence the financial analysis that was generally negative, and shows a more subdued strain on Town services and less of a financial burden over the next decade by serving these parcels and this planned community. Staff also believe, that by eliminating the townhomes, reducing the number of units, and therefore lessening the density, the congestion and traffic concerns are also mitigated to a lesser degree than previously thought.

*Attachments: Location Maps (Aerial, Zoning, Future Land Use Map, Environmental)
 SIGNED - Application (Reid, Adelaide, Wallace, Flarisee) (20241119)
 SIGNED – Application (The Grove Christian Church) (20250724)
 PD Document (20250724)*