



MPC Headlines

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MPC Board Members

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 Adam Ragsdale, Secretary
 Susan Myers, Treasurer
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 Michael Brown
 Ben Farmer
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 Stephen Lufburrow
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MPC Moves to Paperless Meeting System

Marilyn Gignilliat
 Assistant to the Executive Director

Previous issues of the MPC Headlines have included articles describing our 2010 Sustainability Initiative. An important milestone toward our goal was achieved on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 when we held our first MPC Meeting using our new paperless, web-based meeting system.

Over the past few months, staff has been preparing for this transition by holding mock meetings, attending training sessions on software, and generally taking a good, hard look at “the way we do things” so that we can eliminate duplication of effort, cut down on the amount of paper used, and also save energy and staff time by delivering meeting packages.

Our web-base system also gives us an opportunity to provide more resources to residents, developers, and others who need information from our staff reports. Now, when we post our agendas to the webpage, a comprehensive set of documents will be attached to each petition listed. Readers will now have access to the staff report, zoning maps, site plans, letters received from concerned residents and other material. Previously this was only available by visiting our offices.

The Wednesday before each MPC meeting a Preliminary

Agenda will be posted on our website. This Agenda should have enough information to help identify the nature of the action requested and the location of the subject property.

The Friday before each MPC Regular Meeting, a Tentative Agenda will be posted along with a link to the staff report, maps, site plans, development plans or other supporting material.

The Final Agenda will be posted the morning of the MPC meeting. The Final Agenda lists items that have been requested to be removed from the Agenda and won't be heard at the meeting. The Agenda also shows consent Agenda items where the applicant is in agreement with the staff recommendation and there are no known objections. The consent Agenda items are heard at the beginning of the meeting. If you are interested in a Consent Agenda item, please plan to be in the Hearing Room when the meeting begins at 1:30 PM.

This move to a paperless system accomplished two goals for the MPC. First, information is more readily available to everyone and secondly, we are further reducing waste, thus doing our part to help the environment.

Please see us on the web at: www.thempc.org/Administrative/meetings.htm

Director's Corner

Dear Reader,



Many
MPC
Board

meetings are routine sessions where the Board acts on site plans, subdivisions, or zoning petitions. However, on May 5, 2009 the Board took time out to officially welcome three new members and to recognize two out-going Commissioners.

Superior Court Judge **Penny Haas Freese** presided over the Swearing-In Ceremony for all new and returning Commissioners. This annual event had been delayed until all new and returning Commissioners were notified of their appointments. This ceremony also provided an opportunity for Board members, staff and those in the audience to reflect on the charge to the MPC Board.

Ellison Cook, former Alderman for the City of Savannah, was appointed to the MPC Board by the County Commission. Mr. Cook, whose knowledge of neighborhood concerns will be valuable to others on the MPC, replaced **Doug Bean**, whose term had expired.

Continued, see Page 5

Coastal Stormwater Supplement to the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual Is Complete

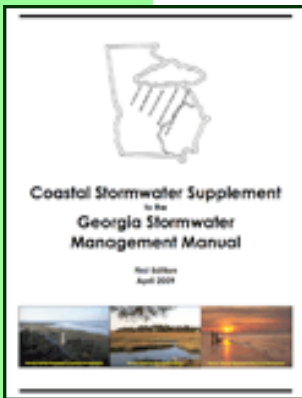


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*Jackie Jackson Teel
Natural Resources Administrator*

As of April 2009, the Coastal Stormwater Supplement (CSS) is complete and ready for use.

The CSS represents the work of a cooperative, collaborative team comprised of the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Environmental Protection Division, the cities and counties of coastal Georgia, and the Center for Watershed Protection. This group developed



guidelines for watershed (natural resource) protection and the control of post-construction stormwater runoff from new and existing development. The Coastal

Stormwater Supplement was produced with a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The guidelines were designed to balance the impacts of economic growth and land development in coastal Georgia while protecting our valuable aquatic and terrestrial resources.

The Coastal Stormwater Supplement is organized for ease of use. It is divided into eight sections with each section providing guidelines that show how to design and manage stormwater after construction is complete. If used properly and consistently, this manual can help to protect coastal Georgia from the negative impacts of the land development process and population growth. In addition, the Coastal Stormwater Supplement makes use of more environmentally-sensitive site planning and design techniques and innovative stormwater management practices, as well as more traditional

stormwater management techniques.

A number of workshops and training sessions for area engineering staff, planners, consultants, and elected officials were held along the coast and were very well attended and received. Communities located within the coastal region will find this Coastal Stormwater Supplement to be a valuable resource in their efforts to develop or enhance their local post-construction stormwater management programs.

The Coastal Stormwater Supplement can be accessed by visiting the Stormwater link on the MPC Natural Resources website at www.MPCNaturalResources.org

Transit Vision Plan Kickoff

*Michael Adams,
Transportation Planner*

This summer, the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) will kick off the Transit Vi-

sion Plan for Chatham County and the City of Savannah. On April 24, 2009, a brainstorming meeting was held between stakeholders, CORE MPO staff, the Chatham Area Transit Authority, and Wilbur Smith and Associates, Inc., the consultant chosen to create the Transit Vision Plan. During the brainstorming meeting, those in attendance were asked what they thought Chatham

County will look like in 20, 30, and 50 years in the future and what areas are the most congested and could benefit from transit service in one form or another. The Wilbur Smith team will develop a macro-scale vision plan for what modes of transit and where it may be needed in Chatham County in the future.



Historic District Zoning Ordinance Overview



www.thempc.org

1960– Savannah adopts land use zoning

1966– Oglethorpe plan area designated National Historic Landmark District

1967– MPC helps draft Historic Area Regulations

1968– Historic Savannah Foundation published significant structure inventory

1973– Historic District overlay ordinance

1997– New, extensive revisions to HD ordinance adopted

2005– Ordinance further amended

*Beth Reiter, Director
Historic Preservation*

Savannah adopted land use zoning in 1960, but there was no legal protection in place to assure property owners that their rehabilitation investment would be protected from incompatible neighboring development. The zoning code was largely suburban in character with setback, lot area and density requirements that were out-of-character with the urban row house development of downtown Savannah. In addition, most of the historic buildings were unrestored and their historic character was not immediately recognized. Since it was not always easy to see the potential of a derelict structure as a restored historic site, many important buildings were lost to accommodate automobile traffic.

Several important events helped change this alarming trend. In 1966, pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, the U. S. National Park Service designated the Oglethorpe Plan area of Savannah as a National Historic Landmark District. In 1968, the Historic Savannah Foundation published its authoritative professional inventory of architecturally significant structures within the Historic District. That same year, a referendum was held to amend the Georgia Constitution to enable Savannah to adopt historic zoning and a review process whereby changes to historic struc-

tures and new development would be reviewed for compatibility under a set of standards.

The prototype for the standards was developed by the architectural firm of Muldawer and Patterson for HUD and was published as the Historic Preservation Plan for the city's Troup Ward Planned Neighborhood Conservation District. Sixteen criteria were developed to be used as design standards. In 1967, the MPC, the American Institute of Architects, and Historic Savannah drafted a document called Historic Area Regulations which corrected the conflicts within the zoning ordinance by recommending an overlay for the district which would allow higher densities, 0-lot line setbacks, and mixed use development typical of an urban environment. This document led to the adoption of a Historic District overlay ordinance in 1973 which created the historic district board of review, established a historic buildings map and adapted the design criteria of the previous HUD document.

Over the years the ordinance and the building map have been amended numerous times to keep them current. Procedures have also been reviewed and changed as necessary. By 1990, continued tear downs and inappropriate new construction prompted Historic Savannah Foundation to contract with Christopher Chadbourne, a Boston-based consultant to prepare new design stan-

dards for the City of Savannah. These were presented to the City in 1992 and the most extensive revisions to the Historic District ordinance were adopted in 1997. These revisions created a historic district height map, specific design standards to implement the compatibility criteria providing objective criteria for judging the appropriateness of alterations and new construction.

Although the Chadbourne report had proposed a number of standards for large-scale development, only two were incorporated into the revised ordinance. Five years later, in 2003, a broad-based committee of citizens and MPC and City staff began meeting to consider additional revisions to the ordinance including a more finely considered height map. At the time of the adoption of these new revisions, City Council adopted language that maximum heights on the height map shall be permitted. The ordinance was further amended in 2005 with regard to demolition and maintenance.

In 2007, pursuant to a law suit, the 2003 changes to the ordinance regarding the height map were nullified due to a procedural error that occurred in the adoption of the 2003 revisions. The City subsequently readopted the ordinance with no changes and through the City manager charged a new revisions committee to once again review the ordinance and make specific recommendations to council regarding large-scale development, height, lot cov-

Continued on page 4.



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Lidar Acquisition Complete

Jason Lee
Sr. GIS Analyst

The SPLOST-funded Lidar acquisition for Chatham County was completed during the month of March 2009, and SAGIS and Chatham County recently received sample data for inspection.

Both SAGIS and the Chatham County Dept. of Engineering have reviewed the data and found that so far it satisfies our specifications for Lidar.

The next phase of the project will consist of the delivery of the individual products and the subsequent review of them by SAGIS and Chatham County Engineering. The individual products to be delivered are: the raw Lidar points, the Lidar

points classified to a land cover, contours and breaklines generated from both those points an imagery, 6 inch resolution imagery of the county, an intensity image, and a Digital Elevation Model (DEM) at the 1 meter resolution.

The intensive review process we will employ to insure quality requires that each portion of data be investigated for abnormalities and consistency. That means that each area will be checked a minimum of 4 times (one for each data type) against each other and against other data sets we currently have. There is also on-the-ground survey work that must be done to verify the data.

The assessment is expected to be complete by December 2009.



Lidar point model of downtown (intersection of Broughton and Price Streets)

Continued (Historic Zoning)
erage and the height map.

Beginning in February 2008, the revisions committee met twenty times to review the ordinance using material from the Chadbourne report and recommendations from the proposed Downtown Master Plan. All of the presentations, case studies, and comments from these meetings are available for public review on the MPC website www.thempc.org. In addition, MPC was briefed three times during the process and the draft was reviewed by the City Attorney and City Manager numerous times. The public comment version of the proposed ordinance reflects the City's internal review.

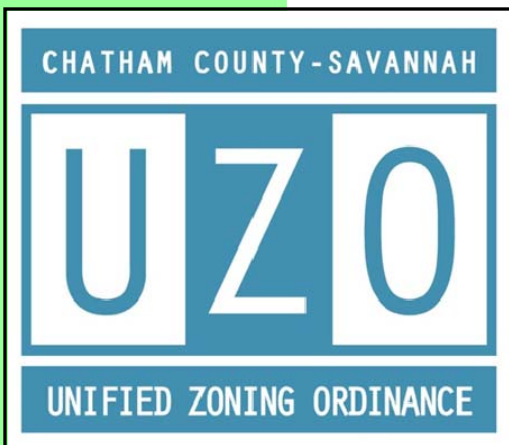
What's New With the Unified Zoning Ordinance?

Charlotte Moore, AICP
Director of Special Projects
Amanda Bunce,
Development Services Planner

duce the public to the UZO. If you were unable to attend but would like to see our presentation, it's available at www.unifiedzoning.org.

Interested in Serving on the UZO Advisory Committee?

Once the ordinance draft is completed by the Technical Committee, an Advisory Committee will be formed with the purpose of reviewing the document prior to a public comment period. Participants are sought to represent and serve as a liaison to neighborhood organizations, building and design-related professions, and other community groups with interest in planning and zoning. It is anticipated that the Advisory Committee will meet weekly for two to three months. If interested, contact Charlotte Moore at 651-1466, or by email at moorec@thempc.org.



As work continues on the draft of the Unified Zoning Ordinance (UZO), related work is also underway:

Community Meetings

In April and May, planning staff held five community meetings to discuss general zoning concepts and to intro-

New UZO Website

In May, a new website was launched for the UZO to increase public awareness and participation. The site features information regarding the purpose and process of creating the UZO as well as scheduled meetings and links to other planning resources. All presentations from Technical Committee and Planning Commission meetings, including minutes from those meetings are posted on the site. The address is www.unifiedzoning.org.



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“the Board took time out to officially welcome three new members and to recognize two out-going Commissioners.”

Director's Corner, continued

Tanya Milton fills the vacancy created when **Freddie Gilyard** resigned to return to the Chatham County Savannah Public School System as principal of Johnson High School. Ms. Milton is the Vice President and Advertising Director with *The Savannah Tribune*. As we begin a Public Involvement Program for several high profile projects, Ms. Milton's media skill will be helpful to staff and the community.

Jon Pannell, partner in the law firm of Gray & Pannell, replaces **Robert Ray**. Mr. Ray served two three-year terms and was elected Vice Chairman; he also served as Finance Committee Chairman. Mr. Pannell serves on a number of local and state professional or community organizations. He also volunteers for Meals on Wheels program

through Senior Citizens, Inc.

Mr. Bean and Mr. Ray were presented with Resolutions to recognize their services to the community during their time on the Planning Commission Board.

The terms for the following MPC Board members were renewed for another three years: **Jon Todd**, Chairman; **Shedrick Coleman**, Vice Chairman; **Susan Myers**, Treasurer, **Ben Farmer**, **Timothy Mackey**, and **Lacy Manigault**.

Adam Ragsdale, Secretary, **Stephen Lufburrow**, and **David Hoover** remain on the Planning Commission until 2009. County Manager **Russ Abolt** and City Manager **Michael Brown** also serve on the Planning Commission.

Our Unified Zoning Ordinance project is rapidly moving forward. Staff is now available to

make presentations to community interest groups, neighborhood associations, or professional organizations about the changes that are part of this revised ordinance. Please call me at 651-1446, or send an e-mail to thomsont@thempc.org if you would like us to speak at an upcoming meeting.

I am also encouraging you to visit our newest website—www.unifiedzoning.org—to learn more about the Unified Zoning Ordinance. Staff has compiled information related to the new provisions of the ordinance, prepared summaries of committee meetings, and other created aids to understanding this important project. Please visit the website and send me your comments.

Meet Our New MPC Board Members:



Tanya Milton



Ellison Cook



Jon Pannell

Please contact Jason Lee (leej@thempc.org) for comments or subscription information.