



*The Lowcountry's Hometown*

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**Planning Commission Workshop  
6:00 PM, February 7, 2019  
Town Council Chambers**

**PROPOSED GIPPY PLANTATION DEVELOPMENT NOTES**

*Current Conditions*

The total property measures 798 acres, with 476 acres of uplands and 322 acres of freshwater wetlands. **The wetlands are located within a conservation easement and cannot be developed.**

At present, the property is located in unincorporated Berkeley County and is zoned Flex 1. This allows for single-family, duplex, and manufactured homes by right, in addition to agricultural and a few other uses. Lot size is at a minimum size of 30,000 sq. ft. **With current zoning, 600-700 homes can be placed on the site by right.**

*Proposed Development*

The current plan of the developer, Stefan Hoyer with Hoyer Investments, is to construct approximately 1,200 homes on the property, with 750 single-family units and the remaining 450 units as duplexes and townhouses. Some of the units will also be designed for an active adult population. Houses would have either vinyl or hardiplank exteriors.

- The developer wishes to place 47 additional acres in the conservation area.
- The plan includes 57 acres of open park space, with 92% of all grade A trees saved.
- 68% of the overall site is to remain in a green state.
- Amenities to include a pool, club house, tennis, pickleball, gym, and 8.5 miles of trails.
- The plans show a boat landing on the Cooper River. The landing is still in the concept stage and it has not been determined if this will be an amenity for residents or a public landing.

## *The Planning Process*

Staff has been working with the development team since May, 2018 to craft a development plan that adheres to the Moncks Corner Zoning Ordinance.

As part of the process, Staff requested that the developer hold public meetings to present their plan and receive feedback on ways to make the development better fit the character and needs of the Town. Two public meetings were held, on November 6, 2018 and January 17, 2019. Additionally, Mr. Hoyer met privately with residents of the Avenue of Oaks and Gippy Dyke Road neighborhoods on February 4 to discuss their concerns.

Issues/Questions & Answers that came up at the meetings include the following:

### Access

- The existing Fairlawn, First St. John's, and Gippy neighborhoods are concerned that the new development will send traffic through their neighborhoods.
  - At the November and January meetings the developer did not commit that access would not go through these neighborhoods. However, it appears now that he has made that commitment. The developer is seeking to purchase more property along Old Hwy 52 in order to place a second entrance. Moreover, he is planning on purchasing Avenue of Oaks and Gippy Dike Road and turning those over to the homeowner's associations in the area.
  - The developer's traffic engineer, Matt Short, stated in January that he felt that all traffic could exit from one entrance on Dairy Farm Road. This would require widening Old Hwy 52 at that point and putting turning lanes in. At some point, a traffic signal would be required.
  - Town Staff has made it very clear that we expect two main entrances on Old Highway 52 and that no existing neighborhoods are to be used as regular entrances. That having been said, the Town is agreeable to one or more of these neighborhoods serving as a locked and gated emergency access for ambulances and fire trucks.

### Traffic

- How will this development affect traffic on Old Highway 52?
  - Part of the process for development is to provide a comprehensive traffic analysis in conjunction with SCDOT, Berkeley County, and the Town. The traffic analysis will explain what improvements must be done to Old Highway 52 from the

intersection with Hwy 52 down to Gaillard Road. All improvements must be made to ensure that the traffic flow resulting from the development is the same flow as now.

- There are approximately 8,500 trips per day on Old Hwy 52 at this point.
- Furthermore, the developer explained that houses won't sell if the traffic on Old Hwy 52 is in bad shape. As such, he has to improve the road per SCDOT mandate to be able to sell the houses in the development.

### Drainage

- Drainage is a major concern. Will the development's drainage affect Fairlawn Barony or other nearby properties?
  - No. Stormwater drainage will be designed such that all rainfall that is currently absorbed by the Gippy Property will continue to do so. This is the law, and no runoff can go to neighboring properties.

### Other Comments

- Does the Development need to be in Town
  - No, the developer simply wishes to be located within Town limits
- This is an historic plantation. Has there been an archaeological study and, if so, what did it find?
  - An archaeologist hired by the developer performed a study on the property, digging 3.5' deep every 100'. Two historic sites were discovered, both of which are in the unbuildable area which is under a conservation easement.
- A large portion of the land is being shown as not constructed. Will that be built on at a later time?
  - No. This plan covers the entirety of the property, and when the development is built out, there will be no additional construction on the property. Moreover, much of the land which will not be built on is in a conservation easement and may never be built upon.
- Has the Town already decided to move forward with this project?
  - No. The Town has not received an official application at this time. The plan has not gone to the Town Planning Commission or the Town Council.
- What other developments has the developer done in the area?
  - The developer is working on Liberty Hill Farms in Mount Pleasant. Their partner, DR Horton, has recently completed Oyster Point, also in Mount Pleasant.
- What is the lot size in Oyster Point?

- 62' x 130', or 8,000 sq. ft.
- Does the developer intend to build a school on the property?
  - No
- One member of the audience stated: Moncks Corner is beautiful, but all this growth will just turn us into another North Charleston. Traffic and the influx of people creates havoc.
  - The response from Mr. Hoyer was as follows: Services cost money. There are two ways to pay for those services: raise taxes or bring in more people to help shoulder the cost of those services. Some people may not like development, but the developer's job is to grow in a professional, inclusive way.
- A representative from the Coastal Conservation League stated that a petition to stop this development was at 900 signatures by the time of the January meeting. 600 of these signatures were from Berkeley County residents. They would like to see Gippy Plantation remain rural.
  - The developer stated that he understands that many people want to see this property preserved. It is for sale, and to the best of his knowledge he is the only person who has sought to purchase it. If someone wishes to purchase the property and place it in a conservation easement, he will "back away tomorrow."
- The final comment from the audience at the November meeting was the following: We may not like this, but someone is going to develop this property someday. The next developer may not gather feedback from the people or give the opportunity to take part.

### *Town Concerns*

Through the months of discussion and public meetings, staff has heard certain concerns from the public repeated regularly. This leads to certain questions that the Planning Commission may wish to ask the developer prior to the formal application. Questions include:

1. Will any existing neighborhood roads be used as primary means of access?
2. Traffic on Old Highway 52 is a major concern. Can you explain what sorts of mitigation measures SCDOT may be requiring in order to handle the additional traffic generated by this development?
3. When will these traffic mitigation measures be enacted?
4. Because traffic is a major concern, have you considered reducing the density? 600 units are allowed by right in the County, and we understand the desire to have more units than that, but 1,200 units seems very dense, and lead to the traffic concerns mentioned repeatedly by the public.

5. We understand the need for a range of housing types in the Town, but is this the right neighborhood for townhouses and duplexes? The public perception of these types of houses is that they are lower end houses often used by renters. There is a need for rental housing and housing that is more affordable to a wide range of buyers, but how do these housing types fit into the vision of Gippy Plantation?
6. The developer is stating that houses will use vinyl siding. That doesn't seem to be in keeping with the vision of a nicer development. Has the developer considered requiring hardiplank, brick, or stone on all buildings?
7. Besides the trees that are being saved and the trail system, how is this development different from Foxbank, Moss Grove, or any of the other developments in Moncks Corner? This is a beautiful piece of property and if it is going to be developed it deserves a beautiful plan.