

Edgefield County  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**Work Session Minutes**  
**County Council Chambers**  
**July 13, 2023**  
**5:04 PM**

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The Edgefield County Planning Commission Work Session was held on Thursday July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at the Edgefield County Council Chambers at 225 Jeter Street in Edgefield at 5:04pm. Notice of the time date and agenda of this meeting was provided to The Edgefield Advertiser, placed on the Message Board outside Council Chambers, and provided to others when requested. Any questions regarding the Planning Commission should be directed to the County's Planner April Morgan [Amorgan@edgefieldcounty.sc.gov](mailto:Amorgan@edgefieldcounty.sc.gov)

**Members present:**

Fab Burt  
Lisa Whitaker  
Karleen Butler  
Rhonda Nowicki  
Sharon Hadden  
Tracy Walsh

**Members absent:**

Daniel Baker

**Staff present:**

April Morgan  
Dharma Williams  
Hart Clark

**County Council members present:**

**Guest Speakers:**

Christopher Bass  
Richard Flippo

*No votes held during work session.*

**I. Call to Order**

Burt called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

**II. Guest Speakers**

Christopher Bass- Land Development Application Parcel # 091-00-00-110-000 (Dog Training& Boarding Facility)

Richard Flippo- Land Development Application Parcel # 102-00-00-081-000 (Boarding Facility)

**III. Old Business**

Hart explains that we will be going line by line over changes to the ordinances and comprehensive plan and if any changes or comments are wanted to be added, they will be added while Morgan distributes a "working folder" that contains changes to each of the commissioners. She explains that these folders can go home with the commissioners so that they can review the material between meetings. She explains

that there are a list of page numbers showing which pages have had changes made.

The first change Clark explains is the date revised from 7/06/2021 to 7/10/2023

The next change Clark explains is the 2020 Census table. Hart explains that the 2020 Census was very poorly done due to it being complete in the middle of COVID-19. He explains that 75% of the information in the table was not even available so the only information in the table that was updated was the information available. He explained normally there is 80% participation in Edgefield County, and in this census, there was only 50% so in the next Census there would be a drastic change. Most of the information is simple data: median values, gross rent values, number of housing units. This is the information they did have by taking the information directly from building permit data submitted to the state every month but of course this data could be anywhere from three to six months behind the current condition. The median value is census value as compared to U.S. property values. While we know house prices are closer to 240,000-250,000 for basic homes, this data is from 2020 and was a bad census year.

Clark continues to explain that the next change was under Estate Residential. This used to say "The overall density of residential development is projected to be about one house on five acres. However, the minimum lot size in this land use area is assumed to be approximately two acres in size to provide developers with flexibility in creating affordable home sites." He explains that this is a conflict because you cannot have a density of one unit per five acres and a density of one unit per two acres so he took the lot size out all together and just left the one house per five acres. Nowicki asks if we could just change it from two acres to five acres, and Clark explains that we could but reminds her that this does not dictate lot size but rather density. Clark continues to explain that these changes are going to make the Comprehensive Plan more restrictive than it currently is. Clark continues to remind the commissioners that this document, the Comprehensive Plan, is primarily used to make our (Edgefield County's) legislatures documents: land development regulations, zoning regulation, etc. This document is used to make those rules. Or, for example, if a PD (Planned Development) comes in and you are reviewing a PD you would use the Comprehensive Plan instead of the regulations because this document is used as guidance for new ordinances. Walsh and Clark go over density examples of one unit per five acres, and Clark explains further that this does not mean that there cannot be smaller lots, town houses, green spaces, etc. it simply means that the average density is going to be one unit for every five acres being developed.

Walsh asks what is going to stop a developer from putting all of the density into one portion of the property and then down the road going back and redeveloping the green space that was left. Clark explains that the zoning in the PD once declared by County Council is locked into place until it changed by the Council again. This means that if a developer decided that they wanted to develop a certain amount of acreage that they left as green space, they would first have to go back through the planning commission and then the commissioners would have to make recommendations to the County Council. Next, the developer would go to County Council to go through the process to get an approval to change that zoning. There is discussion on types of housing and lot sizing, to which Clark explains that in certain PUD's we want to see certain housing or lot sizes, we can make recommendations to County Council about what we want to see and don't want to see. These PD's will still go before County Council even if the Commissioners do not recommend to approve the PD, because a PUD is a creation of a law and all creations of laws go before the County Council. Subdivisions on the other hand do not have to go to the County Council, but they also do not use the Comprehensive Plan but rather they use zoning and ordinances. Anything that is used by right goes by the already enforced laws. You can use the Comprehensive Plan as a tool to aid in these decisions however it is not a legal decision-making tool that can be used to deny anything legally.

Nowicki refers back to the original wording of the Estate Residential Land Use Category "The minimum lot size in this land use area is assumed to be approximately two acres in size," questioning why we should remove it, and Clark explains that we want flexibility in the wording in our Comprehensive Plan so that as commissioners if you do not like something you can change the lot size as long as they meet the density required by the Comprehensive Plan. Clark continues to clarify that this document (the Comprehensive Plan) is for the Commissioners and nothing has to be approved by the commissioners unless they want to. He also explains that minimum lot size should be determined in zoning. So, in certain areas, for example areas of Sweetwater Road or outside of the Town of Edgefield, you could use zoning to get the lot size you desire in those areas without making changes in the Comprehensive Plan.

Walsh asks about the maps in their packets and Clark clarifies that the maps are not yet corrected to reflect the changes but once changes are voted upon he will get with Keisha to reflect any changes made.

Clark continues to the next change in the comprehensive plan which is found in Suburban Residential. Originally it stated "Average lot size may vary from ½ acre to 2 or 3 acres" and it was changed to "Average density is expected to be two units per acre or less." Clark explains

that this says the same thing but simplifies it. Nowicki questions this change and about what it would mean regarding lot sizes. Clark explains that this word change was from lot size to density meaning that you could have any size lot because the lower the density the more space you have but the higher the density the less space you have.

Clark continues to Table 7.3: Composition of Edgefield County Future Land Uses it was requested that the word "Density" was removed from the Suburban Residential and Village Residential categories because it was confusing wording. The commissioners point out that in the table the category names do not match with the category names found in the Comprehensive Plan and need to be made to match. Clark confirms that these will be fixed.

Clark continues to Table 7.4: Future Land Use with Applicable Zoning Allowances and explains that due to suggestions from commissioners Small Lot Residential was removed from Conditional in Rural Agricultural and Estate Residential and moved to not allowed to make it clear that it is being taken away from the conditional uses. Nowicki asks what is considered a small lot, to which Clark explains that it is up to the commissioners' discretions as the Comprehensive Plan is only a Plan and there is not a definition for small lot in it. There is discussion between Walsh and Clark on the different uses and where there are not any definitions explaining them in the Comprehensive Plan. They went further into defining commercial uses and Clark tells Walsh that commercial can be many things for instance if you have a home office selling things out of your house or if you have a miniature Wal-Mart. He then explains that a manufacturing facility would rather be an industrial use. Clark explains that Rural Agricultural became un-zoned when the LMO was scrapped meaning that in 70% of the County you cannot restrict the land use because of the law. He explains the definition of zoning is a law that controls lot size, setbacks, and land use so if an ordinance is written that controls those three things the area has been zoned. Zoning is used to say what would or would not be appropriate, for example saying a Dollar General is appropriate but a Wal-Mart is not. This would be using zoning to say small retailers are allowed but large retail is not. If somebody who is on un-zoned property wants to do a dog kennel, for example the two applicants here today, you can deny solely based on the Comprehensive Plan, however, Clark explained, they can submit in writing they are moving forward with the project if there is not law "Zoning Ordinance" that says they can't. You can put conditions on it but cannot make it illegal in certain area, that would be zoning. Clark clarifies writing an ordinance that controls land use is zoning. Clark continues to explain that the Commissioners could absolutely create an agricultural district and zone the entire un-zoned portion of the County and only allow specific commercial uses, residential uses, minimum lot sizes, but this

would still be zoning. Currently in our ordinances we are limiting lot sizes based off of water and sewer, not based off of the area in which it is located which Clark explains is "questionably legal" according to "The Judge." Burt declares that the Planning Commission needs to carry on with the work session in order to have time for the Land Development Applications. Clark continues that her again took the word Density out of Suburban Residential and Village Residential.

Clark asks for the commissioners to write up any additional changes that they wish to see made and send them to him and Morgan.

Clark continues that in the Zoning Descriptions he deleted GD (General Agricultural Development District) and added GR (General Residential Development District) and GC (General Commercial Development District) to match the ordinances.

Clark adds that West Martintown Road from the Aiken County Line to the intersection of Old Martintown Road was added to the Highway Overlay District for signage and setbacks at the commissioners request

Clark explains that the area overlays outside of Edgefield and Johnston were deleted at the commissioners requests as well as Sweetwater Road Overlay was edited to match the current Commercial overlay that is already there and removed the secondary residential overlay that was going to be there at the commissioners request. The maps will be edited to match these changes once approved. Nowicki asked why the overlays outside of Edgefield and Johnston were being removed and Clark explains that regarding previous discussion it was decided that now was not the time that we need to add those overlays due to not having enough growth in those areas, but if we need them in the future we can revisit. The Martintown Road overlay was edited to delete the sentence where it says "The overlay could include some elements like on Sweetwater, such as wooden fences, but needs to have its own distinct character."

#### **IV. New Business**

Burt begins review of Land Development Application for proposed Dog Training and Boarding Facility to be located on parcel # 091-00-00-110-000 (Cross Creek Road in Edgefield)

Clark explains that there has been a packet distributed to the commissioners and that the kennel is in an un-zoned area and asks if they have any questions. Burt asks if you were driving on 25 if you would have to turn left against oncoming traffic, and Clark pulls up the GIS map to show the location. Bass continues to explain questions that he has gotten in the past such as hair traps for septic tank, cleanliness of the turf, and having 12 dog kennels.

Burt begins review of Land Development Application for proposed Boarding Facility to be located on parcel # 102-00-00-081-000 (Sweetwater Road in North Augusta)

Flippo introduces himself and shares his backstory in training dogs. They will care for up to 14 dogs and have a separate space for cats for up to long periods of times to cater to the nearby military grounds. Walsh asks about if the signage will match the other signage on Sweetwater Road, and Clark explains that he could have a monument sign or small freestanding sign on his property not impairing traffic in anyway. The flag lot size is discussed and Clark tells Burt that the entrance for flag lots cannot be any smaller than 50 feet according to our ordinances.

**V. Adjourn**

Burt asked for a motion to Adjourn, Whitaker made the motion with Butler seconding. All voting in favor (6-0), the work Session was Adjourned at 5:46 pm.

Respectfully Submitted: April Morgan Approved: August 10, 2023  
April Morgan, Planner

James F. Burt  
Fab Burt-Chairman

