MEETING OF THE DARLINGTON CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
TUESDAY, May 18, 2021 – 9 A.M.
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attending were Planning Commission members Ms. Page, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Parnell, and Mr. Wiggins; and staff Ms. Rock, planning and economic development director, and Ms. Shafer, intern; and guest, Mr. Sabin, representing the Pee Dee Council of Governments.

Call to Order: Ms. Rock called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Approval of the Minutes for the meeting of March 16, 2021: Mr. Wiggins made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Parnell made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

Comprehensive Plan Update: Mr. Sabin gave an update of the 2021-2035 City of Darlington Comprehensive Plan. There are 10 elements required by state law, and he is working on completing one per month. He will provide an update on the plan at each Commission meeting through completion. Chapter 4, the Cultural Resources Element, includes the historical resources of the City. These require lots of upkeep, which makes them both useful and difficult to manage at the same time. The City's last architectural survey from 2002 should be updated to add the inventory of historic structures and add the status and condition of those in the original survey. Ms. Rock added that the City has applied for multiple historic grants to add to this element: The Underrepresented Communities Grant would take the Darlington Memorial Cemetery through the next step in its masterplan if awarded. The other would survey the southeast section of Darlington to inventory historic places that have been overlooked in the past. Mr. Sabin said the Cultural Resources Element includes the performing arts and fine arts. The centerpiece of the cultural landscape in town is the J.C. Daniels Auditorium, near the Darlington Library, the historic Carnegie Library, and St. John's School (c.1818). Connectivity in that area is important, as we discussed in the Natural Resources Element to connect Williamson Park with downtown, and similarly connect this cultural area to downtown. These can complement one another. Additionally, the City has several points of public art that could be expanded through the creation of a Public Arts Commission to create more art and highlight local artists as well as a Public Arts Fund. This would bring charm and character to the City. Beyond the mural downtown and mural at Liberty Lane, Ms. Rock noted several other public art items such as the to-scale replica of the Eiffel Tower on Hampton Street, the large abstract sculpture in front of the Mayo High School, and a small storm water mural in front of City Hall on the sidewalk. Mr. Sabin said that it is a small thing that can have a big impact for economic development and downtown. Chapter 5, the Community Facilities Element includes police, fire, recreation, water and sewer, solid waste, and community health (hospitals). Ms. Rock noted the City's need for a new fire station in the next 3 years and new City Hall in the next 5 to 10 years. The City has made the City Administration building available for sale, and that structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The City also purchased a 116-acre parcel to create a recreational sports complex that includes a city pond and creek access. The City's other parks of note, Carraway Park, Hampton Street Park, Bill Cain Tennis Complex, two gyms, and a city swimming pool.

New Business: As COVID restrictions are easing, Ms. Rock asked if members would like to resume meeting in person at City Hall. Mr. Wiggins made a motion to resume meeting in person. Mr. Lewis made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report: Ms. Rock told the Commission that the City had received 67 applicants for the city manager's position. The Municipal Association of South Carolina indicated its top 10 choices, and City Council will make the determination of the finalists this week.

The next elements to be addressed will be Housing and Lane Use at the May meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.