Minutes
McClellanville Planning Commission
Quarterly Meeting
January 20, 2026 – 6:00 PM

The McClellanville Planning Commission convened as scheduled for its quarterly meeting, public notice being provided in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Commissioner Ginny Prevost chaired the meeting. Present from the Planning Commission were Scott Youngblood, Adam Freeze, Dan Fifis and Oliver Thames; Town staff present included Kathryn Basha and Michelle McClellan. Planner Eddie Bernard was present virtually.

Commissioner Prevost called the public hearing to order and that the Commission review and approve the following minutes:

- October 2, 2025, minutes – Motion to approve made by Oliver Thames, was seconded by Adam Freeze.
- October 23, 2025, minutes – Motion to approve made by Scott Youngman, was seconded by Dan Fifis.
- November 3, 2025, minutes – Motion to approve made by Dan Fifis, was seconded by Oliver Thames.

The Commission discussed the need for election of officers for the upcoming year. After a brief discussion about some of the upcoming issues to be addressed; including but not limited to the 5-year review of the adopted Comprehensive Plan, Ginny Prevost and Dan Fifis were nominated to continue as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. A motion by Adam Freeze, seconded by Scott Youngman, was approved unanimously.

The Commission turned its attention to the draft amendments of Article VI: Tree Conservation. At this time, the meeting was joined by the Town's consultants from Kimley Horn Associates who were present to answer any questions as the Commission reviewed the draft. Provisions discussed for clarification included:

- Clarifying whether an exempt tree can be removed without a permit and removing a possible conflict with Section 6.5(B). It was agreed that bush hogging, mulching etc. listed in Section 6.5(B) should be listed as exempt activities at the beginning of the ordinance.
- Identifying conflicts in the ordinance regarding removal of trees less than eight inches in diameter (DBH) without a permit. Consensus reached that property owners should be able to remove exempt trees under eight inches DBH without a

permit, except for protected trees. - Agreed to keep the eight-inch threshold for requiring a permit, and to clarify definitions and exemptions in the ordinance.

- Discussing a procedural issue with when arborist reports for removal of hazardous trees must be submitted: consensus that reports should be submitted before tree removal, not after.
- Reviewing definitions in Section 6.3. It was agreed to strike redundant or confusing language, especially regarding 'historic trees' since historic tree designation is distinct from classification of grand trees which is based on tree size.
- Discussion was held whether grand pines should be exempt. Commission was reminded that these were removed from protection when the Tree Conservation section was amended in 2021.
- Staff was asked to look at consolidating and clarifying graphics related to measuring tree diameter at breast height, branch collars, critical root zones, and multi-trunk trees.
- It was noted that the definitions of branch collar and tree topping needed work.
- Commission discussed the proposed Table 6.4-1 and requiring the number of trees retained based on a range of lot sizes. It was discussed that the requirement for 1 acre may not be sufficient when the same requirement applied to a 3-acre lot if the Town wants to conserve the density and canopy of trees in the village. Recommendation was to keep the 20 significant trees/acre not including exempt species of trees. The consultants were asked to provide a graphic to show where trees can be removed on a site.
- Requesting that staff prepare a more detailed, separate flow chart on how to obtain a tree removal approval.
- Clarifying Section 6.5(E) to require Tree Conservation and Replacement Plans to illustrate trees proposed for conservation **and/or** removal.
- Clarifying that a permit is required for private persons/entities to remove a public tree (vs. "Non-town". It was also discussed that the Town would notify the public 15 days in advance of removing a grand tree on public property since the Tree Committee would already have reviewed the proposal.
- Recommending that emergency provisions also apply to threats to property, in addition to public safety. It was also recommended that mitigation be required if determination that disease of a tree from negligence is determined by a certified arborist.

– Listing interference with water, wastewater communications, or electrical systems as allowable grounds for BZA approval for removal of a protected tree.

Meeting discussion then turned to how the zoning and planning fees are determined and schedule for updating the ordinance draft to incorporate the recommendation made during the evening's meeting.

Adam Freeze made a motion to forward these recommendations to Town Council for scheduling of a public hearing in February. The motion was seconded by Dan Fifis.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Scott Youngman and seconded by Dan Fifis.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle A. McClellan
Town Clerk