
LIBPA September 2004 Newsletter

Development Review Team:

During the month of August the following items of interest to Lady's Island residents and businesses were brought before the Beaufort County Development Review Team for review and consideration.

Garfield Park – This is phase III of the Cat Island planned unit development and consists of 27 residential lots located at the intersection of Waveland Street and Island Causeway.

River Place – This was the initial conceptual submission for a 14 lot residential development on Little Capers road. The basic concept was approved and a subsequent review of this project will occur at a later date.

Celadon (lot 19) – Final approval was granted for construction of 4 condominiums ranging in size from 1150 square feet to 1784 square feet with an additional carriage style apartment. Celadon is located on Sams Point Road.

Lady's Island Fire Station – Approval was granted for the basic concept of a new fire station to be constructed adjacent to the present one on Sams Point Road.

1% Sales Tax:

This is the final of two articles designed to assist our members in making a decision regarding the 1% Sales Tax Referendum which will be on the ballot in November.

Are the projects listed in the referendum going to be started only after enough money is collected for each one? No, bonds will be issued to allow the projects to be started and completed in a timely manner.

Will there be just one big bond for the total amount? No, the bonds will be progressively issued as the projects come on line and the money is needed.

What happens if enough money is not collected by the sales tax? Beaufort County government guarantees the payment of the bond or you the county tax payer will make up any shortfall. However, based on the previous sales tax there is little or no chance that insufficient revenue will be derived from the proposed tax.

Who decides which project will be done first? The Sales Tax Commission established a recommended priority list of the projects and the municipal and county governments approved that list. However, the plan is to start each of them as soon as possible.

What happens to a project if the bids significantly exceed the amount budgeted by the referendum? The projected cost for each project on the referendum was checked and rechecked. It could still happen. Should, the low bid on a project exceed the projected cost the extra cost would come from the project at the very bottom of the prioritized list or from realized savings on other projects if such exist.

Who will be in charge of the transportation projects – Beaufort County or the South Carolina Department of Transportation? It will be a joint SCDOT and Beaufort County effort.

What happens if the State or Federal government decides to contribute money to some of the projects that are fully funded by the referendum? If money comes from other sources, it will reduce the total amount required and the length of time the tax will be in effect.

Why are there more projects for southern Beaufort County? Simply stated, they are in worst shape in regard to traffic and roads. We, in northern Beaufort County, are attempting to build a transportation infrastructure to meet tomorrow's problems. Southern Beaufort County is faced with building and widening roads to cope with today's traffic. Also, remember over 70% of the funds from the proposed sales tax would come from southern Beaufort County.

If the referendum passes in November will there be a follow-on referendum with another package of projects in 5 years? Probably, but it will not pass unless this one is accomplished in a manner that meets public approval. The residents of York County, S. C. which passed the first transportation sales tax in South Carolina, passed a second one with an approval rate of 70%. The first one passed by 200 votes.

LIBPA Supports 1% Sales Tax:

The board of directors for the Lady's Island Business and Professional Association voted to support the proposed 1% sales tax which will be on the ballot in November. The rationale for the positive vote regarding support of the sales tax was as follows:

- The tax would fund the widening to 4 lanes of Lady's Island Drive, construction of another two lane bridge parallel to the existing McTeer Bridge and pave a large number of dirt roads on Lady's Island.
- By providing a 4 lane entrance and exit to and from the island these projects, upon completion, will add increased convenience and safety (speed hurricane evacuation and reduce emergency response time) for all of the residents and businesses on Lady's Island and our neighbors living on St. Helena, Dataw, Harbor and Fripp Islands..
- There are no other funding sources available to support the widening of Lady's Island Drive and the additional bridge project. Beaufort County does have a program to pave the dirt roads but not these dirt roads in the next 5 years.
- It provides funds for the Waterfront Park which is enjoyed by residents of Lady's Island.
- It supports additional road improvements in Beaufort County which are needed and for which funds are not available.

In summary, approval of the 1% sales tax referendum was deemed specifically to be in the best interest of Lady's Island and Beaufort County in general and deserved the support of LIBPA.

The Search For The Correct Residential Density:

The word density, as used in land planning, refers to the number of residential units or houses located on one acre of land. For example, in the northern portion of Lady's Island, which for zoning purposes is designated as rural, the authorized density is 0.33 or 1 house per 3 acres. In the area immediately adjacent to the Village Center, recently designated as a redevelopment district, there is no limit on density. Instead, it has strict standards on the design and types of residential units authorized for that area. The majority of the rest of the island is zoned as Community Preservation which allows a maximum of 2 units per acre or a density of 2.0. To get an idea of how these densities translate into appearance, following are some existing and planned future communities and their approved densities.

Community	Approved Density	Status
Dataw Island	1.10	Near build out
Distant Island	1.10	Development in progress
Coosaw Point	1.22	Initial phase of development
Pleasant Point	1.46	Development in progress
Magnolia Court	1.72	Near build out
Telfair	1.80	Near build out
New Point	2.45	Development complete
Cat Island	2.65	First phase of development
Cane Island	3.01	First phase of development
Greenheath *	3.20	Planning stage
Celadon	3.20	Initial stage of development
The Village*	5.71	Planning stage

*.Greenheath is to be located next to Coosaw Elementary School, the Village will be located on property between Sams Point Road and Sunset Bluff.

As can be seen most of older, established communities have a density which is less than the 2 houses per acre which is the authorized density for the majority of Lady's Island. Many of the future projects

have higher densities.

Whether future projects with more houses on smaller lots is good or bad, is in the eye of the beholder. From a taxpayers viewpoint to allow high density residential growth without consideration of the amount and cost for supporting infrastructure (fire, school, parks, libraries, roads) is a recipe for disaster and inevitable higher taxes. From the viewpoint of property owners desiring to sell undeveloped land the higher the authorized density the higher is the potential selling value of their land. From the developer's viewpoint it primarily involves money and the market. Simply stated, the product they develop must be able to be sold at a profit. Some studies have indicated that in today's market only 30% of potential home buyers desire to purchase a home in a high density area. The remaining 70% of potential buyers tend to favor homes on larger lots.

For Lady's Island, with only one key road (Sams Point/802) through most of the island, the challenge would appear to be matching the right density with the appropriate location. For example, higher density would seem appropriate near the Village Center where appropriate infrastructure exists and stores, services and schools are within walking distance. In areas such as the northern end of Lady's Island which contains a portion of an aquifer recharge area, is located in the flight pattern of the Air Station, and has limited infrastructure perhaps maintaining lower densities would be more appropriate. Finally, it is offered that density in itself is neither good nor bad, but like most factors of real estate is a matter of location.

LIBPA Fall Membership Drive: by Jane Hincer, Membership

During the period September through November our annual LIBPA membership drive will be conducted. In 2003, during the same period, we were able to add 20 new members and in 2002 we added 18 new members during the fall membership drive. The membership drive consists of the members of our board of directors making a special effort to visit nonmember businesses and invite their membership. From the individual members we ask you explain to a neighbor or business associate what LIBPA is, what it does and why we need them as members. Please consider using the newsletter as an example of one of the benefits of membership. Mail or e-mail a copy to a potential member with an invitation to join us. Invite potential members to review our web site (www.libpa.org) which is provided as a community service and through which they can join. We will have special membership applications available at our meetings. As an added incentive, all new member's initial dues (\$35) will include both the 2004 and 2005 membership fees. However, it is submitted that nothing can beat you as a present member personally recommending membership.

If you have an idea as to how we can improve the fall membership drive, please let us know. Let's make this membership drive the best one ever.

Lady's Island Supports New Habitat Restore: by Cindy Stoothoff

Last September Barbara Thomas, Executive Director of LowCountry Habitat for Humanity, asked LIBPA member Cindy Stoothoff to spearhead an effort to open a Habitat ReStore in Beaufort. A ReStore sells new and gently used home building and remodeling materials to the general public at prices 50-90% below retail. The funds raised in this manner would provide additional income for the building of affordable housing in Northern Beaufort County.

Finding an appropriate location in Beaufort was a huge challenge but finally in mid-May, a lease was signed with Karen and Pete Cotter, owners of the Shed in Port Royal. With the help of many volunteers, the building was retrofitted for retail, and the ReStore officially opened at 809 Paris Avenue on July 2. Jenny Drake, a Royal Pines resident, has been hired as the ReStore Manager, and is excited about her role with Habitat. She says "The ReStore is just perfect for Beaufort builders and remodeling contractors, as well as homeowners, in that materials can be donated that would otherwise be taken to the landfill. These items are recycled at reasonable prices to other home remodelers. It's a win-win! And 100% of the profits go to build more homes."

Lady's Island residents deserve special kudos for the support they are providing to Habitat's new venture. Milton Lawrence, a Lady's Island resident, is Construction Supervisor for LowCountry Habitat for Humanity. Other volunteers from Lady's Island include Larry Murray, Fred Zengel, Richard Drake, Lee Hundley, Don Drake, Vivian Bikulege, Bill Morehead and Carolyn Roos who have assisted in the Shed remodel, with the inventory move, the collection of donations and store operations.

Lady's Island businesses and residents have been very supportive of the new store with their donations to include Island Outfitters, Grayco Home Center, the Nunamaker's, Rosemarie Shelley, Chuck and Kathy Henry and Dave Steele. If your garage holds clean, good quality furniture, appliances, old/new

doors, windows, cabinets, sinks or similar items call 525-0055 for pick up information. These items may be tax deductible. Some of the ReStore's best repeating customers are ALSO Lady's Island residents and in this area Brenda Hood and Diane Wall deserve special notice.

Interested in a part time volunteer job? If you enjoy retail sales or are just fascinated with the "stuff" in other peoples' basements and attics, you would probably have fun working in the store. Volunteers are needed Tuesday through Saturday. Call Jenny Drake at 525-0055 for information about volunteering or to make a donation. For additional information about LowCountry Habitat for Humanity, call the affiliate office at 379-3790.

You can visit the ReStore any Friday or Saturday between 9am and 4 pm to see where many Lady's Island residents have been focusing their energies. Please visit often as merchandise changes weekly.

What Next For The Village Center?

Recently LIBPA has been receiving between one to three calls a week from individuals desiring to locate a business in the Village Center. Some of the questions are in regard to zoning, taxes or permitting procedures. However, the most common request is for existing commercial space. If there is not space available the next question is to see if they are interested in construction of a building.

If they are willing to build a commercial facility this brings the subject to the price of undeveloped property in the Village Center. Although there are exceptions such as LIBPA member Paul Trask's project "The Commons" which offers both good location and reasonable price, the price of most undeveloped property in the Village Center has reached the point that only large corporations such as Publix or Walgreens can afford to make such an expensive, long term investment. Which brings us to the question of what is next for the development of the Village Center?

Certainly, some undeveloped property will be held on the market for the next few years in the hope of attracting corporate buyers willing to pay \$500,000 to a \$1,000,000 for a building site. Luckily for those desiring to locate new businesses on Lady's Island a good number of the Village Center property owners have indicated intentions to develop their property in such a manner as to provide commercial space for smaller businesses. However, these developments are presently in the planning stage and will not be ready for occupancy until 2005 or later. Until then commercial space in the Village Center for small businesses will most likely continue to remain at a premium.

Editor's Note: It should be noted that LIBPA representatives attempt to direct most questions regarding new businesses on Lady's Island to other sources of information.

School Bus Safety And Sams Point Road:

With the start of another school year and the completion of widening Sams Point Road into a 4 lane highway the following information is provided for our members regarding when to stop for a school bus. It is taken directly from the South Carolina Department of Public Safety web site: scdps.org.

"New legislation took effect August 1, 2003 changing the circumstances in which a driver must stop for a school bus. Section 56-5-2770 of the South Carolina Code of Laws has been amended to no longer require drivers on a multi-lane highway (two lanes on each side running in opposite directions) to stop for a school bus that is on the opposite side of the road.

Motorist must always stop when they are traveling behind a bus with flashing amber or red lights. When they are approaching a stopped school bus with flashing red lights from the opposite direction, drivers must stop if they are on a two-lane road. If motorist are on a four-lane (or more) highway or private road and meet a stopped school bus, they do not have to stop. However, drivers should slow down and proceed with caution.

After stopping for a stopped school bus, drivers must not proceed until the bus resumes motion or the flashing red lights have been turned off.

The fine for passing a stopped school bus can be as much as \$1,000 and up to 30 days in jail for a first offense."

New Marina Construction:

The second phase of development for the Factory Creek Marina complex in the Village Center has recently been presented to the City of Beaufort Corridor Review Board for review and consideration. Submitted were the following two separate projects.

- Construction of another residential home in the lot immediately adjacent to "The Filling Station" tavern. The 3500 square foot house will have two stories and at the highest point be 49 feet high. It will be located in such a manner that the nearest point to the critical line will be 20 feet from the water. Regretfully, to place the home in this site will require removal of the large oak presently there. To mitigate for removal of the oak, a number of smaller trees will be planted in the complex. This review was to evaluate the basic concept and the Corridor Review Board will review the plans for the project at least once again prior to final approval.

- Construction of two commercial buildings, similar in style to the building in which LIBPA member Joyce Tallmadge presently operates "Its Only Natural". These will be located adjacent to the Upper Crust restaurant. Each building will be two stories with 5000 total square feet and located approximately 20 feet back from the sidewalk.

In the evaluation of both of these projects the Chairman of the Corridor Review Board requested a specific review of the projects in regard to compliance with the standards of the Village Center. We in LIBPA sincerely appreciate the spirit of cooperation and support we receive from the City of Beaufort to ensure standardized zoning in the Village Center.

Thanks Lady's Island: by Donna C. Martin, Director of Advertising & Public Relations, Hargray

In 2003, Hargray made the decision to provide telecommunications services to Lady's Island. Like any good business we made cost and customer projections that we felt were attainable. We sent the first crews to Lady's Island in February to install our infrastructure. The welcome that Hargray received has far exceeded our expectations. Today we are privileged to serve more than 325 homes and businesses and that number is growing daily. Last month we added more than 120 new accounts.

At the present time we are able to offer a full range of services (high speed internet, phone, cable, video-on-demand, and digital cable) to the following areas: Bluff Farms, Audubon, Sunset Blvd., Shorts Landing Road, Telfair, Colony Garden, and the majority of businesses on Sea Island Parkway.

Our construction crews are presently working to extend the infrastructure for Royal Pines, hopefully by September 15, 2004. Royal Pines was not initially planned for in the first phase but due to your tremendous response we were able to include the community. In response to your queries about the Ashdale community, regretfully, this community will be in a later phase. The date for services in this area has not been determined.

On behalf of all of us at Hargray we thank you for your courtesy to our crews as we install our infrastructure. To those of you who have been inconvenienced by accidental cuts of electricity and water lines, we appreciate your understanding and patience.

Again, to everyone in the Lady's Island community thank you for making Hargray feel welcomed. The Beaufort area is a very important business market and we look forward to continued growth and outstanding customer service!

Lady's Island Notes:

New Lady's Island Planner: A new planner, Ms. Carol Tank, has joined the County Planning Department and will be the individual responsible for the Lady's Island planning area. Carol was a past member of the county planning department and is familiar with the challenges of our island. She replaces Stan Williams and can be reached at 470-2728 for information regarding the zoning on our island.

Community Preservation Meeting: The Lady's Island Community Preservation Committee will meet at 10 AM on September 13, 2004 in the Lady's Island Airport conference room. The purpose of the meeting is to review an application for development of a lot located in the Village Center and on Factory Creek.

Two new businesses on Lady's Island: Recently the following businesses have opened their doors on the island. LIBPA welcomes them and extends our wishes for every success.

- **Lost and Found Antiques**, owned and operated by Cindy Thomas, is located in the building adjacent to the Upper Crust restaurant. Cindy indicates they will specialize in good quality, affordable antiques with an emphasis on the unusual and unique. In addition to the antiques there will be available a variety of collectibles. Cindy has done a great job in the renovation and decoration of the building.

● **Accurate Reproductions** owned by LIBPA member Jessica Saari and operated by her brother James Saari, recently opened for business in the new complex at 8 Robin Drive. Accurate Reproductions is a fully digital blueprint and copying firm. They offer a variety of large format printing, imaging, and finishing solutions. Their capability ranges from copying a few prints while you wait, to jobs of several thousand in a single day. James indicates they will strive to be a technology-based, reprographic services and management partner for all business and design professionals. Prior to coming to Lady's Island James and Jessica have operated an Accurate Reproductions in Bluffton for the last 6 years. They can be contacted at 524-2679 or at their web site www.accurepro.com for additional information.

Ballenger Realty Expands: Everett Ballenger, LIBPA member and owner/broker in charge of Ballenger Realty, recently acquired a commercial building on Carteret Street in downtown Beaufort that after renovation will serve as the site of a second realty office. Everett indicates their busy Lady's Island office will remain open and he hopes to open the Carteret Street office in October.

New construction. After years of planning and effort by the parishioner's of St. Peter's Catholic Church, the first steps are underway for the construction of a new church. The new church will be 23,711 square feet, masonry construction and capable of accommodating 1300 people. The official ground breaking ceremony is scheduled for September 26.

The 50 foot Tall Building:

Every so often, on Lady's Island, there is the threat or rumor of the construction of a super tall building, usually a hotel on the waterfront in the Village Center. The first such case was in 1985 when a 5-story hotel was planned in the vicinity of the present site of Ollie's Restaurant. This episode resulted in the first annexation of Lady's Island property by the City of Beaufort. For a variety of reasons, the hotel was never built. In 1999 it was announced that the Country Inn and Suites would build a 3-story, 100-room hotel with a swimming pool and a conference center on the Whitehall property (location of the present Bateaux restaurant). Again, this project never became a reality. LIBPA member Dick Stewart of 303 Associates is in the process of developing plans for a complex consisting of a variety of types of building to be located on the Whitehall property.

With these past incidents in mind the question of appropriate building height was given a great deal of serious study when the zoning for the Village Center was being developed. The Village Center was designed to blend with the City of Beaufort, which currently allows a building height of 50 feet. This height is necessary to allow new buildings to blend with the tall, older homes and structures of the historic district. On Lady's Island instead of existing tall buildings we are blessed with a good number of beautiful trees. The Forestry Service indicates that the average height of the pines and most oaks is approximately 45 to 50 feet. Thus a building reaching 50 feet could be taller than the surrounding trees. Due to this, a general rule for Lady's Island had been to prohibit buildings taller than 35 feet.

After a great deal of research and advice from a wide variety of sources the decision was made to allow buildings to reach a height of 50 feet in the Village Center. However, this 50-foot tall building must be part of a group of buildings and surrounded by other buildings of lesser height resulting in a combined average height of no more than 40 feet for the complex. Additional regulations include prohibiting 50-foot tall buildings from being built along the sidewalk of Sea Island Parkway/Hwy 21 or the first row of buildings along the water. Simply stated, buildings within 30 feet of the sidewalk or the water must be no taller than 35 feet. The second row of buildings could conceivably reach a height of 50 feet. An additional regulation was established that even though a building could reach the height of 50 feet it could not consist of more than 3 stories. Finally, it should be remembered that all construction in the Village Center is subject to review by the Corridor Review Board which has the final say as to the suitability of building height to a particular site given its surrounding and the design of the building. Sooner or later the Village Center will receive the first 50-foot tall building and most likely it will be some form of multifamily residential structure. When this occurs, please know that it is not an accident or the result of an oversight of those members of the Community Preservation Planning Committee that drafted the original zoning regulations for our island. Rather it is a realistic compromise of the many factors that

demand consideration and will hopefully contribute to a better Village Center in the future.

The Case For A Third Elementary School On Lady's Island:

At the present time, the projected population growth from new residential development on Lady's Island will add over 600 new students to our schools. This combined with the following snapshot of the recent enrollment history of public schools on Lady's Island indicates a real need for an additional elementary school.

SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT				CAPACITY
	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	
Coosa Elementary	553	600	610	645	550
Lady's Island Elementary	327	365	396	394	400
Lady's Island Middle	689	633	691	699	750
Beaufort High	1559	1615	1579	1688	1500

The following information provides a small glimpse of the future in regard to an ever increasing student population. Developments which will impact all of our schools include:

- Greenheath, a planned unit development approved for 216 single residential homes and 96 multifamily units, is located adjacent to Coosa Elementary School. No construction has begun on this development but when complete it will add an estimated 156 school age children. Due to its location, all children of elementary school age would attend Coosa Elementary.
- The Village, a planned unit development located between Sams Point Road and Factory Creek Bluff, has not begun construction. This development is approved for 81 single family homes and 119 multifamily units which would add an estimated 100 school age children. Elementary school age children in this community would attend Lady's Island Elementary School.
- Coosa River Estates located in the Marsh Hawk community off of Springfield Road is approved for 190 homes. This project would add an estimated 95 school age children. Elementary school age children in this community would attend Coosa Elementary.
- Celadon, a planned community located on Sams Point Road, is presently under development. Upon completion, it will have 119 single family residences with approximately 60 school age children. Elementary school students in this community would attend Lady's Island Elementary.
- Coosaw Point located on Sams Point Road and in the process of active development will have 450 single family homes with approximately 225 children. Elementary school age children in this community will attend Coosa Elementary.

In summary, future growth is going to challenge all of our schools and especially Coosa Elementary School which presently has 95 students over the capacity of existing facilities. Coosa Elementary has been at or near capacity since the day it opened its doors in 1998. For the last few years mobile classrooms have been necessary to cope with their growing student population. This year 6 mobile classrooms are necessary to support the additional students. The two approved but undeveloped communities (Greenheath and Coosa Estates) have the potential to overwhelm the capacity of the school. Regardless of when the two communities in question are developed, the present rate of growth alone would see a campus of approximately 20 mobile classrooms at Coosa Elementary by the end of this decade. Some say a temporary solution would be to shift Coosa students to Lady's Island Elementary School, make LIES no longer a school of choice, and the problem would go away. To everyone's credit, this simplistic approach of shifting students has not been attempted. It is recognized there are many factors involved in the decision to build a school. However, it would appear that in the regard to a third elementary school on Lady's Island sooner is better than later and a relative degree of urgency in the matter does exist.

Editor's Note: It should be noted that the Beaufort County School District has contracted with the firm of DeJong & Associates of Ohio to conduct a study of the projected number of additional schools required in the future. This study is scheduled to begin in the fall and be completed by January 2005.

Real Estate Values Over Time: by Jerry Marlow

With reassessment figures now available to homeowners, we thought LIBPA members might find interesting the following comparison of average and median sale price increases which have occurred from the last reassessment in 1998 to 2003.

	Average House	Median House
AREA	1998 - 2003	1998 - 2003
City of Beaufort	\$139,950 to \$350,810	\$100,500 to \$105,900
Mossy Oaks	\$101,048 to \$147,311	\$87,000 to \$128,000
Port Royal	\$103,802 to \$143,256	\$94,750 to \$131,450
Burton	\$115,068 to \$169,779	\$98,500 to \$132,000
Lady's Island	\$152,300 to \$219,186	\$132,795 to \$168,500
TOTAL	\$126,289 to \$196,078	\$110,000 to \$147,450

During this period the average sale price of a home in northern Beaufort County increased 55%. The City of Beaufort experienced the largest increase (151%) due to the increase in sales of historic homes. Port Royal experienced the least increase (38%). The other three areas (Lady's Island with 44%, Mossy Oaks with 46% and Burton with 48%) saw similar increases in home value. Hopefully, when you see the average increase of sale prices in your area and compare it to the reassessed value of your home, the reassessment will appear somewhat more reasonable. It is recognized that there are some properties (mainly on the water) that jumped much more than the average.
