



**AGENDA**  
**SOUTHERN CORRIDOR REVIEW BOARD**  
**September 24, 2014**  
**3:00 P.M.**  
Bluffton Branch Library Large Conference Room,  
120 Palmetto Way, Bluffton, SC 29910  
Phone: (843) 255-2140

1. CALL TO ORDER – 3:00 P.M.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT
3. REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2014, MEETING MINUTES ([backup](#))
4. NEW BUSINESS: None
5. OLD BUSINESS:
  - A. Belfair Buffer and Landscaping Revisions - Final ([backup](#))
  - B. Town of Bluffton: No items for review
6. OTHER BUSINESS
  - A. Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 8, 2014, at 3:00 p.m. at the Rotary Community Center, Oscar Frazier Community Park, 11 Recreation Court, Bluffton, SC
7. ADJOURNMENT



SOUTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY  
CORRIDOR REVIEW BOARD (CRB) MINUTES  
September 10, 2014, Rotary Community Center  
Oscar Frazier Community Park, Bluffton, SC

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**Members Present:** Joe Hall, James Atkins, Sam Britt, Dan Ogden, Ed Pinckney, and Pearce Scott

**Staff Present:** Robert Merchant, Long Range Planner

**Guests:** Dan Keefer, Witmer Jones Keefer; Joe Bryant, Belfair Plantation; James Tiller, J.K. Tiller and Associates

1. CALL TO ORDER – 3:00 P.M.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.
3. REVIEW OF AUGUST 6, 2014, MEETING MINUTES: Mr. Pinckney motioned to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2014 meeting with the revision that the second time the words “members present” appears, it be revised to read “members absent.” Mr. Scott seconded. Motion carried.
4. OLD BUSINESS: There was no old business.
5. NEW BUSINESS
  - **Belfair Buffer and Landscaping Revisions:** Robert Merchant gave the project background. He said that the project consisted of landscaping revisions to the portion of Belfair Plantation along US 278. He said that the Corridor Review Board approved some of these revisions at their September 18, 2013 meeting which consisted of minor modifications to the intersection with US 278, tree removal, landscaping revisions and a new sign at the entrance. These improvements have since been completed. These plans specifically stated that the juniper hedge that extended approximately 1,600 feet along US 278 at the entrance would remain. He said that additional modifications to the landscaping of the front portion of Belfair Plantation have been undertaken by the applicant that were not reviewed and approved by the CRB. During the week of August 11, the juniper hedge was removed and reseeded. In addition, four pine trees at the western edge of the entrance were removed. He said that staff contacted the Belfair Property Owners Association and notified them that they would need to bring these additional landscaping revisions to the CRB for review. He said that in addition to the hedge and tree removal the following revisions were proposed:
    - Removal the bookend signs at both ends of the entrance landscaping and replacement with new signs that will be located approximately 250 feet closer to the entrance on both sides.
    - Providing landscaped areas at the far western and eastern portions of the entrance consisting of the addition of six “Character” live oaks, understory trees and muhly grass to match the proposed US 278 median plantings.
    - Removal of additional diseased or damaged pine trees.

Mr. Merchant reminded the Board that the Belfair entrance is configured as a park-like area with sod and interspersed trees that extends roughly 100 feet back from the highway. The highway buffer is located behind the park-like area. Therefore, none of the entrance revisions will disturb the required highway buffer.

Dan Keefer and Joe Bryant presented for the applicant. Mr. Keefer said that the widening of US 278 prompted changes to the Belfair buffer. He said that there were three objectives to the changes being proposed in the buffer – long-term maintenance, safety, and aesthetics. Mr. Bryant said that the Belfair Property Owner’s Association requested the removal of the juniper. It was done to ease maintenance and safety. Mr. Keefer said that the intent was to keep the entrance plantation like and simple consistent with the original design. Landscaping enhancements around the sign are meant to soften the fence and sign. Mr. Bryant said that the juniper hedge required chemical treatment to remove invasive plants. He said that sections of the hedge needed to be removed at times to provide maintenance to the irrigation system. He also said that weeds were a greater problem in areas where the hedge is in direct sun.

Mr. Pinckney said that if the plans that the Board reviewed in 2013 had any hint that the hedge would be removed, the Board would have discussed the issue. He said that for the last 15 years, Belfair Plantation has stood out along the US 278 corridor. He said that the entrance needed to be simple and pastoral. He said that he was not convinced that the hedge posed a long-term maintenance issue. He said that he recommended that the juniper hedge be planted back.

Mr. Atkins agreed on the integrity of the landscape but acknowledged that things change with landscaping – some plants die back, others mature. He said that the plan could incorporate additional elements that would retain the pastoral quality.

Mr. Scott asked about the significance of the juniper hedge. Mr. Pinckney said that it provided an edge along US 278. He explained how having an open buffer was controversial at the time that it was originally reviewed by the CRB.

Mr. Bryant said that breaks were made in the hedge for maintenance purposes. These gaps facilitated weed growth. He also said that there were utilities underneath the hedge.

Mr. Pinckney said that he would be happy with a 15 foot wide hedge instead of a 35 foot wide hedge.

Mr. Ogden said that he wasn’t overly concerned about the juniper going away. He said that the fence provided a better edge. He also acknowledged that there was a 50 foot wide buffer beyond the fence.

Mr. Atkins said that there’s an opportunity to reestablish elements of the hedge, but not necessarily requiring a 35 foot wide hedge the entire length of the entrance.

Mr. Pinckney said that the proposed revisions compromise good work that has been in place for 15 years.

Mr. Britt said that he noticed the change and that the hedge provided a nice transition into the site.

James Tiller of J.K. Tiller and Associates spoke as a member of the public. He said that he worked with Ed Pinckney on the original design of the buffer at Belfair Plantation. He said that he and Mr. Pinckney originally conceived the idea of a buffer along US 278. He said that the intent of the buffer was to preserve a rural look as an entrance to Hilton Head Island. He said that he often drove along Highway 3 toward Columbia and that the landscape changes along the highway from forest to wetland to open fields. He said that he wanted that variety along U.S. 278 and that the buffer at Belfair plantation presented an opportunity to provide that variety. He said that original landscape for the Belfair buffer was a simple landscape. He said that the original entrance to Belfair consisted of a barbed wire fence and an iron gate with two brick columns. The original plan intended to preserve that simplicity. He also noted that he received a compliment on the entrance design from Charles Fraser. He said that the Board should think about important places along the US 278 corridor to preserve for the future.

Mr. Ogden said that even without the hedge, there would still be open green space. Mr. Pinckney said that the hedge provided a crisp line between the drainage ditch and the interior of the site. Mr. Keefer said that often farms are planted right up to the ditch with no transition. He said he wasn't convinced that a hedge was necessary to achieve the intent of the original design.

Mr. Pinckney motioned that the applicant replant the juniper hedge to as close to what was planted originally and that it did not need to be more than 15 feet wide. He also said that the additional proposed landscaping shall be minimized on the plan. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Atkins motioned that the applicant take into consideration the comments made by the CRB and the history of the site and make necessary adjustments to the landscaping plan. Work shall be halted on the site until a revised plan is presented to the CRB for approval. Motion carried with Mr. Pinckney voting no.

6. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.
7. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

## **Belfair Buffer and Landscaping Revisions**

<b>Applicant:</b>	Belfair Property Owners Association
<b>Type of Submission:</b>	Conceptual/Final
<b>Project Landscape Architect:</b>	Dan Keefer, Witmer Jones Keefer, Ltd.
<b>Type of Project:</b>	Landscaping Revision
<b>Location:</b>	Intersection of Belfair Oaks Boulevard and US 278 (across from Buck Island Road)
<b>Zoning Designation:</b>	Belfair Planned Unit Development (PUD)

**Project Information:** The project consists of landscaping revisions to the portion of Belfair Plantation along US 278 that were initiated in August 2014 without receiving CRB approval. The applicant submitted the revisions to the buffer to the CRB at their September 10 meeting. At that time the Board motioned that the applicant take into consideration the comments made by the CRB at the meeting and the history of the site and make necessary adjustments to the landscaping plan. Work shall be halted on the site until a revised plan is presented to the CRB for approval. The motion carried with Mr. Pinckney voting no. Please refer to the attached minutes for the Board's comments on the buffer revisions from the September 10 meeting.

The applicant has submitted a revised landscaping plan and an attached narrative. The applicant has defined the revisions as falling into two categories:

1. Simplifying the landscape around entrance sign and in front of existing fence to enhance the pastoral quality of the entrance. The original plan had six proposed "character" live oaks; three proposed at the western and three proposed at the eastern end of the buffer. The revised plan eliminates one live oak at either end. Also, at the western end, the original plan proposed three saucer magnolias. These are not on the revised plan. The revised plan removes the note that the entrance signs will be graded to raise the base of the signs 24" to 30". Finally, the revised plan eliminates 14 notes that applied to the treed areas located to the left and right of the entrance road. These notes generally called for planting some additional trees, and landscaping under the trees with shrubs and groundcover.
2. Maintaining an edge between the DOT right-of-way and the interior of the site. The applicant is proposing to treat the right-of-way lawn as 'rough' grass to be maintained at +/- 4" height mowed weekly. The interior sod is proposed to be maintained to a lower height to contrast the right-of-way 'rough' grass.

**Staff Comment:** Staff has no comment.