



CITY OF CHARLESTON PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC COMMENT MARCH 15, 2023

A meeting of the Planning Commission will be held on **Wednesday, March 15, 2023** at **5:00 p.m.** in the **Public Meeting Room, First Floor, 2 George Street.**

The following written comments will be provided to the board members 24 hours in advance of the meeting. The comments will also be acknowledged into the record and summarized. The public is encouraged to attend the meeting in person to speak in order for comments to be fully heard.

Application information is available at www.charleston-sc.gov/pc. Please check the website on the meeting date to view any withdrawn or deferred agenda items.

For additional information, please contact:

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, PRESERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY
2 George Street, Suite 3100, Charleston, SC 29401 | 843-724-3781

SUBDIVISION

1. River Rd. and Swygert Blvd.

Swygert's Landing - Johns Island | TMS #3120000050 | Approx. 55.08 ac.

Request subdivision concept plan approval for a new CCDS District 9 elementary school.

Owner: Charleston County School District

Applicant: ADC Engineering

Two (2) comments submitted in opposition:

- **Jennifer Davis, 1227 River Road, Johns Island, SC 29455**

Submitted Mar. 13, 2023 8:53 PM

This letter is in response to the concept plan approval for the new Charleston County School District ("CCSD") 9 elementary school planned on River Road ("New Johns Island School"). The agenda erroneously references the address of such school as the corner of River Road and Swygert Boulevard. Unfortunately, over the course of the past few months the plans for the New Johns Island School have changed several times. The original (on or about 2008) plan for the 40 plus acre site included a round-about closer to the corner of River Road and Swygert Boulevard. We purchased our property in July of 2004 due to the rural and serene nature of Johns Island. Our property is approximately 4.5 acres of which 3.25 acres are marshland that joins Penny Creek that connects to the Stono River and the Intercoastal Waterway. We have enjoyed raising two children at our property over the years. In addition, we have enjoyed the numerous types of birds, fish, shellfish and the like that venture onto our property which is a part of their natural habitat. We have been blessed with many owls and even had the Birds of Prey rescue a fallen baby owl from our property. Approximately 4 weeks ago, it came to our attention via a Johns Island Advocate email that the plans for the New Johns Island School had been revised so that such round-about is now proposed to be placed a few hundred yards south on River Road bringing a portion of such round-about on the corner of our property. We

were not notified of a zoning change for the 40-acre site. To the best of our knowledge, zoning notices were not posted across from our property. Further, we received a knock on our door at approximately 8:04 pm on March 7, 2023 that the CCSD was holding a meeting for us and 7 other neighbors to discuss the change in plans to the New Johns Island School. The gentleman handed us a letter dated as of February 22, 2023. We were never given notice of the community discussion by certified mail as suggested by such letter. Further the meeting was held two evenings later giving us inadequate time to prepare for the meeting or seek separate legal counsel to represent us at the meeting. We were able to adjust our family's schedule so that one of us could attend the meeting. Mark Davis was told by the project manager of the construction company for the New Johns Island School project that certain accommodations could be made for us related to the intrusion of the New Johns Island School and the roundabout to same. More specifically, he was shown a drawing indicating that our driveway would be extended to the "new" River Road. However, the drawing has two sharp turns included in the CCSD's proposed plan which would prevent us from transporting our vehicles and trailers on and off our property. Mark was told that the drive could be changed so that the two sharp turns could be eliminated. We would like a revised drawing from CCSD and the South Carolina Department of Transportation to this effect. Further we have been given unclear landscape and demolition drawings as to the tree line that sits across from our property on the 40-acre site. We would like a clear drawing that specifically delineates which trees will be removed and which trees will remain. Additionally, we would like assurances that all grand oaks will remain on the site across from us. For Johns Island to lose its grand oaks to accommodate a traffic circle is an injustice to all citizens of Johns Island. We live here for the rural nature and beauty of Johns Island. Mr. Davis also learned at the meeting that a bus lot would be constructed at the New Johns Island School across from our property. Mr. Davis was informed that the bus storage lot would be for not only the New Johns Island School, but for the James Island Schools as well. (To say this plan is ill-conceived is an understatement.) The bus storage lot/area would have 65 parking spaces. As a point of comparison, the current bus parking area in front of St. John's High School has 30 parking spots and 32 school buses. He was told that the run off from such bus lot will run from a detention pond through a drain to a private tidal creek situate between our property at 1227 River Road and that of our neighbor at 1237 River Road. Although a representative from CCSD stated the discharge from the bus storage lot would be monitored, this was a misrepresentation. The closest DHEC water quality ambient active monitoring station to monitor the water quality is two miles away near the Limehouse bridge. This monitoring station will not remotely monitor the pollution that will inevitably transfer onto our property. There were no plans presented to mitigate or monitor the resulting pollution. Although most marshland is not owned by the property owner, that is not the case with our marshland. The runoff from the bus storage lot will be discharged directly on our property and that of our neighbor. If the Committee is unable to locate our deeds and plat from the County's online database, we would be pleased to provide you with a copy. If any run off from the bus lot or the New Johns Island School intrudes upon our property in any way, please expect us to seek recourse from both the CCSD as well as the City of Charleston (the "City"). Furthermore, should anyone in our family have any illnesses related to such run off, please expect us to seek recourse through all available avenues from both CCSD and the City. We would like to work with CCSD and the City to reach a written agreement as to (1) our drive way revision; (2) a detailed explanation as to how we will be able to access our drive way during the construction of the New Johns Island School as well as the roundabout; (3) the trees that will be removed across from our

property so that all grand oaks situate on River Road across from our property and that of our neighbor will remain, as well as all other healthy trees; (4) the plantings of new trees and shrubs across from our property so that such plantings will completely buffer the New Johns Island School from being seen from our property; (5) mitigation efforts to reduce the light pollution such bus lot and the New Johns Island School will cause; (6) a new plan to divert any and all water and other runoff away from our property and the monitoring of same; and (7) a plan to significantly reduce the speed limit in a graduated manner leading up to and around the roundabout so that automobiles do not leave the roadway and crash on our property or that of our neighbor. We understand that the Johns Island children need an elementary school. We believe bussing in all second through fifth graders on Johns Island to the location across from us is nonsensical. Children that live in the remote areas of the island and ride the school bus will have to leave their homes before dark each morning for school. Similarly, they will not arrive home from school until dinnertime. They will spend a significant amount of time either at school or on a bus. Further, the CCSD plan will centralize the Johns Island traffic to a 40-acre site on the island. As you are probably aware, due to the ongoing building development on Johns Island, Johns Island traffic worsens each day. The New Johns Island School will only add to the ever-increasing congestion on this island. With this said, we request that the CCSD's current plan for the New Johns Island School be denied until CCSD can, after proper notice, thoughtfully work with the homeowners with property adjacent to such school. If you would like to speak with us further or visit our property, we would be pleased to meet with you. Our contact information is above. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

- **Kimberly Steele, 1237 River Road, Johns Island, SC**

Submitted Mar. 13, 2023 9:54 PM

Bradley and Kimberly Steele 1237 River Road Johns Island, SC 29455 Meeting Name: Planning Commission Agenda Number: Subdivision #1 Name of Project: CCDS District 9 elementary school March 13, 2023 City of Charleston Planning Commission 2 George Street, Suite 3100 Charleston, SC 29401 City of Charleston Planning Committee: This letter is in regards to the concept plan approval for the new Charleston County School District (CCSD) 9 elementary school planned on River Road. The agenda references the location of this school at River Rd. and Swygert Blvd. However, that is incorrect. The current proposed entrance to this school is currently located directly in front of our home at 1237 River Road where they also plan to install a new traffic circle. CCSD held a meeting on Thursday, March 9th with the 8 homeowners whose properties are directly impacted by this traffic circle. During this meeting, many questions/concerns were raised by ourselves and our neighbors. Unfortunately, CCSD was unable to provide answers to the majority of our questions. A list of our concerns regarding this project are as follows: 1. Traffic Circle Location: The initial plan for this project included a traffic circle to be located at the corner of River Road and Swygert Blvd. That plan has changed and the current location of the traffic circle is in front of our home. (See exhibit A attached). (a)Current plans show the grand oak tree located across from and our driveway will be cut down to make room for the traffic circle. Currently, there is no proposed buffer such as a wall, trees, bushes etc. between the traffic circle and our property. The current design also has the headlights of all cars leaving the school, as well as all 59 buses exiting the school, shining directly into our front windows. We believe these headlights will be a nuisance and will impact the enjoyment of our home. (b)We will no longer be able to turn right out of our driveway. Current plans show a new driveway being cut down the street from us in front of our neighbor's home which will be the only access to our property.

We currently have a 31-foot driveway, the proposed new driveway/entrance will only be 24 feet wide and has a sharp turn. We have 2 boats, a 30 foot enclosed car trailer and a 20 foot camper that we regularly take on and off our property. With this new plan, we do not believe we will be able to tow these vehicles on and off our property, which will again directly affect the use and enjoyment of our home. (c) With the proposed plan, trash and recycling trucks will not be able to access our driveway for pick up. When asked what the plan was for our garbage and recycling, CCSD could not provide an answer. (d) We inquired as to whether the US Post Office would continue to deliver our mail to our driveway mailbox or if our mailbox would have to be moved to another location. CCSD was unable to answer this question. (e) Questions regarding who would be responsible for the maintenance of the traffic circle and surrounding areas were also not answered. 2. Bus Lot: (a) CCSD plans to have a bus parking lot on the site. Initially the plan was for 80 busses, we have been informed that number is now 59 busses. This bus lot will hold all busses for Johns Island schools as well as a number of busses from James Island. CCSD was unable to inform us of the number of James Island busses that will be traveling to and from Johns Island impacting the traffic on River Road. We requested a copy of the traffic study that was done for this project. That request was denied. A FOIA request has been submitted. (b) This bus lot is located across the street from Penny Creek. The oil, gas and other pollutants from the bus parking lot will flow into a detention pond that releases directly into Penny Creek. Penny Creek contains numerous oyster beds. The residents of Penny Creek swim in this creek and consume the fish, shrimp and crabs caught in this creek. Commercial crabbers also set crab traps up and down Penny Creek. It is our belief that these crabs are then sold to low country residents for consumption. When questioned how CCSD plans to keep pollutants out this creek and monitor the water quality, they had no answer, and informed us that the water quality of the creek was monitored by DHEC. Our research indicates that the closest DHEC monitoring station is located at the Limehouse Bridge. This is not close enough to monitor the water quality in Penny Creek. Further, we would like assurances that the water quality of Penny Creek will not be damaged. This would require a water quality study to be performed prior to construction, with continued monitoring after the project is completed. (c) We also inquired about the proposed lighting that will be used for this bus lot as we anticipate the bus lot will be in view from our home and the lighting will directly affect the use and enjoyment of our home. CCSD indicated that they think the lights used will "point down" but were otherwise unable to answer any specific questions regarding lighting. We appreciate CCSD's recognition for the need of another elementary school on Johns Island and their efforts in fulfilling that need. It is not our desire to stop or delay the building of this new school. However, it is our position that the current plans for the bus lot and location of the traffic circle directly impact the use, access and enjoyment of our property resulting in inverse condemnation. The value of our home will be diminished and the current plans may make our home unmarketable should we decide to sell it in the future. For these reasons, we respectfully request that the concept plan approval for this project be denied until CCSD is able to address our concerns, as well as those of the 7 other homeowners. We would support a plan that does not negatively impact Penny Creek, our property, or that of our neighbors. Sincerely, Bradley W. Steele and Kimberly A. Steele

SUBDIVISION PROPERTY CONVERSION

1. Property on Nautical Chart Dr.

Bolton's Landing - West Ashley | TMS #2860000047 | Approx. 0.3 ac.

Request under Sec. 54-815 of the zoning code to convert common area/open space parcel (reserve parcel) to building sites on single-family lots.

Owner: Jasmine Gate Homeowner's Association, Inc.

Applicants: Krysten and Amar Patel, Emmi and Scott Neslage, Tim Larkin

No comments submitted

ZONINGS

1. 9 Apollo Rd.

Carolina Terrace - West Ashley | TMS #4181300229 | Approx. 0.2 ac.

Request zoning of Single Family Residential (SR-1). Zoned Single Family Residential (R-4) in Charleston County.

Owner: Sue B. Chanson

No comments submitted

2. 635 Magnolia Rd.

Carolina Terrace - West Ashley | TMS #3531300031 | Approx. 0.34 ac.

Request zoning of Single Family Residential (SR-1). Zoned Single Family Residential (R-4) in Charleston County.

Owner: Michael Dysart and Laurie Griese

No comments submitted

3. 19 Oakdale Pl.

Avondale - West Ashley | TMS #4181400003 | Approx. 0.47 ac.

Request zoning of Single Family Residential (SR-1). Zoned Single Family Residential (R-4) in Charleston County.

Owner: Elizabeth Oakley and Cindy Carter

No comments submitted

4. 1419 Adele St.

Ancrum Hill - West Ashley | TMS #3510700046 | Approx. 0.13 ac.

Request zoning of Single Family Residential (SR-1). Zoned Single Family Residential (R-4) in Charleston County.

Owner: Kerr Adele Properties LLC

No comments submitted