



Ad



SULLIVAN
Costa Del Mar US



[BUY NOW](#)



SUBSCRIBER EDITION



THE ISLAND PACKET

[Local News](#) [Opinion](#) [Business](#) [Sports](#) [Personal Finance](#) [Obituaries](#)

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

‘Protect the area’: Gov. McMaster weighs in on controversial proposed St. Helena development

BY KARL PUCKETT

UPDATED JANUARY 04, 2023 5:40 PM





The Pine Island/St. Helenaville area is one of the last large tracts of land on St. Helena Island. *Coastal Conservation League*



Only have a minute? Listen instead

Powered by **Trinity Audio**

00:00



1.0x

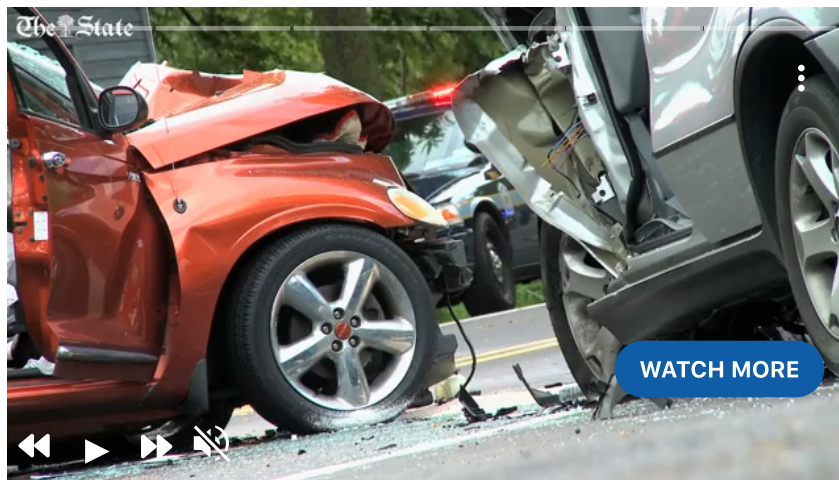
04:02

Gov. Henry McMaster has expressed concern over a controversial local proposal to build a luxury golf course and gated housing development on St. Helena Island, urging Beaufort County to reject a zoning change sought by a developer to make it happen.

“With South Carolina’s population rapidly expanding, debates like this are happening across our state but few threaten the natural beauty, history, and rich culture of our state as this one does,” McMaster wrote in a Jan. 3 letter to Ed Pappas, chairman of the Beaufort County Planning Commission.

“It is my fear that changes to the CPO, which has protected St. Helena from this type of development since 1999, will signal ‘open season’ to other developers and create a domino effect on St. Helena Island and beyond.”

TOP VIDEOS



South Carolina traffic collisions by the numbers

CPO stands for the Cultural Protection Overlay, a special zoning that protects much of St. Helena Island — a largely rural landscape east of Beaufort — from development. Pine Island GC, LLC is asking that nearly 500 acres be removed from the CPO so it can build what it describes in its application as a “world-class, legacy development” that would include a golf course, short-term rentals and “clustered” residential development.

Returning the property, which is not publicly accessible, to base zoning will actually allow for additional conservation measures to protect the area, including reduced housing and dock density, the developer says in its application.

“The development will displace zero local residents, add zero children to the school system, require zero County dollars, and generate minimal infrastructure stress all while generating significant tax revenue for the county,” Pine Island GC, LLC wrote. “Most importantly, the proposed development will create local jobs, sources [of] local goods and services, generate community investment, create local education opportunities, create a new public access point to local waterways and deliver an experience that helps raise awareness and sensitivity to local environmental and cultural climates.”



The 408-acre Pine Island/St. Helenaville is one of the last large tracts of land on St. Helena Island. *Coastal Conservation League*

But the project has run into strong opposition from residents and the Penn Center, the former school for freed enslaved people that today shares and works to preserve the history of African Americans in South Carolina, the Coastal Conservation League (CCL) and Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition, which considers the project a threat to island's environment, history and rural character.

And now McMaster, a Republican who easily won a second four-year term in November, is sharing his concerns about the [498-acre project](#) planned on the Pine Island Plantation and St. Helenaville property.

The Beaufort County Planning Commission will discuss the project at 6 p.m. Thursday.



HENRY McMASTER
GOVERNOR

January 3, 2023

Mr. Ed Pappas
Chairman
Beaufort County Planning Commission
100 Ribaut Road
Beaufort, South Carolina 29902

Dear Mr. Pappas,

I write to you today to share my concerns regarding the development of a luxury golf course and gated community on the historic 498-acre Pine Island Plantation and St. Helenaville property on St. Helena Island.

As you are most certainly aware, on January 5th the Beaufort County Planning Commission will consider an agenda item to amend the St. Helena Island Cultural Protection Overlay District (CPO) to allow for this development.

With South Carolina's population rapidly expanding, debates like this are happening across our state but few threaten the natural beauty, history, and rich culture of our state as this one does.

It is my fear that changes to the CPO, which has protected St. Helena from this type of development since 1999, will signal "open season" to other developers and create a domino effect on St. Helena Island and beyond. It is my opinion that careful consideration of the benefits of development weighed against the certain damage to this pristine, historic, and culturally significant land will yield a decision to leave the CPO untouched.

I ask that you and the commission take these concerns and similar concerns shared by the Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition, the Coastal Conservation League (CCL), the Penn Center and many residents to heart and protect the area from this and similar future developments.

Furthermore, as our state continues to expand, I ask that you and other planning commissions across the state prioritize protecting and conserving our state's uncommon beauty and rich culture from similar projects.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Henry McMaster".

Henry McMaster

HDM/bc

Document

◀ 1 of 1 ▶

+ - 100%



In his letter, McMaster asks the commission to take the concerns of the groups and residents to heart “and protect the area from this and similar future developments.”

“Furthermore,” McMaster said, “as our state continues to expand, I ask that you and other planning commissions across the state prioritize protecting and conserving our state’s uncommon beauty and rich culture from similar projects.”

Beaufort County has said previously the project, as currently proposed, will not be approved because of the Cultural Protection Overlay restrictions, which provide extra protections for St. Helena Island.

BEAUFORT COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CODE (CDC)
ZONING MAP OR TEXT AMENDMENT / PUD MASTER PLAN CHANGE APPLICATION

TO: Beaufort County Council

The undersigned hereby respectfully requests that the Beaufort County Community Development Code (CDC) be amended as described below:

1. This is a request for a change in the (check as appropriate): ☐ PUD Master Plan Change
☒ Zoning Map Designation/Rezoning ☐ Community Development Code Text
2. Give exact information to locate the property for which you propose a change:
Tax District Number: _____, Tax Map Number: _____, Parcel Number(s): _____
Size of subject property: _____ Square Feet / Acres (circle one)
Location: Multiple parcels, see Schedule 1.
3. How is this property presently zoned? (Check as appropriate)
☐ T4NC Neighborhood Center ☐ T2RC Rural Center ☐ C3 Neighborhood Mixed Use
☐ T4HC Hamlet Center ☐ T2RN Rural Neighborhood ☐ C4 Community Center Mixed Use
☐ T4HCO Hamlet Center ☐ T2RNO Rural Neighborhood Open ☐ C5 Regional Center Mixed Use
☐ T4VC Village Center ☒ T2R Rural ☐ S1 Industrial
☐ T3N Neighborhood ☐ T1 Natural Preserve ☐ Planned Unit Development/PUD
☐ T3HN Hamlet Neighborhood ☐ Community Preservation (name) _____
☐ T3E Edge (specify) _____
4. What new zoning do you propose for this property? Removal from Cultural Protection Overlay and return to
(Under Item 9 explain the reason(s) for your rezoning request.) base zoning (T2R). See Schedule 2.
5. Do you own all of the property proposed for this zoning change? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Only property owners or their authorized representative/agent can sign this application. If there are multiple owners, each property owner must sign an individual application and all applications must be submitted simultaneously. If a business entity is the owner, the authorized representative/agent of the business must attach: 1- a copy of the power of attorney that gives him the authority to sign for the business, and 2- a copy of the articles of incorporation that lists the names of all the owners of the business. **See Schedule 3**
6. If this request involves a proposed change in the Community Development Code text, the section(s) affected are: NA
(Under Item 9 explain the proposed text change and reasons for the change.)
7. Is this property subject to an Overlay District? Check those which may apply:
☐ MCAS-AO Airport Overlay District/MCAS ☐ MD Military Overlay District
☐ BC-AO Airport Overlay District/Beaufort County ☐ RQ River Quality Overlay District
☒ CPO Cultural Protection ☐ TDR Transfer of Development Rights
☐ CFV Commercial Fishing Village
8. The following sections of the Community Development Code (CDC) (see attached sheets) should be addressed by the applicant and attached to this application form:
a. Division 7.3.20 and 7.3.30, Comprehensive Plan Amendments and Text Amendments.
b. Division 7.3.40, Zoning map amendments (rezoning).
c. Division 1.6.60, Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) Approved Prior to Dec. 8, 2014
d. Division 6.3, Traffic Impact Analysis (for PUDs)

Document



1

of 19



100%



The property includes Pine Island, a 77-acre island, and a larger property known as St. Helenaville, which are connected by a causeway. St. Helenaville was once a small antebellum village and summer retreat for plantation owners. Pine Island was a hunting plantation. Owned by the Hannah family, it's been managed as farmland and a family retreat for 50 years, but now is for sale and the developer Pine Island GC, LLC, has an option to purchase the property.

This story was originally published January 4, 2023 5:34 PM.



KARL PUCKETT



843-256-3420