



W. Ashley development wins initial approval

Charleston City Council sets smoking fine

By David Slade
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Charleston City Council gave its initial approval Tuesday to a town-sized development of 1,600 homes, plus shops and offices, on a 287-acre West Ashley tract behind Village Green, which would be connected to a much larger development called Long Savannah.

Also Tuesday, City Council revised Charleston's smoking ordinance in response to a recent court decision, making violations of the smoking ban a civil fine of no more than \$25, rather than a criminal offense with the potential for up to 30 days in jail.

Master plan

[See the proposed Long Savannah development](#) master plan *-large file*

The West Ashley development plan revises the second phase of Village Green and incorporates it into Long Savannah, forming a combination of more than 1,500 acres with potentially 5,000 homes and a new commercial hub on the city's western edge.

By most accounts, it could take 20 years or more to fully develop what is planned there.

Mayor Joe Riley, city planners and the Coastal Conservation League are among those who support the plans. They say roughly 1,700 acres of planned city and county park land around the developments will form a permanent edge to the suburbs, and including shops and offices in the plans will reduce the amount of traffic leaving the communities.

"We believe the community will actually enhance the West Ashley area," said Megan Desrosiers of the Coastal Conservation League.

John Ungaro of the Hickory Farms subdivision near the proposed developments told City Council members more development could make traffic unbearable.

"The Glenn McConnell (Parkway) cannot handle the traffic that is on it now, from Bees Ferry Road to (Interstate) 526," he said. "The Glenn McConnell cannot handle the traffic from Long Savannah."

The plan for the land behind Village Green, owned by HPH Properties, now goes to the city's Planning Commission, where it will be considered with the Long Savannah plan, which already has initial approval from City Council.

Both plans will return to City Council together later this year.

Councilman James Lewis voted against the HPH Properties plan, and Councilman Louis Waring was absent from the meeting Tuesday.

The changes to the city's smoking ordinance were opposed by three council members — Lewis, Tim Mallard and Deb Morinelli. Lewis and Morinelli opposed the original smoking ban, which prohibits indoor smoking in businesses with limited exceptions.

"I think it's the most ridiculous thing we've ever done," Morinelli said.

Some opponents of the ban, like council members Larry Shirley and Aubry Alexander, were pleased to see the penalties significantly reduced. Businesses that repeatedly violate the ordinance could lose their business licenses, but City Council would have the final say.

Charleston's smoking ordinance is being challenged in court. The changes are meant to make the city's ordinance more similar to a Greenville ordinance upheld by the S.C. Supreme Court.

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