



## **Balanced Growth: An open letter from Mayor Linda Page**

In March, Town Council and I introduced the framework of a [Town Growth Management Plan](#). Our goal was – and remains – to balance quality of life with development and livability for residents.

Last night, Council passed first reading of a pair of ordinances outlined in the framework. One would eliminate bonus densities in development projects and the other would eliminate a recreation impact fee waiver for developers. We see passage of the first reading as another measured and reasonable step in the process of shaping our town's future and balancing growth.

It is not, however, the end of this journey.

A public hearing on the ordinances is scheduled during the Town Planning Commission meeting on Tuesday, April 28. A second reading of the ordinances, at which time they could be amended, will take place in four to six months, following much review, discussion and debate in the interim. (Start by having your say online via our [Framework Feedback form](#).)

What is important is that we are moving ahead, yet we have a timeframe in place that allows us to carefully consider a number of important final decisions. We'll provide more details on the process going forward in the days to come.

For nearly two years, we've heard residents weigh in with ideas and concerns. When we rolled out the framework, we instantly began to receive even more – and more diverse – feedback. That is great, and no one should be begrudged their right to speak up, no matter when they joined the conversation.

Between now and the next reading, everyone who wants to, will have their say. That includes all residents, business owners, real estate professionals, regional business leaders and more. Town Council and I will listen, analyze the information and feedback we receive, and use that knowledge to make the best decisions we can for the Town.

I realize that there will likely never be full consensus on this issue. Some points of view are just too far apart. And that is to be expected.

Many considerations and concerns have already been voiced, from strain on infrastructure and quality of life to economic development to affordable housing for young professionals. What we're seeking is balance. Balance in planning, balance in development, and a balance in emotions. Some entrenched in this debate want to preserve, as much as possible, the Mount Pleasant of yesterday. Others have contrasting ideas of the way forward that include more dynamic growth tactics. I encourage everyone to keep in mind that the common thread, no matter your view, is that we all want a prosperous and bright future for Mount Pleasant. Visions of how to get there differ, that is all.

A review of the work of this Town Council over the past few months shows just how hard it has tried to carefully consider balance when addressing Mount Pleasant's future:

- In July 2014, the Town established the Government Outreach office as a way to increase communication, engagement and collaboration.
- In September 2014, we reinstated mandatory review by the Design Review Board.
- In November 2014, we lowered building heights in portions of the Urban Corridor.
- We denied numerous developer requests to amend the Town Comprehensive Plan and Code of Ordinances.
- We increased densities where it enhanced quality of life for a neighborhood.
- We held developers to the original terms of the Shem Creek Parking Garage License Agreement, and when they could not achieve those, the agreement did not move forward.
- In the interest of accommodating smart solutions, we've waived waiting periods for developers to resubmit plans on a number of projects. The Town remains open for business and we are willing to work through projects together to get to the right fit.
- We rolled out communication tools such as podcasts, new agenda formats and live-stream beta testing.
- The Town has hired consultants to work with residents on traffic issues.
- As requested by residents, the Town provided a detailed, public response to questions in regard to the office building at the corner of Coleman Boulevard and Mill Street.

This Town Council, Town Staff and I care deeply about Mount Pleasant and its future – just like you. Let's come together in the months ahead to forge a balanced path to the future.

Mayor Linda Page  
Town of Mount Pleasant, SC