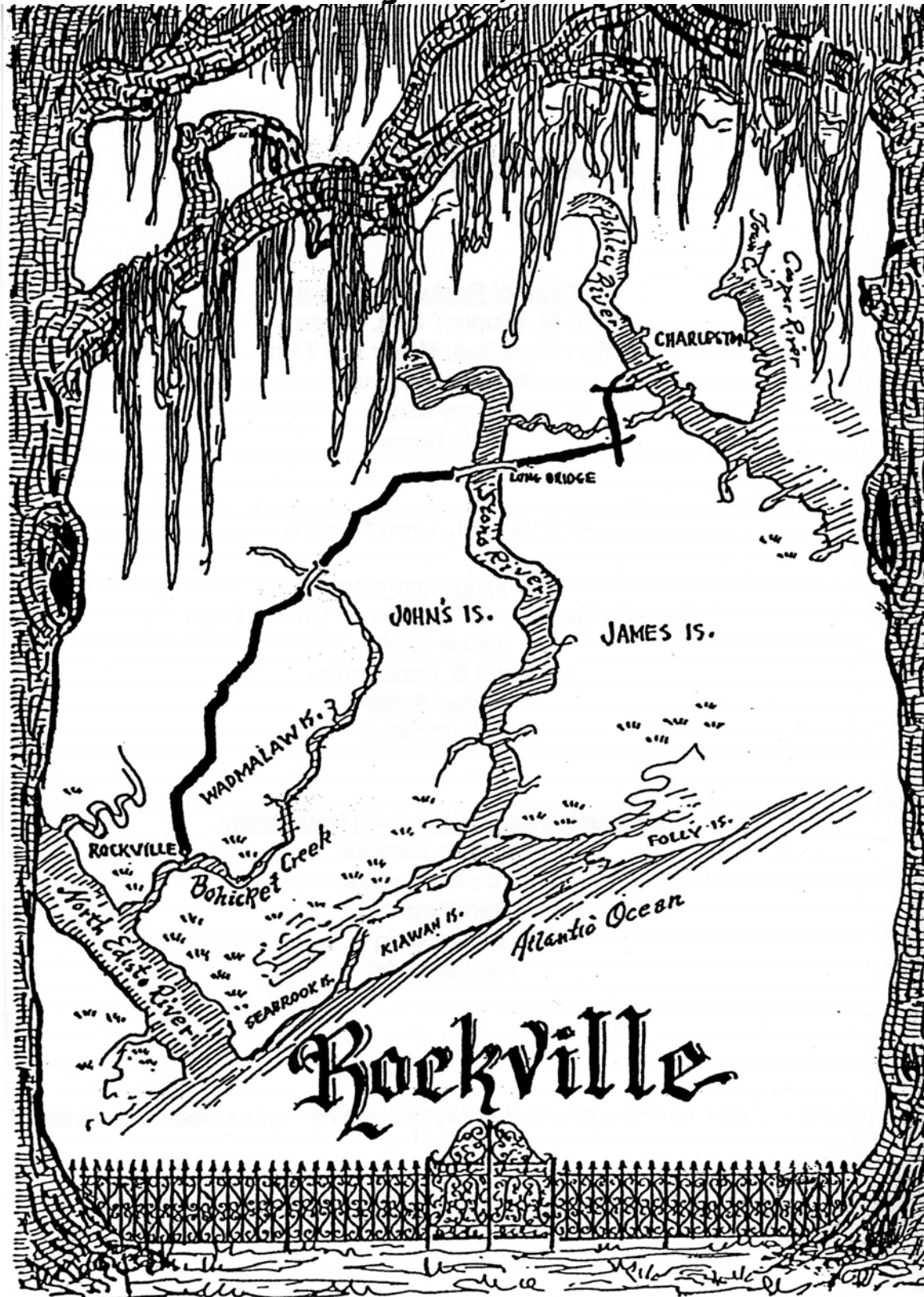


COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TEN YEAR UPDATE

August 17, 2009



Acknowledgements

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Table of Contents

| | Page |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| HISTORY OF ROCKVILLE | 7 |
| VISION STATEMENT | 9 |
| ELEMENTS | |
| POPULATION | 10 |
| HOUSING | 11 |
| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | 13 |
| CULTURAL RESOURCES | 14 |
| COMMUNITY FACILITIES | 16 |
| NATURAL RESOURCES | 18 |
| LAND USE | 20 |
| TRANSPORTATION | 21 |
| PRIORITY INVESTMENT | 22 |
| MAPS | 23 |
| CURRENT ZONING | 24 |
| FUTURE LAND USE | 25 |

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Rockville Comprehensive Plan will guide public decision making that will affect the quality of life in the Town of Rockville through the year 2015. The Plan identifies the community's Vision for the Town of Rockville, developed through the efforts of the Town of Rockville Planning Commission, with input from the public. The Vision articulates the community's sense of what is essential to the quality of life in the Town of Rockville and serves as the touchstone for the Comprehensive Plan. The various elements of the Plan are designed to accomplish this Vision by articulating goals for the future regarding the pattern and intensity of land use, the provision of public facilities and services, economic development, availability of housing, and preservation of natural and cultural resources. The Plan also sets forth specific policies that will guide future Town actions to accomplish the Plan's goals, thereby realizing its Vision for the Future.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

In 2007, the South Carolina Priority Investment Act (The Act) was passed by the General Assembly to address affordable housing and transportation issues and to create a formal process for inter-jurisdictional coordination. The Act requires two new elements be included in Comprehensive Plans, the Transpiration Element and the Priority Investment Element. It also expands the Housing Element.

The Town of Rockville Comprehensive Plan is composed of four sections:

- 1 History of the Town
- 2 Vision Statement
- 3 Elements
 - Population
 - Housing
 - Economic Development
 - Cultural Resources
 - Community Facilities and Services
 - Natural Resources
 - Existing and Future Land Use
 - Transportation
 - Priority Investment
- 4 Maps
 - Current Zoning
 - Future Land Use

LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In 1994, the South Carolina General Assembly passed the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act (S.C. Code Sections 6-29-310 through 6-29-1200). Prior to this Act, the General Assembly had granted authority to create and maintain a comprehensive planning process through a series of legislative acts. Zoning authority was first granted to municipalities in 1924 (Title 5, Chapter 23). The General Assembly extended zoning powers to counties eighteen years later in 1942 (Title 4, Chapter 27). Subsequently, local governments relied most heavily on additional enabling legislation included in a 1967 Act of the General Assembly, codified in Title 6, Chapter 7.

In adopting the 1994 Act, the General Assembly consolidated existing planning legislation scattered throughout the Code, into one location. The Enabling Act also updated the older provisions with current practices and new methods, tools and procedures for local government planning (MASC 1994). The Enabling Act repealed all prior statutes with planning enabling legislation, effective May 3, 1999. By that date, all local planning programs, zoning ordinances and other related ordinances must conform with requirement of the Enabling Act.

The Enabling Act charges the Charleston County Planning Commission acting as the Town of Rockville Planning Commission with responsibility for comprehensive planning. The Planning Commission must establish and maintain a planning process that results in the systematic preparation, continuing elevation and updating of a Comprehensive Plan (S.C. Code Section 6-29-510(A)). The Comprehensive Plan must be adopted by May 3, 1999.

PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS

The South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act (S.C. Code Sections 6-29-520 and 6-29-530) specifies the process for review and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Five steps compose the process:

Step One - Resolution.

By Majority vote of the entire membership, the Charleston County Planning Commission acting as the Town of Rockville Planning Commission adopted a resolution recommending the Plan to the Town of Rockville Council. The resolution refers explicitly to maps and other descriptive material intended by the Planning Commission to form the recommended plan. The resolution was recorded in the official minutes of the Planning Commission.

Step Two - Recommendation.

The Planning Commission sent a copy of the recommended Comprehensive Plan to the Town of Rockville Council.

Step Three - Hearing.

Before adopting the recommended Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Rockville Council held a public hearing. It gave a 30 day notice of the hearing time and place in a general circulation newspaper in the Charleston Area.

Step Four - Consideration of Public Comments.

The Planning Commission considered the comments received on the Comprehensive Plan from the public. The Planning Commission responded to the comments, incorporating revisions into the Comprehensive Plan, as appropriate.

Step Five - Ordinance.

The Town of Rockville Council adopted the Comprehensive Plan by ordinance.

To comply with the Enabling Act the Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Town of Rockville Council by May 3, 1999.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Following adoption of the *Town of Rockville Comprehensive Plan* by the Town of Rockville Council, the Town moved forward with a series of implementation actions. These actions included revisions to ordinances, programs, and routine town operations, as appropriate, to achieve consistency with the Goals and Objectives of the Plan. The Policies included at the end of each of the Plan's elements, provide direction as to the specific actions that will be required to implement the Plan.

HISTORY OF ROCKVILLE

In the charters of 1663 and 1665 Charles II of Great Britain gave to eight noblemen, the Lord Proprietors they were called, all the lands of south of Virginia from the 29⁰ to 36⁰ 30' N Latitude, and lying between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. This vast territory was called Carolina in honor of the King.

In 1666 the Lord Proprietors sent Lt. Col. Robert Sandford on a voyage to explore the coast and rivers between Cape Romain and Port Royal. On June 23, 1666 he sailed into the North Edisto River and ventured up a creek on the east shore, "a very fair and deep creek or river", and having gone a mile, landed, and in the presence of his company took formal possession "by turf and twig" of that whole country from the latitude of 36⁰ N, to 29⁰ SW to the South Seas. The fair and deep creek he mentioned was none other than the Bohicket, and the place where he took possession for the Crown was most probably the present site of Rockville.

The name Rockville is derived, supposedly, from the deposits of ore which jutted from the bluff along the entire waterfront. Today there is only a small outcropping remaining. The island, on the southern extremity of Wadmalaw Island is bounded by the Bohicket River and Adams Creek.

Rockville was founded as a summer haven for the more affluent planters and residents of Charleston's swampy peninsula who retreated to airy seascapes to avoid the dreadful night air emanating from the swamps. It was believed, at that time, that it was the swamps that caused malaria. From records of the early 1700's one finds the following family names on Wadmalaw – Morton, Wilkinson, Jenkins, LaRoche, Seabrook, Sams, Fickling, Adams, Reynolds, Townsend, and Waight. Originally the land was part of Rockland Plantation, a tract belonging variously to the Adams, Jenkins, Seabrook, and Townsend families. The exact date is not known, but the first lots of what would become The Village, as the older section is referred, probably were sold in the 1830's. Scattered single-family houses existed long before that.

The oldest house in Rockville is that of Micah Jenkins, a Johns Island planter. This was his summer house which is believed to have been erected by, or before 1780. The house is best known today as the Whaley house, as the W haleys, or some of their descendents, have lived there, or owned it, prior to and since 1900. After 1800 other houses were built along the water front. The houses were summer homes and were not elaborate. They were fairly large, with numerous windows and wide piazzas – features to insure comfort against the heat. During the Civil War, the Federal troops occupied Wadmalaw Island and destroyed some of the plantations and houses. The old Rectory, formerly owned by Bishop Albert Thomas and now owned by Cynthia Bettridge, was bought by St. Johns Church in 1836 as a

summer home for its ministers. Grace Chapel and the Rockville Presbyterian Church both date from antebellum years. Grace Chapel was completed in 1840. The Presbyterian Church was probably built in the 1850's.

Rockville has felt the whip of nature's fury. The worst catastrophes were the earthquake of 1886 and the hurricane of 1893. The earthquake was unique. In places the earth split apart, and chimneys cracked or fell. People left their homes and camped out of doors. The hurricane of 1893 brought with it a tidal wave. The distress was so great that the Red Cross, in its infancy at that time, sent help. As a result of that storm Rockville lost some of its waterfront; for older residents remember when great oaks stood between the houses and the river, and carriages could be driven the entire length of the village.

In the old days, travel between the islands or to Charleston was entirely by boat or ferry. Roads were unpaved; only Wadmalaw and Johns Island were tied together by bridge. Due to this lack of infrastructure, the rigorous trip from Wadmalaw to Charleston was by boat. At one time, the island was serviced by two boats, the Lotta under the command of Captain Henry Bullwinkle and the Mary Draper owned by the Stevens brothers.

Rockville owes its renown to the annual sailboat regatta races held there each year – races which attract participants and spectators from all points of the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida. The first race was run in 1890, between two flat-bottomed “bateau boats” and has continued since. The man who started what now has become one of the most widely known regattas on the Atlantic seaboard was a preacher, the Reverend B.B. Sams. The first race was sailed between the James Island Yachtsman and the Rockville Preacher. The series continues to grow larger and more famous with the years.

The Town of Rockville was formally incorporated on April 24, 1996. The first Mayor of Rockville J. Douglas Jenkins. The Town's second mayor was Mayor C.M. (Budge) Trott and Council, Sandiford Bee, Mayor Pro-Tem, Riley A. Bradham, Mrs. Daisy Mingo, and Mrs. Judy Suggs

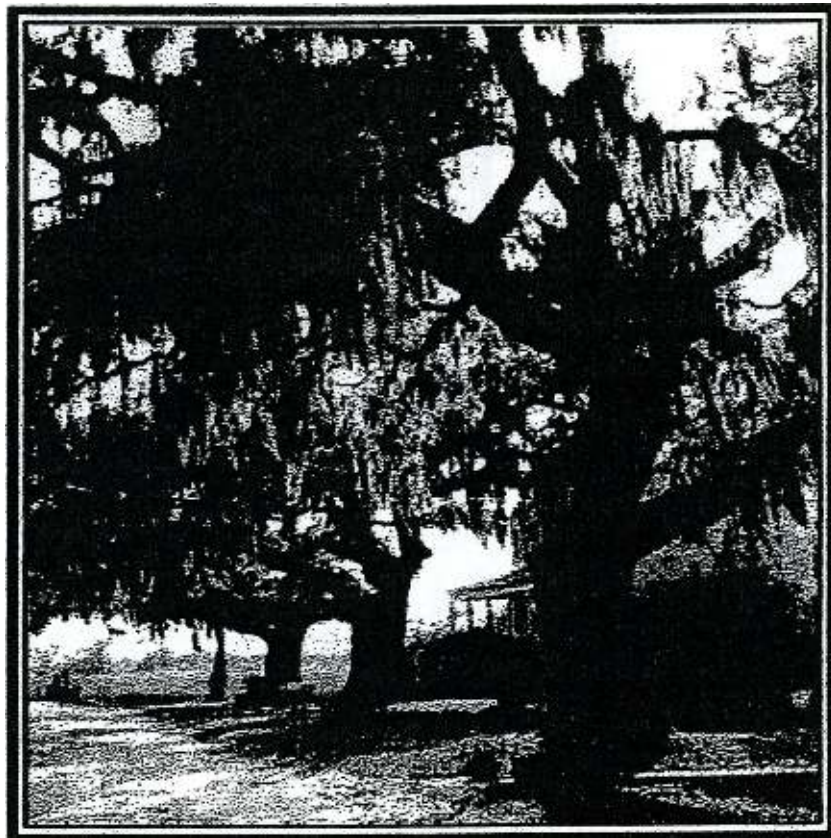
TOWN OF ROCKVILLE VISION STATEMENT

Measures that will enhance the existing character of the Town as a quality place to live, and protect the environment around the town, must be taken to guide and preserve the quality of life for future generations.

The Town should strive to maintain the existing historical and rural character with as little change as possible.

Sensitivity to the rural character of Rockville and preservation of area waterways and landmark trees will sustain the natural environment and enhance the quality of life for our citizens for generations to come.

February 23, 1999



POPULATION ELEMENT

The Town of Rockville was formally incorporated in April 1996. The Town continues to maintain its residential character with no intentions of an aggressive annexation strategy. The intent at this time is to keep annexations to a minimum. The population is racially mixed and family oriented in make-up.

The purpose and intent of the following population data and recommendations is to identify the demographics of the current and future population of Rockville to help guide policy decisions forecast population growth through the lifespan of this Plan (2020) to establish benchmarks for the functionality of the Future Land Use Plan, and to identify future service needs of the population which can be addressed through this Comprehensive Plan update. Population of Rockville is 137.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION

Goals:

To maintain a low-density, single family residential community in keeping with the Town of Rockville's current character.

Ensure that residential development retains community identity and character.

Objectives:

- Continue efforts to communicate with all citizens within the Town by maintaining the bulletin board at Kings Grocery.

- Foster the preservation of Rockville's older, historically significant homes.

- Establish and enforce development standards promoting compatible design and materials by the Design Review Board.

- Maintain the architectural character and scale that currently exists in the Town.

ACTION:

- Provide for the continuity of the Design Review Board.

- Evaluate building and landscape plans to ensure compatibility with existing development.

- Monitor population growth trends and demographic shifts as indicators of population change and use this information to guide future updates to the Comprehensive Plan.



Grace Chapel



Presbyterian Church and



Fellowship Hall

HOUSING ELEMENT

The housing stock originally was built in the 1800's and newer homes have maintained the same character for the most part. Residents desire individuality in home styles as long as the village-style prevails. At this time there are some vacant lots in the Town where residential development can occur.

Housing is included in the Comprehensive Plan to ensure policies are in place to promote safe and affordable housing, providing opportunities for families of various demographic and economic backgrounds.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION

Goals:

Rockville includes the housing element in the Comprehensive Plan in compliance with South Carolina State Law. Furthermore, the intent of this element is to promote a sufficient supply of a variety and type of housing with access to facilities and services and promote housing alternatives for low and moderate income households.

Objectives:

To further enhance the quality of life of Rockville residents, the strategies encourage attractive land uses that promote community identity and support a wide range of housing needs with particular importance on promoting diverse and affordable housing opportunities for seniors and special risk populations.

ACTION:

- Continue to enforce the Building Code and Beautification Section of the Charleston County Code of Ordinances (#1227) and coordinate with other jurisdictions to maintain housing stock in a safe and habitable condition.
- Continue to enforce the Residential Building Code to protect the general health, safety and welfare of the population.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Currently, there are several small businesses in the Town of Rockville. The Overwhelming desire of the community is that no further commercial activity be established. The existing businesses include a small grocery store, a boatyard, and a seafood company. These businesses are rural-in-character and neighborhood-oriented.

At this time, the community does not want increased commercial development. By limiting and controlling development, the rural character of the Town can be preserved.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTION

Goals:

Encourage preservation of the small, neighborhood businesses that currently exist within the Town of Rockville.

Objective:

- Enforce standards that limit commercial development to maintain the rural character of Rockville.

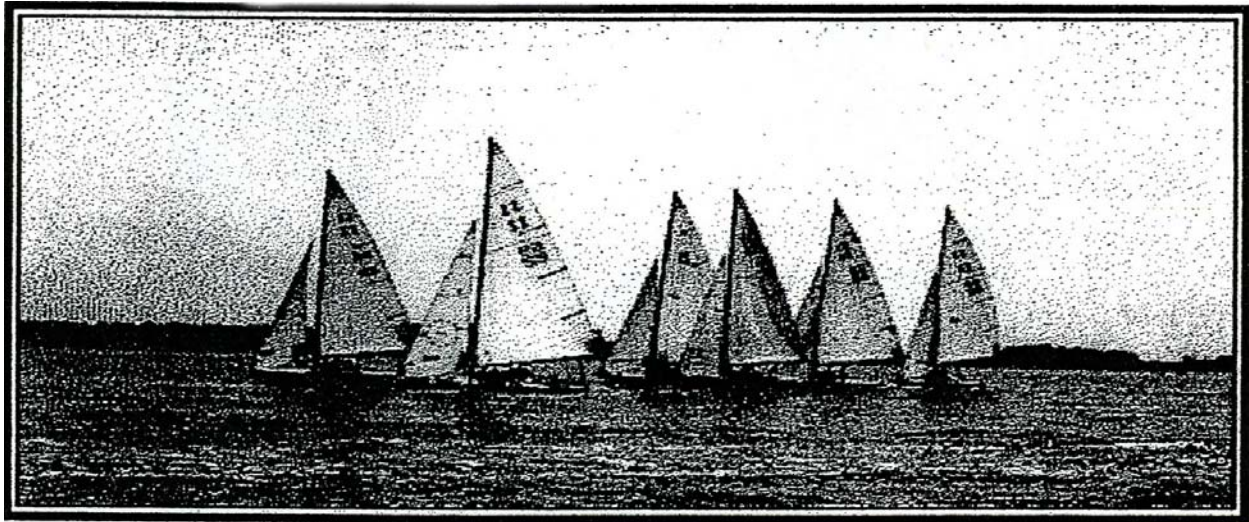
ACTION:

- Establish development standards in the form of an ordinance that limits commercial growth to conform with the rural character of the Town.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Town of Rockville is the essence of a southern, coastal village. The importance of resources, both natural and cultural is evident. The cultural resources have grown out of the significant history of the Town and the surrounding area.

In the early 20th Century, the lack of infrastructure made the Charleston trip difficult. The Town's maritime history developed from the reliance on water transportation. The Annual Rockville Regatta shows the importance of the water resources to the culture of the Town.



Sea Island One Design (SIOD) racing at the Rockville Regatta

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS

Goals:

Promote and preserve the cultural resources in and around the Town of Rockville.

Ensure residents are aware of Rockville's vast cultural resources and the resources available in the Charleston area.

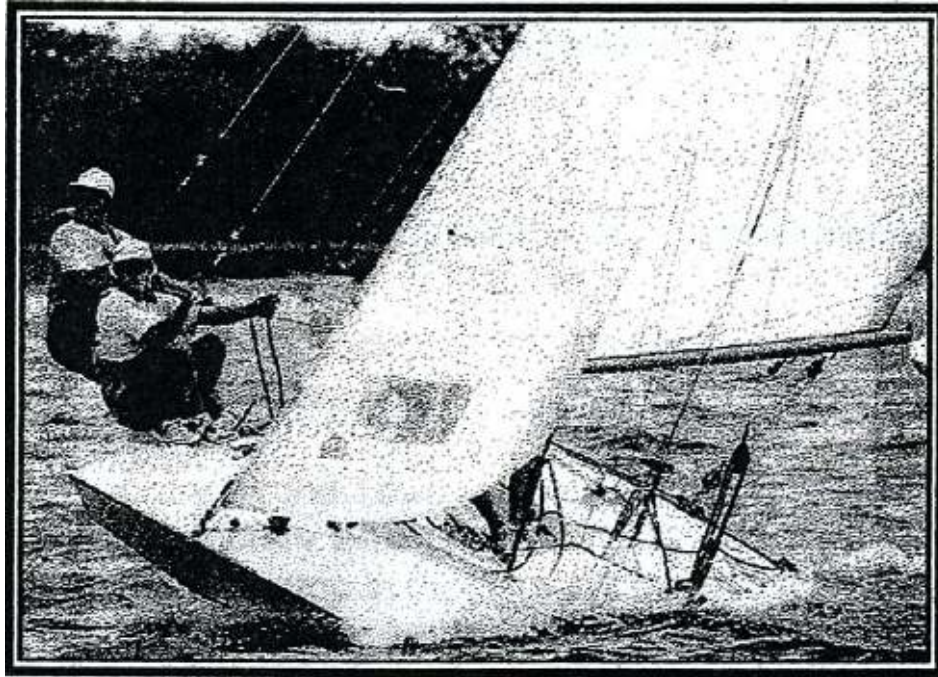
Objectives:

- Increase public awareness of the Town's heritage and cultural resources.
- Maintain the rural character and the historical significance of Rockville.

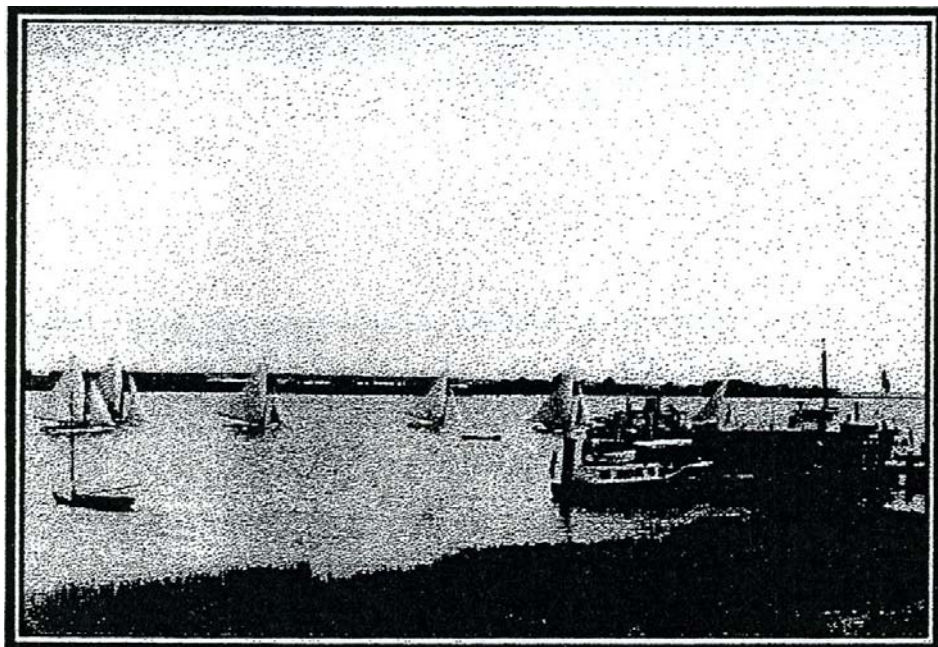
- Research the need for development standards to protect the resources within the Town.
- Expand efforts to preserve the written and oral history of the Town.

ACTIONS:

- Develop a written and oral history of Rockville.
- Assess the need for written standards to protect cultural resources.



Privateer SIOD



Rockville Regatta in the early 1900's.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

There are a number of community facilities in the area to serve the needs of people in the Rockville area. These facilities provide waste management, emergency response, health care, and educational opportunities for residents of the area. These community facilities include the following:

Waste Management: Local residents dispose of household waste in dumpsters located at a recycling center on Wadmalaw Island.

Public Safety: The area is served by the St. Johns Fire District which relies on paid staff as well as on volunteers to meet the fire protection needs of the area. Police protection is provided by Charleston County Sheriff's Department.

EMS: EMS responds to calls in Rockville. Medic 7 is located on Main Road on Johns Island and serves all of Wadmalaw Island.

Library: The nearest library for the Town residents is the Johns Island branch of the Charleston County Public Library. The bookmobile currently makes a stop at Cherry Point Landing to provide library services.

Boat Landing: A public boat landing and fishing pier is located at the end of Cherry Point Road and is maintained by Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTION

Goal:

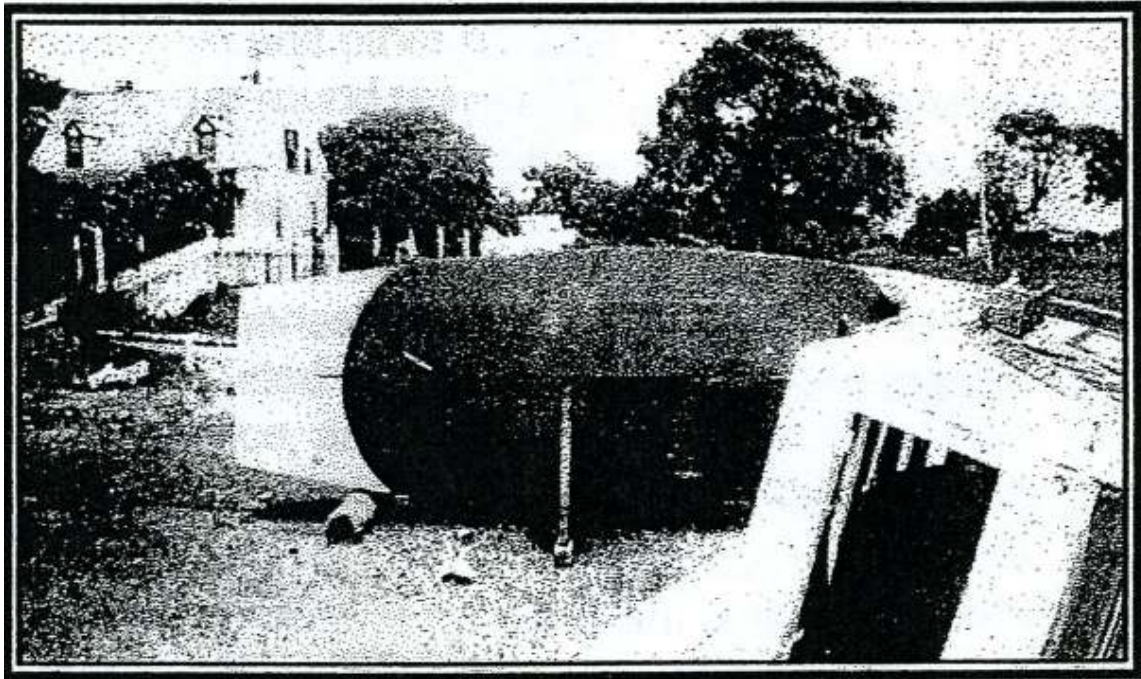
Foster communication and coordination with Charleston County and the State of South Carolina for the improvement and promotion of facilities and services.

Objectives:

- Support Charleston County in the provision and use of any transportation system while preserving scenic beauty, community character, natural resources and cultural heritage.
- Coordinate with Charleston County's emergency medical care, fire protection and law enforcement services.
- Refer to Charleston County's Emergency Preparedness Plan.
- Support Wadmalaw Island Land Plan Committee by appointing a representative from the Town of Rockville.
- Refer to Charleston County's Solid Waste Management Plan.
- Support Charleston County in the development and planning of quality education and library systems that will equip citizens for today's workplace.

ACTION:

- Provide accessibility for residents to all facilities and service.
- Establish an Emergency Preparedness Officer to coordinate with Charleston County in event of natural disasters or other emergencies.



View east from the front of Rockville.



**John Sosnowski and Annie Jenkins Batson
in the front of the *Mary Draper*.**

NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Rockville, a coastal village lying approximately 20 miles south of Charleston, South Carolina, at the easternmost tip of Wadmalaw Island, boasts a great variety of scenic natural resources, embracing a couple of miles of water frontage, maritime forests dominated by ancient live oaks, majestic pines, and palmettos, tidal marsh, and other wetlands. The Town supports diverse wildlife, including white-tailed deer, red foxes, as well as abundant waterfowl and other birdlife. Aquatic life is also plentiful. Alligators, otters, and dolphin are year-round residents of our estuaries, waterways, and lakes.

The Town also works with the South Carolina Office of Coastal Resource Management, Charleston County, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to identify protected areas, marshes, and wetlands. Charleston County and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have regulated development to minimize potential flood damage. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the South Carolina Department of Wildlife and Marine Resources have also assisted in efforts to protect valuable wildlife habitat.

The natural resource that is most apparent upon entering the Town is the wealth of large, live oak trees. This resource offers an atmosphere that is unique and beautiful. To preserve the true character of Rockville, these trees must be preserved as future development occurs.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTION

Goal:

Maintain the high quality of rivers, creeks, wetlands, and the ocean and limit the effects of erosion along Bohicket Creek and Adams Creek.

Objectives:

- Support water quality monitoring by South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) and through federal-sponsored programs.
- Support S.C. DHEC and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources in evaluation of pollution prevention and control measures needed to accommodate growth without jeopardizing the recreational and ecological benefits of the creeks and other waters.
- Coordinate with S.C. DHEC, Lowcountry Open Land Trust, Coastal Conservation League, Office of Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), and the U.S. Army -Corps of Engineers regarding protection of wetlands and prevention of erosion along Bohicket Creek and Adams Creek.
- Increase enforcement of no wake zones on Bohicket Creek and Adams Creek.

Goal:

Maintain existing high levels of air quality.

Objective:

- Support regional air quality planning and enforcement efforts sponsored by S.C. DHEC and Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Government (BCD COG).

ACTION:

- Update Development Standards to ensure that both natural resources and trees are preserved.



Historic waterfront of Rockville.

LAND USE ELEMENT

The existing land use of the Town of Rockville is residential for the most part. There are a few commercial establishments and two churches. Also, the Sea Island Yacht Club is located on Bohicket Creek at the end of Sea Island Yacht Club Road. The residents greatly desire the residential character to continue.

The Town has a very human scale as it exists today. The large live oaks, village-style housing and rural atmosphere create a quiet, small town and vast natural resources and a reliance on the maritime resources has defined the land use as the town has grown.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTION

Goal:

To ensure that future development complements and enhances the existing residential character of the community.

Objectives:

- Establish land use regulations outlining the permitted uses in any undeveloped areas of the municipality.
- Enforce zoning/land use restrictions and development standards.
- Establish and enforce municipal ordinances regulating density and lot coverage.

ACTION:

- Establish and enforce land use regulations and ordinances which address housing density, lot coverage, zoning and development standards.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

South Carolina State Law regarding comprehensive plans was recently amended to require that transportation be a stand alone element in the Comprehensive Plan. The provision of transportation in the County should reflect the unique characteristics of the landscape and adhere to the character outlined in the development quality strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of Rockville has no airport, public transportation and no public facilities.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTION

Goal: To maintain Rockville as a rural, non-commercial, residential community.

Objectives:

The purpose of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan is to present information and strategies that respect the scenic beauty, community character, natural resources and cultural heritage of Charleston County in the provision and use of any transportation.

ACTION:

PRIORITY INVESTMENT ELEMENT

The Priority Investment, Implementation, and Coordination Element prioritizes the implementation actions for the County over the next ten years through strategies, implementation initiatives. This Element provides guidance for implementation of strategies contained in the other Plan Elements by analyzing the potential federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years and prioritizing projects recommended for that funding.

The Town of Rockville has no infrastructure requiring funding from federal or state agencies and does not anticipate requiring funding in the foreseeable future.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTION

Goal: Public infrastructure projects will be prioritized through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.

Objectives:

- Inter-jurisdictional coordination.
- Annual planning work program for implementation of this Plan.
- Maintaining rural character, non-commercial, residential community.

ACTION:

- Review and update the Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance to ensure these standards reflect the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan Elements including but not limited to rural preservation, development quality, resource protection, housing affordability, and economic development.

MAPS

1. **Current Zoning Map**
2. **Future Land Use Map**



