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S.C. SUPREME COURT

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In The Supreme Court

APPEAL FROM THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

The Honorable Bentley D. Price

Appellate Court Case No. 2022-000300
Unpublished Opinion No. 2024-UP-372 (S.C. Ct. App. Filed October 30, 2024)
Circuit Court Case No. 2021-CP-07-01241 and
Circuit Court Case No. 2021-CP-07-01231

Historic Beaufort Foundation, Petitioner,
v.
City of Beaufort, City of Beaufort Historic District Review Board,
and The Beaufort Inn, LLC, Respondents.

AND

West Street Farms, LLC and Mix Farms, LLC, Petitioners,
v.
City of Beaufort, City of Beaufort Historic District Review Board,
and The Beaufort Inn, LLC, Respondents.

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

John A. Massalon, Esquire
(SC Bar #10279)
Carissa Steichen Land, Esquire
(SC Bar #104264)
WILLS MASSALON & ALLEN LLC
Post Office Box 859
Charleston, South Carolina 29402
(843) 727-1144
jmassalon@wmalawfirm.net
cland@wmalawfirm.net

ATTORNEYS FOR PETITIONER
HISTORIC BEAUFORT FOUNDATION

W. Andrew Gowder, Jr., Esquire
(SC Bar #7895)
Austen & Gowder, LLC
1629 Meeting Street, Suite A
Charleston, South Carolina 29405
(843) 727-2229
andy@austengowder.com

ATTORNEYS FOR PETITIONERS
WEST STREET FARMS, LLC
AND MIX FARMS, LLC

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CERTIFICATION OF COUNSEL

I certify that a petition for rehearing was made and finally ruled on by the Court of Appeals
on November 19, 2024.

s/John A. Massalon
John A. Massalon

ATTORNEY FOR PETITIONER
HISTORIC BEAUFORT FOUNDATION

s/W. Andrew Gowder, Jr.
W. Andrew Gowder, Jr.

ATTORNEY FOR PETITIONERS
WEST STREET FARMS, LLC
AND MIX FARMS, LLC

QUESTION PRESENTED

Did the Court of Appeals err in affirming the ruling of the Circuit Court and, specifically, in concluding that the appeal was untimely because Petitioners did not appeal the conceptual or preliminary approvals when that holding is contrary to this state's long-established precedent that only final judgments are subject to appeal?

INTRODUCTION

The Supreme Court should exercise its discretion to grant review because this appeal involves novel legal questions. Rule 242(b)(1), SCACR, provides that a case involving novel legal questions is a type of case that will be considered for the discretionary review sought in this Petition. *See* S.C. App. Ct. R. 242(b)(1); *see also* *Peagler v. USAA Ins. Co.*, 368 S.C. 153, 157, 628 S.E.2d 475, 477 (2006) (“In answering a certified question raising a novel question of law, this Court is free to decide the question based on its assessment of which answer and reasoning would best comport with the law and public policies of the state as well as the Court's sense of law, justice, and right.”).

The Court of Appeal’s opinion affirming the decision of the Circuit Court overlooked or misapprehended the legal issues below. Specifically, the Court erred in concluding that the appeal was untimely. The Appellant was not required to appeal conceptual or preliminary HDRB approvals under local practice in the City of Beaufort and a long-established precedent that holds that only final judgments are subject to appeal. Nonetheless, the Court of Appeals declined to consider the merits of the appeal and instead dismissed the appeal based upon the novel determination that preliminary or conceptual approvals by an architectural review board established under the state enabling law are final decisions that must be immediately appealed. Neither Respondents nor the decision below cite any statutory provision or case law in support of the conclusion that an appeal of decisions reached during the conceptual and preliminary review processes is untimely if made after the final decision of the HDRB is rendered under S.C. Code Ann. § 6-29-900. Likewise, the cases citing that statute do not provide any clarity as those decisions do not address the issue of whether an HRB decision granting conceptual or preliminary approval must be immediately appealed pursuant to § 6-29-900. To the extent that the prior order

of this Court deemed this argument abandoned for failure to cite controlling authority, the Appellants submit that this is a novel question on which there is no precedent.

Additionally, the Supreme Court should grant certiorari to review the decision of the Court of Appeals to give much-needed guidance to local governments charged with interpreting and administering the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act. The prior decision in this matter has produced uncertainty in the very jurisdiction from which this appeal originated. During its most recent meeting on December 11, 2024, the Town of Beaufort Historic Review Board considered whether the Beaufort Code should be amended to change the review and approval process. (See Memorandum to the HDRB from the Beaufort Community Development Director dated December 4, 2024).

As detailed below, the Parking Garage did not receive final approval until June 9, 2021, and this appeal was timely filed within thirty (30) days of that decision. Moreover, any final approval issued for the Hotel before June 9, 2021, does not bar this appeal because the Hotel design approved at that meeting was materially different from any design approved before that date, rendering it, essentially, a new application. Neither the Parking Garage nor the Hotel had the requisite valid approvals from the City of Beaufort for the HRB to consider these applications. Beyond that, the merits of each of these structures fail to meet even the minimal threshold of requirements for approval in Sections 4 and 9 of The Beaufort Code and the Beaufort Preservation Manual. The Board failed, as a matter of law, to fulfill its responsibility under The Beaufort Code in approving these applications. For these reasons, and because the matters herein present novel questions of law, Petitioners respectfully request this Honorable Court issue a writ of certiorari to review the issues presented by this appeal.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

This is a consolidated appeal by two different sets of Petitioners of the HRB's approval of two projects in the Town of Beaufort's National Historic Landmark District for the construction of a 77-unit hotel building, including a rooftop bar and restaurant ("Hotel"); and for the construction of a parking garage ("Parking Garage"). The current ordinance in the City of Beaufort that governs development and building approvals is The Beaufort Code, adopted effective June 27, 2017, and updated on July 10, 2018. (R. p. 791 – p. 777). The Beaufort Code repealed and replaced the Unified Development Ordinance ("UDO"), which governed development and building before that date. (Id.).

The Parking Garage

The City of Beaufort traditionally required three levels of review and approval to achieve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the Garage: conceptual, preliminary, and final. On August 17, 2016, the Board granted conceptual approval with conditions for the Parking Garage. (R. p. 047). On July 12, 2017, the Board approved a motion for the Parking Garage to undergo significant revision and return to the Board with a simpler design. (Id., at p. 661). By July 2017, The Beaufort Code had already been approved and was in effect. On September 20, 2017, the Board gave preliminary approval for the Parking Garage plan with various conditions. (Id., at p. 559). The then-current drawings were approved as submitted, and the Applicant was tasked with refining the design details to receive final approval. (Id.).

Under either the UDO or The Beaufort Code, preliminary approval for the Parking Garage expired on March 20, 2019, 18 months after the September 20, 2017, preliminary approval date. David Prichard, on behalf of the City, in two letters dated June 21, 2019, and July 1, 2020, erroneously issued an extension of a "Certificate of Appropriateness" for the Parking Garage that

had never been issued and did not exist. (R. pp. 676-677). The Parking Garage never received a “Certificate of Appropriateness” from the Board, a requirement under the UDO and The Beaufort Code. Under either ordinance, a Certificate of Appropriateness could only be issued after final approval, which the Parking Garage never achieved. Also, David Prichard referenced The Beaufort Code section 9.1.4 as the governing code in those two letters. Mr. Prichard did not reference the UDO. (Id.).

The Hotel

Like the Garage, the Hotel was subject to several levels of review before final approval. The Hotel was initially presented for review and approval to the HRB on September 14, 2016. At that time, HRB staff advised the LLC to revise its plans, including the elevation of the Hotel, based on staff and board comments and return to the HRB for another conceptual review. The LLC submitted its project to the City in 2017. The Beaufort Code was adopted on June 27, 2017, and replaced the UDO as of that date. Lauren Kelly, representing the City, initially presented the Hotel project in a July 12, 2017 HRB meeting, approximately two weeks after the Beaufort Code was adopted. The approved official July 12, 2017 minutes quote Lauren Kelly saying, “this project (the Hotel) is being evaluated under the new Beaufort Code,” confirming that the Hotel was considered under the Beaufort Code and not the UDO. (R. p. 661). (The July 12, 2017, Meeting Minutes included in the Record on Appeal to the Circuit Court at p. 200 are incomplete. Counsel for Respondents has consented to Appellants’ request to supplement the record under SCACR 212(b) to include in the record a complete copy of the July 12, 2017 Meeting Minutes).

During this July 12, 2017 meeting, the HRB granted the Hotel preliminary approval. (Id. at p. 666). According to the Beaufort Code, such preliminary approval expired on January 12, 2019, i.e., 18 months after the HRB issued such preliminary approval. The Applicant’s next request

for approval for the Hotel, however, was almost 27 months later, on October 9, 2019, for a “Certificate of Appropriateness.” Notably, the “Certificate of Appropriateness,” dated October 9, 2019, and signed by John Dickerson, the then chairman of the Board, specifically referenced the Beaufort Code and its Section 9.4.1 as the governing authority. It did not reference the UDO at all. (R. p. 047).

On June 9, 2021, the LLC appeared before the Board seeking two approvals: (a) Agenda Item No. IV(C) 812 Port Republic Street: Change after Certification for the Hotel, and (b) Agenda Item No. IV(D) 918 Craven Street, New Construction for the Parking Garage. (R. p. 160 – p. 245). The Board approved these plans on June 9, 2021. (Id. at pp. 244-245 – pp. 307-308).

After the Board’s June 9, 2021 final decision, Appellants each timely appealed the Board’s final decision to the Circuit Court under S.C. Code Ann. § 6-29-900 and The Beaufort Code Section 9.10. A hearing was held on January 6, 2022 at the Beaufort County Court of Common Pleas. On January 20, 2022, the Honorable Bentley D. Price issued an order denying the appeals of HBF and West Street/Mix Farms. (R. p. 649). The Appellants jointly filed a motion to reconsider on January 28, 2022, which was denied on February 11, 2022. HBF and West Street/Mix Farms each filed a notice of appeal of the Circuit Court decisions to the Court of Appeals on March 11, 2022. The Court of Appeals consolidated the appeals, and the parties were informed of that by a letter from the Deputy Clerk of Court dated March 24, 2022.

ARGUMENT

1. THE APPEAL WAS TIMELY

In their brief, Respondents focus heavily on the argument that the present appeal is not timely. (Resp. Br. pp. 13-17). However, they fail to address the substance of the HRB decision that is the center of this appeal. Respondents do not present any support for their assertion that many of the issues raised by Appellants are time-barred because each conceptual, preliminary, and final approval by the HRB for both projects was “indisputably” a decision which had to be appealed within thirty (30) days of each decision. No statutory provision or case law is cited in support of the conclusion that an appeal of the final decision of the HDRB is untimely. Respondents’ argument is also at odds with well-established law and policy in this state that requires that only final decisions and orders can be appealed.

The Order Denying the Appeal provides a detailed account of the multi-layered process of obtaining the required approvals for projects like the Hotel and the Garage. That process took several years but the Appellants have no input or control over the timing and pace of when the applicant Respondent requests approvals or when the Board decides them. In a broad sense, each project's review and approval process involved conceptual, preliminary, and final stages.

The statute itself does not offer any guidance on whether those decisions before final approval are subject to immediate appeal. The Beaufort Code does not provide for conceptual or preliminary approvals: only a final approval resulting in issuance of a certificate of appropriateness. Specifically, the statute authorizing this appeal provides:

A person who may have a substantial interest in any decision of the board of architectural review or any officer, or agent of the appropriate governing authority may appeal from any decision of the board to the circuit court in and for the county by filing with the clerk of court a petition in writing setting forth plainly, fully, and distinctly why the decision is contrary to law. The appeal must be filed within thirty days after the affected party receives actual notice of the decision of the board of architectural review.

S.C. Code Ann. § 6-29-900.

Likewise, the cases citing that statute do not provide any clarity as those decisions do not address the issue of whether a HRB decision granting conceptual or preliminary approval is subject to immediate appeal. To the extent that the prior order of this Court deemed this argument as abandoned for failure to cite controlling authority, the Appellants believe that this is a novel question on which there is no precedent.

The language of the statute indicates “any decision” of the board may be appealed to the Circuit Court and does not specify whether that appeal must be from preliminary, conceptual, or final approvals. S.C. Code Ann. § 6-29-900. It is a fair reading of the statute's plain language that if any decision may be appealed, then preliminary, conceptual, or final approvals may all be appealed without regard to whether appeals are taken of the preceding approval. If the Respondents’ (and the Court of Appeal’s) reasoning is adopted, however, all decisions, including a conceptual decision, which can be far from final and bearing little resemblance to the final decision, **must** be appealed if the interested party is to be allowed to appeal any later decision of the board.

The reasoning adopted by the Court of Appeals and highlighted by the Respondents in their brief contradicts the well-established legal principles of finality and ripeness. Generally, only final judgments are appealable. *Culbertson v. Clemens*, 322 S.C. 20, 23, 471 S.E.2d 163, 164 (1996). Any judgment or decree, leaving some further act to be done by the court before the rights of the parties are determined, is interlocutory and not final. *Mid-State Distribs., Inc. v. Century Importers, Inc.*, 310 S.C. 330, 336, 426 S.E.2d 777, 780 (1993). Additionally, an issue is not ripe if it is “contingent, hypothetical, or abstract.” *Jowers v. S.C. Dept of Health and Env'tl. Control*,

423 S.C. 343, 815 S.E.2d 446 (2018), citing *Colleton Cty. Taxpayers Ass'n v. Sch. Dist. of Colleton Cty.*, 371 S.C. 224, 242, 638 S.E.2d 685, 694 (2006).

Respondents argue the appeal is untimely because the Appellants did not appeal the HRB's conceptual or preliminary design approval for the Hotel. (Resp. Br. p. 14). However, the developer was not required to restart the approval process when the height, scale, and mass were fundamentally changed by the addition of the fourth story to the Hotel, making the original submission moot, and creating in effect a new submission. In fact, the HRB failed to reconsider conceptual approval when 303 Associates submitted for final approval a building with four stories, plus solar panels, rather than three stories that had been approved at conceptual and preliminary stages. The addition of the new floor alters the entire proportion of the building. Appellants did not have the opportunity to appeal the conceptual and preliminary approval of the building that was given final approval because the building finally approved with the fourth-story rooftop bar was not given any conceptual or preliminary review by HRB. Therefore, this appeal is timely.

By their very nature, the decisions of the HRB involve value judgments that change and evolve as a project moves through the complex design and approval process. Evaluating architecture piecemeal, as contemplated by the three application stages, is complex. The height, mass, and scale of buildings cannot truly be evaluated without looking at other design elements such as fenestration, solids and voids of the proposed structure in total. The very names "conceptual" and "preliminary" demonstrate that any approvals in those categories are prime examples of decisions that are not final, and an appeal from such a decision would likely be met (rightfully so) with a claim that it is not ripe because in both instances the design and details of the structures are likely to change. A clear example of that is evident in the record before the Court. On July 25, 2017, a letter was issued to the Respondent's architect, Goff D'Antonio Associates,

stating that the Board granted preliminary approval of the Hotel with conditions at the July 12, 2017 meeting. (R. 574-575). However, by the time that Respondent received final approval of the Hotel on June 9, 2021, not only was the design different but a different architecture firm prepared it. (R. 590-611).

The only point in the process in which the issues change from abstract architectural and design concepts to concrete decisions that can be meaningfully reviewed in court is at the final approval stage. Moreover, requiring interested parties like the Appellants to appeal every conceptual and preliminary decision at every stage of the process to ensure timeliness would exponentially increase the demands on municipal and judicial resources and create much more uncertainty. Therefore, the Respondents' assertion that the appeal is untimely is unfounded.

The Court below erred in finding that the Appellants' challenge to decisions made during the conceptual and preliminary approvals were not timely and the Appellants respectfully request that this Court issue a writ of certiorari to review the issues presented by this appeal. Further, the Appellants respectfully ask this Court to decide the significant substantive issues discussed fully in the briefs previously submitted, summarized in the following sections.

2. FINAL APPROVAL SHOULD HAVE BEEN DENIED BECAUSE ANY PRIOR APPROVALS OF THE HOTEL EXPIRED BEFORE THE HEARING

At the outset of the hearing on June 9, 2021, on the Hotel application, the Chair announced that the application would be considered under the Unified Development Ordinance ("UDO"). The Beaufort Code was adopted on June 27, 2017, and replaced the UDO as of that date. The Hotel Project was originally presented in a September 2016 Historic District Review Board meeting before The Beaufort Code was adopted. The official July 12, 2017 minutes indicate that the Hotel "is being evaluated under the new Beaufort Code," and by extension, not the UDO. On July 25, 2017, Lauren Kelly for the City issued a letter to the applicant Goff D'Antonio Associates for the

LLC, stating that the Board granted preliminary approval with conditions. These minutes also state that "the approval expires 12 months from the date of the letter (July 25, 2017) unless the applicant has an active submittal pending review by staff and/or HRB. Under the UDO, specifically item 3.1.M.3c, conceptual and preliminary approvals expired after 18 months and cannot be renewed beyond 18 months. Under table 9.1.4 of The Beaufort Code any approval under that ordinance expired 24 months thereafter. However, the next approval for the Hotel was not issued until nearly 27 months later, on October 9, 2019, when the owner was issued a "Certificate of Appropriateness." Therefore, the Hotel's preliminary approval expired under the terms of the ordinance prior to the alleged approval of the Hotel's "Certificate of Appropriateness."

Since the Hotel had no valid preliminary approval under either the UDO or The Beaufort Code on June 9, 2021, it was legal error for the Board to consider the application for final approval as a necessary legal prerequisite had not been satisfied. The Court of Appeals' decision affirming that final approval should be reversed and the Board's decision should be vacated.

3. ANY APPROVAL OF THE GARAGE EXPIRED BEFORE JUNE 9, 2021

The approval of the Parking Garage suffers from a similar legal infirmity. On August 17, 2016, the Board granted conceptual approval with conditions for the Parking Garage. Assuming, without conceding, that the Garage was conceptually approved under the UDO, the Parking Garage received preliminary approval from the City as evidenced by a letter written by Lauren Kelley, former project development planner for the City of Beaufort, dated October 9, 2017, which referenced a September 20, 2017 Board meeting. A copy of that letter was included in the application for the June 9, 2021 meeting at page 195.

The preliminary approval for the Parking Garage was granted after the UDO was repealed and replaced by The Beaufort Code. Under the terms of the UDO and the Beaufort Code, that

approval expired on March 20, 2019, i.e., 18 months after the issuing of the preliminary approval, and could not be renewed. Consequently, the Parking Garage application was not eligible for consideration of final approval at the June 9, 2021 hearing because the preliminary approval expired over two years before the Board heard the final approval application.

4. THE BOARD NEVER ISSUED A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE GARAGE

The Board granted final approval for the Parking Garage based on an erroneous understanding that the Parking Garage had previously been granted a “Certificate of Appropriateness.” The consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness is not a mere technicality. It is, rather, a substantial compliance issue and vital to the Board’s review and approval process as well as the entire permitting process, as shown by the language of Section 9.10(c) of The Beaufort Code, which details the process and criteria for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness.

David Prichard, Director of Economic Development and Community Planning for the City of Beaufort, issued two letters dated June 20, 2019 and July 21, 2020, which were included in the materials for the June 9, 2021 meeting which purported to extend a “Certificate of Appropriateness” for the Parking Garage that never actually existed in the first place. To further compound the legal confusion, Mr. Prichard referenced section 9.1.4 of The Beaufort Code as the basis for the extensions. Mr. Prichard did not reference the UDO. Clearly, it was an error for the Board to consider the application for the Parking Garage, since the prior approval under the UDO had expired, and any further action relating to the parking Garage would have to proceed under The Beaufort Code.

5. NEITHER PROJECT SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED WITHOUT A SPECIAL EXCEPTION FROM THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

Both the Hotel and the Parking Garage are Large Footprint Buildings as that term is defined

under The Beaufort Code. Section 4.5.10 (B)(5) of The Beaufort Code requires a Large Footprint Building to secure a Special Exception from the Zoning Board of Appeals (“ZBOA”). According to the rules the City wrote for itself, neither application could proceed before the Board without satisfying the condition precedent of obtaining a Special Exception from the ZBOA. However, the applicant did not request or receive a Special Exception for either project. Absent the Special Exceptions required by Section 4.5.10 (B)(5) of The Beaufort Code, the Board had no jurisdiction to consider either application approved on June 9.

6. THE FACTUAL RECORD DOES NOT SUPPORT APPROVAL

In addition, the Circuit Court erroneously denied the appeal as Respondent, Beaufort Inn, LLC, failed to present any evidence to the Board that the Hotel or Parking Garage qualified for approval under the guidance documents that govern the Board’s decision-making as a matter of law, as provided in The Beaufort Code, Section 9.10.2 (B).

The approved Garage plan is 4 levels tall with a front facade of approximately 300 linear feet, square footage of approximately 160,000 square feet, volumetric mass approaching 3 million cubic feet, and accommodates over 475 vehicles. The Hotel has a fourth-story roof-top bar which was a new element first presented during the meeting on June 9th, a front façade of approximately 170 linear feet, square footage of approximately 50,000; and volumetric mass of approximately 1 million cubic feet. At the hearing on June 9, the 4th floor rooftop bar was treated as previously approved even though the addition of that element indisputably affected the height, scale, and mass of the Hotel. The applicant did not present evidence on those issues, and the Board approved the hotel without considering the effect of the 4th floor on the hotel’s height, scale, and mass. Each of these structures individually are multiple times larger by every measure than any other building in historic downtown Beaufort. City staff requested scale models of these buildings in 2016, but the

applicant was never required to present models illustrating the true impact of the Hotel and the Garage on the historic district.

The Parking Garage and the Hotel are both infill projects that are subject to special criteria addressed in Section 4.1 of The Beaufort Code. The Section 4.1 criteria include the preservation of Beaufort's National Historic Landmark District while permitting appropriate growth. Section 4.7.2 of the Code is specific to the National Historic Landmark District. This section outlines principles for compatible infill in the National Historic Landmark District.

The Parking Garage and the Hotel, even in the absence of the Hotel's proposed fourth-story rooftop bar, are not compliant with any of the stated points of 4.1 Purpose and Intent of Infill Projects or the principles of Section 4.7.2 given their outsized proportions and are completely out of character in Beaufort's National Historic Landmark District.

Additionally, there was no meaningful review of the architectural details of the Hotel or the Parking Garage on June 9. The applicant never constructed a sample wall to allow City staff or the Board to review the design details of the building elements, construction materials or proposed workmanship. The Hotel was approved with little or no details about the solar panels that will be installed on the building. Section 4.2.3 of The Beaufort Code provides that [i]n addition to the standards and guidelines in this article, any development located within the Beaufort Historic District is subject to the standards, guidelines, and procedures established in Section 9.10. In Section 9 of The Beaufort Code, 9.10: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS outlines the following specific criteria that infill projects in the Historic District must meet to be approved to include: a) Compatibility; b) No Adverse Impact; and c) Consistency with Adopted Plans. Neither the Parking Garage nor the Hotel are compatible in downtown historic Beaufort given their height, scale, and mass; they will each individually have irreparable adverse impact on the character of

downtown Beaufort. Moreover, the director of its State Historic Preservation Office, W. Eric Emerson, Ph.D., wrote a letter in August 2016 discouraging the approval of the Parking Garage.

9.10.2.B.1 then specifically required that the Board utilize the “Beaufort Preservation Manual, August 1979, and the Beaufort Preservation Manual, Supplement, August 1990, in evaluating infill projects. The manual specifically mandates that new construction have appropriate scale, absolute size, massing, and proportions to the surrounding buildings and townscape and includes illustrations of examples of prohibited buildings. The size and incompatibility of the Hotel and the Parking Garage are immensely beyond even the illustrated prohibited structures.

Sections 4, 9, and the Beaufort Preservation Manual all clearly prohibited Board approval of the Parking Garage and prohibited a fourth-story rooftop bar for the Hotel. It is also important to note that the HRB cannot consider economics or use in approving projects. The UDO, which has been superseded by The Beaufort Code, also required that the Board evaluate infill buildings and structures in the same manner as The Beaufort Code to ensure their: compatibility, no adverse impact, and consistency with adopted plans. The UDO also required that the Board abide by the “Beaufort Preservation Manual.”

The applicants did not present evidence before the Board or make arguments to the Board, establishing even minimum compliance with any of the guidelines the Board is required to apply in its decision-making under The Beaufort Code (or the UDO, even if it were to apply). Based on this dearth of evidence before the Board, the Board erred in granting the relief requested by the applicants in the absence of even a minimum threshold of evidence by the applicant.

7. THE DEVELOPER DID NOT HAVE A VESTED RIGHT TO DEVELOP/CONTINUE THE PROJECTS

Finally, the Court erred in finding that the LLC had vested rights to develop and/or continue

the projects because of various factors including applications, decisions, approvals, and permits submitted and approved, agreements and assurances by the City and the expenditure of funds by the LLC. None of those factors are sufficient to confer vested rights. Under the Vested Rights Act, a vested right is established for two years upon the approval of a site-specific development plan. *Id.* § 6-29-1530 (A)(1).¹ That Act generally requires the local government to establish a point in time in the zoning or land development plan approval process, before issuing the building permit, at which the landowner's right to use or develop vests, *id.* Section 6-29-1540 provides criteria for the standards and procedures in local land development ordinances and regulations. Under § 6-29-1560 of the Vested Rights Act, the issue of significant owner and government acts only comes into consideration if the local governing body does not have local development ordinances or regulations. The City of Beaufort adopted those standards and procedures, and therefore the factors relied upon by the Court below do not apply in this instance to justify a finding that the LLC had vested rights.

CONCLUSION

The Court of Appeals erred in affirming the ruling of the Circuit Court. Because the matters herein present novel questions of law, Petitioners respectfully request this Honorable Court issue a writ of certiorari to review the issues presented by this appeal.

Respectfully submitted,

s/John A. Massalon
John A. Massalon, Esquire (SC Bar #10279)
Carissa Steichen Land, Esquire (SC Bar #104264)
WILLS MASSALON & ALLEN LLC
Post Office Box 859

¹ In the Act a site specific development plan is defined as a plan describing “with reasonable certainty the types and density of uses for specific property,” and may include a “planned unit development; subdivision plan; preliminary or general development plan; variance; conditional use or special use permit plan;” etc. *Id.* § 6-29-1520(9).

Charleston, South Carolina 29402
(843) 727-1144
jmassalon@wmalawfirm.net
cland@wmalawfirm.net

ATTORNEYS FOR PETITIONER
HISTORIC BEAUFORT FOUNDATION

s/W. Andrew Gowder, Jr.
W. Andrew Gowder, Jr., Esquire (SC Bar #7895)
Austen & Gowder, LLC
1629 Meeting Street, Suite A
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andy@austengowder.com

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