

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

November 28, 2011

7:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Hand, who stated that all requirements of the “Open Public Meetings Act of 1975” had been met.

ROLL CALL:

Planning Members Present

Thomas Hand
Perry Conte
Mayor Suzanne Walters
Albert Carusi
Wayne Conrad

Board Solicitor

Andrew Catanese

Zoning Officer

Joanne Mascia

Board Secretary

Patricia H. Wagner

Member Absent

Kenneth Hawk

Alternates Present

Robert Ashman

Julian Miraglia

Motion by Mr. Miraglia and seconded by Mr. Conte to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2011 work session.

Affirmative votes: Mr. Hand, Mr. Conte, Mayor Walters, Mr. Carusi, and Mr. Miraglia.

Preliminary Discussion – Hotel & Motel District

Mr. Ashman reported on the sub committee’s initial findings. The following items were discussed:

Current situation

- old outdated structures with small rooms
- open in limited season
- less than 75 rooms (total of all motels in the area)
- no likely investment improvements under current ordinances, height restrictions & lot sizes = our motels disappear in time
- competitive towns are improving their offerings

Future vision

- adequate modern motel accommodations are vital to achieve our master plan goals
- preserve and enhance quality motel accommodations
- 120+ rooms (total of all motels)
- maintain all aspects of our stated family friendly Borough
- coordinated plan to increase shoulder seasons – marketing motels/businesses/events/attractions/Borough

Challenges

- outdated restrictive ordinances
- high value/cost of land

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

November 28, 2011

7:00 p.m.

What is needed

- revised ordinances that allow for economical investment to improve/develop quality accommodations desired by today's consumers
- possible public/private "partnerships" & incentives, creative Jy/Aug parking solutions

Suggested changes

- Make overlay motel/hotel zone in business district (E & W side of 2nd Ave from 93rd to 99th St) with specific use conditions
- Clear definition of motel/hotel
- Design motel/hotel form specifics to include:
 - wide street perspective
 - max 4 floors with 8-10' setback on top floor
 - 42' max height
 - 10' front setback
 - residential look
 - landscaping on perimeter
 - maximum 650 sq ft per unit
 - 1 or 2 curb cuts, no back out
 - parking for 1 car per unit (9x18')+ offsite parking option
 - fencing/buffer
 - lighting
 - signs

Mr. Conrad would like to see as part of the vision for the newer motels/hotels to include space for meetings and conferences. He believes this will give them a competitive edge when vying for business. He is also concerned with the visual impact of taller structures.

Mr. Ashman reported that after talking with the current motel/hotel owners they need a certain number of rooms at a certain price & occupancy rate to make money. Due to Stone Harbor's smaller lot sizes they can't get enough rooms on their respective sites and also provide larger meeting or conference spaces at the same time.

Board members discussed allowing potential heights of 42' and 48' for motels in the overlay zone. Mrs. Mascia is concerned with allowing conditional uses. If a case is brought before the Zoning Board it wouldn't matter how many surrounding residents protested because if the applicant met the conditional use the ZBA would have to approve the application. She would also like to see consistency for parking requirements for all hotels and motels no matter where they are located.

Mr. Hand opened the meeting for public comments.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

November 28, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Joan Kramar, 10506 Golden Gate Drive addressed the Board. She suggested potential developers could design adjoining suites that could be opened up for meetings or conference space.

Dan Shousky of Oliveri, Shousky & Kiss Architects spoke next. He stated most hotels have a ceiling height of between 8' to 9' and coupled with the thickness or depth of floor construction (8" to 12") a building height of 42' will work. The average newer hotel room is 8' 8" in height. Because the rooms are smaller the height makes them appear larger. He also discussed the amount of space needed to include for building supports, plumbing and heating materials. Geo thermal cooling towers and elevator equipment must be located on the roof top. These are considered extraneous and would not be included in the building height limitations. Mr. Shousky used a hotel model that he prepared for a client to demonstrate his points. Consumer reports show that most customers want an indoor corridor entrance to the room and not a front balcony entrance. They want a private balcony as an extension of the indoor room space. An indoor corridor entrance provides protection from weather.

Mr. Conrad asked Mr. Shousky to explain the relationship between the footprint of the building and the number of parking spaces allotted. If there were for example forty rooms, would there be sufficient floor space for forty cars or would off site-parking be required. Mr. Shousky stated that in the Diller project, adequate parking has been provided for on site, but in most circumstances off -site parking will be required to accommodate the customer's cars. Mr. Conrad feels a developer would have to purchase additional land for off-site parking. Mr. Shousky agreed with this. It was agreed the increase parking demand is for the height of the summer season. There is adequate parking during the shoulder & winter months.

Vincent LaManna addressed the Board on the parking issues. He feels the onus would be on the developer/applicant to provide proof of adequate parking. It would be part of a conditional use variance request. He feels the Borough must address a global parking need in town. The establishment of a parking fund was mentioned. He also feels the additional fourth story is critical to the success of a hotel/motel and in return the business community.

Mr. Ashman feels there are creative ways to accommodate the additional parking demands. These will be researched & presented to the Board at another meeting.

Mr. Ashman & Mr. Carusi have spoken with the current hotel/motel owners in the area. None of them are planning to invest any substantial amounts into properties they have now. However they would re-invest in their properties if they could add more rooms by means of additional floors. They would then consider staying open in the shoulder season to see if that was also profitable for them.

Mr. Conrad feels that at some point, the Board will have to do a major selling job on this topic to the residents, particularly those that own properties in the proposed overlay zone. Mayor Walters agreed with this. Board members agreed the plan is not ready at this time and much work still needs to be done before any formal action is taken. Mr. Hand does like the Borough's two story restrictions but feels that something must be done to help the business community. He also does not want to have the properties change from hotel use to multi-family residential use.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

November 28, 2011

7:00 p.m.

If that did happen, site plan review action would have to take place. A review of the definition for hotels/motels could also be done. Board members agreed that motels/hotels are important to Stone Harbor's future.

Mr. Conrad and Mr. Carusi again asked for public input before any formal Planning Board action.

Mr. Hand asked for further comments from the Board and the General Public.
No one spoke.

Mr. Catanese will work with the committee to prepare a draft resolution for next month's meeting. Zone boundaries, heights, set-backs, landscaping, etc. will be incorporated.

OLD BUSINESS

Cape May County Library – Stone Harbor Branch

Vincent LaManna addressed the Board. He noted that he had acquired a copy of a County email regarding the status of the Stone Harbor Branch of the CMC Library. Mr. LaManna read that the County is submitting a revised plan to the NJDEP. The structure is to be moved to accommodate the requirement that it be located twice the size of the height from toe to the dune with the proposed relocation being a distance of 45 feet from the bulkhead without adding additional parking spaces there is a loss of eight parking spaces however there is room to add an additional 10 spaces between the building and the bulkhead for a net gain of two spaces.

Citing NJSA 40:55D-31, Capital Projects Review, Mr. LaManna feels the Library plans must come back to the Stone Harbor Planning Board before any further money is spent. It is the Board's position that the Library is a Cape May County Capital Project and not the Borough of Stone Harbor's. Mr. LaManna disagreed with this position.

Mr. LaManna does not feel that the March 28, 2011 meeting met the requirements for a Capital Project Review Section 31 hearing. Mr. Catanese feels the March 28, 2011 application was not presented to the Board as a Section 31 hearing but was submitted as a courtesy hearing only and he feels the case law that he reviewed said the County had an obligation to bring the application before the Board or the Borough in some way, and to provide an opportunity for input and for the County to consider the recommendations of the Board. Mr. Catanese does feel the Board did fulfill the intent and purpose of the section of the Municipal Land Use Law Mr. LaManna is referring to.

Mr. LaManna stated he is speaking as a Borough resident and taxpayer.

Beach & Bay Access Plan

Mr. Carusi reported that the report will be ready for submission sometime in December 2011. This is two to three months ahead of the NJDEP requirement.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

November 28, 2011

7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business at hand Mr. Hand called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A motion to adjourn the meeting by Mayor Walters and seconded by Mr. Carusi. All members present voted in the affirmative.

APPROVED:

ATTESTED: _____
Patricia H. Wagner, Secretary Stone Harbor Planning Board