

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION  
STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

**October 25, 2010**

**7:00 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**ROLL CALL:**

Planning Members Present

Perry Conte  
Mayor Suzanne Walters  
Kenneth Hawk  
Wayne Conrad  
Albert Carusi

Board Solicitor

Andrew Catanese

Zoning Officer

Joanne Mascia

Board Secretary

Patricia H. Wagner

Absent

Thomas Hand  
Thomas Cope  
Julian Miraglia, Alternate

Alternate Present

Robert Ashman

**Approve Minutes**

**Motion by Mr. Ashman and seconded by Mr. Conrad to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2010 regular session.**

All members present voted in the affirmative.

**PUBLIC HEARING: Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan**

Due to technical difficulties with a slide projector Professional Planner Linda Weber verbalized the highlights of the Master Plan’s Historic Preservation Element Policy Document.

- Historic Preservation Treatments including preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction were explained.
- Importance of Historic Preservation: actual remnants of history, protection of community character, stabilizes/increases property values, sparks heritage tourism, economic development strategies, and sustainability.
- Public Policy & Historic Preservation resources include the National Register of Historic Places, the State Register of Historic Places and locally designated sites and districts.

Ms. Weber outlined the history of Stone Harbor and showed the various architectural styles found within the Borough. She gave the criteria for a property to be included on the National Register: a property must be historically or architecturally significant on the national, state or local level and possess integrity. Integrity means a relatively high level of character defining features from its period of importance: locations, setting, design, workmanship, feeling and association. A property must also be associated with significant events or significant persons of the past; or embody distinct characteristics of type or period of the past and also yield important information in prehistory/history. The Planning Board Historic Preservation Committee is recommending placing 42 structures along with the Bird Sanctuary and the now defunct railroad right of way (Second Avenue) on the Borough’s Historic Property Inventory List.

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Other recommendations are to increase public awareness by various educational programs and activities. The Borough should also encourage voluntary restoration by providing a resource center for interested property owners. Site Plan reviews, to be completed by a Historic Commission, are being suggested prior to a Zoning Board of Adjustment or Planning Board hearing with the Historic Commissions comments being forwarded back to the appropriate board. The historic preservation element also suggests the development and adoption of design guidelines for such site plan reviews.

**Public Comment**

Mr. Conte opened the meeting for public comments.

Joan Kramar of 10506 Golden Gate Drive is in favor of adopting the historic element. Mrs. Kramar feels that many people who want to renovate a home are told by builders to just rip it down rather than renovate it. She would like to see the Planning Board or Historic Commission speak to the local builders and get them on board with the plan and its options for preservation.

John Henchek of 337 94<sup>th</sup> Street is also in favor of the plan as presented tonight. He spoke of the unique opportunity the Historic Commission will represent. Mr. Henchek feels this will show Stone Harbor as an example of an American community. He complimented everyone that has worked on this project, from its earliest stages to the final report.

Mark Asher addressed the Board next. Mr. Asher is an architect who has designed many homes in Stone Harbor and Avalon and is in favor of the plan. He feels Stone Harbor's zoning ordinances need to be made more flexible. Mr. Asher would like for the Borough to offer more incentives to preserve a property instead of tearing it down. Currently to restore or rehabilitate an older home requires applying for variances from the Zoning or Planning Boards. The requests for variances can become additional costs for a property owner as many older homes are now considered non conforming structures. Mr. Asher feels it is the Borough's current Zoning Ordinances that are encouraging property owners to tear down a house and not necessarily a builder telling a property owner to do so.

Charles Koch of 236 85<sup>th</sup> Street also spoke in favor of the Historic Element. He agreed with Mr. Asher's comments regarding the current zoning laws being cumbersome for someone who wants to do a renovation. Mr. Koch asked if the Council has or will establish a budget line item for the Commission to expend funds. He also feels that requiring a site plan review will be an additional deterrent and cost burden for an applicant. Mr. Koch also feels tonight's meeting has not explained things in enough detail.

Joan Kramar understands the commission will be strictly advisory and not regulatory. Mrs. Kramar reminded the Board that there is no guarantee that Borough Council will set aside funds for the commission/committee. She suggested the commission/committee seek out grant money, similar to the funds acquired by the Borough's Shade Tree Committee.

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Barry Hamilton of 11215 Third Avenue asked if anyone has considered preserving the commercial integrity and profile of the commercial districts. He mentioned the movie theatre on 96<sup>th</sup> Street and Smuggler's Cove. Mr. Hamilton asked if the Historic Commission would also look out for commercial property preservation. Mayor Walters stated commercial buildings would probably fall under the Historic Preservation and at this time the Borough does not have any plans to purchase either property.

John O'Dea of 230 84<sup>th</sup> Street spoke next. Mr. O'Dea is a local real estate agent. He asked if the Borough intends to draft and adopt a demolition ordinance. Mr. Ashman stated that there are no plans to have a demolition ordinance. It was listed in the Historic Preservation Plan only as a possible tool.

No one else spoke. Mr. Conte closed the Public Session.

**BOARD DISCUSSION**

Mayor Walters and Mr. Hawk both noted that the Council's Administrative & Finance is in favor of having an Advisory Committee of Council for Historic Preservation and not Commission. The A & F committee would like for all language referring to NJ Municipal Land Use Law be removed from the ordinance. Mayor Walters noted the A & F committee recognizes and appreciates all the hard work that everyone has done on this project and they agree with the importance of historic preservation in the Borough.

Mr. Catanese stated the Borough Council will make the final decision on having a committee versus a commission but the Board still has the authority to adopt the Historic Element Plan as presented this evening, including the use of the term Historic Preservation Commission.

Ms. Weber stated that if the Council establishes a Committee and not a Commission that Committee would not have the authority to review site plans or sub divisions presented to either the Zoning Board of Adjustment or the Planning Board. The Committee could not be part of a public policy function.

**Motion by Mr. Ashman and seconded by Mr. Conrad to adopt the Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan.**

Affirmative votes: Mayor Walters, Mr. Hawk, Mr. Conte, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Carusi, Mr. Ashman.

Mr. Conte called for a two minute recess.

Mr. Conte reopened the meeting

**Shade Tree Protection Ordinance Report**

Mayor Walters did not have any updates on this item as the Borough Council's Natural Resource Committee has not met since the last Planning Board Meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

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**Waterfront Business District Purchase Plan**

The Planning Board suggestion to purchase land for a pocket park in the Waterfront Business District has been placed in the Borough's Capital Plan for consideration. The amount was for \$2,000,000. 00. The budget is still under discussion and nothing has been finalized.

**Public Comment**

None

**Public Session - closed**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

APPROVED:

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