

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD**

February 9, 2015

4:30 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 with the Press of Atlantic City having been notified of the Board's schedule for 2015 on December 20, 2014, and the schedule having been posted on Stone Harbor's website and the Municipal Clerk's Bulletin Board.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Jill Gougher
Thomas Hand, Chairman
Robert D. Bickford, Jr.
Al Carusi
Perry Conte

Board Solicitor:

Dan Reeves
(sitting in for A. Catanese)

Board Secretary:

Diane Frangiose

Alternates:

David Coskey, Jr.
Lynne Dubler

Zoning Officer:

Joanne Mascia

Members Not Present:

Mayor Suzanne M. Walters
Wayne Conrad, Vice-Chair

Welcome to New Alternate Board Members

Mr. Hand, on behalf of the Planning Board, welcomed the new alternate Board members, David Coskey, Jr., and Lynne Dubler and the reappointment of Al Carusi.

Mr. Reeves administered the Oath of Allegiance and Oath of Office for reappointed and new Board members Albert Carusi, David Coskey, Jr., and Lynne Dubler.

Approval of January 12, 2015 Minutes

Motion by Mr. Hand to admit the meeting minutes. So moved by Mr. Carusi and seconded by Mrs. Gougher. Roll call was taken. Affirmative votes: Mr. Bickford, Mr. Carusi, Mrs. Gougher, Mr. Hand. Abstained from voting because they were not present at the last meeting: Mr. Conte, Mr. Coskey and Ms. Dubler.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

February 9, 2015 4:30 p.m.

Review and Discussion of Professional Planners 2015 Contract Quote

Mrs. Gougher stated as an fyi, that the pricing on the quote was the same as last year and that there was no increase in the fees that Heyer, Gruel is charging. Mr. Hand asked if the Planning Board's budget was the same for 2015 and Mrs. Gougher stated yes, it is. Mr. Bickford said based on that information, and the positive contribution they made last year, he would move that the contract be affirmed and propose that the Planning Board hire Heyer, Gruel. Mr. Hand seconded the motion. Roll call was taken on the motion. Affirmative votes: Mr. Bickford, Mr. Carusi, Mr. Conte, Mr. Coskey, Mrs. Gougher, Mr. Hand. Abstained from voting: Ms. Dubler.

Review of Draft Ordinance re Business/Hotel Overlay Zoning District

Mr. Bickford stated that he didn't know how familiar Mr. Reeves was with the Ordinance and he assumed it was Mr. Catanese's work product, but the one thing in reading it that confused him in terms of the off-street parking regulations, which he thought was one of the main points of the discussion, was C-1 on the 2nd page regarding one parking space per unit, but then later, it still had 1 ½ spaces and the distinction between those is confusing. At the top of the next page, B-2, Motels and Hotels shall provide 1.5 parking spaces and they are also different dimensions. Mr. Reeves stated that he reviewed the draft Ordinance and what he can tell the Board is what Andrew told him, that the Ordinance was drafted at the very end of 2011 when the matter had been discussed before and it is his understanding that it hadn't been discussed much since then. Mr. Reeves further stated that he noted the inconsistency in the parking issue and assumed that when it was previously discussed, maybe a decision had not been reached, so there are those two alternatives. He does not know if they are each permitted or if only one of them would be permissible and he is sure that Mr. Catanese will know more about it the next time he is present.

Mr. Hand stated that he wanted to fill in the new Board members about the draft Ordinance. There are a couple projects that the Board has been working on and the latest one was sent to Council for a vote, the 96th Street Waterfront Business District. The Planning Board's thoughts were to preserve some of the commercial buildings on the block because a lot of them were going residential. The Planning Board introduced the recommendation allowing a three story building, with the first floor commercial and then the 2nd and 3rd floor residential. No parking will be required. Mrs. Gougher stated an additional height was added on the residential. Mr. Hand stated it would be a little higher than what is allowed now. Mr. Carusi stated the usage on the first floor would change and Mr. Hand said yes, professional usage would be added which was never allowed before. Mr. Hand stated the Board has always liked the idea of two story but now with the third story and new flood regulations, there is a 10 to 12 foot foundation so commercial would be built on ground level and be flood proofed so it is not really adding that much height to the property. The Board approved that and sent it to Council. They are reviewing it and we are waiting for an answer. Mr. Coskey asked does it go any further than 95th Street and Mr. Hand said no, it goes from 99th Street to Hall Harbor. There are only a few properties that will build to take advantage of it but the Board is hoping to preserve the area. That is the vision that the Town Planner had

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

February 9, 2015 4:30 p.m.

and the ideas he submitted. You might have heard a rumor that we were going to build a pier in the middle of the basin. That was one of his visions he threw in as kind of a joke to say this is what you could do and a lot of the neighbors were up in arms about it although it was never considered by the Board as an option. We are also trying to preserve the hotel district. We had one hotel that came in and wanted to re-do their place and parking is a problem so we are trying to find alternate routes that would have remote parking within a mile radius that the hotels could use and then we are also considering whether they can do three stories. We left that off to the side until we finished our Waterfront District, which we did complete in November.

Mr. Carusi said we are looking at four stories so the height would be comparable to what was done at the Reeds. Mr. Hand said three stories. Mr. Bickford said the draft Ordinance says four. Mr. Hand said it was still going to be three stories and consideration whether or not to allow parking underneath with alternate parking somewhere else. Mr. Carusi questioned would there still be first floor parking. Mr. Hand said no, it was being tossed around and that's why there is a discrepancy in the draft. At the time, the Board was leaning more towards finding alternate parking and having three stories.

Mr. Carusi stated that at the end of his last term three years ago, it had been on the Board's Agenda to review. An Architect came to one of the meetings and brought a model showing the first floor parking with three stories above. There was a discussion regarding height but the thing that stuck in his mind was one of the hotel/motel owners said to do three floors with first floor parking was economical, but that two floors above first floor parking was not. Mr. Carusi also asked is the 42 feet discussed and asked if the Reeds was at 42 feet. Mrs. Mascia and Mrs. Gougher stated yes. Mr. Coskey wanted to know if the Board was approached by any of the hotel/motel owners. Mr. Hand stated there was 1 hotel owner who went before the Zoning Board of Adjustment but withdrew his application that was for parking on first floor and three stories above. Mr. Coskey said it's kind of like the new Avalon Hotel. Mr. Hand stated yes and that his recollection was the Board was leaning more towards three stories with elimination of the parking requirement on site by finding alternate parking methods. The Board was afraid of the canyon effect when driving down Second Avenue with three stories. The Borough Planner said that Second Avenue was wide enough and there are ways to set the building back where you don't get that effect.

Mr. Conte stated that Section 3, item number B.3 has a few blanks that should be discussed because it says that any improvements above a certain elevation would have a 13 foot setback. Mr. Conte stated that he was hesitant to give up the additional 12 foot height in the residential zone and that it is something that the Board stopped talking about years ago and to see some of the things presented the way they are, he is not sure the way it reads is the way it was thought of back then so the way he looks at it is that it seems there are a lot of things in opposition to this that should be discussed further to understand it better. Mr. Bickford said that Mr. Conrad has done a lot of work on it and that he thinks it was useful for Mr. Conte to provide the background on, that subject to anyone having a desire for further discussion. It was recommended to table the discussion.

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD**

February 9, 2015 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Conte stated that there was a lot of information gathered back then that he does not have immediate recall of and would like to review again. He remembers that the measurements of all the surrounding buildings was done to see how the new construction would look compared to current building codes, that there are some condos that are taller than currently allowed. Mr. Bickford stated that it is within the overlay zone on both sides of Second Avenue except for 96th Street. Mrs. Mascia stated current zoning is 28 feet from curb compared to prior years of 36 feet. Mr. Hand stated the other part of the discussion was 1 ½ spaces per unit currently required versus changing to 1 space per unit to be in conformance with State parking requirements. Mr. Conte recollected the Board was very close to agreeing on one spot versus 1 ½ per unit and would like to settle that first by Ordinance.

Mr. Carusi stated he would not be able to attend next month's meeting but he would like to discuss the Ordinance further. Again, his concerns are heights and canyon effects along with parking. He also has a concern that owners won't refurbish existing units if they can't get their money out of it. Mr. Hand stated he doesn't think it is as pressing as it once was because they are okay with the way it is now but wants to consider the future and preservation of the hotels in existence. Mrs. Gougher stated it would be beneficial if we could get the minutes from back then so those of the Board Members who were not involved can get a better understanding of how the Ordinance was crafted.

Mr. Hand stated another discussion with the Town Planner was about going four stories on the front but not closer to the residential homes at the rear, only going three so they don't get a shadow effect. Mr. Conte stated he didn't think it was called aspect ratio but he was on the Committee when the Town Planner suggested this method for Commercial. Mrs. Mascia stated it is, floor area ratio. Mr. Conte stated he knew some towns have something called aspect ratio. Mr. Bickford stated it is also referred to as sky exposure plain because it permits the angle of the sun to hit the sidewalk as opposed to a right angle preventing it. Mr. Hand suggested the Board wait for Mr. Conrad to have further discussion. Mr. Carusi asked if the Planning Board or any representative of the Board talked to any of the owners. Mr. Hand said yes, and their recommendation was to go one spot and have at least three stories to make it feasible and they were fine with having to park on 97th Street. Some of the existing hotels are three stories. Mr. Hand stated they may be at 38 feet. Mr. Coskey asked do you really see people jumping in and investing in a refurbished property compared to a rebuild. Mr. Hand stated it would have happened if this Ordinance was in place 2 years ago, that their point is we have sixties architecture where you are entering from the outside and no one is enjoying their decks because they want to be able to enter the hotel rooms from inside with private balconies and then get more money for more attractiveness.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

February 9, 2015 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Carusi stated two years ago he attended a Seminar on Tourism and a gentleman came in from the West Coast and one of the examples he gave was for a town similar to ours in the State of Washington where the season is Labor Day to Memorial Day. A man came in and wanted to put up a Boutique Hotel, five star, with a restaurant and so it became so popular that he has a waiting list for dining and staying for six months. It is a success story. Hopefully, we are on the same path with this. The other thing he brought up is that the young people today are looking for a place like that to stay so the inference is if we don't allow them to do something, will that population drop off and go someplace else? Having said that, I wouldn't want to see it get to the point where we out price that particular level of clientele because Stone Harbor is for everyone, not just the wealthy. Mr. Conte stated although some of the hotels are not very attractive, they do bring in a certain price point and they make the town a little more affordable. Mrs. Gougher asked if they indicated how many additional rooms they would need to build to make it worthwhile and Mr. Hand stated he would check his notes on that but then you need a bigger lot. Mrs. Mascia stated building codes would have to be met which on these small parcels dictates how many units. Mr. Bickford stated New York does have a sky exposure plain concept that he talked about before which is the difference between for example, Park Avenue which is kind of the Dune Drive or Second Avenue of New York where there is a Boulevard Street and Wall Street where the buildings are built in a canyon with no sun because they are right out to the building line and they go straight up. Mr. Hand stated we will bring this up at the next meeting and talk to Mr. Conrad. Mr. Bickford stated there is no urgency to this and we should be proactive but this should be on the agenda for a worthwhile discussion. Mr. Hand stated he believes this is the last thing remaining to be resolved. Mr. Bickford stated with all respect, he also has a reservation about putting something else in front of Council until they deal with the Waterfront Business District and we see how that goes. Mr. Carusi agreed that is a good idea. Mrs. Mascia stated yes, it is. Mrs. Gougher stated it would be helpful if the old minutes could be distributed and reviewed to help with that. Mr. Bickford asked if Council is about a month away from taking a vote on the Waterfront Business District and Mr. Carusi stated maybe a month or two months. Mrs. Gougher stated probably within a month, that Mr. Catanese wants to sit down with a couple of Council members and go over in more detail explaining it so they can understand it but the majority of Council are in favor with how it was presented.

Mr. Coskey asked what is the Waterfront Business District and Mr. Hand stated it is the bay front commercial properties from 99th Street and it wraps all the way around. It has unique zoning. Mrs. Gougher stated the Board has recommended professional and business on the first floor where before professional was prohibited on the first floor and then on the second and additional third floor you could put residential or professional. References to the walkway were taken out so that people understood that the Board was not promoting any type of public walkway around people's backyards. Mr. Hand stated no rights were being taken away, that the homes that exist can stay there and if something happens to them, they can rebuild. Mrs. Gougher stated on-site parking is not going to be required, there would be language allowing them to purchase one of the permits from the Borough to park in the parking lot.

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD

February 9, 2015 4:30 p.m.

Public Comment

No one spoke. Public Session Closed.

Old Business

No one spoke.

Board Discussion

Mr. Hand stated he had one item for discussion. He is concerned that the Planning Board was not approached with the project regarding the new Police Administration Building before it was made known to the public. Mrs. Gougher said it was presented to the public so that they would know the Borough was looking at several sites but it is not to the point where it would come to the Planning Board but then yes, it would come to the Board as a courtesy review. Mr. Hand said he thought it came to the Planning Board when it was in the developmental stage and Mrs. Mascia said yes, it was that way before but that stopped years ago and now it is just a courtesy review for input to Council. Mrs. Gougher asked if Mr. Hand is looking for the Planning Board to give input on the site location and Mr. Hand stated he thought it would be better to come into the Board before it goes to the public for the Board's comments, that it is the job of the Board to make recommendations for the future of the town. Mrs. Gougher stated from the public's point of view, one of the things that the Borough has been told is that the public has not been informed from the beginning of a project and this was an attempt to do that so that they heard everything as it is being discussed first hand; there has not been a final decision on this and certified letters went to those property owners that are within three blocks as a courtesy. Mr. Hand said he understood that and it's great but before that took place, the Planning Board should have been informed. Mr. Carusi asked if that is how it was done previously with discussion by the Planning Board and Mr. Hand said no. Mrs. Gougher stated the Police Department had a design before she came onboard with retrofitting the existing building but she is not sure it was brought to the Planning Board. Mr. Carusi stated the POA put a blast out to second home owner members but it is still difficult to get the total information out because there is just so much you can put out. Mr. Hand stated we have access to a Town Planner so everyone should be informed and he doesn't think the Borough is tapping into him as a resource. Mr. Bickford stated he agreed and supported the suggestion. Mr. Hand stated that for example, the Library situation never came to the Planning Board but the Board from his recollection, sent recommendations to Council to do our own Library as Avalon does and we never heard anything about it. Mrs. Gougher stated that is not the Planning Board's responsibility; the point taken is a good one and it can be given to Council, but

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION
STONE HARBOR PLANNING BOARD**

February 9, 2015 4:30 p.m.

unfortunately, the Police Building was already underway and at the last minute when we met with the Architect, we discovered that what they were going to do may not necessarily be the best thing. Mr. Hand stated that our budget for the Town Planner is \$15,000 and we use less than half of it. Mr. Carusi stated he has no problem with the Planning Board seeing a presentation. Mrs. Gougher stated we can certainly invite the Planner and the Architect for next month's meeting. Mr. Carusi stated he does not want anything to be held up in his absence since he will be away next month. Mr. Conte asked Mrs. Gougher if there is a need for the new building and she responded yes, the building that the Police are presently in is not acceptable. Mr. Carusi stated the men have been very patient and the building is not efficient. Mrs. Gougher stated the original design retrofitted into the existed building footprint but it wasn't necessarily the optimal way to build a police station.

Mrs. Gougher further said that one of the other things we liked if we do build something separate from the existing building, is that it can possibly be retrofitted or rehabbed for additional municipal space or possibly the Museum since we are looking for a home for the Museum. Mrs. Gougher stated it is not too late to bring it before the Planning Board. Mr. Conte asked if it is required to notify the public and Mrs. Gougher said truthfully, that is the message that we have been getting from the people, Council as the elected officials, have to be able to know when to say this is it, this is our decision and we are moving forward. Mr. Conte asked if the public is notified one time or more. Mrs. Gougher said it is difficult because you have full-time residents and then you have people that are only here 3 or 4 months of the year and a lot of them complain we only do our business in winter but we can't say we are only going to do work from May to September. Mr. Carusi said he personally believes the taxpayers are paying the bill; we should share as much as possible with them but you say it once, make the presentation thorough and get the feedback and analyze it and look at the negative and see if it holds water and then report out to the public. Then we have to formalize the location of the site and the plan and move on it.

Adjournment

Having no further business at hand Mr. Hand called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Conte seconded the motion. All members present were in favor and stated aye.

APPROVED: March 9, 2015

ATTESTED: Diane Frangiose
Diane Frangiose, Secretary Stone Harbor Planning Board