

Nags Head Local Business Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

July 15th, 2015 Minutes

Nags Had Town Hall; Conference Room

Committee Members Present: Annette Ratzenberger, Jody Crosswhite, Anne Farmer, Bobbie Stager, Commissioner Renee Cahoon, Deputy Town Manager Andy Garman, Deputy Planning Director Kelly Wyatt.

Public Present: No members of the public present.

Commissioner Renee Cahoon opened the meeting, welcomed the committee members and gave an update on the resolution approved by the Board of Commissioners to reduce the speed limit along US 158 to 45mph consistently. The resolution is now being reviewed by NCDOT.

Adoption of Minutes: June 11, 2015. Minutes were adopted by full consensus of the committee.

Staff member, Kelly Wyatt updated the committee on the status of the nonconforming sign ordinance which originated through discussion and consensus of the committee. The ordinance was unanimously adopted by the Board of Commissioners at their July 1, 2015 meeting.

Staff members Andy Garman and Kelly Wyatt presented to the committee a brief power point presentation on all of the existing retail shopping centers within the Town, their amount of road frontage along US 158 and their total number of units (including vacant units). In addition information was presented regarding the letter spacing and height of numerous signs within the Town to provide the committee with examples/illustration of the amount of signage necessary to accommodate varying numbers of tenants within a shopping center. Several comments were made within regard to Pirates Quay shopping center in particular: any granting of signage based upon linear road frontage on US 158 would not benefit Pirates Quay due to its configuration; and that many of the tenants within Pirates Quay offer services, not necessarily retail opportunities. The committee noted that creating a uniform sign ordinance to accommodate every situation would be difficult. Jody Crosswhite noted that Central Square also has visibility issues. Andy Garman offered for consideration an option of calculating allowable signage based upon store frontage (not road frontage), this would address the concerns with Pirates Quay and Central Square. For example, Pirates Quay has roughly 720 feet of store frontage, at 1 square foot signage per 10 linear feet of store frontage this would allow for a 72 square foot sign, as opposed to the currently allowed 64 sq. ft. The committee could consider such language, possibly only allowing an increase beyond 64 sq. ft. if 50% of the sign area is designed for the tenants and not the anchor store.

The committee began discussion on the use/placement/storage of outdoor merchandise as signage with a few instances noted throughout the Town. Bobbie Stager inquired about other Towns and what their regulations on outdoor displays of merchandise is? Members expressed that many times this leads to a cluttered appearance and not in tune with the Nags Head aesthetic. Staff commented that potentially allowing increased freestanding signage and/or two signs may result in less flags, merchandise, etc. to draw attention. Also, if outdoor storage is something the Town would like to allow, maybe designating a specific location on the property for such displays. Bobbie Stager stated that holding a “stakeholder” or business owner meeting to discuss these concerns may be beneficial to not only get the appropriate information out but to hear from a broad group what the true concerns/obstacles are and how best the Town may address those. Anne Farmer noted that hearing what others think could be beneficial, for instance, ‘what are our visitors saying’? Committee members noted having heard comments that a lot of the displays are distracting and with no clear addresses on site people often have to navigate by landmarks. Bobbie Stager commented on how beneficial and useful the multi-use path is and putting merchandise on or near path is hindering accessibility and visually distracting, that the Town has provided the path and incumbent upon business to keep it clean and attractive. Committee members noted that the landscape ordinance under consideration could also be useful in deterring merchandise clutter. Staff informed the committee that the landscape ordinance and administrative adjustment is moving along and will be heard by the Planning Board at their August 18th meeting.

Andy Garman provided the committee with draft ordinance language regarding previous discussions on rooftop signage. Staff requested the committee review the proposal and provide comments and feedback prior to the next meeting.

Planning Staff updated the committee on current items being heard/discussed by the Boards including loosening regulations for cottage courts and managing large single family residential structures as it relates to architectural design and maximum bedroom restrictions.

Planning Staff provided the committee with the portions of the Town Code pertaining to placement, height and contrast of numbering for addresses. Before wrapping up the meeting the committee suggested that the Town place this information on the main website to help gain compliance.

Commissioner Cahoon thanked all the committee members for their participation and the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 20th, 2015 at 2:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm.