

## **Nags Head Local Business Ad Hoc Committee Meeting**

**March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Minutes**

### **Nags Had Town Hall; Conference Room**

Committee Members Present: Gayle Drummond, Jody Crosswhite, Bobbie Stager, Gus Zinovis, Carole Sykes, Anne Farmer, Ralph Buxton, Annette Ratzenberger, Garry Oliver, Commissioner Renee Cahoon, Deputy Town Manager Andy Garman, Deputy Planning Director Kelly Wyatt and Principal Planner, Holly White.

Public Present: Courtney Gallop

Commissioner Renée Cahoon opened the meeting at 2:30pm welcoming all of the committee members.

Adoption of Minutes: February 26, 2015. Gus Zinovis made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented, Jody Crosswhite seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Renée Cahoon discussed with the group having our Septic Health Coordinator, Todd Krafft give a short presentation at an upcoming meeting on the Towns Septic Health Program and water monitoring.

Principal Planner, Holly White introduced herself and provided the committee with handouts coinciding with her presentation on the history, process and timeline for the Towns Comprehensive Land Use Plan (LUP) and Code Update. Commissioner Cahoon noted that there are many parallels with the goals of the committee and the final product of the code updates, she feels this committee could be very beneficial in the process.

Annette Ratzenberger inquired about the timeframe for this project, staff stated that it would likely be an 18-24 month process with plenty of opportunities for the committee and other community involvement. Jody Crosswhite inquired about content and adoption of plan. Commissioner Cahoon stated that the goal of the updated plan is to be more user-friendly, a Town Plan and not necessarily a CAMA mandated plan.

Deputy Town Manager, Andy Garman gave a presentation to the Committee on current landscape and buffer regulations within the Town, noting the ambiguity in portions of the code and the inconsistencies throughout. Mr. Garman stated that our current codes are quite rigid with little flexibility and felt like consideration should be given to revising these portions of the code should the committee be inclined to do so. The committee expressed an interest in considering new language, especially for the five foot buffer required between parking areas and rights of ways. Members discussed a more natural grouping of trees and shrubs, consideration of plant salt and wind tolerant species and plantings with shallow root beds around septic areas.

Courtney Gallop inquired if there would be a height limit on vegetation considered, staff stated that the desire was for natural growth that a minimum height would be necessary but no maximum imposed.

Jody Crosswhite stated that consideration should be given to height of vegetation in relation to the architecture and height of the structure for which it is buffering. Also, buffering adjacent to district boundaries should be reviewed.

Garry Oliver noted that many older businesses do not have landscape buffering but appear to function well. Staff noted that landscaping doesn't have to be a "one size fits all" approach; there can be alternatives and creative solutions.

Gail Drummond inquired about the landscaping for Croatan Center, staff stated that the current ordinance allows for replacement of existing buffer however it is incremental, only 20% of the total buffer can be removed and replaced.

The committee requested that planning staff establish some objectives for the landscape revisions and have the committee review the language prior to consideration or initiation by the Planning Board.

The committee requested that planning staff discuss ideas with a landscape architect and provide graphics to demonstrate the differences and advantages of current code versus proposed flexible grouping of plantings. The committee also suggested looking at what other small/tourist towns require.

Annette Ratzenberger noted that outdoor art could also be incorporated into the landscape plan, unique and aesthetically pleasing.

Jody Crosswhite inquired about the landscaping/plant spacing requirements in Duck. Andy responded that it was based upon frontage and the applicant can propose variations in plans. Holly White stated that you could consider trees based upon caliper, number of plantings based upon canopy trees and understory trees/shrubs.

Planning Staff noted that graphics and examples would be brought to the committee at a later meeting after doing some research.

Planning staff gave a brief update on nonconforming signage, rooftop signage and current shopping center signage. It was noted that the landlord for Pirates Quay Shopping Center has a master sign plan which imposes a more stringent square footage allotment than current Town ordinances.

Garry Oliver requested staff consider maximum height limitations on rooftop signs, they should not be allowed to exceed the town wide height limit of 35 ft. or 42' with the appropriate roof pitch.

Staff informed the committee that there is a 25% threshold for repair of a nonconforming sign versus the 50% that most people are familiar with. It was the consensus of the committee to review increasing the percentage from 25% to 50% for repair of nonconforming signage.

Several members of the committee expressed the need for better clarification of the Town's sign regulations, especially flag signs, perhaps a fact sheet could be provided to all business. Planning Staff

noted that they could put that together. Anne Farmer suggested adding visuals for more clarity. Ralph Buxton requested clarification on directional signage as well.

Ralph Buxton mentioned to the committee that he would like to generate discussion on “branding” Nags Head, creating a vision of the business community distinguished from other Towns. The committee expressed interest in pursuing this, re-enforcing the family oriented beaches and small, local business owners.

Commissioner Cahoon updated the committee on the Board action to approve the conceptual plan for Dowdy Park.

Garry Oliver and Jody Crosswhite spoke about the need for mass transit opportunities and the history of this request throughout the years. Ralph Buxton noted several concerns with traffic flow throughout the Town.

Commissioner Cahoon thanked all the committee members for their participation; the next meeting was scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 2:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.