

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

**May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Minutes**

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

Committee Members Present: Garry Oliver, Annette Ratzenberger, Bob Sanders, Ralph Buxton, Gus Zinovis, Carole Sykes, Jody Crosswhite, Commissioner Renee Cahoon, Deputy Town Manager Andy Garman, Deputy Planning Director Kelly Wyatt, Principal Planner Holly White.

Public Present: No members of the public present.

Commissioner Renee Cahoon opened the meeting, welcomed the committee members.

Adoption of Minutes: April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. Jody Crosswhite made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented, Gus Zinovis seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted by unanimous vote.

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 had been presented to the Board of Commissioners and had received support to be forwarded to the Planning Board for formal review.

Deputy Town Manager, Andy Garman continued discussions with the committee on drafting and providing more flexible ordinance language related to landscaping and buffering requirements. Mr. Garman passed out proposed amendments for allowance of an "Administrative Adjustment". This would provide an administrative/staff level mechanism to allow minor variations, or adjustments to certain dimensional requirements or numerical standards such as setbacks, parking and height to be approved by staff. Staff indicated that this type of allowance may be beneficial in relation to landscaping and buffering in that we could vary the number of required parking spaces to accommodate preserving significant or substantial vegetation when in the proximity of the parking lot. Commissioner Cahoon asked that the committee review this ordinance and be prepared to offer comments at the next scheduled meeting.

Staff member, Kelly Wyatt asked the committee to revisit the discussion on rooftop signage. Draft ordinance and language had been presented at the previous meeting and comments, feedback, suggestions would be welcomed. Ralph Buxton expressed a concern in the allowable height of rooftop signage, staff confirmed that the rooftop sign, as proposed by this ordinance, would be limited to the maximum height of the district in which it is located, typically 35 feet. It was noted that rooftop signs are engineered to withstand the winds and elements. Staff clarified that a roof sign could be located at the peak of the roof or along the angular main roof or porch roof. Commissioner Cahoon noted that the ordinance limits the area of the sign to 5% of the total floor area or 300 square feet, whichever is less. The committee discussed this language at length and agreed that 300 square feet of roof top signage is too large and that for businesses with substantial floor area even the 5% could result in signage larger

than what the Town envisions. To give the committee a reference point, Gus Zinovis stated that he has a rooftop sign on his restaurant (Mulligans) and it is approximately 60 sq. ft. in area. Jody Crosswhite noted that Forbes Candy had a large rooftop sign that sustained storm damage, approximately 5x50 in size. Andy Garman noted that the committee may want to consider a signage ratio based upon the plane of the roof so as the sign is more proportionate to the building scale. Commissioner Cahoon stated that the floor area percentage may be obsolete and using a rooftop plane ratio with maximum square footage may be worth additional consideration. Andy Garman also noted that the square footage allowance for a freestanding business shall not exceed 64 square feet and questioned whether the Town would want a rooftop sign larger than a freestanding sign. Annette Ratzenberger expressed that while she was fine with the signage she would like to ensure that any lighting be down-lit preserving the night sky. Staff noted that they would prepare some examples for the committee to review.

Staff member, Holly White briefly updated the committee members on the Action Item Chart that she had previously discussed. This Plan indicated the issues that the committee had discussed to date, the progress to date, upcoming necessary actions, the responsible party and timeframe for completion. Holly noted that this was a lot of information to digest and requested that committee members review the document and provide any comments, feedback or suggestions at the next scheduled meeting.

Staff updated the committee on the status of compiling a list of all business owners within the Town for the purpose of possibly creating business association. Staff noted that they will work to provide a concise list as soon as possible. Commissioner Cahoon noted that staff should check with the Police Department as they may have a listing of business owner information for the purpose of sending out alerts. Staff also stated that the Town could provide a mechanism on the Town's website for business owners to sign for an email/distribution list as well as providing information on water bills and privilege licenses. Annette Ratzenberger noted that this request for information could be placed within Town's weekly newsletter broadcast by Public Information Officer, Roberta Thuman.

The committee brought up items from the Action Plan related to "branding", specifically creating an "app" to assist vendors and visitors in orienting themselves to find specific destinations. Commissioner Cahoon recommended consideration be given seeking a student/intern to work on this – or to have an "app contest" at the high school to help with this project. The committee discussed having something that would identify beach accesses, cultural destinations, retail and restaurant locations, and recreation areas. The committee felt this was a good idea and should be pursued.

Jody Crosswhite noted that the Action Plan provided great talking points and asked if it was the Town's desire to have the committee help prioritize the items included. Holly White felt that would be helpful and noted that some items, such as T-3 (multi-use paths) would be an ongoing priority. Andy Garman recommended the committee consider ranking their Top 10 Items.

Ralph Buxton stated that he had some safety concerns with connectivity in and around the Outdoor-Commercial Recreation Overlay District and would like special consideration be given to this particular area. The committee discussed the difficulty and hazards of crossing 158, the lighting levels at night and

the speed limit. Commissioner Cahoon stated that there had been discussion of reducing the speed along the Little Bridge, others noted that the median in this area is confusing and better signage is necessary. Commissioner Cahoon asked the committee if they were interested in requesting the speed limit be seasonally lowered to 45 mph, the committee was interested and felt like the top priority should be the area of recreation overlay including the causeway. Some committee members felt this speed limit reduction would be more difficult to enforce if done in segments. Ralph Buxton made a formal motion to request that the speed limit be reduced to 45 mph seasonally in the Recreation Overlay District. Gus Zinovis seconded the motion, the vote was unanimous.

Gus Zinovis inquired about the residential real estate signs along the roadway and any ordinances regulating them. Commissioner Cahoon noted that this had been a topic of discussion that the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners had considering as there had been numerous complaints. The majority of these signs appear to be Village Realty and Joe Lamb Realty. The committee agreed that there is likely a need to have some type of realty company identifier but the roadside signage could be smaller in area and lower in height to be less obtrusive. The committee felt as though a small sign at the road (1.5 sq. ft.) and a larger sign on the house (6 sq. ft.) would be adequate but it would be helpful to have the 911 address at the road as well. Andy Garman noted that the majority of these signs are along NC 12 and NC1243 for longer, ocean front lots. Andy noted that the comments and recommendations from this committee would be relayed to the Planning Board at their upcoming May 19, 2015 meeting.

The committee inquired about how long this committee would remain in place. Commissioner Cahoon noted that the committee would continue to meet as long as there are items to review and we continue to make progress and move forward.

Commissioner Cahoon thanked all the committee members for their participation and the next meeting was scheduled for June 11, 2015 at 2:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.