



MEMORANDUM

Town of Nags Head

Planning & Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: Michael Zehner, Director of Planning & Development
Kelly Wyatt, Deputy Director of Planning & Development

Date: June 24, 2020

Subject: Text amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance submitted by a property owner to expand the principal sale items from outdoor stands to include reservations and tickets for events/activities

OVERVIEW

The proposed text amendment (the applicant for the amendment is Kate Creef, Assistant General Manager, on behalf of Outlets Nags Head) is seeking to amend Section 7.76.1 to expand the principal sale items allowed to be sold from outdoor stands to include “reservations or ticket sales,” and to amend Section 7.76.2. to increase the number of outdoor stands allowed per site from one (1) to two (2). Initially, as discussed with the Planning Board on January 21, 2020, the proposal sought to amend the UDO to allow “outdoor kiosks” for the sale of tickets and reservations for on-site and off-site recreational facilities. Mrs. Creef had explained to the Board that a vendor had approached the Outlets about the idea of having a kiosk located on the property to allow patrons to book charter fishing excursions, a concept which was believed would enhance the customers’ shopping experience. Mrs. Creef indicated that there would be a preference to allow two outdoor stands (where the regulations only allow for one) and confirmed for the Board that the plan was to locate the kiosk in the terrace area.

Based upon the discussion and feedback provided by the Planning Board, the applicant modified the original proposal (consistent with the version before the Board) and returned to the Planning Board meeting on February 18, 2020. The Planning Board recommended approval, with changes recommend by Staff, detailed as part of Staff’s recommendation.

The Board of Commissioners held a public hearing and considered the proposed amendment at their meeting on May 6, 2020. Ultimately, the Board voted unanimously to table consideration and refer the amendment back to the Planning Board for review and recommendation, requesting that the Planning Board consider the issues raised by the Board. The following excerpts are from the minutes of the Board of Commissioners’ meeting:

Applicant Kate Creef spoke electronically on behalf of the Outlet Center Nags Head; they had been asked about interest in providing a space for displaying fishing photographs and taking reservations for inshore and offshore fishing trips; they felt this would be a great opportunity to enhance the offerings at the Outlet

Center and could also apply to other recreational activities that would appeal to their shoppers such as dolphin tours.

Comr. Fuller confirmed with Planning Director Zehner that 11 shopping centers would be affected/eligible for the outdoor stands under this ordinance modification. It was noted that in 2013 the Planning Board turned down a similar request it was believed because it was related to multiple food stands. Comr. Fuller also confirmed with staff that currently some items can be sold in the requested manner in accordance with current ordinance.

Attorney Leidy confirmed that there were no other public comments on this text amendment, and he concluded the Public Hearing at 9:23 a.m.

Comr. Fuller spoke in opposition to the request as he feels the service being requested already exists and has for years; he expressed concern that it in effect only adds more signage – signage for these types of businesses tend to look carnival-like and additional signage is not what the town is after right now. He also feels that the building itself would be used as signage.

Comr. Brinkley spoke indicating that he does not share the same concerns as Comr. Fuller and in addition he does not feel that it would create an increase in traffic or trash.

Comr. Siers said that he looks on it as an opportunity for others to experience more about the Outer Banks that they may not be aware of – he has no issues with the request.

Comr. Renée Cahoon discussed parking and Director Zehner stated that no additional parking spaces will be needed if 50 spaces are already provided.

Mayor Cahoon said that he had one reservation and that is adding another freestanding sign unit to the parking lot.

In response to a question from Comr. Renée Cahoon re: removal of the outdoor stands, Director Zehner said that the structure would essentially be permanent but would not be able to operate year-round.

Mayor Cahoon summarized some modifications as discussed such as location on site, visual impact, signage, and parking.

MOTION: Comr. Fuller made a motion to deny the request for outdoor stands as presented. Comr. Renée Cahoon seconded the motion with the friendly amendment (accepted by Comr. Fuller) that the proposal be sent back to the Planning Board for review and recommendation re: today's comments made by Board members.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION: Comr. Fuller withdraw his motion; Comr. Renée Cahoon withdrew her second.

MOTION: Comr. Brinkley made a motion to table the discussion and refer the outdoor stands proposal, along with the issues expressed today by Board members [re: location on site, visual impact, signage, and parking] back to the Planning Board for review and recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Siers which passed unanimously.

The proposed ordinance returned to the Planning Board on May 19, 2020. Based upon discussion by the Board of Commissioners, and the Board's motion, Staff further recommended to the Planning Board that consideration be given to limiting the option for two stands to sites greater than a certain size, limiting signage to a total of fifteen (15) square feet for all outdoor stands, and clarifying where stands may be located on a site, in terms of being located within parking areas or needing to be located no closer to a property line than the distance from a principal building on a site or within a certain maximum distance from a principal building.

Upon reconsideration at their meeting on May 19, the Planning Board voted 6-0 to recommend that two stands only be allowed on sites with an area of ten (10) acres or greater, that signage for all stands be limited to a total of fifteen (15) square feet, and that stands used for reservations or ticket sales shall be located within shopping centers or group developments, such as within common areas or walkways, and shall not be located within any parking area.

BACKGROUND

The current version of the allowances and standards for *Outdoor Stands, Accessory to Shopping Center & Group Development* are the result of numerous changes over the course of the last ten (10) years; actions of note are as follows:

- The allowance of outdoor fresh produce stands as an accessory use to shopping centers was first established in mid-2009;
- In late-2009, an amendment was adopted to allow hotdog vending stands as an accessory use to shopping centers;
- In early-2010, an amendment was adopted to allow coffee vending stands as an accessory use to shopping centers;
- In mid-2010, recognizing that one of each of the aforementioned stands could be permitted at any given shopping center, an amendment was adopted to limit the number of accessory outdoor stands at any shopping center site to one (1); additionally, the various stand uses were consolidated under a single use (Outdoor Stands);
- In late-2010, the Ordinance was amended to allow Italian ice and fudge sales;
- In early-2013 ice cream was added as an allowed sale item; additionally, in 2013, a request to expand the allowable number of stands from one (1) to (2) was denied; and
- The provisions were last amended in 2014 when the allowed locations for outdoor stands were expanded to allow as accessory to Group Development (aka Office/Retail Group Development).

Beyond comments made by the Commissioners concerning the necessity of the service proposed and the proposal to allow up to two outdoor stands on a property, concerns raised with respect to location, parking, and signage are relevant under current regulations. Currently, outdoor stands are 1) allowed to be located on a site in compliance with minimum district yard regulations for principal use structures, 2) are allowed to be located on a site with fifty (50) or more existing parking spaces without providing additional parking spaces, or provide a minimum of three (3) additional parking spaces for sites with less than fifty (50) parking spaces, and 3) install a temporary sign with an area up to fifteen (15) square feet.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

There are no direct policies concerning outdoor stands. However, certainly economic development objectives and policies encouraging and supporting small businesses and the viability of existing commercial properties are applicable, and need to be balanced with objectives and policies focused on maintaining the Town's character.

Generally, Staff believes that the request to allow the sale of tickets and reservations is consistent with applicable policies; however, Staff would suggest that the standards be clarified to require that the sale and advertisement of items be confined to stands. With respect to the number of allowed stands on any particular site, Staff would support a maximum of two (2) stands, with no more than one (1) stand selling fresh produce, hot dogs, coffee, ice cream or Italian ice, and/or fudge.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Previously, the Planning Board, at their February 18, 2019 meeting, voted 6-0 to recommend amendments to the UDO as recommended by Staff. In making their recommendation, the Planning Board acknowledged their opinion that the proposed amendments were consistent with the relevant policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

Upon reconsideration at their meeting on May 19, the Planning Board voted 6-0 to recommend, in addition to those modifications previously recommended, that two stands only be allowed on sites with an area of ten (10) acres or greater, that signage for all stands be limited to a total of fifteen (15) square feet, and that stands used for reservations or ticket sales shall be located within shopping centers or group developments, such as within common areas or walkways, and shall not be located within any parking area.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff previously recommended that the amendments be adopted with modifications to the standards to require that the sale and advertisement of items be confined to stands and to allow a maximum of two (2) stands, with no more than one (1) stand selling fresh produce, hot dogs, coffee, ice cream or Italian ice, and/or fudge. Additionally, it was suggested that Sections 7.76.3 and 7.76.4. also be amended to provide for a

maximum stand area and any time limitations, respectively, for the sale of tickets and reservations; a limitation of 150 square feet and a time limitation consistent with produce stands are likely sufficient. Finally, Staff recommended that the current definition of Outdoor Stand, as follows, be amended consistent with the amendment of Section 7.76.1.:

Outdoor stand means an approved area where the sale of produce, hot dogs, coffee, ice cream or Italian ice, and fudge occurs from a cart or structure.

Staff supports and recommends those additional modifications recommended by the Planning Board. Both the original modifications recommended by Staff and the Planning Board, as well as the additional modifications recommended upon reconsideration, have been incorporated into the attached adoption ordinance and markup of Section 7.76, highlighted to differentiate from the applicant's proposal. It is important to note that the limitation on sites ten (10) acres or greater in area would, currently, only apply to one (1) of the eleven (11) properties previously identified by Staff; if the limit were five (5) acres, the allowance would apply to three (3) of the eleven (11) sites.

With regard to the Board of Commissioners' review and action, Staff recommends consideration of the following UDO provisions:

3.5.3. Action by the Planning Board.

3.5.3.1. Every proposed amendment, UDO text amendment or zoning map amendment, shall be referred to the Planning Board for its recommendation and report. The Board of Commissioners is not bound by the recommendations, if any, of the Planning Board.

3.5.3.2. Prior to the consideration by the Board of Commissioners of a proposed UDO text amendment or zoning map amendment, the Planning Board shall advise and comment on whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Board shall provide a written recommendation, certified by the UDO Administrator, to the Board of Commissioners that addresses plan consistency and other matters as deemed appropriate by the Planning Board, but a comment by the Planning Board that a proposed amendment is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan shall not preclude consideration or approval of the proposed amendment by the Board of Commissioners.

3.5.3.3. Members of the Planning Board shall not vote on recommendations regarding any UDO text amendment or zoning map amendment where the outcome of the matter being considered is reasonably likely to have a direct, substantial, and readily identifiable financial impact on the member.

3.5.4. Action by the Board of Commissioners.

Action upon an UDO text amendment or zoning map amendment, including the scheduling of a public hearing, will be at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners.

3.5.4.1. Before an item is placed on the consent agenda to schedule a public hearing, the Planning Board's recommendation on each proposed amendment must be received by the Board of Commissioners. If no recommendation is received from the Planning Board within 30 days from the date when submitted to the Planning Board, the petitioner may take the proposal to the Board of Commissioners without a recommendation from the Planning Board. However, the Planning Board may request the Board of Commissioners to delay final action on the amendment until such time as the Planning Board can present its recommendations. No such limitations shall apply to applications or requests submitted by Town staff or any Town Board.

3.5.4.2. After receiving a recommendation from the Planning Board on a proposed amendment, the Board of Commissioners may proceed to vote on the proposed ordinance, refer it to a committee for further study, or take any other action consistent with its usual rules of procedure.

3.5.4.3. The Board of Commissioners is not required to take final action on a proposed amendment within any specific period of time. Final action on an UDO text amendment or zoning map amendment submitted by third parties will be taken within a reasonable time. Final action taken within 90 days of the public hearing before the Board of Commissioners shall be presumptively reasonable.

3.5.4.4. No member of the Board of Commissioners shall vote on any zoning map amendment or UDO text amendment where the outcome of the matter being considered is reasonably likely to have a direct, substantial and readily identifiable financial impact.

3.5.4.5. Prior to adopting or rejecting any UDO text and/or map amendment, the Board of Commissioners shall adopt one of the following statements which shall not be subject to judicial review.

3.5.4.5.1. A statement approving the amendment and describing its consistency with the adopted Comprehensive Plan and explaining why the action taken is reasonable and in the public interest.

3.5.4.5.2. A statement rejecting the amendment and describing its inconsistency with the adopted Comprehensive Plan and explaining why the action taken is reasonable and in the public interest.

3.5.4.5.3. A statement approving the amendment and containing at least all of the following:

3.5.4.5.3.1. A declaration that the approval is also deemed an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. The Board of Commissioners shall not require any additional request or application for amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.

3.5.4.5.3.2. An explanation of the change in conditions the Board of Commissioners took into account in amending the UDO to meet the development needs of the community.

3.5.4.5.3.3. Why the action was reasonable and in the public interest.

3.5.4.6. In deciding whether to adopt a proposed amendment to this UDO, the central issue before the Board of Commissioners is whether the proposed amendment advances the public health, safety, or welfare. When considering proposed map amendments:

3.5.4.6.1. The Board of Commissioners shall consider the entire range of permitted uses in the requested classification.

Attachments:

1. Zoning Amendment Application; and
2. Proposed Ordinance