

# CAROLINA BEACH

Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting

Thursday, August 11, 2022 - 6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach, NC



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## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rouse called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

### PRESENT

Chairman Wayne Rouse

Vice Chairman Jeff Hogan

Commissioner Melanie Boswell

Commissioner Ethan Crouch

Commissioner Todd Piper

Commissioner Bill Carew

Commissioner Lynn Conto

### ALSO PRESENT

Planning Director Jeremy Hardison

Senior Planner Gloria Abbotts

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. July 14, 2022 – P&Z Minutes

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the minutes

Motion made by Chairman Rouse

Voting Yea: Chairman Rouse, Vice Chairman Hogan, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Carew, Commissioner Conto

*Motion passed unanimously*

### STAFF REPORT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Ms. Abbotts reported the following statistics for the past month:

#### Permitting

- 33 permits (renovation, repair, grading, additions, fence)
- 8 residential new construction
- 8 certificates of occupancy

#### Code Enforcement

- 47 complaints received
- 47 resolved

## Demos

- 213 Wilson Avenue
- 1407 Searay Lane
- 1605 Searay Lane

## New Businesses

- Neapolitan (retail) – 800 Saint Joseph Street
- Cherry Blossom Takeout Sushi – 8 Pavilion Avenue
- The Starlite Motel – 201 Cape Fear Boulevard (name change)
- The Beach House Motel – 412 Carolina Beach Avenue North (new ownership)
- Island Bagels – 1328 North Lake Park Boulevard (name change)

## Town Council and Other Updates

- Stop sign petition – four-way stops in Seagrove (Council will hear in September)
- Text amendment – no commercial through-traffic in Ocean Heights neighborhood (Council will hear in September)
- Ocean Boulevard Sidewalk Project open house (held August 10)
- Risk Rating 2.0 information meeting held (held August 10)

## **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

None

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

2. Conditional Zoning to Consider a Hotel with a Restaurant and Bar Located at 205, 207, and 209 North Lake Park Boulevard and 204 Harper Avenue in the Central Business District  
Applicant: Jefferson C. Woodall, Architect

On behalf of the owners, Architect Jefferson C. Woodall has applied for a Conditional Zoning (CZ) application for a four-story hotel with a rooftop bar, restaurant, and retail located at 205, 207, and 209 North Lake Park Boulevard and 204 Harper Avenue in the Central Business District (CBD). Hotels and bars are permitted by CZ in the CBD; restaurants and retail are permitted by right. Therefore, the entire project must be approved by CZ.

The proposed project would have 42 hotel units in a locally owned and operated boutique property by the same developers of The Hive in Wilmington. The subject property consists of a single-family home and the former site of Welcome Inn. The ground floor would consist of a covered parking structure, hotel entrance, and commercial space. The second floor would have 12 sleeping rooms, a pool, a pool bar, and green space. The third and fourth floors would each have 15 sleeping rooms. The rooftop would consist of a café/bar. The commercial spaces would be open to both hotel guests and the public.

Ms. Abbotts presented the details, including displaying photos showing existing conditions of the property and surrounding uses. She said the property owners received a Conditional Use Permit in

2016 for renovation, but due to health issues they could not continue with the improvements. Ms. Abbotts went over CZ guidelines and shared information about the required public meeting on July 1, when the developers met with adjacent property owners and stakeholders and noted concerns; the developers accommodated a neighbor's concern with an easement for access.

Ms. Abbotts said stormwater retention will be on site. She reviewed criteria the Commission must consider when voting and conditions of the project. Ms. Abbotts said staff recommends approval of the project.

**ACTION:** Motion to open the public hearing

Motion made by Chairman Rouse

Voting Yea: Chairman Rouse, Vice Chairman Hogan, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Carew, Commissioner Conto

*Motion passed unanimously*

Wilmington Attorney Matt Nichols, who is assisting the applicant in representing the developers, highlighted a few details of the proposal and introduced Kaylie O'Connor and Robert Rosenberg, principals of Wilmington Development Group. He said Ms. O'Connor has lived in the Town since 2008.

Ms. O'Connor of 414 Charlotte Avenue said she and Mr. Rosenberg developed the locally owned and operated property The Hive, which has 15 suites and opened in 2019 in downtown Wilmington. She said The Hive has a 4.7 rating on Google, has 83% direct bookings, and is the preferred lodging for film and TV productions. Ms. O'Connor said with the newly proposed property in the Town, they hope to convey a surf vibe while using design elements and materials to impart old beach town nostalgia.

Mr. Woodall reviewed floor plans and other details of the proposal.

Mr. Nichols said the proposal is consistent with the Town's Master Development Plan and the Town's 2020 Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) Land Use Plan. He said granting CZ approval would offer the following benefits:

- Revitalization of an outdated property
- Significant improvement to streetscape along a portion of North Lake Park Boulevard
- Offers high-quality accommodations for guests and visitors
- Provides retail and restaurant options for Town residents and visitors
- Promotes economic development, tourism, and job creation within the CBD

Commissioner Crouch asked how the project will be able to pull off on-site stormwater retention. Charlie Cazier, civil engineer for the project, said soil testing was done on the site and it all turned out very well for underground infiltration. He said the plan is to go under the parking areas.

Commissioner Crouch asked how the hotel will control public access to the pool if the public is able to come through to the rooftop bar. Ms. O'Connor said there will likely be coded gates as well as controlled access to certain floors via the elevator.

Commissioner Crouch and Vice Chairman Hogan brought up concerns about the creation of a corridor that might invite people to wander off North Lake Park Boulevard. Mr. Woodall said the current design would remedy this.

Commissioner Crouch asked if there are plans to put new sidewalks to tie into the existing ones. Mr. Woodall said they are not sure how the Town's plans for Harper Avenue will affect sidewalks.

Commissioner Crouch asked what the size of the rooftop bathroom is. Mr. Woodall said 8x20.

Commissioner Boswell asked if employee parking would be available on site. Ms. O'Connor said the hotel would have the option to rent spots in public lots for employees, and there would also be a few overflow spots as well as bicycle and golf cart parking for employees on site.

Commissioner Boswell asked if the bathrooms would exceed the height of the elevator or roof. Mr. Woodall said they are about the same size.

Commissioner Piper said he likes the glass railings on top because they don't create mass. He brought up public input regarding concerns about garbage. Mr. Woodall said that area would be fenced with gates around it.

Commissioner Boswell asked about the property's plan for trees. Mr. Woodall said they think they can move one, but another is big and not in good shape, although they can try to work around it. He suggested the possibility of eliminating the loading area.

No one from the public requested to speak.

**ACTION:** Motion to close the public hearing

Motion made by Chairman Rouse

Voting Yea: Chairman Rouse, Vice Chairman Hogan, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Carew, Commissioner Conto

*Motion passed unanimously*

Commissioner Conto said it's phenomenal that the Town would have a boutique hotel, and there is a need for it. She said she is highly in favor of the project.

Commissioner Crouch said it's a unique project that would bring a lot of value to the Town. He said he's sensitive to adjacent property owners' concerns and was glad to hear the applicant was amenable to add some additional landscaping to the south side. Commissioner Crouch said they are making a good effort to save and relocate as many trees on the parcel as possible. He asked staff if the application for this project included water usage and consumption rates, a recent requirement the Town implemented. Commissioner Crouch said he didn't see it in the agenda packet. Mr. Hardison said

yes, the Town received design flow for the numbers on this project and gallons per day that the project would add to the system, and this information was evaluated by the Utilities Director.

Commissioner Crouch said he has concerns about the rooftop bathrooms being enclosed, occupied space going above the 50-foot height limit. He also said the conditions staff recommended were not included in the agenda packet. Commissioner Crouch said all the other information he's heard is positive, and he thinks those involved with the proposal have been receptive to concerns expressed by the community. He said concerns about storm drainage are a very important component because the property is currently all pervious surface.

Commissioner Boswell said she thinks the project is a great addition because sometimes historic buildings are beyond repair or renovation. She said capping the height needs to be part of the conditions and thanked the developers for saving as many trees as possible.

Commissioner Carew said he thinks the project is going to be a nice addition to the Town and is a great redevelopment opportunity for the properties. Regarding the request to approve something that goes above the 50-foot height limit in parts of the structure, he said this is a component the Town should be flexible on in the CBD to encourage more development. Commissioner Carew said this is a small give to bring in a project like this.

Commissioner Piper said this is a nice project. He said his big concern is to ensure the applicant has met the goals of the neighbors, which seems like the case. Commissioner Piper said if the Town is going to allow flexibility with the height limit, there should be a hard stop of 50 feet on standing and walking surfaces because going too high may stand out among neighboring structures. Mr. Hardison said design guidelines may be implemented as a condition of approval, but the applicant would need to agree to them.

Vice Chairman Hogan said he likes everything about the project but worries about ingress and egress on Harper Avenue, although he said this is a better option than Lake Park Boulevard. He said he thinks everything the Town has asked is in the plan, and he likes it a lot.

Chairman Rouse said he likes the concept in general, and developers seems to be showing themselves as good neighbors. He said the project has his support with the conditions that are laid out.

Commissioner Crouch said the Town should probably take a look at the stoplight on Harper Avenue because of the demand on the intersection. Mr. Hardison said the Town will need to coordinate with the N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT).

Commissioners discussed making height, transparent railing, and landscaping on the south side part of the conditions.

**ACTION:** Motion that whereas in accordance with the provisions of the North Carolina General Statutes, the Commission does hereby find and determine that the adoption of the Conditional Use District is consistent with the goals and objectives of the adopted Land Use Plan and other long-range plans and the potential impacts of the surrounding area are mitigated by the approved and recommended conditions

Motion made by Vice Chairman Hogan, seconded by Commissioner Carew

Voting Yea: Chairman Rouse, Vice Chairman Hogan, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Carew, Commissioner Conto

*Motion passed unanimously*

### **NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Commissioner Boswell said a review and assessment of water capacity for the hotel project was not included in the agenda packet and asked for that information to be part of the agenda packet in the future. Mr. Hardison said it was included as part of the memo.

Commissioner Boswell said she has seen new construction in the Town without gutters and asked if this stormwater measure was not required or not being enforced. Mr. Hardison said new construction must have a stormwater design but does not necessarily require gutter installation. Commissioner Boswell said she sees gutters showing up on plans but not being installed. Mr. Hardison said he can look into this. Commissioner Boswell asked what the recourse is once that happens. She said in some cases adjacent properties are being flooded because the stormwater plan being presented to the Town is not being followed. Mr. Hardison said he will have to follow up with the Stormwater Inspector.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**ACTION:** Motion to adjourn

Motion made by Chairman Rouse

Voting Yea: Chairman Rouse, Vice Chairman Hogan, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Carew, Commissioner Conto

*Motion passed unanimously*

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.