

KURE BEACH TOWN COUNCIL
JOINT WORK SESSION WITH PLANNING & ZONING
B1 District Survey
May 9, 2007 7:30Pm

ACTION MINUTES

On May 9, 2007 at 7:30pm, the Town Council held a joint work session with the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding results of a survey for the B1 district. Notice of the meeting was posted at Town Hall, advertised in the newspaper and letters were mailed to each business owner within the B1 District.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Pro Tem Mac Montgomery
Commissioner Jim Dugan
Commissioner Bill Ufferman

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mayor Tim Fuller
Commissioner Dean Lambeth

P&Z MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair – Alan Votta
Vice Chair – Ken Buchert
Members – Tim Bullard
James Schutta

MEMBERS ABSENT

Janet Foster

STAFF PRESENT:

Town Clerk Nancy Avery

Mayor Pro Tem Montgomery called the meeting to order at 7:30pm and introduced John Sawyer of John Sawyer Architects. Mr. Sawyer introduced Philip Humphries and Scott Ogdon, members of his staff, and Peggy and Dexter Hayes of Hayes Planning Associates.

Ms. Hayes presented a summation of the findings and recommendations resulting from the survey and other studies considered and a copy of the presentation is herein incorporated as part of these minutes.

The team from John Sawyer Architects stated that Kure Beach is unique because:

- elevation is higher than most coastal communities which puts the town in position of being able to create a “walkable” community with street level retail. The town doesn’t have to worry about elevating buildings to provide parking below

CAMA setbacks are based on the first stable line of vegetation. In Kure Beach’s case, the setback actually takes the first 60 foot setback from the bulk head. This reduces the building space to 5000 square feet, but it is not a hurdle that can’t be over come. There

are two CAMA lines, 60 feet from bulkhead and 120 feet from the bulkhead and between the two lines, a building can be built up to 5000 square feet. There seems to be a misconception around the town that there can't be building at the 60 foot setback, only at the 120 foot setback– that isn't correct.

- It is evident from survey responders that a business district is wanted. The Town should be an advocate for business and figure out ways to configure the B1 district to help businesses be profitable
- Sidewalks and attractive, safe streets are needed. Sidewalks should be wide enough to provide for outdoor commerce and benches
- Need parking spaces to be available to business customers and patrons, not employees
- Signage needs to be improved – design for visitors new to the area
- Sustainable landscaping is needed to improve appearance and provide shade on streets. Good investment
- LUP talks about central corridor on K Avenue. Large 90 foot ROW is currently used for parking. Recommend clearly designating a boulevard look and provide other parking areas. Need to address parking to allow for sidewalks. Potential for overflow parking at park location
- The pier is real draw and helps to create a center in the district. Need wider sidewalks and buffers between cars and sidewalks to encourage pedestrian lingering.
- Change traffic pattern making section of K Avenue from Fort Fisher Blvd to the ocean one way following along Atlantic Avenue and out L Avenue. This creates town center for farmer's market, festivals, etc. 18 ft for wide one way lane, 6 foot buffer of trees and benches, bike racks, sidewalks, businesses – allow an 'unloading' zone for beach/pier visitors with remote parking
- 35 ft height limit is consistent with the small town feel that survey responders like about town – need to focus on ways to work with that
- population of 2000 won't support large commercial business. Mixed use is built in the zoning ordinance – gives flexibility. There are ways to build more footage for buildings without additional height
- work with Progress Energy and DOT to bury power lines – would make huge difference in appearance

Mr. Hayes stated he reviewed the Town's ordinances and existing Land Use Plan and commented:

- Pier is center piece and Kure Beach is known for it– should focus on this fact when considering land use pattern
- Commercial use should be encouraged and maintained on ground floor and as dominate use
- Commercial use should be protected to serve tourists and residents- don't allow residential to dominate
- Need to address parking shortages
- Need to improve appearance of district

- Ideas for achieving the above include changes to Land Use Plan and ordinances because there are inconsistencies and regulations that don't apply such as the allowed use of car lot in the B1 district
 - Land Use Plan purpose states trade, etc for local and regional – lose 'regional' focus
 - make use of ordinance that allows dwellings as part of business use - mixed use
 - be careful about parking regulations as to whether on site parking is required – can be provided at off site remote location
 - ordinance allows portable signs which can be nuisance for pedestrians – may want to remove
 - FAR is not really appropriate for area because it requires allowing height availability – used more in extremely dense locations
 - ordinance doesn't have special/conditional use which requires site plan approval – suggests looking at adding. Current practice right now requires only building permit – town doesn't get to review or control
- Ideas for funding changes:
 - Revenue – set aside funds and allocate % of general fund
 - Research grant programs such as Main Street and CAMA grants
 - Create special assessment tax district
 - Preferential tax opportunity – if private business open to public, can reduce taxes

Questions and comments from P&Z and Council

1) What type of business can 2000 population support?

Business owners need to extend to shoulder seasons to increase tourists. The key is phased development, success tied to tourism – population alone can't support

2) Can you send all written data and drawings presented to P&Z and council?

Yes

3) If B1 becomes a complete mixed use town center with no hotels, is it possible that the business center can survive with hotel business from other towns?

Anticipation is that people will come to eat, shop and walk along the beach, pier – make these items a destination. Trend is that visitors tend to eat where they lodge, so look to encourage Wilmington and surrounding area trips. Could look at retail on ground floor and motel/vacation rentals on 2nd and 3rd floor. Develop image and brand Kure Beach as a destination. Attraction for people is to be close to ocean.

4) By the term “destination” – do you mean a short visit -- one or two days.

Even day trips - the area is already a draw with the fort and aquarium. Need something to grab the attention of these visitors. For people that don't know the area, parking must be clearly marked

5) Think we need more information on what tourists want, before a plan can be developed

6) Ordinances don't reflect reality of today's town – adequate in 1970's. How do we act on bringing ordinances in line and how important is that?

Very important to update ordinances

7) Council wants business district that maintains viable business. P&Z has indicated willingness to comply and support. We need to look at in a fresh light.

Public Comments

1) At first glance, confused by survey – was it for business owners or for residents to mold Town. Questions clarified that the resident opinion was wanted. I own most of motels left and wasn't approached to be interviewed –am willing to talk. Studies indicate more income in motel than retail and motels can't exist in 35 foot world. Only way to recapture loss of motel units lost is to build higher. Most of visitors that come to the beach want to stay where they can look at the ocean. Why didn't survey go out to people who pay ROT tax money? Need their input. Without tourism, taxes will go up. Missing part of puzzle – why not make pamphlet and put on ferry, aquarium, motels, pier, etc to get tourist input. Different tourist comes to Kure Beach than to Carolina Beach – more upscale, family oriented.

2) Marketing committee has put out surveys to ROT visitors and usually get less than 4% response.

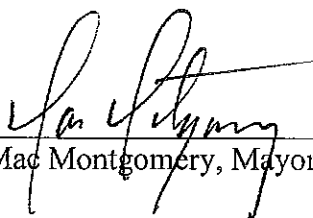
3) Holden Beach doesn't have business district – have to cross the bridge to causeway. Used to be one, but has disappeared.

4) Think height limit should have been on survey – input from general public is needed as to how much height would be tolerated.

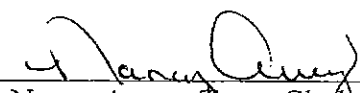
5) It was a good survey –for the extension up K avenue with mixed use with residential – where are they going to park? That has to be addressed. Don't want to attract day trippers that spend the day at the beach without spending any money in local economy.

Adjournment

Mayor Pro Tem Montgomery adjourned the worked session at 9:40pm



Mac Montgomery, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST: 

Nancy Avery, Town Clerk

