



TOWN COUNCIL
Joint Meeting with
Planning Commission & Harbor Area Review Board
July 22, 2010
6:00 p.m.
St. Charles Parish Hall

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Dora Sullivan, having established a quorum, called to order the Joint Meeting of the Town Council with the Planning Commission and Harbor Area Review Board. In addition to Mayor Sullivan, present were Councilmen Bannon, Evans, Natali, Sullivan and Veber. Councilman Bennett was not able to attend. Also in attendance were Town Manager Heather Arcos, Town Planner Tom Bonadeo and Town Clerk Libby Hume. Mr. John Crouse of Hankins & Anderson, formerly CMSS Architects, was also in attendance as well as two members of the public.

Chairwoman Joan Natali, having established a quorum, called to order the meeting of the Planning Commission. In addition to Chairwoman Natali, present were Commissioners Ben Lewis and Roger Munz. Commissioner Dennis McCoy arrived at 6:03 p.m. Commissioners Malcolm Hayward and Mike Strub were unable to attend.

Chairman Ralph Orzo, having established a quorum, called to order the meeting of the Harbor Area Review Board (HARB). In addition to Chairman Orzo, present were Board Members Russ Dunton, Laurie Klingel, Steve Michel and Joan Natali.

Town Planner Tom Bonadeo introduced Mr. John Crouse who presented the final draft of the Harbor Area Design Guidelines explaining how the guidelines were structured. Mr. Crouse began by showing the coverage area on the map and went on to review the following sections: i) Street Design Standards, including Parking; ii) Streetscape Design Standards, including Streetscapes, Pedestrian Ways, Arcades & Colonnades, Outdoor Plazas, Outdoor Lighting, Outdoor Furniture, and Outdoor Dining & Sidewalk Cafes; iii) Architectural Design Standards, including Massing, Façade Treatment, and Building Materials; and iv) Landscape Design Standards; v) Signage Design Standards, including Environmental Signage and Commercial Signage.

There was some discussion regarding the design standards of the East Beach community in Norfolk, VA regarding their landscaping and building materials.

HARB member Steve Michel stated that he was new on the board and asked whether the information contained in these guidelines were recommendations or standards. Mr. Crouse explained that these were recommendations only. Tom Bonadeo added that requirements are included in the Zoning Ordinance and that these were guidelines to give people/developers an idea of what the Town would like in the Harbor area.

Commissioner Ben Lewis asked how these guidelines would be implemented. Tom Bonadeo stated that the guidelines would be given to developers. Mr. Crouse added that developers prefer clear guidelines of what the municipality wants.

HARB member Russ Dunton commented that there was some very nice vinyl siding that look like cedar shakes and asked if that would be permitted. Mr. Crouse stated that if the Town allowed some vinyl siding it could cause problems with other people/developers wanting to use other types of vinyl siding which is not as attractive.

Tom Bonadeo stated that the Town could not dictate use of certain materials, but could only make suggestions through the Historic District Review Board (HDRB) and the HARB. Mr. Crouse added that most developers would adhere to the guidelines provided by the Town vs. having to go through the process of getting something approved.

Councilman Veber stated his concern regarding parking whether on-street or off-street. The Town currently does not have enough room to accommodate parking for the condo units in Town, etc. and there was only one page dedicated to parking included in the guidelines. Tom Bonadeo stated that there was specific parking guidelines included in the Town's Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Crouse added that the Town could institute time limits on parking along Mason Avenue but the limits would have to be enforced.

Councilman Evans noted that on page 45 regarding Building Materials, the guidelines refer to maximum sizes on various materials, but no minimums which could become an issue. Mr. Crouse stated that Councilman Evans had a good point and that this was something that could be reviewed further.

HARB member Russ Dunton noted that on page 46 regarding Acceptable Materials for Exterior Walls, the guidelines state that "Mortar shall be red to light brown in color. Grey and white mortar colors are not acceptable" and questioned why grey and white mortar would not be permitted. There was some discussion regarding the color issue and Russ Dunton suggested that the last sentence in this section regarding grey and white mortar be deleted.

Councilman Evans stated that pages 43 and 46 are contradictory regarding the use of aluminum. Page 43 permits the use of "anodized aluminum, stainless steel, copper, bronze, brass or painted steel" but page 46 lists "metal siding that is exposed, galvanized, aluminum or other shiny metal materials" as unacceptable materials.

HARB member Steve Michel expressed some concern regarding the recommendations in the guidelines for one side of Mason Avenue vs. the historic nature of the opposite side of Mason Avenue and the fact that each side could have a different look. Steve Michel also added that in several places in the guidelines, the word "must" was used and suggested that this could be changed to "encouraged" since these are actually recommendations. Mr. Crouse agreed regarding changing the word "must" to "strongly encouraged" which would give the developers some flexibility and went on to address Mr. Michel's concern regarding the two sides of Mason Avenue matching stating that the two sides do not have to look alike and the Town may not want them to look alike. With the two sides of the street not being identical in nature, it would add diversity. Not all the buildings currently along Mason Avenue are alike.

HARB member Russ Dunton pointed out, on page 29, that the end of Item 8 shows a notation that should have been deleted to which Mr. Crouse was in agreement.

Councilman Evans asked about the "Transitional Zone / District" and whether it was the intent to make the buildings less imposing and more contemporary. Councilman Evans added that he felt that the buildings that were going up at the new wastewater treatment plant were

more contemporary with low profiles and a stark appearance. Mr. Crouse responded that the intent along Mason Avenue was to have the buildings be more like the historic styles but along the Harbor, a looser interpretation of styles would be permitted.

Commissioner Roger Munz asked, since “shiny” materials were not acceptable, if steel roofs on porches would be prohibited as well. Roger Munz added that the use of architectural vinyl would be nice in some instances as accents to a building. Mr. Crouse stated that steel roofs would be permitted as outlined in the guidelines, but reiterated that once vinyl was allowed, it could cause problems. Hardy Plank siding offers a very nice selection and would be preferred rather than vinyl.

HARB member Laurie Klingel expressed some concern regarding the suggested plant list stating that some of the plants included in the list may not be appropriate in certain areas and asked whether the HARB could advise against the use of some trees if a developer indicated that they would plant a type that would not necessarily be appropriate. Tom Bonadeo stated that this plant list was developed by the Tree Committee several years ago and that the HARB would be able to give their recommendations during the application review process.

Tom Bonadeo asked the attendees to forward any additional changes or concerns to himself or Libby Hume. Any modifications will be made and the final guidelines would be forward to the Planning Commission to make their recommendation to the Town Council. The Town Council would hold a public hearing in September and vote on the approval of the guidelines afterwards.

Motion made by Councilman Bannon, seconded by Councilman Veber to adjourn the Town Council Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission and the Harbor Area Review Board. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Motion made by Commissioner Dennis McCoy, seconded by Commissioner Roger Munz to adjourn the Planning Commission Meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Motion made by HARB member Laurie Klingel, seconded by HARB member Steve Michel to adjourn the Harbor Area Review Board Meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Mayor Sullivan

Chairwoman Joan Natali

Chairman Ralph Orzo

Town Clerk