



WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

321 Causeway Drive, Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480

August 7, 2018

The Town of Wrightsville Beach Planning Board met at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers located at 321 Causeway Drive, Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480.

PRESENT: Chairman Jim Smith, Vice Chairman Jeff DeGroote, David Culp, Susan Snider, Karen King

ABSENT: Ace Cofer, Vivian "Zeke" Partin

Staff Members Present: Danielle Villegas, Planning Technician
Tony Wilson, Director of Parks and Planning

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Chairman Jim Smith at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Jim Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

...Motion by Ms. Susan Snider to approve the July 3, 2018 minutes. Motion seconded by Mr. Jeff DeGroote and carried unanimously by a vote of (5-0).

NEW BUSINESS**AGENDA ITEM A:**

CONSIDERATION OF THE TEXT AMENDMENT 92.01 AND 155.7.15 TO ALLOW FOR PERMITTED VENDORS TO RENT BEACH EQUIPMENT TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH AN ONLINE PROCESS AND OFFSITE LOCATION.

STAFF PRESENTATION:

The current ordinance allows for Beach Equipment, chairs and umbrellas only, to be rented to hotel guests, by hotels located immediately adjacent to the beach front. According to the ordinance, beach equipment shall include beach chairs/loungers, umbrellas, personal use size canopies no larger than twelve feet by twelve feet, small beach games, small beach toys, coolers, and small tables. Ocean related business activity is a business activity limited solely to teaching participants to surf or kite board and the rental of beach equipment by vendors who have acquired a permit through the Town.

The proposed text amendment would allow additional types of equipment to be rented, and allow for other businesses to rent the equipment to the public through their online service.

Planning Staff reached out to department heads for review and comments, the following feedback was received:

- **Fire Department:**

How will this impact the emergency lanes we have on the beach, would they be allowed to leave equipment on the beach like blockade, surf club is not a resort yet they rent/vend right on the emergency lane, what about future vendors...is this going to open up x number of vendors up and down the beach? Where would these vendors be allowed to park while dispensing their equipment? I would implore you not to allow them to drive on the beach like shell island. (they leave huge ruts in the beach access and on the beach since they do not air down their tires) The beach accesses are already pretty busy without having these vendors lugging multiple umbrellas on a cart through the accesses or through Mercers Pier access.

- **Parks & Rec Department:**

This request may open up requests by other businesses to operate on the beach strand. We receive numerous calls from businesses offering beach yoga, boot camp, and other similar classes desiring a permit to conduct business. Unloading of equipment may become an issue as vendors are unable to find parking and potentially block beachgoers while they unload to accommodate their customers.

This ordinance was originally written for existing hotels, on the beach front, to rent only chairs and umbrellas to their guests. Staff is concerned that this will open up problems with multiple vendors renting various equipment, to the public, along the entire beach front.

Planning Staff recommends that the Planning Board forward an unfavorable recommendation to the Board of Aldermen for the Text Amendment to Chapter 155.7.15 Chapter 92.01.

PLANNING BOARD QUESTIONS:

Ms. Karen King asked if hotels are only just now having to apply for a permit to rent beach equipment. Mr. Tony Wilson replied that they have always had to comply with this.

PRESENTATION BY APPLICANT:

Applicants Mr. Ben Rhodes and Mr. Theo Robbage presented their request, saying they had been on the beach for more than ten years and will not allow equipment to be stored there. They have a good relationship with Shannon and plan to remove all equipment by dark. They suggest a limited amount of permits and plan to park at the owner's property. They do not plan to drive on the beach, however they do use a cart. They addressed all fire and parks and rec concerns, ending their presentation by saying they plan to follow all parking rules.

PLANNING BOARD QUESTIONS:

Mr. Jeff DeGroot asked where they currently operate. Mr. Rhodes responded that they have an offsite storage facility and everything is done through an ecommerce website. When Mr. DeGroot clarified and asked where they operate, Mr. Rhodes said in Wrightsville Beach and Figure 8.

Ms. King inquired whether they receive more business from people staying in houses/condos who find a parking spot and then call for a reservation, or vice versa. Mr. Rhodes responded that about 70% of their customers do meet the above description, but about 30% do not.

Chairman Jim Smith asked if they are currently working on Wrightsville Beach. Mr. Rhodes said that they did conduct this business model last year, but had to stop due to an existing contract with Silver Gull and miscommunication.

Ms. King asked about the quality of the beach equipment. Mr. Rhodes responded that it is good quality and they guarantee a better installation than the normal beach goer. They use a high quality anchor made in NC for the umbrellas.

PUBLIC HEARING

In Favor:

Carol Sheketi of 313 Nixon Place manages the Islander Condominiums in Wrightsville Beach. She has worked closely with the applicants and was impressed by their work ethic. This service helps elderly patrons who can't enjoy the beach because they can't set up their beach equipment.

Sue Bullock that Wrightsville Beach supports new businesses and that we're happy with this one. Ms. Bullock commented that she and Mr. Wilson have gone through this

particular discussion three times. She suggests that the business be required to carry liability to cover accidents with equipment.

Ms. Nancy Faye was concerned about storage in front of the dunes at the Blockade Runner, but was ultimately in favor.

In opposition:

None.

PLANNING BOARD QUESTIONS

Mr. David Culp asked how the applicants' liability works. Mr. Rhodes responded that Wrightsville Beach is named as the insured.

Ms. Snider asked if staff has discussed limiting permit numbers. Mr. Wilson said they have not, this is the first time it has come up.

MOTIONS:

...Motion by Ms. Susan Snider to forward a favorable recommendation to the Board of Aldermen to approve the changes to text amendments 92.01 and 155.7.15 on Beach Equipment Rental. Motion seconded by Mr. David Culp and carried unanimously by a vote of (5-0).

AGENDA ITEM B:

CONSIDERATION OF AN INITIAL ZONING REQUEST, FOLLOWING THE ANNEXATION OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 7000 WRIGHTSVILLE AVENUE, TO A C-5 ZONING DISTRICT.

STAFF PRESENTATION:

Planning Staff is requesting the Initial Zoning, following the annexation of the property located at 7000 Wrightsville Avenue, to a C-5 Zoning District. This parcel was added to the Town of Wrightsville Beach by the General Assembly of North Carolina per Session Law 2018-107 Senate Bill 566 and is located in an area that the Town typically considers a C-5 Zoning District.

Planning Staff reached out to department heads for review and comments and received no feedback.

Planning Staff recommends that the Planning Board forward a favorable recommendation to the Board of Aldermen to approve the Initial Zoning of 7000 Wrightsville Avenue to a C-5 Zoning District.

PLANNING BOARD QUESTIONS:

Chairman Smith asked if the two adjoining properties are in Wrightsville Beach. Mr.

Wilson said they are not. Chairman Smith then asked if the ABC Board owned the property now. Bill Kopp from the ABC Board said they do own the property. He is also in favor of this motion.

MOTIONS:

...Motion by Mr. David Culp to forward a favorable recommendation to the Board of Aldermen to approve an Initial Zoning request, following the annexation of the property located at 7000 Wrightsville Avenue to a C-5 Zoning District. Motion seconded by Mr. Jeff DeGroote and carried unanimously by a vote of (5-0).

OLD BUSINESS

None at this time.

OTHER BUSINESS FROM CHAIRPERSON OR BOARD MEMBERS

None at this time.

OTHER BUSINESS FROM STAFF

None at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

...There being no further business to come before the board, Ms. Susan Snider made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Ms. Karen King, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 6:48 p.m. Vote (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Danielle Villegas, Planning & Inspections