

**TOWN OF EMERALD ISLE
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2008**

Chairman Jim Craig called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Members present were: Jim Craig, Ken Sullivan, Linda Hughs, Bob Smith and Tom Kelly. Also present was Kevin Reed, Planning and Inspections Director, Peggy Grammer, Permit Technician.

A motion was made by Linda Hughs to excuse Eddie Barber and Pete Wachter from tonight's meeting. The motion was seconded by Tom Kelly and passed unanimously (4 to 0).

A motion was made by Bob Smith to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2008 Planning Board meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Linda Hughs and passed unanimously (4 to 0).

Kevin Reed advised the Planning Board members of actions taken by the Board of Commissioners at its November meeting including the rezoning of property in the vicinity of Island Harbor Marina from MH-1 and Business to Marina Village. Mr. Reed advised that for the month of October, the Planning and Inspections Department had issued one permit for new home and a total estimated value for all permits in excess of \$1.4 million. This brings the fiscal year total to over \$5.9 million in construction value and the department has collected approximately \$39,455 in permit fees.

Consider a request from H & S Hotel Properties LLC, for Commercial Review of the proposed H & S Hotel located at 9001 Crew Drive.

Mr. Reed indicated that H & S Hotel Properties LLC was seeking commercial review in order to construct a hotel on property at 9001 Crew Drive. The property is currently zoned Business (B) and hotels are a permitted use in the B District. The proposed hotel will have three stories with 53 rooms and a swimming pool. Mr. Reed informed the Board that the Town's Technical Review Committee had reviewed the project at its November meeting. He further indicated that the proposed development was consistent with the Town's requirements for building setbacks, building colors, building height limitations, parking requirements, exterior lighting, and natural area requirements. Mr. Reed indicated that the Town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), specifically Chapter 6, Section 6.1.3(4), requires that commercial structures have building offsets in order to avoid buildings having the appearance of being large box type structures. The applicants are proposing the use of offsets and projecting porches on the second and third floor as an approach to complying with this requirement of the UDO. Mr. Reed further indicated that there were no offsets along the first floor of the structure. Present for questions and comments were Larry and Daisy Spell representing H & S Hotel Properties. Several board members had questions about the building colors and Mr. and Mrs. Spell responded by showing specific examples of the building materials they were proposing to use. Staff confirmed that the proposed colors were consistent with the Town's requirements. In response to a question from Mr. Kelly, Mr. Spell indicated that they would manage the hotel as a "mom and pop" operation and would not seek outside management for its operation. Mr. Spell also indicated that they hope to begin construction in early 2009 and would anticipate the construction to take approximately one year. Ken Sullivan asked about the required building offsets on the first floor

and whether or not the Town had previously approved a building with no offsets on the first floor. Mr. Reed indicated that this was the first multi-story building that had been reviewed in his tenure with the Town. Mr. Reed further indicated that one story commercial buildings, such as the Sea Oats Shopping Center, have no offset but use the roof structure and overhang or other similar architectural features to avoid a box like appearance. In response to a question regarding the use of balconies on the first floor, Mr. Spell indicated that a balcony on the first floor would create architectural incongruity and make it difficult to effectively landscape around the building. Mr. Craig commented that landscaping along the first floor would soften the effect of no offset on the first floor. Mr. Sullivan asked if awnings could be used on the first floor to create a visual break. Mrs. Spell responded by indicating that the offsets would conflict with the half circle windows on the first floor which were added to make the appearance of the building more appealing. Mrs. Spell further indicated that the balconies on the second floor create a visual offset similar to a gable roof for a one story building. Mr. Smith indicated that balconies on the first floor would appear to be “out of place” and he felt the combination of landscaping and second floor architectural features created an attractive appearance of the structure and that he was comfortable with its appearance. Mr. Kelly noted that the use of brick along the first floor and the transition to siding above the first floor also contributed to an attractive appearance for the structure and seemingly creates a visual break in the wall structure. Mr. Reed responded to a question by Mr., Sullivan and indicated that a gable can serve as an offset even though it is not technically part of a wall structure. Mr. Sullivan commented that the use of porches and gables in the roof make the appearance of the structure attractive. The general conclusion of all of the Planning Board members was that the building design was attractive and that the combination of building materials, offset and porches help create a structure that did not have a box-like appearance. Following this discussion, Mr. Ken Sullivan made a motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that the proposed development be approved with the following condition.

1. Approval for the on-site septic disposal system.

The motion was seconded by Linda Hughs and passed unanimously (4-0)

Discussion regarding a request from R. Andrew Harris for an amendment to Chapter 6, Development Standards, Section 6.7.1(7) of the Town’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) in order to allow for commercial parking surfaces to be constructed of wood.

Mr. Reed presented the Board with a copy of a letter from Mr. Andy Harris requesting an amendment to the Town’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to allow commercial parking areas to be constructed of wood. Currently the UDO limits the surfaces of commercial parking areas to asphalt, concrete or permeable construction blocks only. Mr. Reed indicated that Mr. Harris represents the owners of Island Harbor Marina and they are currently working on redevelopment plan for the property that would include parking areas constructed of wood. The Planning Board had a number of questions relative to the appearance, maintenance and safety of commercial parking lots constructed of wood. Mr. Reed confirmed with the Board that after conversations with representative of Carteret County and Morehead City, that both of these neighboring jurisdictions have or would permit parking and vehicle areas to be constructed of wood. Mr. Reed indicated to the Board that the building code would address how such structures are designed based on their intended use and specific loading requirements. Several Board members indicated that they still had questions about the proposed amendment and wanted to see some specific examples of how wood could be used in such an application. After discussion of

the proposal, the Board requested more information to be provided by Mr. Harris for review at its December 15, 2008 meeting. Mr. Reed indicated that he would convey this to Mr. Harris and place the matter on the Board's December agenda.

COMMENTS:

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by Bob Smith to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Linda Hughs and passed unanimously (4 to 0). The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Peggy Grammer, Secretary
Town of Emerald Isle Planning Board