Town of Nags Head
Planning Board
May 20, 2025

The Planning Board of the Town of Nags Head met on Tuesday, May 20th, 2025, in the Board Room at the Nags Head Municipal Complex.

Planning Chair Megan Vaughan called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. as a quorum was present. Chair Vaughan noted that Mr. Elder would not be present for the meeting. She also mentioned that Kristy Wright had sent an email regarding her departure and expressed appreciation for her years of loyal service. Chair Vaughan stated that the Board of Commissioners would work on replacing her in the coming months.

Members Present

Megan Vaughan, Meade Gwinn, Molly Harrison, David Thompson, Basil Belsches

Members Absent

David Elder

Others Present

Kelly Wyatt, Joe Costello, Andy Garman, David Ryan, Lily Nieberding

Approval of Agenda

David Thompson moved to approve the agenda as presented, Meade Gwinn seconded, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Public Comment/Audience Response

None

Approval of Minutes

Chair Vaughan asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 15th, 2025, meeting. David Thompson moved to approve the minutes as presented; Molly Harrison seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Gwinn pointed out a correction needed in the minutes. He noted that Macey White was referenced as working for Village Realty, but she actually works for Seaside Realty Management.

Action Items

Consideration of Site Plan Amendment submitted by the Town of Nags Head for the redevelopment of the existing Employee Wellness Facility, located at 5401 S. Croatan Highway, Nags Head.

Planning Director Kelly Wyatt presented the site plan amendment for the redevelopment of the existing employee wellness facility. She explained that the town was the applicant for this project, which involves the construction of a 2-story, 3,200 square foot employee wellness facility with two residential workforce housing units above, along with associated site improvements.

Key points of the presentation included:

- The property is currently zoned R3 and is being considered for rezoning to SPDC Institutional.
- A 10-foot wide transitional protective yard is required along the southern property line.
- The property is in an X flood zone with a local elevation standard of 9 feet. The proposed building will be elevated to 10 feet.
- The project is consistent with the 2017 Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Plan.
- Lot coverage will slightly decrease from 44.12% to 44% with the redevelopment.
- The building height will be 34 feet, complying with the 35-foot limit.
- The building design meets architectural standards with 155 residential design points.
- Parking requirements are met when considering the entire town hall facility.
- Landscaping and buffering requirements are met.
- No lighting or signage is proposed at this time.
- Wastewater approval is in process with the Dare County Health Department.

Chair Vaughan inquired about the hours of operation for the fitness facility. Town Manager Andy Garman explained that it would use a badge system, allowing 24/7 access for employees. Mr. Garman confirmed for Mr. Gwinn that Planning Board members can get a badge to use the facility; those interested can contact Jan Mielke, Human Resources.

Mr. Garman confirmed for Mr. Belsches that the units would be furnished.

Board members expressed support for the project, particularly the inclusion of workforce housing. David Thompson noted that the town was leading by example and setting a good precedent.

David Thompson moved to recommend approval of the Site Plan Amendment as presented. Basil Belsches seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Nomination of Planning Board member to serve on the Septic Health Advisory Committee (SHAC).

Basil Belsches volunteered to serve on the Septic Health Advisory Committee, citing his background from working on the decentralized wastewater management project.

There being no other volunteers, Chair Vaughan called for a motion.

A motion to nominate Mr. Belsches to serve on the Septic Health Advisory Committee was made by Molly Harrison and seconded by Meade Gwinn. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Wyatt informed Mr. Belsches that the next SHAC meeting would be on May 28th at 10 AM in the conference room at Town Hall. Ms. Wyatt offered to send him notes to catch up on the committee's current work, including the distribution of a $500,000 grant through a no-interest loan program for high-risk properties.

Report on Board of Commissioners Actions – May 7, 2025

Ms. Wyatt provided a brief report on the Board of Commissioners' actions from their May 7th meeting. Of note: the consent agenda included the map amendment for rezoning the southern portion of the employee wellness facility property from R3 to Village Institutional, as well as the associated text amendment; Ms. Wyatt gave an update on a draft scope and framework for implementing the

$500,000 zero-interest loan awarded by the Division of Water Infrastructure; Deputy Planning Director Joe Costello presented information on a collaboration opportunity with the county through the hazard mitigation grant program for property elevation or acquisition.

Town Updates

Ms. Harrison requested, and Ms. Wyatt gave an update on the recent BOA case and variance that was granted for a property on Lakeside Street.

Mr. Gwinn requested more information, and Mr. Costello gave more details regarding the house elevations/acquisitions opportunity through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Discussion Items

Continued discussion of Strategic Plan Action Item 2.2 as it relates to the examination of the allowable uses within the Commercial Outdoor Recreation Overlay District.

Mr. Costello presented an update on the examination of allowable uses within the Commercial Outdoor Recreation Overlay District (CORD). He reviewed the area covered by the overlay district and discussed potential changes to allowed uses, and infrastructure improvements.
Key points of the discussion included:

- The need to support existing businesses by allowing flexibility and expansion of uses.
- Consideration of removing some C2 uses from the CORD that may be incompatible.
- Managing heights and development to keep the sound visible and accessible.
- Potential for the area to become a second major activity center for seasonal tourists.
- Improving connectivity between the Whalebone activity area and the sound side activity node.
- Developing a way-finding action plan and considering public art installations.
- Continuing to implement and update the pedestrian plan.
- Advocating for the US 158 access management plan.

David Thompson emphasized the popularity of boardwalks along the water, referencing recent articles in Southern Living magazine. He suggested that such attractions could draw people away from the beach and create new opportunities for activities.

Chair Vaughan inquired about public input. Board members discussed the importance of public input with Mr. Thompson noting that with public engagement "we'll get more ideas". Mr. Gwinn agreed noting that "public input would be valuable". Staff and the Board agreed that they need to clearly define what input they're looking for.

Chair Vaughan suggested prioritizing items that don't rely on possible legislation. The Board and Staff agreed that focusing on infrastructure improvements and wayfinding could generate interest and excitement about the area.

Staff will prioritize potential actions and continue the discussion at the next meeting.

Planning & Development Director's Report – May 7th, 2025

Ms. Wyatt provided brief updates on ongoing projects and activities:

- The Estuarine Shoreline Management Plan is progressing, with recent drone imagery captured to identify subaquatic vegetation.

- The sand relocation phase of the dune management program has ended, but applications for dune cost share program are still being accepted until mid-June.
- The Planning Department achieved good permit turnaround times in the third quarter.
- Summer events at Dowdy Park are starting, with yoga sessions already underway.

Planning Board Members' Agenda

None

Planning Board Chairman's Agenda

None

Adjournment

Town Manager Andy Garman invited board members to attend an open house at the new Public Services Complex following the meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made by Molly Harrison. The time was 9:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lily Campos Nieberding