

TOWN OF EAST HAVEN
Candlelight by the Sea Ad Hoc Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Douglas Mac Donald
Committee Member DePalma
Committee Member Cofrancesco
Committee Member Schlegel
Committee Member Carbo

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Committee Member Vellali
Committee Member Deko
Committee Member Moscato

Chairman Douglas MacDonald called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Roll was called and a quorum was present.

There were no representatives in attendance tonight from the Sub Committee of the Town Council.

There were 11 members of the public present.

Mayor-Elect April Capone-Almon arrived at 7:07 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION made to accept the minutes of the October 25th meeting by Committee member DePalma and seconded by Committee member Cofrancesco. All were in favor none were opposed and none abstained.

MOTION CARRIED

DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE PLANS OF 147 COSEY BEACH AVENUE

Chairman MacDonald stated that the committee wished to discuss the viability of leaving the structure up or knocking it down and to discuss what the funding would be with either one. Town Engineer Mario Ricoszi then spoke to the Committee and the public regarding this matter. Mario thanked the committee for the invitation to speak tonight and handed out informational packets of general information to member of the committee.

Chairman MacDonald asked Mr. Ricozzi about the cost of demolition as opposed to demolition and renovations. The cost estimate was around \$400,000 for demolition and \$94,000 for demolition with renovations. This cost estimate was done as part of the process of the site work done by Nafis & Young Engineering as part of the anticipated Beach Revitalization Plan.

Public comment was then taken regarding the information handed out by Mr. Ricozzi. One member of the public stated that he had heard there were 2 different views of what to do on the site. He also state that the building is definitely an eyesore and asked the committee if they have considered using the footprint of the building with a pavilion so that resident could utilize the area more and that he could envision an area with low impact on open space. He is a 65 year resident of the Town.

Chairman MacDonald then asked Mr. Ricozzi if there were a proposal based upon the existing footprint and he said yes. There was a discussion of a park, conference center etc, and lots of misinformation as to what the end result would have been in prior discussions. Chairman MacDonald state that this committee is charged with taking public comment, that it would be available to use by the entire Town and it would be an open process with open minded people. He then thanked the public for their comments and informed the public in attendance the there was a lack of posting for prior meetings, but the new committee would have postings in the East Haven Courier, on Channel 20, which is the local information channel and have meetings in places other than the Beach House.

Committee member DePalma then stated that this commission is starting from scratch and nothing will be used from prior meetings. Chairman MacDonald stated that the committee can only recommend based on a committee decision not decide and that the people want the issue resolved.

Questions were asked again by the public regarding the cost of the demolition and why it would make a difference whether the building was being demolished without renovations as well as with renovations. It was explained that the cost estimate came from the consultant in prior meetings and plans. It was also asked that if the building was to be demolished could parts of the building be recycled and sold to organizations using recycled building parts. It was stated that it could.

Committee member Carbo then had a discussion about the building and whether it was to remain up or down and that safety is the main concern no matter what.

Mayor-Elect April Capone-Almon than said that the key thing to remember is that this is beachfront property and they are not making it anymore. Foxon residents maybe use the beach more often possibly because they don't live there. Chairman MacDonald said that when speaking about the uses for this property to think outside the box. There was an issue brought up that maybe the DEP would buy the property as they are looking for properties along the Connecticut coastline. But they are looking for key coastal lands and this technically isn't coastal or wetlands and then we wouldn't be able to tell the state what to do with the piece of property.

Someone from the public stated that as someone who goes to the beach quite often, the use for parking would be great as is maybe a continuation of the beach, but whatever you do there, make sure it wouldn't get ruined by vandals.

Ken McKay from the Town Council spoke about the purchase of the property by the Town. He stated that a private contractor that was interested in the property wanted to put up 4 story condo buildings in this spot and the residents of the Town did not want that. This is a viable piece of property and that it should be used by the Town for that reason. There was a discussion about open space and the lack in Town. Committee member Cofrancesco stated that the committee would be shortsighted if they turned over the property. He suggested to all to think about not just now but for the future generations and what we could do to preserve the space.

Committee member DePalma asked Mario Ricoszi if the footprint of the building could be sliced and he stated yes it could. That would make it viable to look at other options and limits the size of a building on the property.

Discussions were held as to why the Town couldn't charge for out of town usage of the beach and it was stated that because the Town had used state funds for the beach we had to leave the beaches open to all. Paying

to park was another issue brought up and that is something that needs to be discussed at a future time.

Sarah Morrill, Community Development Director for the Town of East Haven suggested that whatever plan you consider to please also consider using the Plan of Conservation Development Task Force Plan that makes it easier to get funds for grants from the state.

Mario Rizzo stated that the PDTF was recently adopted and dominantly in the same form as the commission put it together. Planning and Zoning had adopted this as well and maybe could be used for a guidance document.

Committee member DePalma state that this is to benefit the majority of the Town and would like for the entire Town to enjoy what he does as a resident of the beach area.

Committee member Schlegel state that he appreciated all the input from the public and said that when you are at the beach, never look down or up but all around you.

Mayor-Elect April Capone-Almon stated that she is excited about this project and thanked everyone for coming out.

Chairman MacDonald stated that the next meeting would be held on December 6th here at the Foxon Recreation Reggie Hatch Center at 7:00 p.m. and stated that we are beginning to form thoughts as a committee and with ideas from public comment we are on our way.

There being no further business to come before the committee, Committee Member Carbo made a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. and it was seconded by Mayor-Elect April Capone-Almon. All were in favor, none were opposed and none abstained. **MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda S. LaLuna
Clerk