

PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes Special Meeting August 17, 2006

I. ROLL CALL

Fred Walstrom	Present
Andrew Bowman	Present
Jack Deegan	Present
Jeff Ford	Absent
Mary Ellen Hughes	Present
Laura Kors	Present
Sheryl McCleery	Present
Peter Sears	Present
Sara Smith	Present

Also present were City Planner Larry Nix, City Attorney Jim Ramer and City Manager Fred Geuder.

Approximately 120 people were in attendance.

Chairman Fred Walstrom called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

II. PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Walstrom asked the City Manager to review of the purpose of the meeting.

The City Manager noted that this was a public hearing on proposed zoning code amendments, not a hotel plan specifically. The amendments would re-define hotels, provide for an overlay district in a portion of the CBD to permit a three-story, up to 39' tall building, and the process for approving such a project. Speakers at the hearing were asked to limit themselves to two minutes each.

Walstrom noted that the overlay district would be confined to the one block where the hotel currently existed. Walstrom opened the floor to comments.

1. Brad Breuer of 441 Short Street noted his concern about the viewshed along Main Street. He did not want it to become a canyon, because Main Street is a primary attribute of Harbor Springs. He also mentioned maintaining the historical views of the community.
2. Roy York of Lower Shore Drive said he moved here because of the quaintness of the community. Why change it now? He was also concerned about the precedent it may set.
3. Marty Breighner, a Main St. property owner, feels the height proposed is reasonable compared to other existing buildings. He is in support of the proposal.

4. Dennis Bila, an East Third St. property owner, said the existing hotel does not meet current needs of the community, and he was in support of the proposal.
5. Bob Bokram, of Friendship Township, voiced his support of the project.
6. Jack Blanchard, owner of 233 E. Bay, noted that he bought his property in 1965 and would like to see the community remain a “village” and keep its small town atmosphere. He was concerned about the precedent, and noted that he might like to have three stories if this were approved.
7. Tom Gallagher of Little Traverse Township noted the need for a larger hotel. If it is not built here, it might be built outside of town and could lead to sprawl. He supports the changes.
8. Dudley Marvin, an owner of the Pier Restaurant, supported the need for the hotel. The existing hotel has never been viable. He felt the standards for a Condo-Hotel were too picky. The Harborside Inn has not been kept up. He also noted the parking changes proposed and said he agreed with those changes also.
9. Billy Harrison of 12 Beach Dr. noted that the Wequetonsing Landowners Association was unanimously opposed to these changes. They felt it could be a bad precedent.
10. Millie Wallin, E. Bay St., noted that the hotel has never been successful; its rates were too expensive and it is too short a season. She is opposed to the new plan.
11. Tim Brown, owner of the Colonial Inn, said he was opposed to having a Condo-Hotel. He barely makes it in the summer owning his property free and clear. If this is approved, he might want the same considerations. He tried to enlarge in 1987, and was turned down, and now he is glad he was turned down. He is opposed.
12. B. J. Mogg of Glenn Drive is opposed. She does not want to see the changes, and what is proposed is way too big.
13. Jean Beckley of Little Traverse Township noted that she is on the Township Zoning Board. When you make a change in the zoning, be careful what you do, because it could be a bad precedent.
14. Elizabeth Donnelly of 405 E. Main noted that the parking lot was zoned differently and asked whether a taller building could be built there without Planning Commission approval.

The City Manager noted that the zoning for the parking lot allows a residential structure 35’ tall to be built. But he also noted that the parking lot was required for the hotel, so if that were to change, the Planning Commission would be involved.

15. Betty Fisher of 615 East Bluff was opposed to the changes. The changes would open a big hole in the code. Leave the town as it is.
16. John MacGregor, a Harbor Springs business owner, said he has seen a lot of changes in 44 years. Harborside Inn was poorly built and has been poorly maintained. He does not feel the height difference is significant and he is in favor of the proposed changes.
17. _____, (Barbara Dean's daughter), noted that the current hotel is not attractive, but she is opposed to the proposed changes and feels it would be spot zoning. It needs change but the building should stay small.
18. Tom Gallagher asked Harbor Springs what it wants. The town is not the same as it was 20 years ago. We need to have a good way now to host visitors.
19. Dick Farmer of Beach Drive noted that Harbor Springs is doing well overall. People like the small town atmosphere. He is opposed to the changes and is concerned about what precedent would be set if the changes were approved.
20. Sandy Ruggles, of 552 W. Bluff, said she can't believe anyone is thinking about these changes. It appears to be residents on one side and business owners on the other side. She asked the Commission to listen to those who live here. She is opposed.
21. B. J. Mogg said she doesn't mind a new building, but not one so big.
22. Mark Rondel of East Main St. is not comfortable with the overlay district for one block; if you do it, do it for the whole CBD. Let everyone have an equal chance. Also doing these changes for what appears to be one project is not a good idea. He also does not like the Condo-Hotel concept. He called this merely a developer's tool.
23. David Wood, who lives adjacent to the Hotel on East Bay, noted that .5 acre requirement. Does the Bank qualify. He also noted that the parking lot is not currently zoned CBD. Would it be changed?

The City Manager noted that an application would have to include a request to re-zone that portion of the property.

24. Barbara Dean of Marina Village asked why change the rules? The bluff views will change, and this will open a precedent. She is opposed.
25. Nancy Sellers, of East Bluff and Glenn Drive, noted that she has been here 26 years, and this proposal was like the 'big foot' buildings in Birmingham. Do we want that. She opposes.

26. Doug Troszak of 125 E. Bay said he left Birmingham when the “big foots” happened. He suggested the overlay district for the whole CBD.
27. Sandy Ruggles noted that the tall “historical” buildings in town are all very significant buildings and have been around a long time. She is opposed to more tall buildings.
28. Bill Waldron of Zoll St. noted that he has had no better neighbors than having the Mossburgs build adjacent to his property, but it will be much bigger downtown and will appear particularly so from a boat.
29. Ed Alf of Pennsylvania Street said business could be better. But people like Harbor Springs for its character, and if you change the character, people will go away. Keep it as it is. He opposes the changes.
30. Sally Lott of Harbor Springs supports the changes. Any help you can give the merchants is good.
31. Tom Carruthers of Harbor Point said where he was from in Cincinnati you didn’t change the code much. He is opposed. Harbor Springs could end up looking like Bay Harbor if it were approved.
32. Bill Bugera of Lower Shore Drive and owner of the New York Restaurant questioned the viability of a hotel, but do something at the site.
33. Nancy Kenyon of East Main St. said if the units were Condo-Hotel units, would they be rented out and what would be the price?

Chairman Walstrom said the Commission did not know what rental rates would be.

34. Tim Brown said he felt the season was too short in Harbor Springs for another hotel.
35. Paul Fairbairn said it was not so much a question of viability, but of height. It is a short season, and he supports the changes.
36. Maureen Mayne of East Bluff felt that the changes would change Bay Street’s character and that this would be a bad precedent.
37. Rob Mossburg of the Cottage Company said he likes Harbor Springs as a place to live. He has been in the hotel business since 1983; he feels the Condo-Hotel would work; the existing hotel is not big enough; there is a historical precedence for a three story hotel on the site; he is trying to be creative and help to make a more vibrant downtown; he said historically corner buildings were more significant; he appreciates the many comments heard; this project would generate significant tax dollars over its life span.

38. Dick Petit noted that this hearing was about the process. He would like to see a scale model of the proposal.
39. Mark Rondel said the Master Plan is to preserve the character of Harbor Springs. Owner/operators have decreased under the zoning code. A new Condo-Hotel would not be owner operated.
40. Chris Marley said the community needs the hotel. He is not concerned about the height.
41. Bernie Sloan of East Bay St. is opposed because of the visual impact and the additional noise that would be created.
42. Dick Wallin of 307 East Bay said Bay St. and Gardner St. are narrow streets now. We need to seriously consider the long-term implications of this proposal. He is personally affected, and feel his property value would go down. He is opposed.
43. Holly Hudson of Fourth St. noted that a new hotel may or may not really change the economy of Harbor Springs. She is opposed to the changes.
44. Dudley Marvin said he is an independent owner/operator of a hotel, but he said a Condo-Hotel can work if marketed properly.
45. Mary Wood of 263 E. Bay asked how many rooms the Perry Hotel has (80 per Marvin). This is proposed to be 15-20 rooms; it won't change the economy. The business community needs a new model like Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario.
46. Josh Withey, a local business owner, said change is inevitable. He supports the changes and he supports what the Mossburgs have done.
47. Bill Prall, a former business owner in Harbor Springs, said the business season needs help. The downtown needs revitalization and this is a good project. He is in favor. The project would also create jobs.

Commission Bowman noted that he had to leave. He would have to abstain from any vote, but he thanked people for their comments.

48. Dick Farmer noted he is not against a hotel, but is against these proposed changes.

City Attorney Ramer commented that the City felt the proposed ordinance could be defended, but there were no guarantees in law.

49. Sonja Gardner, manager of the current hotel, asked whether anyone could then build higher.

50. Tim Brown said there was no answer to that question.

51. Rob Mossburg noted that he had placed a flag on the elevator shaft at 39' high.

The City Manager noted that many letters received that had been distributed to all Planning Commission members.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Walstrom said he would not want to vote on this now or tonight. He wanted to digest all the comments.

Motion by McCleery, seconded by Deegan, to table consideration until the September 21st regular meeting of the Planning Commission. Motion carried.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the special meeting was adjourned.

Frederick W. Geuder, City Manager

HOTEL ZONING LETTERS

2006

As of 8-18-06

7-8	Greg & Lynn McDonald	504 E. Main	Support
7-30	Gloria Frank	5269 W. Lake	Opposed
7-30	Bruce & Patsy Ohmart	302 E. Main	Opposed
7-30	Dick & Millie Wallin	307 E. Bay	Opposed
7-30	David & Mary Wood	263 E. Bay	Opposed
7-30	Gloria Frank (2 nd Letter)	5269 W. Lake	Opposed
7-31	Patsy Ketterer	HS	Opposed
8-1	Boo & Diane Litzenburger		Support
8-1	Eleanor Jardine	226 Pine	Opposed
8-7	Wes & Karen Hovey	591 E. Bluff	Opposed
8-8	Ann Burrows	553 E. Main	Opposed
8-8	Josephine Beardslee	496 E. Main	Opposed
8-8	Patrick Dolle & Family	11 Beach Drive	Opposed
8-3	Henry & Judy Velleman	453 E. Bluff	Support
8-3	Pete & Juli Wallin	7879 Lauer Lane	Opposed
8-10	John & Susan Graff	537 E. Third	Support
8-10	Ed Koza	Glenn Drive	Opposed
8-10	Susie Carruthers	Harbor Point	Opposed
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8-11	David Wood (2 nd Letter)	263 E. Bay	Opposed
8-11	Cindy & Michael Pettibone	827 Glenn	Support
8-11	Mike & Penny Isermann	368 Church	Support
8-11	Tim Herbert	Third St.	Support
8-12	Mary Wood (2 nd Letter)	263 E. Bay	Opposed
8-15	Elizabeth Donley	405 E. Main	Support
8-12	Patty & Mark Malcolm	450 E. Main	Opposed
8-12	James Offield	HS	Support
8-9	William & Katherine Wood	120 E. Summit	Opposed
8-11	Gow Litzenburger	HS	Support
8-11	Josephine Beardslee (2 nd Letter)	496 E. Main	Opposed
8-14	CH Crane II	471 Bay	Opposed
8-14	Greg Renker	Harbor Point	Support
8-14	Bernie Shaffer	E. Main	Support
8-14	John Baker	HS	Concerns
8-14	Walter Fisher	HS	Opposed
8-14	Jeff James	HS	Support
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8-14	David Lyle	Walstrom Marine	Support
8-13	Robert Swanson	HS	Support
8-14	Byron West	HS	Support
8-14	Betty Kujat	HS	Opposed
8-14	Kellison King	E. Main St.	Support
8-14	Tom Gallagher	HS	Support
8-14	Larry Beck	HS	Support

8-14	Steve Ryckman	E. Main St.	Support
8-15	Ralph & Jane Mahalak	HS	Support
8-8	Marye Thomlison	HS	Opposed
8-15	Sonya Goddard	Harborside Inn	Support
8-15	Nancy Peterson	4 th St.	Support
8-15	Robert Peterson	HS	Support
8-14	Jeff Graham	Turkey's	Opposed
8-15	Alan Dika	301 Easy St.	Support
8-15	George Menzi	W. Bluff	Support
8-15	Margee & Bud Tinney	525 E. Third	Support
8-15	Kathy Emig	E. Main St.	Support
8-15	Alan Hammond	HS	Support
8-15	Bob & Barb Bokram	HS	Support
8-16	Neil Marzella	210 E. Main	Support
8-15	Withey Painting	HS	Support
8-15	Lisa Ashley		Support
8-16	Karli Bertocchi		Support
8-16	Bill Prall	HS	Support
8-16	Bruce & Patsy Ohmart	E. Main St.	Opposed
8-16	Cynthia Rutherford	Easy Street	Support
8-16	Gib Tinney	HS	Support
8-10	Dennis Bila II	321 Spring	Support
8-16	Margaret Tvedten	284 E. Third	Opposed
8-16	Adelaine Const.	HS	Support
8-15	19 Name Petition		Opposed
8-12	Mary Wood	263 E. Bay	Opposed
8-16	Steve & Kathy Boeckman	HS	Support
8-16	David Sparrow	HS	Support
8-16	Gordon & Marcie Sczubelek	HS	Support
8-16	Steve Miller	HS	Support
8-16	Donna Niederstadt	HS	Opposed
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8-16	Julie Tower	Zoll St.	Support
8-16	Carolyn Sutherland	Good Hart	Support
8-16	Ralph Wixson	Petoskey	Support
8-16	F. Linehan/G.Donahue	East Main	Support
8-16	Dr./Mrs Harvey Minkin	224 Artesian	Support
8-16	Nicole Schapila	377 E. Third	Support
8-16	Darrell & Kathi Lavender	Woolybugger	Support
8-16	Tim Patton	Bay St.	Support
8-16	Sandra Koehler	HS Title	Support
8-16	Dorothy Miller	HS	Support
8-16	Steve Koss		Support
8-16	Michael Brochert	HS	Support
8-16	Kate Scollin	Preston-Feather	Support
8-16	David Balok	Edward Jones	Support
8-16	Karen & Bill Frederick	HS	Support
8-16	Anna & Randy Saddison	KRG	Support
8-16	Robert Saley	Northern Poss.	Support

8-16	Rob Mossburg	Cottage Co.	Support
8-16	Pam Pfeifle	Island Bean	Support
8-16	Mick & Ann Phillips	534 W. Bluff	Support
8-17	Paul Fairbairn	HS	Support
8-16	Shauna Bezilla	HS	Support
8-14	Rob & Emily Dube	597 E. Main	Support
8-16	Michael Sherman	Harborside Inn	Support
8-16	Jeff & Lynn Granger	541 Hoyt	Support
8-16	Michael & Eliz. Apling		Support
8-16	Marty & Lisa Sutter	E. Bay St.	Support
8-16	Shaun Bezilla	HP Golf Course	Support
8-16	Thornton Brodhead	HS	Support
8-16	Ross DeFries	HS	Support
8-16	LeRoy Kramer	557 Pine	Opposed
8-17	John Cupps	HS	Support
8-17	Julie Cupps	HS	Support
8-17	Joe Lechner	HS	Support
8-17	Kathy Boyer	HS	Comments Pro/Con
8-17	Gail Temple		Support
8-17	Ron ?		Support
8-17	??		Support
8-16	Sally Lott	Harrison St.	Support
8-17	Jean Armstrong		Opposed
8-17	Anna LaRue	W. Lake St.	Opposed
8-17	John Ogden	HS	Support
8-17	Morris Hall		Support
8-16	Anna Souto	Harbor Accents	Support
8-17	Joe O'Neill	W. Lake St.	Support
8-17	Cindy Dickson	HS	Support
8-17	Tom Behan II	Pumco	Support
8-17	Tara Kruzal		Support
8-17	Daniel Warner, Jr.		Support
8-17	Evelyn McNeil		Support
8-17	Cathy Neff-Siezers		Support
8-16	Monogram Goods		Support
8-17	Elizabeth Rollie		Support
8-17	Maureen Lee		Support
8-17	Mark & Mary Hramiec Hoffman		Support
8-17	Kathy Erber	309 Maple	Support
8-16	Al and Jim's Tree Service		Support
8-17	John Ottinger		Support
8-17	Craig Bell	The WARD Gallery	Support
8-17	Dr. Durkin & Charly Vickery		Comment
8-17	Ashley Green	357 Heacock	Opposed
8-18	Brad Breuer	Short St.	Opposed