

CITY OF NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA
NORTH MYRTLE BEACH CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
Wednesday, September 14, 2022

Minutes

1. ROLL CALL: 1:30 PM

Marilyn Hatley called the workshop to order and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Marilyn Hatley

JO Baldwin

Bubba Collins, Absent

Fred Coyne

Nicole Fontana

Trey Skidmore, Absent

Hank Thomas, Absent

2. DISCUSSION:

Regarding proposed minimum building size for in-common, single-family, and duplex units. Jim Wood, Director of Planning and Development, stated the small owned market trend was gaining popularity especially with retirees and first-time home buyers. The ordinance was prompted by a project that was completed a few years ago. There were some units in the project with less than 600 square feet. The majority were over 900 square feet. He stated there have been three more proposals for small home projects. A project with smaller units, could be the ones with higher turnover which would lead to neighborhood instability and may increase the demand for storage units. In keeping with the most recent project, the staff has proposed an ordinance for a minimum house size standard for a single-family, in-common project of 900 square feet units for one story and 1,300 square feet for two-story units. Director Wood stated this would only apply to in-common projects, where one developer owned the land, and the unit would be bought or rented. The land would not be owned. This standard would not apply to single-family lots. Director Wood explained the standards that had been in the ordinances for a long time and gave examples of projects within the city. A discussion between the Council and staff ensued. Mayor Hatley stated she did not think they would have to worry about them not having enough tiny homes being built in the area. She wanted to make sure they had a good development where in five years it was not run down and blighted. Mayor Pro Tempore Baldwin stated he agreed and didn't want it to be an issue in the future. Mayor Hatley stated she didn't mind going down in size, but they still needed to be careful. The Council and staff continued their discussions. Mayor Hatley stated they were not trying to encourage or discourage small homes. They were trying to get the best design for a small home. Director Wood stated they could come up with a proposal that would address their concerns.

Mayor Hatley opened the floor for public comment.

Jolene Puffer, 3506 Turner Street, North Myrtle Beach, stated she was concerned that she didn't hear any discussion on affordability. When the size is minimized then the affordability is minimized, which was why the tiny homes started to develop in communities. People needed to have homes they could afford to live in. She asked Director Wood if he saw a study of people that needed storage when they lived in a small house or his supposition. Director Wood stated it was his opinion of what would happen, and Councilman Coyne stated they have had feedback on this concern. He saw where she was coming from on cost and affordability would be tough to determine and they needed to have a balance. Ms. Puffer asked if they had a plan for affordability. Manager Mahaney stated the median income and age in North Myrtle Beach was very high. In his opinion, there would not be much affordable housing this side of the waterway with their dynamics. Ms. Puffer stated their city was designed on the median income and age.

Manager Mahaney stated he didn't design the city; it was the way it had developed based on the geography. Ms. Puffer stated the city was tasked with accommodating the people in the workforce that weren't in that median age and income. Manager Mahaney stated the affordability was being found across the waterway. Mayor Hatley stated the value of the properties were very high on the east side of Highway 17. Not many developers would pay that price to build a lower income development. They do have land on the west side where affordable housing could be found. She stated the Mayor of Loris had a long talk with her and said the growth of North Myrtle Beach had helped their city to grow tremendously along with many affordable housing developments. There were affordable apartments and housing on the west side of the waterway. She stated that Ms. Puffer couldn't expect everyone who worked in North Myrtle Beach to live on the east side of the waterway. Ms. Puffer stated she knew that, but she wanted to make sure they were accommodating. She thought the city should have reserved 15-25 houses in Sea Glass to make workforce housing. Mayor Hatley stated there were condominiums and apartments being build next to the Sports Complex. Councilman Coyne stated the biggest cost of living on the coast was the cost of the land, whether it was a 900 square foot house or a 1,300 square foot house. Ms. Puffer stated there was a considerable difference in the sale of these two different square foot homes. She stated they saw that with Del Webb. She also stated there should be some ability to provide affordable houses and if all the minimums were put in, then people would be less likely to develop it. There was not a discussion about price point. Her original point was when they put a minimum square footage, there was also a minimum price. Were they serving the citizens of North Myrtle Beach? Mayor Hatley stated they were not going to tell a developer how much rent they should charge. Ms. Puffer stated the people that worked in restaurants had to live across the waterway. She would like them to consider price points. Mayor Pro Tempore Baldwin stated affordable housing was important and was concerned about setting a minimum. The Council and staff continued to discuss affordable housing.

Ray Skidmore, 920 37th Avenue South, Myrtle Beach, asked for clarification on the R-3 zoning, which allowed RV and mobile home parks. If they allowed this ordinance, then they couldn't allow these RV or mobile homes that were 400 square feet or less. Director Wood stated this ordinance would not apply to RV or mobile home parks, because they were a specific land use category. Mr. Skidmore stated the ordinance did not say that. He wanted to know if there was language that excluded RV and mobile home parks. Director Wood explained there wasn't, but it was the interpretation of the ordinance that they were separated products. It would only apply to single-family, in-common projects. He offered to add that into the narrative.

Cheryl Kilday, Destination North Myrtle Beach, stated this was an interesting conversation and she thought there would be more exploration needed. The future of the city needed to think about what people want when they move here, like quality of construction and size of open space. They talked about it at their meetings and tried to avoid the term affordable housing, but use attainable housing for teachers, public safety, etc. She stated the Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce started a new foundation called the Partnership Grand Strand and workforce was a part of it. It wasn't something we could solve by ourselves, but it was a regional issue. She wanted to have workforce a part of the conversation. Mayor Hatley stated across the waterway could be affordable housing and it was in the city limits. Ms. Kilday stated a conversation needed to be had about what people were looking for, what would be solved by this ordinance, and she wanted the Council to take time to see if it would apply to the community.

Director Wood stated there was a minimum site size of 5 acres to have this kind of project and at least 5,000 square feet of land area per unit, and 25% open space for in-common projects.

Mr. Skidmore stated in the R-3 zoning ordinance, the lot size for RV's is stated to be 40 x 60, which was 2,400 square feet. He stated it would be a lot easier if the ordinance read just 2,400 square feet and not a specific lot size. It would accomplish the same thing. It would be easy to amend.

David Prince, 1311 Holly Drive, North Myrtle Beach, stated he agreed with Mr. Skidmore on the 2,400 square foot lot. He asked if there was an open space requirement at Sea Glass. Director Wood stated it

was part of a PDD and required 20% open space and he believed it exceeded it. Mr. Prince stated it didn't seem like there was that much open space. He was doing a project across the swing bridge, and they were 3,500 square feet. They had more of a parking problem than Sea Glass did. He stated there needed to be adequate parking. Director Wood stated Sea Glass exceeded the parking requirements and they didn't allow short-term rentals, which usually caused parking issues.

Mayor Hatley stated she thought they would need another workshop on the issue before it became back to the Council. Director Wood stated if it were to be expanded, it would need to be readvertised, go back through Planning Commission, and then brought back to City Council. Mr. Noury stated it could be withdrawn. Mayor Hatley asked for it to be withdrawn and started all over. The Council was in agreement. She thanked everyone for coming to the workshop and adjourned the meeting at 2:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison K. Galbreath, Clerk to Council

MARILYN HATLEY, MAYOR

Minutes approved and adopted this 17th day of October 2022