

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF OCEAN RIDGE,  
FLORIDA HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 1997 AT 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Digby Bridges. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, roll call was answered by the following:

Commissioner Aaskov	Commissioner O'Hare
Commissioner Kaleel	Commissioner Stamos
Mayor Bridges	

- III Proposed Outline - Land Use Presentation
- A. RSF- single family residential district (Sec 26-11)
    - 1. Permitted Uses
    - 2. Special Exceptions subject to Commission Approval
    - 3. Property Development Regulations
      - a. Minimum lot area and dimensions
      - b. Minimum yard setbacks
      - c. Maximum building height
      - d. Minimum floor area
      - e. Maximum floor area
      - f. Proposed Supplemental Information
  - B. RSE-Single-family residential estate district (Sec 26-10)
    - 1. Same topics as RSF
  - C. RMM-medium density multiple-family residential district (Sec 26-12)
    - 1. Same topics as RSF

Mayor Bridges announced that he would like to clarify that the Commission was not trying to "railroad" these changes through. He explained that Gulf Stream and Palm Beach now have solid codes and everybody is pleased with them and he feels Ocean Ridge will be happy with the changes.

Mayor Bridges further explained that the Planning and Zoning Commission had spent many hours with the Consultant reviewing and revising the proposed changes.

Mayor Bridges advised that the goal was to preserve the current look of Ocean Ridge by closing the loopholes in the current code. He stated that the consultant has attempted to keep the architecture based on a human scale and also to control the massing of a house.

Mayor Bridges added that a decision must be made on whether these revisions should be made part of the code or a voluntary guide.

Mayor Bridges stated that he had asked Scott Tiernan, a resident of Gulf Stream, to come in and speak on his feelings towards the changes that have been made there.

Mr. Tiernan stated that Gulf Stream previously had a zoning board that approved buildings that met the setback requirement and no other design requirements. As a result of this, homes were built that some residents did not feel enhanced the architecture of the Town. Gulf Stream then introduced a new code that dictated design to be in scale with the lot size. Mr. Tiernan explained that some of the requirements include Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to be at 33%, any ceilings over 15' to count as double, and the inclusion of non-enclosed overhangs in the FAR. He stated that the real estate market in Gulf Stream has not been effected by these changes. He concluded that he felt it is a good idea to have consistency, integrity, and scale. There was applause from the public.

Hank Skokowski, consultant from Urban Design Studios, gave a description of his background which included a Master's degree in Urban Design and national awards received for quantitative standards of design guidelines.

Mr. Skokowski stated that the Town Commission had advised him in the beginning that they did not want a code as rigorous as the one in Gulf Stream.

Mr. Skokowski explained that there were two changes that constituted minimal size restrictions. The first was that the maximum height of a single story home would be decreased from 32' to 28' and the second was that the first 200' of ceilings over 15' would not count as double effecting the FAR.

Mr. Skokowski stated that the intent was to regulate the front of homes to keep the residential character and added that most of the homes in Palm Beach would pass these criteria.

Mr. Skokowski concluded that the controls being proposed are minimal and would help to ensure compatibility within the community.

Town Clerk Hancsak gave a summary of the correspondence that had been received on this issue by stating the names of the residents who sent in letters in favor of and those against the proposed changes.

Mayor Bridges advised that he had spoken to some of the people listed on the petition against the proposed changes and discovered that they were not fully aware of what the changes involved. He added that the Commission needed to relook at the south end of Town to see how the revisions may affect that area.

Bruce Gimmy, 12 Ocean Ave and a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, stated that at first he believed the situation in Gulf Stream to be silly, but then realized the importance of the changes. Mr. Gimmy stated that he felt strongly about the sense of community in Ocean Ridge that he would like to keep as is.

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Bud Ford, 6306 N Ocean Blvd and acting Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, advised that when they were first asked about this, they felt they had a mission to keep to continuity of the Town, to not create a economic hardship on any area, to keep changes minimal, and to be fair to all.

Earl Jones, 14 Sailfish Lane and a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, stated that while no one wanted a totally obnoxious house going up across the street, the Commission did not want to dictate style or taste. Mr. Jones then showed illustrations to the public that showed a house with no windows that would be acceptable in the current code.

Betty Bingham, 1 Ocean Ave and a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, stated that the idea of revising the land development code was first proposed two years ago. She added that she was interested in having houses that do not cut off draft from neighbors or encroach on the neighbors in other ways.

At this point in the meeting, Town Manager Lanker went through the current code. He explained all of the sections indicating which sections had proposed changes and what these changes would mean.

After Town Manager Lanker and Hank Skokowski explained all of the revisions, Mayor Bridges asked for comments from the public.

Charlotte Carle, 7 Harbour Dr. S, stated that she understood the reasons for the revisions regarding window coverage and flat roofs citing the house recently built on Harbour Dr. that she described as looking like a prison.

David Berger, 45 Bimini Cove Dr., stated that the house next door to him looked like a convention hall because it took full advantage of the Building Department. He suggested that a moratorium be put on building plans until these revisions are finalized.

Gerald Goray, 130 Island Dr., stated that he appreciated the work of the Town Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission and added that he too liked the current character and feel of the Town. He advised that he felt government should not regulate items of personal taste and added that he felt government officials try to pass new laws as a type of legacy. He stated that he agreed with the current regulations of setbacks, lot coverage, and maximum height. He added that he thought the reinstatement of the regulation regarding flat roofs would alleviate some of the current problems. He suggested that an effort be made to correct the ambiguities in the current code so that new changes are not introduced that will affect property values. He concluded that he felt it would not be appropriate to limit door size, limit window size and coverage, and penalize for areas with a ceiling height over 15'. He added that he had additional letters and petitions he planned to submit in the next few days.

Phil Barlage, 35 Anna St. and a member of the Board of Adjustment, asked for clarification in the characterization of neighborhood by type. Hank Skokowski explained that he went into the community and looked at many characteristics including street size and landscaping as opposed to grouping by zoning. After this, the Town was divided into 5 groups that were simplified into 3 distinct neighborhood types.

Mr. Barlage stated that he believed that the more restrictions placed on houses would affect the demand and decrease the value.

Gilbert Panzer, 6810 N Ocean Blvd., stated that the government should not micro-manage aesthetics and suggested that the code be kept as it currently stands.

Emmett Pace, 5550 N Ocean Blvd., advised that he agreed with both Mr. Goray and Mr. Panzer adding that he felt what one does with the inside of the house should be the business of the resident.

Mayor Bridges stated that if it were permissible to have 20' ceiling heights, then the neighbor's view could be obstructed thus illustrating that what is done on the inside of the house can affect others.

Mr. Pace then asked for clarification on acceptability of sliding glass patio doors. Mayor Bridges stated that if the patio was enclosed it would affect the FAR and if the sliders were located in the front it would be governed by the window size.

Dr. Smith, 125 Marlin Dr., commented that he felt the current code to be sufficient and the proposed changes to be excessive and unnecessary.

Ruth Vanze, 16 Ridge Blvd., stated that she would welcome the bigger mansions as she felt they would help taxes.

Bill McCauley, 6285 N Ocean Blvd, stated that before any land development codes are changed, there should be a landscaping code in effect. He added that he formally objected to this process until a landscaping code is in effect. Atty Nicoletti advised that the Town currently has a landscaping code in effect that is in the process of being revised.

Shelly Childers, 22 Harbour Dr. S, advised that she felt the proposed changes were quite liberal. She added that she would also like mansions in Town, but they need to be on the correct lot size.

Bernard Ratner, 32 Harbour Dr. N, stated that he felt the proposals are reasonable and that the current code allows for many abuses. He added that he resented the individuals making comments about "big government" regarding the Town's democratically elected body.

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Haley Mills, 13 Hudson Ave., stated that she thought the Commission's actions are admirable and she is in favor of the changes. She added that she was also offended by the buzz words about big government.

Comm Stamos stated that he, too, has been offended by the implications that they are acting as big government and disagreed by saying that the Commission is only reacting to suggestions given by people in their neighborhoods.

Comm Kaleel concurred with Comm Stamos and stated that it is not easy to place restrictions on homeowners. He stated that he believed government should have some restrictions and the issue is what is a fair restriction. He added that he would like to know what sections those opposed to the revisions would agree with.

Comm Aaskov stated that the Commission was attempting to protect those building on their property, but also their neighbors. She suggested that the items be voted on one by one.

Comm O'Hare thanked the public for their input and commented that he too resented the inflammatory statements about big government. He suggested that there be another meeting to discuss the proposed revisions.

Mayor Bridges suggested that the Town Atty draw up the revisions and bring them before the Commission to be looked at one at a time. After that meeting the Commission could massage the wording of the Ordinance to make it acceptable to more people.

Comm O'Hare suggested that each proposed revision be done as a separate ordinance to which Atty Nicoletti stated that it would be just as effective to isolate each as a separate section of the ordinance.

Mayor Bridges suggested that the Commission have a workshop to examine the draft Ordinance, receive additional input, and then authorize the Town Attorney to finalize the ordinance for first reading.

IV. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:55 PM.

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Mayor Bridges

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Commissioner Aaskov

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Commissioner Kaleel

Attest By:

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Commissioner O'Hare

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Town Clerk

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Commissioner Stamos