

# REHOBOTH BEACH HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION

**From:** Mark Saunders, President, RBHA Board

**To:** City of Rehoboth Beach Planning Commission

**Date:** June 7, 2021

## **RE: Change of Zoning Request, 330 Rehoboth Avenue**

The owners of 330 Rehoboth Avenue have filed a request with the Planning Commission to alter the zoning of the whole of the property from mixed C-1 and R-1 to all C-1. This request is being made as a part of their preparation to pursue needed approvals for a proposed new hotel and related facilities including parking. **The RBHA Board opposes the request to rezone this property for the reasons stated below.** Please note that the RBHA Board is not taking any position regarding the proposed hotel as presented at prior meetings of the Planning Commission, rather the RBHA is specifically opposed to the rezoning of this property. There may be other solutions available to the owners through existing city processes.

330 Rehoboth Avenue occupies multiple lots fronting on Rehoboth Avenue as well as on State Road. The R-1 lot is an oversized 19,400+ s.f. parcel, roughly the size of 4 standard Rehoboth building lots. Historically, this lot has been used for parking. At the time that our current zoning maps were drawn, possibly going back into the 1960's, the lot in question was continued as an R-1 lot despite functioning in a commercial capacity. **Clearly the city believes that an R-1 designation is most appropriate and reflects the city's vision for the future of that part of State Road and South Rehoboth.**

Property owners who spoke at the Planning Commission meeting in August, 2019 and/or submitted written comments regarding the proposed hotel voiced their opposition. Multiple homeowners from Scarborough Village, including the association representative for Building 6 which abuts the R-1 lot, described having reviewed city zoning maps prior to making their purchasing decision. Owners of multiple units stated that they had been assured by knowledgeable professionals that should the function of the property change, the usage of the property would be required to meet the restrictions of the R-1 zone. City zoning maps must have meaning. Homeowners invest hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars relying on the official information of the city to be accurate and stable. **The city has an obligation to homeowners to maintain the stability of current zoning.**

The 330 Rehoboth Avenue parcel is not the only example of mixed zoning multi-lot parcels in the city. A decision by the Planning Commission to support rezoning the R-1 lot to C-1 would create a legal precedent potentially leading to future rezoning requests which would result in the destruction of the residential character of multiple blocks in their areas. Our residential neighborhoods are at ever increasing pressure from encroaching commercial projects as well as overbuilt rentals functioning as mini-hotels. **The RBHA Board requests that the Planning Commission avoid setting a precedent that would place further pressure on our residential neighborhoods and risk irreparable damage to the character and charm of our small town by denying the rezoning application.**

The RBHA Board is taking no position regarding the building of the proposed hotel. The owners of 330 Rehoboth Avenue have other processes available to them within city governance that may allow them to reach their goals.