

# Rehoboth Beach Homeowners Association City Update

**Vol. 1, No. 1  
March 11, 2023**

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our City Update. RBHA is tracking various issues as they come before City boards and commissions. We will use this email summary of recent information in an effort to keep our members up-to-date on topics that we believe may be of particular interest to our members. This is not meant to be an exhaustive summary of city business, but rather a more narrow focus on topics that may require tracking over time or warrant citizen engagement. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome!

## Mayor and Commissioners

1. **Rezoning Request Process.** Discussion continued at the Regular Mayor and Commissioners meeting on February 17<sup>th</sup> regarding appropriate procedures to follow when a property owner requests a rezoning. Communication with the state established that it would be necessary for the state to first review the request as a PLUS Review. Plus Review is a mandated state-level committee that reviews and approves our Comprehensive Development Plan and advises local governments on land use and zoning issues. This Plus Review in this case would allow a discussion of the request in the context of the zoning maps in the approved Comprehensive Development Plan. The state Plus Review meeting will result in a recommendation to the City of Rehoboth Beach, either for or against, rezoning. The City will still have the discretion to review the recommendation of the Plus Review committee as a part of its own decision-making process. The City will be responsible for initiating the request for Plus Review as well as any associated costs. Discussion of how to approach these costs moving forward needs to be an additional Mayor and Commissioners agenda item.
2. **Variations Issued by the Board of Adjustment.** At the Workshop Meeting on March 6, 2023, the Mayor and Commissioners discussed the advantages and disadvantages of extending the timeline from 6 months to 12 months for the expiration of approved variations. This discussion relates to only ***commercial projects that require Planning Commission Site Plan Review***.
3. **Basement Heights.** The discussion continued at the workshop meeting on March 6, 2023. The Assistant Building Inspector provided Part Two of his presentation to the Mayor and Commissioners. The presentation is attached to the meeting agenda and may be viewed on YouTube. The department made recommendations to resolve conflicts between the International Building Code and the Rehoboth Building Code. An agenda item appears on the Regular Meeting for March 17, 2023 to consider a resolution to continue the current practice of approving basement heights of 6 feet 6 inches pending an opportunity for the Board of Commissioners to further study the matter and consider any needed corrective actions.

## Planning Commission

1. **Parking.** Discussion of parking issues continued at the Planning Commission meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup>, specific to the development of recommendations to the Mayor and Commissioners for changes to City Code for hotel and commercial parking requirements. Proposed language will continue current commercial parking requirements for offices and businesses, while cleaning up

some potentially ambiguous code language. The notable proposed changes involve hotel parking. Language that is outdated is recommended to be removed. The new language will include a requirement of 1.2 hotel spaces for each hotel guest room and 1.0 spaces for each 250 square feet of meeting and other gathering spaces. Efforts were made to provide clear and inclusive language to help assure that parking must be provided for hotel space that will support gatherings and meetings regardless of how the developer may label the space in their proposed plan.

2. Bellhaven Hotel. The developers provided additional planning materials to the Planning Commission just before the deadline the City had provided to them for noon, March 10<sup>th</sup>, two hours prior to the regularly scheduled PC meeting at 2:00 pm. PC discussion concluded that the developer would be offered a Preliminary Site Plan Review meeting to occur at the regularly scheduled April 14, 2023 meeting. It is not uncommon for large, complex development projects and proposals to require more than one Preliminary Site Plan Review meeting. During public comment on March 10, abutting neighbors voiced concerns with the potential impacts upon their buildings and properties but were reminded by the Chair that discussion at that meeting was limited to discussion of next steps for the process and that specific concerns would be more appropriate to voice at the April Planning Commission meeting.