

BOROUGH OF LAVALLETTE

PLANNING BOARD QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

2539 surveys were mailed; duplicates were not excluded and it is estimated that 30 were returned as undelivered. 810 surveys were received. Several surveys were only partially answered (questions skipped over etc.) Percentage of responses received= 32%

1 Overall, are you satisfied with the areas set aside for the residential and commercial zones?

Yes 480 60%

No 263 32%

Those that responded in the negative to this question explained that they were unhappy about the intrusion of the residential area into the business district.

2. Currently, the residential districts are zoned for single-family homes. Are you in favor of multi-family homes as well in the residential districts?

Yes 122 15%

No 671 83%

Those that responded in the negative to this question explained that they were opposed to condominiums, townhouses and multi-family homes as they increase density, create parking shortages thus adding to congestion, increased call for services etc.

3. Are you satisfied with the Condo/multifamily development along Grand Central Avenue (Rt. 35 North)?

Yes 196 24%

No 583 72%

Those that responded in the negative to this question explained that they were opposed to condominiums and multi-family dwellings and their intrusion into the commercial district. Most cited the most recent development of the Krone's property and are of the opinion that the Planning Board and/or the Borough permitted the development.

The one most common complaint throughout the entire survey was the condoization of Route 35 North.

4. Are you in favor of the three-block Downtown Business District (B-2 Zone) with only commercial uses on the first floor and residential or commercial uses on the second floor?

Yes 612 76%

No 119 15%

Should it be expanded?

Yes 286 35%

No 376 46%

I was unable to extrapolate reasons for the responses to this question and very few were offered other than citing the advantages of the business district and an increase would result in exacerbating parking congestion, increase density etc.

5. Should an Architectural Design Plan that specifies the style and color of building exteriors for all new commercial buildings along Grand Central Avenue be developed?

Yes 560 69%

No 201 24%

Those that responded in the positive to this question explained reasons such as keeping the commercial buildings shore-like, coordinating color schemes and several mentioned the further avoidance of buildings that resemble Dunkin Donuts and Eckerd Drugs.

Those that responded in the negative to the question explained reasons such as variety is the spice of life and freedom of choice.

6. Currently, only two occupancies are permitted on a 50 x 100-foot lot in the B-1 or B-2 Business Districts.

Are you in favor of increasing the commercial occupancies to three or more for each lot in the Business districts?

Yes 160 20%

No 599 74%

Those that responded in the negative to the question explained very little citing mostly reasons such as parking congestion, over-crowding, and density.

7. Are you in favor of expending local tax dollars on beach replenishment?

Yes 469 58%

No 277 34%

Those that responded in the positive to the question explained that the beach is the main asset of the borough and thus, must be maintained.

Those that responded in the negative to the question explained that the Federal government should pay the expense of replenishment or that the beaches should be left alone and let nature handle the issue.

8. Are you in favor of cleaning, and beautifying the bay front?

Yes 627 77%

No 120 15%

The majority of those that responded in the positive to the question explained that the bay should be kept in a natural state while being kept well cleaned and maintained.

Are you in favor of limited improvements that blend with the natural environment, i.e. nature trails, walking paths, etc?

Yes 572 71%

No 179 22%

The majority of those that responded in the positive to the question explained that they were in favor of any natural plantings, dune grass, bayberry bushes, nature trails and especially walking paths since so many residents enjoy the sunsets.

Several responses added examples such as removing any unnecessary cement and hard surfaces to enhance tidal and flood percolation.

9. Are you satisfied with the number and type of recreational facilities within the Borough?

Yes 656 81%

No 69 9%

The percentages speak for themselves.

10. Overall, I think the Borough has many positive attributes, such as

There were several attributes noted by those participants who responded to the question. I will list them in the order of repetition.

1. Access to the beach and ocean.
2. The advantage and beauty of the bay front and attendant fishing
3. The family environment of a seashore, self contained small community
4. The non-commercial boardwalk
5. The volunteers, first aid etc.
6. The gazebo and concerts, and library
7. Responsive police
8. The courteous Borough Hall staff
9. Recycling program
10. Public Works

There were other items mentioned i.e. the lifeguards, small school district and recreational attributes i.e. flea market, bus rides etc.

11. I think the Borough needs improvement in

1. Limit condominiums, multi-family homes and density
2. Control residential development on Route 35 North
3. Limit large dwellings on small lots
4. Maintenance of the boardwalk on a yearly basis
5. Amount of restaurants available (not pizzerias)
6. Zoning and Code enforcement (weekend garbage control not enforced)

7. Control of sump pump discharges
8. Parking enforcement, and litter control in the summer
9. Allow and attract businesses that are essential to a season shore community
10. Exercise better control over conditions of dumpsters on business sites
11. More trees and greenery
12. Badge checkers at all entrances and improvement in job performance.

There were other items mentioned i.e. no eating or alcohol on beach (coolers are not checked); increase police presence on beach, dune enforcement and signage.

12. Do you have any other suggestions regarding the physical, economic and social development of the town?

Physical Suggestions:

1. Stop the number of condominiums and multi-family dwellings
2. Improve drainage and control sump pump discharges
3. Avoid over-development, density, huge dwellings and paving
4. Keep bay-front clean and natural; remove all unnecessary cement
5. Limit dune height and increase dune plantings i.e. beach roses (Rosa Rugosa)

Economic Suggestions:

6. Encourage commercial development i.e. higher quality restaurants with liquor licenses, shops, and boutiques (no chain businesses)
7. Control spending and limit all over-time

Social Suggestions:

8. Make businesses clean the sidewalks by their establishments
9. Creation of a municipal parking lot

10. Do not permit dogs on the boardwalk
11. More restaurants (this is also under economic and social suggestions)
12. Tennis and basketball courts need improvement
13. No smoking on beach ordinance and enforcement of beach regulations
14. Year-round youth programs
15. Improve boat ramp

SUMMARY

This summary is based strictly upon my perception of information offered from participants. I do not have any in-depth research or statistics but I read each and every comment offered on the survey responses.

There were mainly three approaches taken to the direction in which the Borough of Lavallette wishes to proceed in reference to a Master Plan. One approach is to view the community as one of summer residents, secondly, the summer visitors and thirdly, the year-round residents.

The summer residents and the summer visitors exist because of the Borough's proximity to the ocean and the bay and their ability to obtain the services and amenities during their visit/stay that they are accustomed to receiving. Many of the summer residents are of the "baby boomer" era that had the good fortune to be financially able to purchase realty in Lavallette or, they have inherited it from family. On the other hand, the year-round residents exist because in addition to the location, they enjoy the life style of a small community with a seashore environment, a small school district and one that welcomes everyone. Planning Board members are always hearing testimony about the house having "been in the family for years." As someone who spends time in the Construction Office, I hear this comment on numerous occasions.

The summer residents and the summer visitors expect dining facilities (other than one) and would like to see some with liquor licenses. They enjoy the beach and bay during the day, and expect dining, drink and decent vacation-type shopping. At dinner hour, they leave Lavallette for other dining sources taking their money with them. The leisurely stroll after dinner, with further dollars being spent on the spouse and children in local businesses, is cut off by the lack of such facilities. A short trip over the bridge for dinner brings them one step closer to the Mall and in turn, affects the local economy.

This probably accounts for some of the success of the “anchor area” businesses located near the Crab’s Claw not only at dinner hour, but at lunch hour as well.

As the number of rental units shrink, it become increasingly difficult to expand the tourist trade and this factor adds to the economic woes of the Borough and the local businesses. Less tourists and summer visitors, translates into less beach badges sold, and removes the viability of local business surviving on a year-round basis. The reduction of rental units results in less tourists, more businesses being unable to survive, and thus, selling out to the development of more condominiums and so it comes full circle.

Not that there are not year-round younger families but the year-round growth, if any, appears to be in the form of retirees. As Planning Board members will attest, they constantly hear testimony alluding to being a vacationer for years and the anticipation of finally being able to move to Lavallette permanently as a retiree. Applicants often speak of finally being able to use a summer residence for retirement purposes.

The needs of a retirement community may be all together different.

One common thread throughout the survey comments was the desire of all for the business area to be maintained, and the invasion of residential development on Route 35 being halted. There were comments made about the town fathers seeking out businesses and offering them incentives to come to Lavallette. There were references to other shore communities that have developed their commercial districts and the town fathers seeking direction from them. On the other hand, there were complaints about traffic congestion and the parking shortages but this seems to be directed at summer volume as opposed to the actual existence of any business.

There were many negative comments about the development of the Krone’s site and there appears to be the perception that this development was “allowed” by the Planning Board.

The purpose of this summary is not to form any conclusions or make any recommendations. I merely attempted to provide the Board with objective information that was gathered from the comments offered. I hope it is of some use.