SHPOA POSITION DOCUMENT

SEASHORE VETERANS PARK PROJECT

November 23, 2026

Background:

A resolution to approve an $18,000 fee to an outside engineering firm for the purpose of submitting a permit request to the NJDEP in accordance with CAFRA (Coastal Area Facility Review Act), so that the Borough of Stone Harbor can develop the area at the 95th St. parking lot was discussed at the November 16th Council meeting. The proposed project would include, among other things, construction of a new public restroom facility, a new stage for public events and performances, an expansive lawn, a Veterans' monument, and public space. It would incorporate a cul-de-sac turnaround, renovated parking and associated landscaping, hardscaping, site furnishing, signage, and lighting.

This resolution was postponed by a 6-0 vote of Council; SHPOA had advocated for this postponement due to minimal public awareness of the project, a lack of transparency by the governing body to their constituents, and the proposed expenditure of $2-2.5 MM taxpayer costs without the proper planning and vetting of the project.

Council plans to accumulate public input on this plan on their website until December 14th, allow for public input at the Council meeting on December 1st, and presumably plan for a vote at its meeting on December 15th.

SHPOA strongly opposes Council moving forward with this project, at least until the public has had ample time to provide input, and financial questions posed below have been adequately addressed. Here are some of the concerns that we feel are important to consider:

Financial Considerations:

- The Actual cost for Stone Harbor to build this park after a $2.5MM potential county grant is projected to be an additional $2-2.5MM. This would be funded by taxpayers, undoubtedly resulting in an increase in the existing $34 M general fund debt
- SHPOA has for many years advocated for the Borough to develop a long-term capital plan, identify costs and taxpayer impact of the items in that plan, and work with the Homeowners to prioritize capital spending. Only then should new projects be moved forward.
- The Borough has neither identified nor considered the annual costs to maintain this proposed park, which include daily bathroom cleaning, weekly lawn mowing, seasonal landscaping, etc. The additional water usage that would be required has also not been specified.

- The Borough has not analyzed the frequency and cost of maintaining and replacing equipment like video screens, speakers, furniture, etc. These should be presented as part of the discussion, especially considering the annual budget challenge the Borough has to meet the mandatory state cap limits on spending.

Non-Financial Project Impacts:

- Loss of approximately 20 parking spaces in the existing lot.
- Increased traffic at that location.
- Neighbors within 500 yards of this location have not been notified directly of this plan, nor have they had the chance to weigh in on the potential impact the noise and light from this project will project into their residential properties.
- Event and crowd control will be challenging. Ingress and egress to events must be considered in light of traffic control and management. Similarly, Borough noise regulations, Public Works and Police Department staffing and budget to manage planned events need to be considered carefully.
- Has any consideration has been given to salt air and harsh environmental effects on the structures and grass/landscaping at this seaside location?
- Has the impact of local noise ordinances been addressed; Should a traffic study be considered relative to events and time of day they'll be held?

Purpose and Benefit/Detriment Analysis:

- To what extent will the facilities actually be used by residents as distinguished from one day visitors?
- Will the park attract outside visitors who will contribute to our congestion, use our public services, but not add to the Borough revenue stream?
- What is the actual projected frequency of events to be conducted at the stage facility, and what is the nature of those events, including time of day?
- Stone Harbor has an active American Legion Post which has successfully managed Veterans' activities in the Borough for many years. Has the Borough worked with the Legion or other local Veterans' organizations to ensure they have had input and pride in this "Seashore Veterans Park"?
- Does the fact that Avalon and Sea Isle City have similar parks require that Stone Harbor do so also? Has consideration been given to the ongoing cost and management requirements which those facilities present to their respective municipalities?

Alternatives and Other Considerations:

- Could the 82nd St. recreation facility, which is already built and maintained, be considered as an alternate location for stage/bandshell structure and events?

- Could the Borough pursue separate grant and permit applications, and stage the project at two sites – (a) bathrooms and improved parking/aesthetics at 95th St. and (b) stage/bandshell at 82nd St., where parking, a lawn and bathrooms already exist?

For all of the above reasons, we believe that this project has not been properly planned, socialized, or budgeted for. SHPOA therefore opposes this proposed development, until such time that the issues we outline above, are studied and addressed. It's when you rush big projects like this, that mistakes are made. So we respectfully asks our members to make their voices heard by emailing Council members to share your opinion. The members of Borough Council appear below.

Thank you,

Stone Harbor Property Owners Association

Council Members

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New Council Members as of Jan 1, 2027

Geoff Woolery

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