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Scarborough neighbors 'have a lot of concerns' as Pine Point motel again seeks conversion to condos

By [Mario Moretto](#)

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SCARBOROUGH — The owners of a 22-unit seasonal motel on Pine Point are making initial moves toward converting the building into 12 luxury townhouse condominiums, a move that could reignite a six-year neighborhood feud.

Nicholas Truman, who co-owns the Lighthouse Inn at Pine Point with his brother, Peter, has requested an advisory opinion from the Planning Board about the plan to build and sell the condos. The board will eventually give its opinion to the Zoning Board of Appeals, which will make a final decision about the conversion.

It's not the first time the Trumans have explored conversion.

In 2005, they started working on a plan to turn the motel at 366 Pine Point Road into six luxury condos. The plan ultimately failed, thanks at least in part to opposition from the Pine Point Residents Association, which formed to fight the plan.

In 2009, [a controversial land swap](#) between the Trumans and the town resulted in what is now Snowberry Ocean View Park at the end of Pine Point Road. It also allowed the motel owners to put parking next to their building, although the swap reduced the number of spots from 28 to 22.

The neighbors opposed that deal, too. They claimed it wasn't a fair deal for the town to lose Depot Street, which used to run between the motel and its parking strip, where the park now sits. Depot Street was a dead end at Pine Point Beach.

The association isn't expected to like the condo plan this time, either.

"It's too dense a project," said Judy Shirk, a member of the group. "They don't even own an acre of land. I'm not against them being residential or having condos, I'm not against that. It's just the amount. ... It'll be a big impact going from a seasonal operation to a year-round operation. We have a lot of concerns."

Shirk also said she has concerns about parking, and about the stress on the town's services if year-round residents move in. In an email, she said abutting property values are at stake, although the town's assessor, Paul Lesperance, said the conversion would undoubtedly increase the hotel's property value.

"The character of the neighborhood is at stake," Shirk said.

Nicholas Truman said the time is right for the conversion. He and his brother are ready to give up the motel game, he said, and a successful appeal to the town would mean a broadened tax base and closer conformity to the area's zoning rules.



Photo: Mario Moretto / The Forecaster

Owners of the Lighthouse Inn at Pine Point are in the preliminary phases of turning their 22-unit hotel into 12 townhouse-style condominiums.

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366 Pine Point Road, Scarborough, Maine



"We're trying to do a very, very nice project," Truman said. "The Truman family has been on this street corner for 52 years. We've always had a reputation for keeping nice property. I guarantee this will be a very nice project that will blend in well with the new (Beachwalk) subdivision."

With the dispute about the land swap and parking behind them, Truman said this is as good a time as any to seek the appeals necessary for condo conversion.

The inn is a nonconforming building in a district zoned for residential use. Converting to condos would mean moving closer to zone compliance, though it would still require special permission because of the number of units in the building.

Truman said the condo renovation would include adding a third floor to the building, and that each townhouse would be about 1,200 square feet and have two bedrooms. Though design is in the preliminary stages, he said he hopes the condos will cost less than the homes in the Beachfront subdivision.

Shirk, meanwhile, has sent an email urging other neighborhood association members to be involved in the Planning Board hearings.

"This corner is among the most visible in Pine Point," she wrote. "The public, through the town's ordinances and the planning and zoning board, have rights to be heard in this process."

At the Aug. 22 Planning Board meeting, where the advisory opinion was to be sought, the item was tabled to give the Truman's more time to complete the advisory request.

"We just wanted to make sure we had crossed all our T's and dotted all our I's," Truman said. "We thought we were ready, but we just wanted to make sure."

As for the neighborhood group, Truman said he doesn't doubt it will have a bone to pick with his plan.

But he said he doesn't plan to meet with the group outside Planning Board or ZBA meetings, as he and his brother did the first time they broached the idea of condominium conversion.

"They're citizens, and they have a right to their opinion," he said. "But those meetings are the appropriate forum now."

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