

May 18, 2026 Ship Bottom Land Use Board Update – Hochstrasser’s Marina Application

Below is a summary of the recent hearing before the Ship Bottom Land Use Board concerning the redevelopment application for Hochstrasser’s Marina, which was purchased in March by Hotel LBI owner Chris Vernon.

If approved, the proposed project, to be known as “Salt Shack,” would operate as a casual waterfront restaurant featuring dock-and-dine access, outdoor seating areas, yard games, and fire pits. The existing structures located on Eighth Street are proposed to be renovated, while adjoining lots would be utilized for boat storage and overflow parking as required.

It should be noted that the application has been submitted as a minor site plan application, and no variances are currently being requested.

In response to comments and concerns raised by members of the Land Use Board and local residents, a number of operational, site design, and neighborhood impact issues were discussed during the hearing. Below is a summary of the principal items reviewed and the requests made to the Applicant/property owner.

Proposed Conditions and Operational Requirements

(As Requested by the Land Use Board)

1. The establishment shall maintain a maximum occupancy of two hundred ninety-five (295) seats.
2. Hours of operation shall be limited to 12:00 p.m. (noon) through 10:00 p.m., seven (7) days per week.
3. Last call for all alcoholic beverage service shall occur no later than 9:45 p.m., with the intent that all patrons vacate the premises by 10:00 p.m.
4. Live or recorded music shall be permitted daily between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and sunset only.
5. The number of boat slips shall remain capped at seventy-two (72). Each slip shall be limited to one (1) watercraft/vessel per slip.
6. A minimum of twenty (20) bicycle racks shall be installed in the northwest corner of the property.
7. Permanent restroom facilities meeting all applicable code and occupancy requirements shall be installed prior to the commencement of the 2027 season.

8. Any mobile kitchen facility shall be fully screened from customer view. Food service shall be limited to waiter/waitress service only. Food trucks shall not be permitted on-site. The Applicant may consider installation of a permanent kitchen facility for the 2027 season.
9. Loading and delivery operations shall occur only within the designated loading area as reflected on the approved site plans. All deliveries shall occur after 8:00 a.m.
10. Trash and refuse management areas shall be located in accordance with the approved site plans. Trash collection and pickup shall occur only after 7:00 a.m. Appropriate “No Parking” signage shall be installed as required.
11. The Applicant shall review the proposed landscaping and fencing plans with the owners of the adjoining northern properties and shall reasonably accommodate requested modifications where practicable.
12. The Applicant shall obtain all required permits for tree removal along the northern property line and shall provide replacement trees and fencing in compliance with all applicable municipal ordinances.
13. A complete landscaping and fencing buffer shall be installed along all property lines adjoining the Applicant’s property.
14. A comprehensive lighting plan shall be provided for all owned lots and properties. The Applicant shall undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that lighting does not spill onto adjoining properties.
15. Lot 15.02 shall remain a residential lot with grandfathered boat-only parking. Curb cuts and sidewalks shall be installed along the eastern side of Shore Road, and curbing shall be installed along the southern side of 7th Street.
16. A parking improvement plan shall be implemented for Lots 16.01 and 17.01. Such plan shall include, at a minimum:
 - A stone parking surface;
 - Parking stops;
 - Site lighting;
 - A minimum of two (2) additional curb cuts;
 - Sidewalk installation along the eastern side of Shore Road; and
 - Directional signage for parking circulation and usage.

17. A noise control plan shall be prepared and implemented during the first five (5) weeks of operation. Noise levels shall remain below the limits established by the current municipal noise ordinance.
18. A traffic control study shall be conducted during peak operating periods in calendar year 2026.
19. The Hotel LBI valet standard operating procedures (SOP) shall expressly prohibit the use of 5th Street, 6th Street, and 7th Street for valet parking staging, parking, or vehicle return operations.
20. Architectural plans reflecting all agreed-upon conditions and revisions shall be submitted for review and approval.
21. The project shall proceed as a single-phase development only. No additional phases or expansions beyond those approved in the final resolution shall be permitted.
22. The Applicant shall comply with all applicable requirements, approvals, permits, and regulations of the Fire Department, Building Department, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP/DEP), and all applicable municipal ordinances and regulations.

After over 4 hours of comments from the residents and board discussion, the board unanimously voted to carry the application to June 3, when testimony on listed issues will continue. Traffic and noise concerns remain a major sticking point for residents, with debate centering on state DEP noise regulations and speed control on 7th, 6th and 5th street.

The next hearing on the Salt Shack application is scheduled for 6 p.m. June 3 at LBI Elementary School.