

# Historic Sperry Boathouse at Suni Sands



Original Sperry Boathouse, built in 1906

Over the years, weathering and constant exposure to the elements have taken their toll on the Boathouse. During the Hurricanes of 2004 and 2005, further damage was sustained and eventually the structure was tarped for safety. Prior to the Modica Group's purchase of the Suni Sands property, the Town was initiating preservation efforts with the previous landowner. Understanding these previous efforts, the new property owners began researching restoration options for the Boathouse. It was determined that while restoration would be ideal, it was not possible given the structure's state of decay and modern-day building code requirements. Therefore, a plan was developed to demolish the existing structure, and then replicate it to mimic the structure, character and spirit of the original historic Boathouse, while adding modern amenities and meeting modern building codes. This process is now underway, after a process of permitting that involved the Town and several state regulatory agencies.

- In 1904, Mr. and Mrs. William Sperry, of the Sperry & Hutchison Company that distributed S&H Green Stamps, purchased a plot of land with a house on the Jupiter Inlet. They named their estate "Suni Sands."
- In 1906, the Sperry's built the Boathouse. While the primary use was to properly store their various watercrafts, the Boathouse also included a second floor ballroom for entertaining guests.
- In 1949, the Suni Sands property was sold to Mr. W.M. Clemons of Rome, GA, who converted the land to the Suni Sands Mobile Home Park.
- As time progressed, owners changed and the land went into foreclosure. In 2013, the Modica Group, LLC purchased the Suni Sands property.



Sperry Boathouse, c. 1940's



Tarped Boathouse, c. 2015



Rendering of Boathouse replica

## Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q: When was the original Sperry Boathouse built, and by whom?**

A: The Boathouse was built in 1906 by Mr. and Mrs. Sperry. Mr. Sperry was part owner of Sperry & Hutchinson (S&H) Company, of S&H Green Stamps fame

**Q: Does the Town own the Sperry Boathouse?**

A: No. The property on which the Boathouse sits (Suni Sands) is currently owned by the Modica Group, LLC. Historically this property has been under private ownership.

**Q: What agencies had to permit the demolition of the Boathouse?**

A: The Town of Jupiter Building Department, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**Q: Was the original Boathouse structure deemed unsafe?**

A: Yes. The Town's Building Official deemed the structure unsafe, and therefore required the demolition by the property owner.

**Q: What permits have been issued by the Town to-date?**

A: The Town issued a demolition permit in 2015 that has since expired, and an original reconstruction permit that was subsequently revoked. Currently there is a stabilization permit and extension that is valid until January 9, 2017, and on July 13, 2016, the Town issued a second demolition permit. It is anticipated that the property owner will apply for a reconstruction permit in the near future.

**Q: What is the cost of demolishing the existing structure and reconstructing the new structure?**

A: It will cost the property owner approximately \$40,000 to demolish the existing Boathouse, and approximately \$3 million to reconstruct the replica.

**Q: When will reconstruction begin?**

A: Reconstruction can begin after the property owner submits a site plan application for the new boathouse and the site plan is approved by the Town Council, and permits are granted.

**Q: What are the environmental factors that need to be considered during the demolition and reconstruction process?**

A: To limit impact on local habitat, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection provided instructions through Environmental Resource Permits. Demolition is planned to occur during low tide so debris can be collected, stored landward, and be removed.

**Q: Have plans been submitted for developing the Suni Sands property?**

A: To date, the Town has only received applications for permits to demolish and reconstruct the Boathouse. The Town has not received any applications from the property owner to develop the other portions of the Suni Sands site.

**Q: What will the Boathouse be used for once it is reconstructed?**

A: The final use of the structure will be determined by the site plan approval process. That being said, currently, the property owner plans to use the second story as an open ballroom, and offer portions of the Boathouse available for lease as special function and meeting space.

**Q: How can I learn more about this project as it progresses?**

A: Visit [www.jupiter.fl.us/agendas](http://www.jupiter.fl.us/agendas) to see which projects have been submitted to the Planning and Zoning Department and which projects will go before the Town Council. Subscribe to receive Town Council Agenda and Summary emails at [www.jupiter.fl.us/NotifyMe](http://www.jupiter.fl.us/NotifyMe).