



MEETING MINUTES

of the

APPLICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

TOWN OF BELMONT, NH

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2021 – 8:00 AM

HELD REMOTELY THROUGH ZOOM

Members Present: Alicia Jipson (Assistant Town Administrator), Craig Clairmont (Public Works Director), Richard Ball (Land Use Technician), Deborah Black (Assistant Fire Chief), Russel Wheeler (Building Inspector) and Dari Sassan (Town Planner)

Others Present: Van Hertel, Jeff Merritt, Floyd Hayes, Dennis Stephens

Introductions

Mr. Sassan opened the meeting at approximately 8:00 AM. He said that as Chairman of the Belmont Application Review Committee, he finds that due to the state of emergency declared by the Governor, this public body is authorized to meet using electronic means. Mr. Sassan said that notice was given to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting by either using Zoom, or by telephone, and that if any party experiences any difficulty in accessing the meeting at any point, please call 603-267-8300 extension 125, and the meeting will be recessed until access can be restored for all parties.

Mr. Sassan took a roll call attendance and he thanked everyone for attending. He explained that staff members comprising the Application Review Committee (ARC) are present to assist the applicants in a preliminary discussion regarding their proposals. He said that the discussion is non-binding on the applicants and the Town, and that the ARC has no regulatory authority. Mr. Sassan said the meeting is intended to allow staff to gain a better understanding of the proposal and to provide applicants with early input on their proposal. He said that staff members remain available to continue to provide assistance during the application process and that the meeting is a public meeting, but not a public hearing and staff is not authorized by local or State law to accept public comments as part of this review. Mr. Sassan said that the submission deadline for the February 22, 2021 Planning Board meeting is 4:00 PM February 1, 2021.

Case 01-21R – Van Hertel

Mr. Hertel said that he owns approximately 59 acres on Jamestown Road which he is proposing to subdivide into 7 lots, 6 residential lots each having 150-200 ft of frontage, and one large lot with frontage separated by another existing lot.

Mr. Sassan said that the property is located in the Residential Single-Family Zone, not within the Aquifer & Groundwater Protection Zone and not within the Floodplain. He said the property is presently in Current Land Use, that an intent to cut was recently filed and that the land is currently vacant.

Mr. Clairmont asked if Mr. Hertel plans to serve as a general contractor or if he simply plans to perform the subdivision and sell off the lots. Mr. Hertel said that he just plans to subdivide and sell them off, however he would explore working with a local building. Mr. Hertel said that he intends to perform a fairly hard selective cut down to 12-inch trees for saw logs and then to leave at least half to 2/3 as there is no market for pulpwood. Mr. Hertel said that the logger recently performed some logging over a period of 2-3 weeks and that he would probably return in the summer to cut more. Mr. Clairmont said that in a similar situation recently on Plummer Hill Road he worked with the developer to have him stake out the driveways and install

the aprons so that when construction began it would not interfere with the roadway. Mr. Hertel said that he would look at it as part of working toward an approval. Mr. Clairmont said that it seems to work well in terms of satisfying the needs and concerns of all parties and it eliminates the risk of having to delay occupancy because someone wants move in at a time of year when the installation of a paved apron cannot occur.

Mr. Clairmont said that there is quite a bit of water moving through that portion of roadway. Mr. Ball said that one of the requirements of a subdivision plan is that it show sight distances for all proposed driveways and he confirmed that in this case the required sight distance would be 300 feet. Mr. Clairmont expressed that it would be difficult to achieve that sight distance in a few spots. Mr. Hertel said that he has walked the frontage and he agrees that it would be problematic if the lots were laid out without taking site distance into consideration, but that he feels it can be achieved by strategically situating the lot lines and driveways. Mr. Clairmont and Mr. Ball indicated that Jamestown Road is a scenic road, but that scenic status probably impacts public works operations more than it impacts private property owners. Mr. Hertel said that it is indeed a pretty area and that would be willing to work with the Town and the Conservation Commission to limit cutting along the roadway.

Mr. Ball said that wetlands will need to be flagged as part of the project and that wetland permits might be necessary. Mr. Hertel said that he thought he could avoid wetlands for the 6 proposed lots, but that if sight-distance considerations required that driveways impact wetlands he would secure those permits.

Assistant Chief Black and Mr. Wheeler said that they do not have immediate questions or concerns. Ms. Jipson said that when the lots are sold those portions will come out of current use. Mr. Sassan reiterated that the sight distances will need to be shown on the subdivision plan, as well as wetlands mapped by a certified wetlands scientist. He said that wetlands setbacks must be observed unless relief is sought.

Mr. Sassan said that the preliminary list of items necessary for Planning Board Review include application, notification documents, fees, plans, narrative, photos and deed. He said that a full listing of all submission requirements is set forth in Section 5 of the Subdivision regulations, and in the correspondent application checklist, all available on the town website. Mr. Sassan said that waivers may be requested for submission requirements that do not impact or otherwise pertain to the proposed project and that all waiver requests shall be formally submitted using a waiver request form. He said the Board must vote to grant any requested waivers; thus, it is necessary to provide a reasonable rationale for any items to be omitted. Mr. Sassan restated that the application deadline for next Planning Board meeting is 4pm, Monday, 2/1/2021, for 2/22/2021 meeting.

Mr. Hertel said that he is looking at the possibility of conducting gravel extraction on the remaining 40-45 acres but that he would also like to look at the possibility of using that remaining lot for single family housing or potentially, if applicable, condominiums or apartments. He also indicated that he would like to see if the town would have interest in using the parcel for low-income or subsidized housing. Mr. Clairmont said that it would be an ideal place for a wildlife sanctuary. Mr. Sassan said that there are a few organizations locally and regionally whose mission is to focus on the type of uses that Mr. Hertel is suggesting and that he would be happy to assist in providing some contacts. Mr. Sassan said that assuming it was not a contingency of the proposed subdivision of 6 residential lots, it could be brought up and discussed at the same Planning Board meeting at which the subdivision case is heard. He said that conducting a preliminary consultation with the Board also remains an option. Mr. Hertel encouraged anyone with interests to reach out to him and he expressed an overall interest in doing something to help individuals who might be struggling.

Case 02-21R – Aranosion Oil

Mr. Sassan said that the property is located on the corner of Ladd Hill Road and DW Highway and the proposal is for a gas station and convenience store with a drive through. Mr. Merritt provided a brief

overview of the existing site, identifying existing structures, curb cuts and natural features, including a narrow wetland which conveys drainage into a pipe that ties into existing drainage infrastructure along DW Highway. He explained that the proposal is to redevelop the site, removing the existing building and pavement in order to construct a new 4,900-square-foot convenience store with a canopy with 10 fueling stations. He said that the drive-through would be associated with some sort of food service such as coffee to include a pick-up window on the Ladd Hill Road side of the store. Mr. Merritt said that the driveway on DW Highway would become right-in-right-out and that the driveway on Ladd Hill Road would provide full ingress and egress and that it would be substantially narrowed from what is there today.

Mr. Merritt said that the parking includes spaces across the front of the building and alongside the boundary shared with Goodwill. Mr. Merritt asked about the potential for considering the fueling stations as parking spaces. Mr. Sassan and Mr. Ball said that they did not believe the fueling stations could count as parking spaces in terms of meeting parking requirements. Mr. Merritt reviewed the four variances that were obtained pursuant to the project including:

1. a variance from the required setback of ground disturbance from wetlands,
2. a variance from the required setback of underground storage tanks from wetlands,
3. a variance from the required front property setback along DW Highway from the fueling island, and
4. a variance from the required front property setback along Ladd Hill Road from the convenience store.

Mr. Merritt described the drainage system as being a closed system including catch basins with oil/debris hoods which will outlet to a subsurface detention basin. He explained that water service will come from a stub that was provided at the time Convenient MD obtained water service and that underground electric and communications would originate from a pole near the intersection. He said that building would also receive gas service and that septic would potentially be provided using a Clean Solution system in which the breakdown of the effluent occurs in the tanks rather than in the field, resulting in a reduced field size with greater longevity. Mr. Merritt said that he has also explored the possibility of connecting to municipal sewer but that it appears as though all nearby sewer infrastructure is privately owned and connecting to sewer would therefore involve traveling at least 500 feet. He said that he is continuing to explore that option. Mr. Merritt reviewed the construction phase erosion control measures that would be observed as well as a landscape plan and a lighting plan.

Mr. Clairmont requested that he be kept abreast of any developments with connecting to public sewer and he acknowledged that it would be a difficult undertaking.

Assistant Chief Black, Mr. Wheeler said that they do not have immediate questions or concerns. Ms. Jipson said that she does not have immediate questions or concerns, but that she thinks the project is a good idea. Mr. Ball asked about the existing easement held by the Goodwill property for parking and snow storage space on the subject lot. Mr. Merritt explained that conversations are underway with the abutting property owner but that a plan to relocate the easement and provide comparable parking and snow storage spaces is included in the plans. He pointed to the section of the plan set that shows ten parking spaces and a snow storage area all lined up along the property line. Mr. Ball expressed concern regarding what he felt was a very tight turning radius which would be encountered by cars leaving the fueling canopy from the front side and then proceeding toward the DW Highway exit. Mr. Merritt explained that the drive lanes in that vicinity are very wide, which creates a deceptive illusion that the turning radius is tight, when in actuality it is not very tight.

Mr. Ball wondered if it might be best to have all exiting traffic outlet onto Ladd Hill Road and he asked if conversations have taken place with DOT. Mr. Merritt said that he has had an initial meeting with DOT and that no serious concerns were identified in regards to what is proposed. He said that he still needs to undergo the formal driveway permit application process. Regarding the notion of eliminating access to or from DW

Highway, Mr. Merritt expressed that it is essential to the viability of convenience stores and gas stations that they maintain all means of conveniently accessing the business.

Mr. Sassan said that he imagines people are going to have interest and concern regarding potential traffic impacts on Ladd Hill Road and on the intersection. Mr. Merritt acknowledged that Mr. Sassan had previously relayed that notion and he said that in response they have decided to involve a traffic consultant to conduct a traffic study to thoroughly examine that concern. He said that a trip generation memorandum would be included as part of the Planning Board application. Mr. Merritt said that at the DOT level they might expand upon that information following the scoping meeting with DOT.

Mr. Sassan said the application requirements are set forth in Section 5 of the Site Plan Review regulations and that the application and the correspondent application checklist provide additional guidance. Mr. Sassan said that waivers may be requested for submission requirements that do not impact or otherwise pertain to the proposed project. He said all waiver requests shall be formally submitted using a waiver request form and that the Planning Board must vote to grant any requested waivers; thus, it is necessary to provide a reasonable rationale for any items to be omitted. He said that the application deadline for next Planning Board meeting is 4pm, Monday, February 1, 2021 for the February 22, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Hayes asked if the Town provides any grant funding or other assistance to support the installation of charging stations for electric vehicles. ARC Members said that they were not aware of any such funding at the local level. Mr. Hayes asked about code requirements associated with electric vehicle charging stations. Mr. Sassan said that Mr. Wheeler is having difficulty with his audio and he suggested that the applicant reach out to Mr. Wheeler for further discussion on that matter. Mr. Hayes asked about what would be required in terms of an elevation drawing of the fueling canopy. Mr. Sassan said that the Board would want a standard elevation drawing showing the colors and overall appearance of the canopy structure.

Minutes

MOTION: On a motion by Mr. Ball, seconded by Mr. Wheeler, it was voted unanimously to adopt the minutes of December 22, 2020 as written.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:58 AM.

Prepared by,

Dari Sassan
Town Planner