

MINUTES
Workshop Meeting
Sanbornton Planning Board

Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, January 19 2017 at 7:00 PM

Meeting Place: Town Offices, 573 Sanborn Road, Sanbornton, N.H.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Evelyn Auger at 7:00 PM

Roll Call

Regular Members present: Will Ellis, Chair Evelyn Auger, Selectman John Olmstead, Don Bormes

Regular Members absent: Dick Gardner

Alternate Members present: Jody Slack (seated for Dick Gardner)

Alternate Members absent: Gail Morrison, Justin Barriault

Others present at the meeting: Town Planner, Bob Ward

Approval of draft Planning Board minutes from 1/5 – Don Bormes made a **motion** to approve the draft minutes of 1/5. Will Ellis **seconded** the motion and the **motion passed**, with Selectman John Olmstead abstaining.

New Business

Public Hearing regarding Application #P17-S01/Site Plan Review from Applicants Kris and Ralph Rathjen for wedding venue proposal at KREBS Farm under Agritourism. Property is located at 316 Upper Bay Road in the General Residential Zoning District.

Selectman John Olmstead recused himself given his relationship with the Applicants. Will Ellis asked if the Planning Board has decided that this proposal is considered Agritourism. Chair Evelyn Auger stated that this a public hearing and that it should move forward as such for Site Plan Review, and that any members can ask questions of the Applicants. Brian Pratt of CLD Consulting Engineers presented the site plan to the Planning Board, with minor changes since it was presented to the Board by Town Planner Bob Ward in November. Pratt explained that the original site plan had more parking shown but that a back-up parking area has since been eliminated, and two smaller back-up lots are shown further from the road. Will Ellis asked if the parking lot on the farm would be gravel and Ralph Rathjen stated that it would be grass and is compacted and well drained. Brian Pratt reviewed the sound study with the Board and explained that a DJ set up speakers from the tent area in order to do a sound test from various areas around the property. The results show that music had a slightly higher decibel reading than a breeze, but less than that of a sedan coming to a stop and then accelerating. Chair Auger asked about operation hours. Brian Pratt stated that hours would be from 9:00 am to 11:00pm but the duration of any event would be limited to 8 hours. Pratt also explained sanitation, stating that portable toilets would be located under an overhang of the house, or that rented bathroom trailers could be parked on the property.

For any events that would use the Mountain View Church parking lot, Brian Pratt stated that a portable crossing sign would be used so that pedestrians can safely cross the road, and that temporary No Parking signs would also be in place on the roadside. He also explained that solid waste would be bagged at receptacles on site and disposed of at the local transfer station, and that the maximum number of guests for a wedding would be 250, but the Rathjens are expecting most weddings to have a guest count in the low 100's. Don Bormes asked if an assembly permit would be needed. Ralph Rathjen responded that he had looked into this and that the assembly permit application states that weddings are excluded.

Don Bormes stated that the site plan appears to have covered all the items he had questions on, but that he is still concerned about added traffic. Ralph Rathjen stated that he is considering requiring police detail for later events to ensure the safety of the public and guests. Chair Evelyn Auger stated that she is in favor of the wedding venue proposal but was disappointed that this did not follow the Commercial Variance procedure, as was done with Longlook Farm. Ralph Rathjen stated that the Commercial Variance being on the table had upset some neighbors, and he wants to have good relationships with abutters so he pulled the application for that. He stated that neighbors felt that it would lead to more commercial businesses being allowed in residential areas. Ralph Rathjen explained that SB345 does not explicitly say “weddings” as being an approved use, but the sponsor of the bill purposefully did not create an exhaustive list so that it would not eliminate other potential uses. Chair Auger stated that the legislature put this law into effect in July and therefore Sanbornton would not be able to create any regulations regarding SB345 until the next year at Town Meeting.

Sheila Dodge of Woodman Road questioned the sound study that had been presented by Brian Pratt and stated that a sound reading was only done on one sedan. She stated that she is concerned that the sound reading would be much higher with 100 cars leaving an event at the farm at one time. Kris Rathjen explained that Steele Hill often hosts weddings and she does notice many cars going to that facility but she doesn't find them to be noisy. Abutter Jim Sweeting also questioned the sound study being accurate and suggested a re-do, but stated that the two weddings held at KREBS in the past could be heard but were not bothersome. Chair Evelyn Auger stated that even if there were a new sound study conducted, Sanbornton does not have a noise ordinance.

Selectman Karen Ober stated that she was concerned about liability due to alcohol. Ralph Rathjen explained that he will obtain an “event cover” for events which will address this. Selectman Ober also said she is concerned about the road being rated for only a certain amount of travel, and this may be exceeded if there are weddings at Steele Hill, Mountain View Church and KREBS Farm. She also asked the Rathjens to keep in mind that abutters of Longlook Farm have grown tiresome of having traffic and noise from that wedding venue almost every weekend in the summer and to be mindful of the amount of events they book. Selectman Ober asked the Rathjens if they are requiring wedding planners for all weddings and they responded Yes. Ralph Rathjen stated that he is okay with moving the event end time from 11:00pm to 10:00pm, and requiring the event and staff to vacate by 11:00 rather than midnight to keep neighbors happy.

Will Ellis asked where farm-to-table events will be held. Ralph Rathjen responded that they will be held in the barn or outside and a maximum of 100 people could attend if it was in the barn. Selectman Ober noted that the occupancy level needs to take into consideration chairs, tables, etc. and Ralph Rathjen stated that he will have the Fire Chief look at the space. Brian Pratt stated that the septic system is rated for that amount of usage. Will Ellis asked if the house septic use is included in that and Pratt responded No, and Ralph Rathjen stated that there are 6 bedrooms but there are no plans for overnight stays by guests, though that is approved as an acceptable use under SB345. Will Ellis stated that he was concerned that a future owner of the Farm could then operate a B&B without any further approval from the Planning Board.

Jody Slack explained that he thinks SB345 is not clear and this endeavor seems best suited by a Commercial Use Variance. Will Ellis stated that he would like to study the information provided by the engineer as he has not seen it before. He also noted that he thinks the parking area on the farm property should be gravel, and that lighting specifically for the parking area is needed and should be shown on the site plan, and that the Church parking lot should not be included in the plan. Ralph Rathjen stated that there is a flag pole that he can attach lighting to and that it will be drawn on the site plan, and Church Trustee and abutter Jim Sweeting explained that there is a verbal agreement in place for the Rathjens to use their parking lot, with the Church having right

to first refusal, and that this is non-transferable to a future owner. Will Ellis stated that he would want to ensure that the farm activity remains the primary use of the property, and therefore income from weddings and events should be less than that of farming. Chair Auger stated that there is not a way to police that.

Don Bormes made a motion to accept the requested waivers #13, 15, 21, and 26, requested by the Applicants due to no permanent structures needing to be built and no surveying being needed. Chair Evelyn Auger seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Don Bormes made a motion to accept the application as complete. Chair Auger seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Will Ellis stated that he still needs more time to review this information and research Agritourism more since it is new. Don Bormes stated that the ZBA has already decided that this proposal is Agritourism and that the Planning Board's only task is to review and approve the actual site plan. The Board and the Applicants agreed to continue the hearing at the Planning Board's next meeting on Thursday, February 2nd at 7:00.

First Public Hearing related to Sign Ordinance – Chair Evelyn Auger opened the public hearing. Town Planner Ward explained that this proposed amendment to the Ordinance would add a clarifying statement related to the goal of the Town's sign regulations. Selectman John Olmstead made a motion to accept the amendment as written. Jody Slack seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

- a. **Review of job description for Town Planner** – Town Planner Ward provided the Board with the final Town Planner Job Description that has been approved by the Board of Selectmen. Selectman Olmstead stated that this has been sent to Thornton & Associates to be included in the pay matrix study.
- b. **Update concerning proposed Bull Fish Gravel Pit located on Johnson Road** – Town Planner Ward stated that the hydrogeological study has not been completed as the escrow account has not been funded by Bull Fish yet. The total amount needed is approximately \$32,000.
- c. **Planning Board Report**- Town Planner Ward provided a copy of the report that will be going into the Annual Town Report explaining what the Planning Board has been working on this past year.
- d. **Transportation Destination Map from Lakes Region Planning** – Town Planner Ward provided the list of Sanbornton destinations that he has sent to the Lakes Region Planning Commission to be included on a Transportation Destinations Map.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 2nd at 7:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Audry Barriault