

BETHLEHEM PLANNING BOARD

PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

BETHLEHEM TOWN BUILDING MEETING ROOM

May 9, 2012

Present: Peter Roy, Andrea Bryant, Harold Friedman, Pat Doughty, Chairman Don Lavoie, Alecia Loveless

Chairman Lavoie opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

Chairman Lavoie appointed Andrea Bryant as full voting member for the purpose of this meeting.

Chairman Lavoie read a draft of a letter to Ed Sears regarding modification of his previously approved subdivision. Chairman Lavoie noted that he had called LGC for a legal opinion on this matter and had been told that changing the screening on one of the lots constitutes a substantial change to the plan which would require public hearing, legal notification as well as legal notices to the abutters. The Board agreed to send this letter to Mr. Sears. He will be advised to come in for another public hearing if he decides to change the screening on one of his lots.

The Planning Board approved of merger deeds for the Terry Lewis property off River Road and the Low property on Route #302.

Pat Doughty moved to approve the minutes of April 24, 2012 as presented. The motion was seconded by Alecia Loveless and carried 5-0.

Fire Chief Jack Anderson introduced Director Perry Plummer from the New Hampshire fire Academy and Fire Chief Allen Clark from Sugar Hill. Chief Clark has served on the Committee which has come up with this location for a possible fire academy.

Chief Clark noted that the location on Trudeau Road of the former WMNF Ranger site was one of several sites that they had considered for this purpose. The site will serve as a training complex where simulated fires will be extinguished. It will serve as an on-going training facility for firefighters. He added that a firefighter undergoes approximately between 216-260 hours for certification. A potential site in Lancaster was passed over due to extremely wet conditions. The Bethlehem site is within 50 miles from most North Country Fire Departments. Chief Clark noted that this is a government application and will be treated differently than applications coming before the Board.

Director Plummer stated that this is an ideal site located on 12 acres. There are currently five structures on the site. He estimated that the majority of the site will not be seen three seasons out of the year. The main house dates back to the 1930s. It is a 2-story building which also housed the office for the Ranger Station. It is approximately 1000 square feet. This building will be used for dry practice. There is a one stall garage/shed dating back to 1974. This will be used for storage. The 7-bay garage will be used for classroom space and an additional office space. Most of the existing buildings will remain as is. A

burn facility will be constructed. This is a steel building with a 40 foot tower which will be used for burn simulation training. The burn process uses clean wood and hay on pallets which creates clean white smoke. There will be no excess of smoke escaping from the burn facility. It is estimated that there will be between 15-30 people training at one time. There will be no water runoff from the site.

Harold Friedman asked if the site would have barracks for the trainees to stay and was told that everyone would be going home after their training due to the close proximity of this facility to most of the northern fire departments using the facility. The participants will be getting certification training as well as local fire departments using it for continuing training practices.

Andrea Bryant asked if there would be sirens and other noise. She was told that there would be no reason to run sirens. Hours of operation would be 8:00am – 4:00pm and would include weekends including Sunday. There would be some evening classes as well.

At this point Chief Anderson stated that the Bethlehem Fire Department has started an Explorer's Program which will be sponsored through the Boy Scouts. This program will involve 14-20 year olds who are interested in pursuing as firefighters and joining the department. Chief Anderson stated that the Explorer's program as well as having the fire academy located in Bethlehem will be very good for the community.

Chairman Lavoie noted that there is an Aquifer Protection Ordinance which has recently been adopted by the town. It requires that all non residential use acquire a special use permit.

Director Plummer stated that there will be no solvents used or store on site. The foam used to put out fires is biodegradable . There is an old drain which will be sealed up.

There was some discussion on the noise generated from some gravel pits and the landfill. These businesses are not permitted to operate on Sundays. Andrea Bryant stated that she is also concerned with truck noises from this project. She was told that at the most there would be two trucks parked at the site and they would not be running sirens.

Director Plumber and Chief Clark both stated that they want to work with the community to make this venture a success. They did not anticipate being in full operation for about a year. A press release will be going out within a few days. Chairman Lavoie suggested that the Board waive the application fee and only bill the client for abutter notices and newspaper notices. The board agreed to do this.

In other business the board took a final look at draft #5 of the Planning board rules and Procedures. After some discussion it was decided that this document will be approved and adopted at a Public Hearing in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Sargent

Administrative Assistant

