TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Planning & Zoning Joint Meeting

February 8, 2023

Minutes

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Present: Chair Mike Bruno, Vice Chair Anthony Rodrigues, Veronica Morris, Kim Koprowski, Martie

Cook, and Kevin Roy

Absent: Alecia Loveless

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Meeting opened at 6:01 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Hebb Lot Line Adjustment Map 209 Lots 59 and 60.2.**

Board reviews the application checklist and determines it is complete.

**Martie Cook makes a motion to mark the application for Francis Hebb as complete. Kim Koprowski seconds and a unanimous board vote follows.**

Mr. Hebb gives a history of how he acquired the property from Bob and Joan Schafer and explains this lot line adjustment is to move the large flower garden from lot 60.2 to lot 59 to ensure it stays with the property the house is located on.

**Veronica Morris makes a motion to approve the lot line adjustment for tax map 209, lot 59. There is a second from Anthony Rodrigues and a unanimous vote form the remaining members of the Planning Board to approve.**

Chairman Bruno informs Mr. Hebb that the town will file the signed mylar plans with Grafton County Registry of Deeds, and that Mr. Hebb will be responsible for getting the deeds updated to match the new map.

**The Chandler Hotel Conceptual**

Matt Woods from Giri Hotels presents follow up information to the board regarding the change of use planned to remove the dining room at The Chandler Hotel and convert them to 10 guest rooms. Veronica Morris questions if the plan includes additional parking spaces. Mr. Woods confirms there are 10 addition spaces planned.

Mr. Woods asks if the Board can confirm what paperwork has been submitted. He was under the impression that a site plan application had been submitted, however, the only application in the files is for a building permit. A conversation ensues regarding whether the project needs to be submitted with a major site plan or minor site plan application. Mike asks for some specifics on the project to determine the answer to the question.

The subject of parking is brought up again. Does the submitted drawing include the additional parking required? No because they are waiting to meet with Fire Chief Jack Anderson. Mike points out that the original plans approved by the Planning Board included the restaurant in the parking configuration.

Mr. Woods informs the board that they are working with a company out of Manchester to eliminate the noise issues that comes from the roof.

Mr. Woods states that Giri Hotels has purchased the white house on Main Street that abuts the property and can use that site for additional parking if necessary. Mr. Woods is comfortable with the spots they have identified for parking. Mike recognizes the advantage of having the historical knowledge of both the previous owners and the current owner as to how the parking flows. Mike feels comfortable that the parking plan will be adequate based on that knowledge.

Mr. Woods questions which site plan checklist they should be following, Minor or Major? Would the town need the long form for change of use within the existing building. Mike explains when the project came before the board in Sept the board was revising the checklists and this project may be the first to use the Minor Site Plan checklist.

Kim asks if they have spoken to the Village District yet regarding water. Mr. Woods indicates not yet, but it’s on the list.

Veronica points out that the current Minor Site Plan Review requirements state that changes from one permitted nonresident use to another, or from a nonresidential use allowed by Special Exception to permitted use, provided that the change in use does not involve any of the following: Increase in the number of dwelling or lodging units.

Veronica then points out that there was a previous application that didn’t meet the footprint requirement for the Minor Site Plan Review, however the board elected to let the project proceed with the Minor Site Plan Application, so there is a precedent set that the board change allow the Minor Site Plan

Martie Cook comments that changing the restaurant, a more intense use than rooms, almost seems like a reverse change of use.

Mike suggests the Board needs to look at what the parking requirement was when the project came before the Board as the Arlington and requests that Dawn research what the original requirement was. Once that is verified the process could be simplified.

**Rambling Woods Solar Array**

Fred Wheeler, President of Rambling Woods introduces Jeannie Oliver from Vermont Law School, as well as Dave Chelius and Melissa Elander from NH Clean Energy.

Rambling Woods is looking to put in a solar array on the property they own on the northwestern side of the Village District access road, in conjunction with the Village District’s solar project.

Ms. Oliver shares her screen over Zoom to show the map and review the plan.

* Manufactured Housing development locate in District 1.
* Ground mounted array.
* Maximum capacity of 100 kw AC.
* North-western corner of parcel, access via access drive to Water Pollution Control Facility.
* Connecting to Eversource distribution grid.
* Serve up to 27 households with potential for future growth in community, majority LMI.
* The project will require some tree clearing.

The purpose of tonight’s meeting is to clarify what the process is and what permits will be needed.

* Minor Site Plan Review – Site Plan Review Regulations Article IV, section 4.04 J (addition of free standing solar panels). Site Plan Review Regulations Article VII apply to site plan preparation, instead of Article VI, section 6.02 ©
* File:
  + Applications for Site Plan Review and Solar Permit application
  + Application and Abutters Fees
  + Site Plan complying with Section 7.01
* Other permits?
* Bonding Requirements?
* Any restriction or concerns we should know about?

Martie questions whether the project needs permission from the Village District to address the performance bond. Veronica thinks that comes from the Select Board, but questions whether the Village District needs to approve the site plan?

Veronica also wonders if the Village District Road that runs thru the Rambling Woods property is it a road or an easement?

Kim mentions the Village District is also putting in a solar array. Melissa Elander from Clean Energy NH states that Dave Chelius and Bruce Caplain are working to get the town and businesses solar projects linked.

Veronica states, depending on how much land the project needs to clear, they may need to contact the Conservation Commission and DES for a wetlands permit. Do they have a rough estimate of how much land they need for the array? Fred responds that, beyond the array, they also need to take into account the sun exposure. He adds that the inner connection is variable depending on Eversource, but due to the high cost of wire they need to be conservative.

Mike requests a plan that shows where the solar array would be situated, and how it would be installed.

Ms. Oliver asks the Board if they would recommend looping the Conservation Commission in? Martie recommends transparency from the beginning.

Mike commends the group for taking on the project and recognizes there are a lot of moving parts and a steep learning curve.

The question is raised if there has been any conversation with the Village District and if they are in favor have them write a letter of support.

Kevin Roy asks how this project will affect the snowmobile trails. Fred states they would put up a fence for mutual protections.

Dawn to send a copy of the Minor Site Plan Application and any historical information in the Planning file for Rambling Woods.

**2023 Planning Service Agreement**

Tara Bamford has sent a Planning Service Agreement for services in 2023. Mike summarized the agreement for the Planning Board. Kim motioned to accept, Kevin seconded, and all members were in favor. Mike signed the agreement on behalf of the Planning Board.

**Housing Opportunity Grant**

Martie informs the Board that her lease is up in August and she will be leaving the area; however, she should be able to get the work done for the grant before she leaves, but understands if the Board thinks she should step aside.

Marite lays out the process for the Board.

* Multi step survey process
* Focus groups/residents with different demographics.
* Public meeting with the general population

Once complete the Town will have to figure out how they want to proceed and what will be economically advantageous. Tara would take the information from the public and look at what would need to change in the town ordinances in order to proceed.

Veronica clarified that the grant agreement is with the State of NH and the Town has an agreement with North Country Council (NCC) to do some portions of the project, making NCC the sub-grantee.

The question is asked whether or not the Board is comfortable with Martie leading. Mike thinks the next board should decide.

Martie motions that the Planning Board approve the sub grant with NCC for the Housing Opportunity Project. Anthony seconds, all in favor.

**Customer Service Survey**

Mike received some feedback on the survey from Marlaina Renton and Ian Dowling as they have come before the Board for numerous projects. Onc comment they made indicated that they weren’t sure they wanted to work with a consultant as the Board recommended, but in hindsight they are so glad for Tara’s help.

Mike will make a digital copy using Google Forms and paper copies will be in the office to be handed out to applicants once the process is complete. Completed surveys will be submitted to Dawn and Mary.

**Closing Items**

Minutes for 10/26/22, 1/4/23, 1/25/23, and 2/8/23 will be reviewed at the next meeting on 2/22/23.

**Kim Koprowski motioned to adjourn. Martie Cook seconded the motion. Motion to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

 Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Ferringo

Planning and Zoning Board Clerk