



Village of Saranac Lake

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VILLAGE OF SARANAC LAKE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES 8/4/2020

ATTENDANCE

Development Board Members: Tom Boothe, Chairperson, Present
Donna Difara, Absent
Bill Domenico, Present
David Trudeau, Present
Elias Pelletieri, Present
Craig Catalano, Alternate, Excused
CJ Hagmann, Alternate, Excused

Paul Blaine, Development Code Administrator, Present
Cassandra Hopkins, Administrative Assistant, Present

CONVENE

Tom Boothe opened the meeting at 6:00pm.

Motion to approve June 2, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes by Bill Domenico, seconded by David Trudeau.
All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), June 2, 2020 meeting minutes approved.

PUBLIC HEARINGS BOARD ACTION

Christopher and Kate-Lyn Knight, Area variance for a shed in the side setback area, 145 Old Military Rd.

Boothe asked the Development Code Administrator, Paul Blaine to give the rest of the board present a rundown of the application.

Blaine stated that this project is requesting a variance tonight. He showed the board the submitted site plan and pointed out that the proposed shed will be placed within the side setback for the lot. He added that a discussion can be had about the orientation of the shed to reduce the requested variance.

Boothe asked the applicant, Christopher Knight, to speak to the board about the submitted project.

Knight and his wife, Kate-Lyn, addressed the board to add that the variance is being requested due to some site restraints given the topography and other structures on the lot. They added that it will be an 8'x10' kit shed to be assembled in an existing gravel space with plenty of vegetative cover during the time of leaf out. The applicants stated that they have been in communication with their neighbors.

Boothe asked each board member in turn their thoughts on the proposed project.

Elias Pelletieri stated his approval of the project and mentioned he has been in communication with the neighbors as well.

Trudeau agreed with Pelletieri.

Domenico stated that it is a fine project and he doesn't have any problems with it as proposed.

Blaine suggested to Boothe that he ask for any public comment before calling to close the public hearing portion of this proposed project.

Richard Weber, neighbor, stated that he and his wife do not have any issues with the project and have discussed the project with the Knights.

Boothe asked if there were any other public comments.

Motion to close the public hearing by Pelletieri, seconded by Domenico. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), public hearing closed.

Motion to approve Area variance for the project by Trudeau, seconded by Pelletieri. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), unanimous approval for the project.

Joseph G. Dockery, Site Plan review for proposed landscaping, 8 Church St.

Blaine gave an overview of the project, explaining that the landscaping being done is the removal of vegetation on a vacant lot, which the applicant is currently trying to sell, without any primary structure or building project. He showed the board a site plan for the proposed trees to be removed and specifically mentioned mature trees on the property to discuss with the applicant.

Boothe asked for Blaine to share the applicant's drawing of exactly which trees he plans to remove and requested clarification on which of the mature trees the applicant wants to remove.

Boothe asked for the applicant to share with the board his comments on the landscaping project and if he has any objections to keeping the one elm tree at the rear of the property.

Joseph Dockery, project applicant, stated that he does not have any objections or comments to what the board has discussed. He added that the initial idea is to make the lot look more appealing as a buildable lot, but to maintain some vegetative cover. He further clarified that there is a planted row of Ash trees that have been put in by the State closer to the road that will remain, along with the trees designated on the plan submitted.

Boothe asked for any comments from the board members.

Domenico asked the applicant if there is someone interested in purchasing the lot at this time.

Dockery stated that yes, there is someone that is interested, however, there is no contract at this time. He stated that from what he knows, the potential purchaser would end up building on that lot so more trees would come down.

Pelletieri stated that he is okay with the proposed landscaping plan and recognized that the lot is located in a downtown area.

Trudeau stated that he has no problem with the site plan as submitted.

Boothe added that he has no problem with it as well.

Motion to close the public hearing by Trudeau, seconded by Pelletieri. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), public hearing closed.

Motion to issue a negative declaration for purposes of SEQR by Pelletieri, seconded by Trudeau. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), declaration moved.

Motion to find the project in conformance with LWRP policy standards and conditions by Trudeau, seconded by Domenico. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), motion carried.

Motion to approve Site Plan review for proposed landscaping by Pelletieri, seconded by Domenico. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), unanimous approval for the Site Plan.

BluSeed Studios, Site plan review for site improvements, 24 Cedar St.

Blaine shared the proposed Site plan with the board and said overall it is a good site improvement project but he did make a few suggestions for the board to consider in their review, such as screening the parking area with more green plantings, operation of outdoor lighting, and the color/material of the accessory structure's roofing. He stated that the applicants are working against a grant deadline.

Boothe asked for any applicants to speak to the board about the proposed project.

Mark Kurtz, Chair of the BluSeed Board, introduced himself and another board member, Charlie Wilson.

Boothe asked if they have any knowledge of plans for once the rail trail is there as it borders the parking area that is graveled over right now.

Kurtz stated that any screening done in the future will be visibly pleasing, but take into consideration the rail trail and the ability to attract trail users to the property.

Boothe asked about the existing pollinator garden on the property.

Kurtz explained the existing conditions and clarified that the artistic rendering that the board has seen of the property is outdated and based on a previous grant application. He added that landscapers will work with them to preserve and improve the pollinator gardens on the property. He stated that at the other end of the property planting will be added around the proposed pavilion/outdoor classroom.

Wilson stated that any outdoor lighting operations will be on a timer and motion detectors that can be adjusted. He added that part of the concept here is to make the building more ADA compliant with expanded walkways and widened doors.

Boothe asked for any additional comments from the board.

Pelletieri stated that on the roofing he understands there may be cost concerns in the decision and it should be up to the applicant.

Kurtz stated that this project will change the aesthetics of the entire property for the better. He added that the roofing coloring will be made to look like the existing building.

Domenico asked for clarification on the handicap parking.

Wilson stated that the new plan is for two ADA compliant parking spots in the parking area.

Trudeau stated that he supports the project.

Boothe asked for any other comments.

Motion to close the public hearing by Pelletieri, seconded by Trudeau. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), public hearing closed.

Motion to issue a negative declaration for purposes of SEQR by Trudeau, seconded by Pelletieri. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), declaration moved.

Motion to find the project in conformance with LWRP policy standards and conditions by Domenico, seconded by Trudeau. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), motion carried.

Motion to approve Site plan review for site improvements by Pelletieri, seconded by Domenico. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), unanimous approval for the Site Plan.

Josh Clement, Area Variance request for expansion of a nonconforming structure, 50 Pontiac St.

Blaine showed the board the submitted project plans and explained that there are three lots involved in the expansion of a residence that is nonconforming for front setback. He stated that the board will review the project and consider asking the applicant to merge the three parcels in order to move closer to the minimum lot size of 25,000sq.ft. He introduced Matt Norfolk, applicant's attorney, on the call tonight to help answer any questions.

Boothe pointed out that when combined, the three parcels will be very close to meeting the minimum area at 22,486sq.ft. He asked the applicant for any comments.

Norfolk asked if there is any need for the front setback variance, if the parcels are combined.

Blaine stated that there may not be any need for separate motions at the meeting.

Boothe asked about the side setback.

Blaine said that side setback is irrelevant once the parcels are merged. Blaine further provided that an area variance is necessary because it is an expansion of a nonconforming structure which is non-conforming because of the existing front setback, even though the addition will be on the back of the structure. He added that another variance is for the lot size not meeting minimum area for that district, but both variances can be approved as one project with conditions made by this board.

Boothe asked the applicant if there are any problems or comments on those two variances.

Josh Clement, applicant, stated that the Development Code's minimum lot size requirement for that district is odd, but he is ready and willing to merge all parcels in order to complete his project.

Boothe stated that the board just wants to go by the book and meet the code. He asked any other board members for their comments.

Domenico asked for the exact front setback for that district. He asked about the plans for the addition.

Blaine stated that it is a 25ft. minimum front setback.

Clement stated that he did not know about the front setback, just the side setback that was to be resolved with the merging of parcels. He added that the construction will be on the back of the building.

Norfolk shared with the board the exact plans for the 1,200sq.ft. addition and pointed out that it will not be visible from the road.

Boothe asked the applicant if he is willing to merge the parcels.

Clement stated yes. He added that there may be cause for concern for future projects on an existing garage. Trudeau stated that it is a good project.

Pelletieri stated that the minimum lot size for the C2 district in the code doesn't seem right, so perhaps there is a mistake. He thanked the applicant for his willingness to work with the code.

Domenico seconded that sentiment and suggested that lot size requirements be revisited in the future.

Boothe stated that this board has made modifications to this Development Code before and the board can entertain that in the future.

Clement stated that the code as it is written does put a burden on the applicants trying to improve a property. He added that there is a frustration and that the minimum lot size should be looked into for that district.

Boothe asked for any public comments on this project.

Frank Camello, neighbor, added his approval for the project (as signaled over the Zoom feed because his audio did not work).

Wes and Gail McLaughlin, neighbors, asked about the height of the new construction.

Clement stated that it will be within 2-3ft. of the existing structure's height certainly within the 40ft. maximum in the code.

The McLaughlin's stated that they think it is a good project.

Motion to close the public hearing by Pelletieri, seconded by Domenico. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), public hearing closed.

Motion to approve Area variance request for expansion of a nonconforming structure with condition that the three parcels be merged with verification submitted to Development Code Administrator, by Domenico, seconded by Trudeau. All in favor (as signaled over the Zoom feed), unanimous approval.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Boothe invited members of the public to speak at this time.

Cassandra Hopkins, Community Development Administrative Assistant, asked everyone to please state their name very clearly if they are going to make a public comment.

David Lynch, Village resident on Main St., stated that he has sent an email correspondence to Paul Blaine to be passed along regarding the Adirondack Pregnancy Center. He stated that there may be a lot of public comments made here tonight about the Adirondack Pregnancy Center from some different perspectives.

Boothe added that comments should be kept brief, about 3 minutes, if a lot of public comments are being made tonight.

Lynch agreed and went on to state that there is evidence to suggest that there are grounds for this board to reconsider their approval of the Adirondack Pregnancy Center. He stated that the applicant was misleading to the public and did not disclose any affiliation until after the project was approved. He referenced Development Code §106-11 B.

Nicole Klohmann, Village resident on Main St., stated that she opposes the Adirondack Pregnancy Center. She stated that this project has been misleading from the start and that their affiliation with Heartbeat International only furthers the point given some of the misleading, objectifying and overall false literature that has been handed out by them.

Sam Balzac, Village resident on Shepard Ave., stated that any former statements that the Adirondack Pregnancy Center is community based are not true, he referenced where the hot line that will be set up is from, in addition to

the website. He stated that the future hours of operation are the same as Planned Parenthood in Saranac Lake. Carolyn Koestner, Village resident on Shepard Ave., stated that the last time the Adirondack Pregnancy Center came up in front of this board she voiced opposition. She stated that other community members have voiced opposition and signed a petition, and a letter has been submitted to make clear their statement that the Board needs to revoke their notice of approval to the Adirondack Pregnancy Center. Madeline Clark, Village resident on Shepard Ave., stated that the Board needs to reverse its decision on the Adirondack Pregnancy Center because of the reasons stated before and because all in the name of faith, these crisis pregnancy centers prey on the most vulnerable in our community. She added that she does not see adequate services being provided to sexual assault victims by the Adirondack Pregnancy Center and other crisis pregnancy centers.

Fred Balzac, Village resident on Shepard Ave., asked the Board to broaden their interpretation of the Development Code. He added that one of the first sections of the code states 'The purpose of this code is to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community' and said given everything that has been said before the Board today about the Adirondack Pregnancy Center, he does not think that this holds true.

Tracey Schrader, Beechwood resident and Village volunteer, stated that she has many concerns about the Adirondack Pregnancy Center, starting with who will really be on staff. She added that from her own research she found that the only listed medical professional is a doctor out of Long Lake.

Boothe addressed the Board and the public to reiterate that anyone can speak during this Public Comment period.

Lynch stated that a board member has acted out, twice now in the Public Comment period, and added that at the previous meeting Mr. Pelletieri yelled at Carolyn Koestner.

Erin Cass, Village resident on Rt. 3, addressed the Board to state that there are concerns over the Adirondack Pregnancy Center stemming from the center as a hospital designation. She added that she has been employed at Paul Smiths College and would like to recognize that Saranac Lake is the closest care center for students outside of the on-campus health center. She added that students are an especially vulnerable population and that the crisis pregnancy center will have an impact beyond the border of Saranac Lake.

Kathleen Recchia, Village resident on Shepard Ave., stated that she would like to formally complain about the behavior of the one Development Board member that left the meeting abruptly tonight.

Margot Gold, Village resident on Kiwassa Rd., stated that health care in the community needs to be evidence based, patient centered care and accurate information is something necessary in any health care setting.

Boothe stated that all comments have been heard loud and clear and added that there is a formal way of appealing a decision that Paul Blaine can help anyone with.

Koestner stated that the appeal process has been asked about and they were told that there is no way to appeal this decision.

Blaine stated that is not correct.

Boothe stated that it must have been a miscommunication.

Blaine stated that the appropriate step to take is to contact him and he can guide anyone through the process from here.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Domenico, seconded by Trudeau. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Meeting was officially adjourned at 7:35pm.

Meeting minutes prepared by Cassandra Hopkins, on August 12th, 2020.

Community Development Administrative Assistant