

**Ashland Planning Board Work Session
Minutes
April 30, 2014
Ashland Town Hall**

Members Present: Susan MacLeod, Gordon McCormack Jr., Fran Newton (BOS representative), Cheryl Cox (alternate)

Members Absent: Liz Cody, Phil Preston (BOS alternate representative)

Others Present: Eli Badger, Casey Hixon, Sara Hixon, David Page

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chairman MacLeod.

New Business

Informal Consultation: Casey and Sara Hixon described their plans for a 1.5 acre, irregularly-shaped parcel in the Rural Residential zone on Route 175. The property is currently owned by Judy (Paul) Holt and was used as a residence and a mobile home repair business. Because the previous business has been inactive for a period of time, the property reverts to Rural Residential criteria. If the Hixons purchase the property, their intent is to store vehicles and equipment onsite for their business (logging, tree service, and chipping for biomass use). Eventually the mobile home would be removed and a steel building would be erected; at that point vehicles would be parked behind and inside the building. The actual logging, chipping, etc. would occur off-site.

Discussion ensued regarding the difference between agricultural uses and forestry uses, as applied to allowable uses in a Rural Residential zone. Citing relevant RSA's, Chair MacLeod explained that forestry as it occurs in rural residential (agricultural) areas may only be incidental to the active, practicing agricultural (farming) use and must occur on the property itself. Agricultural uses occurring on a property are under the jurisdiction of the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food. Forestry is under the jurisdiction of DRED, which allows actual timber cutting and forestry practices in the Rural Residential zone, on the property itself.

The proposed use would be a commercial use (no on-site residential component) in a Rural Residential zone. Some of the relevant issues for the Hixons to address include setbacks on the property, siting of the building on the property, location of the well, DOT permits governing driveway and traffic impact on the state highway, vehicle maintenance and fuel storage on the property, storage of woodchip piles, input from abutters, etc. The denial from the building inspector (for a commercial use in a Rural Residential zone) triggers the need to go to the Zoning Board of Adjustment to request a special exception for a non-allowable use (conducting a commercial business in the Rural Residential zone). If the ZBA process is pursued before the Hixons purchase the property, they must get permission from the current owner to act as agents for the application. The Hixons were also reminded that they must address all of the criteria for a special exception. If the special exception for commercial use were approved, a site plan for the deed registry, construction, changes, etc. would necessitate going to the Planning Board. Both the Zoning and Planning Boards will require a site plan.

Informal Pre-Application Consultation: David Page explained his proposal, which involves establishing a nano-brewery operation (White Mountain Brewing Company) in a rented brick building off Winter Street, currently owned by Jeff and Linda Reale. The property and area have had a succession of other industrial and commercial businesses. He explained the planned renovations (including epoxy painting of floor and walls, installing a walk-in cooler, renovating the bathrooms) which must be completed before state and federal licenses are granted. The licensing process takes about 3-4 months; operation would tentatively begin in the fall. Mr. Page was reminded about and is familiar with the permitting and inspection processes (building, electrical, plumbing, life safety) required by the town. He will be submitting the relevant forms (including property owner signature) for the site plan review process. He was advised to submit the application immediately, which the Planning Board could then review on May 7 to determine if a full site plan review will be needed at a future date.

Other Business

Chair MacLeod provided an update on Lisa Young's Personal Training business, relevant to the sign permit and site plan review processes. Lisa Young was advised to request a waiver for the sign permit (moving the same permitted sign from one location to another) and submit a letter to the PB to request a waiver for a site plan review through the property owner Rich Ash. Chair MacLeod has received from Rich Ash the application for waiver of a site plan review, as the new tenant is a current business relocating to a site which was previously inspected and approved for 2 business spaces.

Mr. Badger asked if there are any state permits, licensing or regulations governing gyms. Chair MacLeod and Health Officer Fran Newton will check into this.

Correspondence

The updated sewer connection permit for the Squam River Landing project has been signed (April 17, 2014) by the Ashland Water and Sewer Department and submitted to the NH Department of Environmental Services.

The driveway permit for the Dollar General store was approved by the DOT and has been forwarded to the Planning Board.

Chair MacLeod received a form indicating that Buskey's Auto is being considered for a permit to change from a repair facility to a retail automobile dealership and requesting approval. While reviewing the form, it was determined that some of the questions (e.g., RSA sign regulations for automobile dealership) could not be answered by the Planning Board. The form will be turned over to the Town for completion.

As a follow-up to the Ashland Historical Society's input to the Implementation chapter of the Master Plan, the AHS will attend the Planning Board's May 7 meeting to discuss formation of a Heritage Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 pm by chair MacLeod.

Minutes submitted by Mardean S. Badger