**TOWN OF BETHLEHEM**

**Planning Board Hearing**

**January 12, 2022**

**HYBRID ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**Minutes**

**6 p.m.**

Town Hall: Chair Mike Bruno, Kim Koprowski, Kevin Roy, Anthony Rodrigues, Alecia Loveless, and Chris Jensen

Excused absence: Johnathan Stevenson

Alternate: Peter Roy and Tinker Stevenson

**All stood for the pledge of allegiance.**

Chair Bruno opened the meeting and read the AGENDA. He then appointed Peter Roy as a voting member.

**Conceptual Super-Secret Ice cream 2213 Main Street**

Christina Zontini Owner Super-Secret Ice Cream conceptual - 2213 Main St.

She plans on making small batch ice cream, using local ingredients. She currently sells at the Farmers Market in Littleton.

A portion of Indian Brook was a retail ice cream shop. She and her husband want it to stay a retail ice cream shop. They came before the board to make sure that their plans were ok for the space.

Chair Bruno asked if she could explain the space in which she is envisioning the ice cream and the part that’s going to be retail?

Christina said that the only plans are to use the existing kitchen where the Slicks ice cream shop was.

We’ll set up a takeout window right up front next the front door, and that’s how we’re going to operate to start, through the summer.

They would like to be open about two days a week, maybe three.

All the ice cream from scratch, so I need a little bit bigger space than like regular ice cream shops.

Wastewater was discussed and the board agreed that she needs to be in contact with the Village District.

There were no further questions from the board.

Public comment

Mr. McGrath said that is not a change of use, and it is a great project.

**Mr. Bruno motioned to waive Site Plan Review. Peter Roy second. 7-0 passed.**

Mr. Bruno suggested that Ms. Zontini write a letter to the Village District explaining her plans for the building. Christina Zontini agreed.

**Closed conceptual Super-Secret Ice cream.**

**Voluntary lot merger**

Merger lots for Rek’lis and Balance. Map and lots 203 55.2 and 55.2.1 District one main street

Next item of business is the voluntary merger of Rek’lis and Balanced Bethlehem. Just a note, this is an administrative change combining the two tax lot maps.

Signed by Chairman Bruno.

**Rek’lis Brewing Company site plan review.**

Owners Ian Dowling was at Town Hall and Marlana Dowling was online.

The board read over the application.  
Site Plan Application was complete

Mike Bruno motion to accept the Site Plan Application as complete. Anthony Rodrigues second. 7-0 passed

**Change of use. The Site Plan is for a tasting room in the Balance building.**

Mr. Dowling:

July of last year Rek’lis purchased the Balance Building which was a Yoga Center and health retreat. It is being converted into offices for management staff and a tasting room.

It's also going to house a storefront for Rek’lis merchandise and 4 packs of beer.

The patio off the West and Northside of the building will be used as overflow from Rek’lis as weather permits.

The board asked about additional people. About 40 additional people.

What about with the deck? Maybe more, but it’s going to be weather dependent in those areas. I'm not sure about the outdoor areas. I would guess another 30 people or so.

The board asked: When you describe this project, there's no expansion of the footprint of the current building, it's just more of a redesign of the interior of that structure. Is that correct?

Ian Dowling: that's correct; outside of the building will not change at all except for the addition of a spiral staircase on the west side. Used exclusively for employees to access the offices.

Do you still anticipate live music? Yes. Nothing scheduled, nothing regular.

**Technical issues**

**Technical issues**

**Public input**

**Stanley Scism 51 Maple Street**

He appreciated the narrative from Rek’lis explaining the plan. He is concerned about all the cars and people going between cars. He appreciates the restaurant, and he applauds it. He is glad it’s not just a bar anymore. He thinks that cars should only park on the Rek’lis side of the street.

**Mr. Stebbins 42 Church Street**

Concerned about the number of cars and their headlights shinning into his house.

The music can be heard in his yard. What time the music will end?

How many parking spaces are there going to be?

He understands that they need to protect their business.

What time will the music end and what nights will there be music so they can be out of town. 39 parking spots is that a maximum? He just wants to know what can be done.

**Mr. Bruno asked Ian Dowling about plantings to protect the Scisms between the properties.**

**Technical difficulties**

**Marlana Dowling**

Reminded the board that this is a permitted use. They always stop the music at 10pm. Sometimes it ends at 8pm. Per the town ordinance 10pm

**Tara Bamford reminded the board that this was a site plan application not a zoning issue. This is a permitted use: places of amusement or assembly.**

**Marlana Dowling**

There is a narrative that was given to the board and all abutters that explains the plan.

Rek’· lis Brewing Company

2085 Main St.

Bethlehem, NH. 03574

603-991-2357

Attn: Bethlehem Planning Board

This is a description of usage and operations for Rek’lis new tasting room located at 2087 Main St., Lot

#55.2.1

This project is an intermediate phase to the bigger project that was presented as a conceptual back in June.

Due to labor shortage and a record-breaking summer, our production facility and campus plans have been

put on hold. As far as this project goes, we are in the stage of seeking out a design firm that is qualified for

a project and its potential size and impact. We are projecting that the groundbreaking for this final phase

will start hopefully, late summer or early fall of 2022, hopefully with a finish line of early summer 2023.

In the interim, we would like to put the “Balance building” into use as a tasting room and offices for

managers. This will support the current business in many ways. The space will provide a better waiting area

and experience for guests in the winter. It will also allow for customers just looking to get beer and go to

have a quick in and out experience.

The need for professional space is extreme for Rek’lis, this space with its 4 offices will provide for

managers with a place to do their professional work, the remaining offices will be used for storage of

merch, gear, and our networking internet equipment.

This project will be funded by Ian and Marlaina. Demo work by Jamie Myers Construction co., Electric and

plumbing by licensed contractors (this will be very minimal). The footprint and elevations of the building

will not change for this project.

Rek’lis tasting room will include: (see more description after following list)

● This space will be used for a tasting room, overflow for restaurant, spirit/beer educational

programs, corporate and public events.

● The plan is indoor and outdoor (current west patio, back deck) for customers. The outdoors will be

standing only.

● Two seating areas, one with standing tables and a few tables for seating, the other a lounge bench

area with a coffee table.

● A 4-sided bar for serving and showcasing rek-lis beer, wine and limited cocktails will be offered.

● Seating capacity for all areas will be approx. 40.

● Operating hours are still to be determined, currently we are thinking Friday thru Sunday 12pm to

8pm.

● Live music indoors, infrequently in the winter. We will possibly have outdoor live music on the back

side of building located on the mid-section of deck.

● Employees will be integrated from our current staffing

● Existing signage on Main St. for the previous business will be used for the Rek’lis tasting room. The

building itself will be painted in spring, there’s a possibility of some mural work on the exterior.

● Lighting on Balance building will not be changed. String patio lights with hoods will be strung on

the west side patio.

● Landscaping will remain mostly the same for interim plan

● Customers will move back and forth from the tasting room to brewpub via the parking lot. This has

been our current mode for customers for the last 4 years of business with no issues.

We have been given preliminary approval by the liquor commission to extend our current license to the new

building. They do not require us to do a full-service menu or food. They do recommend offering some light

fare, snacks, or food truck if available. See approval letter from head of liquor commission. This letter has

been submitted with this review.

The removal of 24' of interior wall to create a large tasting room. Addition of a new 4 sided or island

tasting bar with some limited seating. Approximate number of seats will be bar seating (estimate at 16),

Coffee table area (estimate 8), there will be standing and Whiskey barrel tables for setting drinks down

and a few more tables for minimal seating, (estimated 20).

Existing kitchen to remain for a short menu, simple fare. This kitchen will be mostly used for workshops to

the public and for employee use.

We are merging lot 55.2 with 55.2.1 which will in that case put both properties in Zone D1M. Please see the

provided parking explanation submitted with this review.

As for water use, the building currently supports the needs for restrooms. There will be no changes there.

The only other use of water will be for cleaning, minimal cooking and serving water to customers.

Bethlehem Village District has been informed. Please see letter approval submitted with this review.

As for the rest of the outdoor space, we will leave the existing back deck and side patio the same footprint.

We will add a few of our Rek’lis features, such as barrels and stacked wood to create a perimeter on the

side patio so drink can be consumed outside on good weather days, this area will also be the access point to

food truck.

Final detail, we will be adding a per-code spiral staircase on the west side of the building for employees

only. This will be new access for upstairs storage and office.

We have a hopeful, but soft goal of opening the tasting room for the May of 2022.

Thank you,

Marlaina and Ian

**There was a lot of back-and-forth conversation about the noise that Rek’lis produces. Jensen asked If they would consider the music to end earlier and not be outside.**

**Marlaina:** We also know that we want to be good neighbors, so we're willing to work some things out, but also, you know we have a business and a business plan, and if we're staying within the town’s regulations and ordinances, we must base things off that. We can negotiate some things and talk it out.

**Jensen:** OK, so what you're saying right now, it's open.

Would you forget the music on that patio?

**Marlaina:** Well, I don’t know what to tell you. What if I have someone that's willing to sign a really good contract? Events help pay my event coordinators salary. Then they choose a different business over us because they don't get to have their favorite guitar player at their wedding reception. We want to keep them in Bethlehem so they don’t choose to go elsewhere.

**Jensen:** He’s trying to balance a couple of talented entrepreneurs with people who have lived there before Rek’lis. You know you have stated again and again about your million-dollar wages. My concern is people who live nearby. Every time we ask about making changes you bring up wages

**Marlaina:** I'm not ravishing the wages I'm trying to explain as a business why we have to make the decisions that we do. You know I'm not trying to make it a personal thing. I'm trying to help you to understand the decisions that we're making, and I'm trying to explain my side of it.

**Marlaina:** We want this to be a good experience for everybody. You know it's a business district were a business. And you know, we have a business plan that we're trying to accommodate for ourselves and for our town.

**Vice Chair Koprowski asked about the hours for the tasting room. It will not be open as much as Rek’lis. Possibly Thursday – Sunday 12-8.**

**Leona Stebbins**

Corn hole is very noisy. What is the difference between Rek’lis and Balance? Is it a bar?

**Ian Dowling**: It is a bar.

**Mr. McGrath suggested a site visit.**

Mike Bruno suggested vegetation. Can that be accommodated? Such as lower evergreens.

**There was a lot of back and forth talking about buffers.**

**Ian and Mr. Stebbins will meet to discuss some sort of buffer for the headlights and other concerns.**

**Koprowski said she agreed with Mr. McGrath to do a site visit. To go and listen.**

**The board decided to do a Site Visit on January 26 @ 5pm at the Balance building. Then reconvene the hearing at 6pm at town hall.**

**Koprowski motion to visit Balance Bethlehem on January 26 @5pm for a sound and light visit. Jensen second. 6-1 passed. Anthony Rodrigues opposed**

**Tara Bamford:** “I’m a little bit concerned about the direction the conversations been going because this isn't an application for a special exception in front of the zoning board. This is a site plan application. Places of amusement and assembly are permitted uses in this zoning district. It's very clear that they could generate noise that goes beyond the property line until 10:00 PM in that Main St zoning district. I'm a little bit concerned that the board is coming at it from a can they do this use here; zoning says they can do this, use here”.

**Mr. Rodrigues suggested that if you want to change a permitted use, you will have to change the law. Petition the town to change the law. This is a permitted use.**

**Closed Rek’lis SP (continued)**

**Site plan continued to January 26, 2022. Site Visit at 5pm at Balance Building - then town hall hearing at 6.00pm.**

**Technology Issues**

**Open Public comment on proposed amendments to the Bethlehem Subdivision Regulation.**

The proposed amendments include numerous updates and non-substantive corrections. Edit and clarification. Throughout the document, additional boundary line agreement inspection 3 definitions and revised definitions for several terms. Addition of offsite. Federal provision, addition of notice of decision details to Section 5 subdivision procedures. Reorganization and additional details in Section 7. Mission Requirements Section 8 design standards strengthen stormwater and road standards, including new section, regarding maintenance responsibility for private roads.

**Chair Bruno**: We’ve been working over the last several months with Tara. She was asked to review our subdivision application, lot adjustment and checklist. Site plan, and site plan checklist is next.

It is a revision of what we had, that will align with our regulations.

Plans and regulations are basically being brought up to the 21st century. That's the best way to sum it up.

There was a lot of administrative changes that he and the board support.

Mr. Bruno thanked Tara. He asked if anyone on the board had any questions for her regarding the work that she has done?

The board agreed that it looks great.

Anyone in the public have questions for the Board or Tara Bamford. No questions.

**Technical difficulties**

**Anthony Rodrigues motion to accept the changes to our subdivision and lot line adjustment as well as the checklist. Jensen second 7-0 passed**

**Technical difficulties**

Chris McGrath would like the board to consider roads to be ledge pack.

McGrath said that it’s about time that the board regulations were updated and clarified. They look great, he read them 3 times.

**Keating voluntary merger**

Alecia Loveless motion to approve Keating voluntary merger. 5.7 acres – 5 acres combined 10.7 acres. 37 Ridgewood Lane. Jensen second 7-0 passed

Chair Bruno signed

**Minutes 12-8-21**

Jensen motion to approve minutes from 12-8-21. Peter Roy second.

6-1 Kevin Roy abstained passed

**The board discussed having a 7-day time frame prior to a scheduled hearing for all application documentation.**

* **In writing on the application: 7 days before a meeting.**

**Chairmen Bruno would like a policy in place for all board questions that want to be submitted to NHMA be written and sent to Deb in an email.**

**Kevin Roy motion to adjourn. Peter Roy second. Adjourned all in favor.**

Respectfully submitted - Debra Bayley/Planning/Zoning Clerk