TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Planning Board Meeting

March 23, 2022

ZOOM AND IN PERSON

MINUTES

6:00 PM

PRESENT: Chair Michael Bruno, Kevin Roy, Vice Chair Anthony Rodrigues, Martie Cook, Kim Koprowski and Chris Jensen

Excused absence: Alecia Loveless and Tinker Stevenson

Mr. Bruno opened the meeting at 6pm.

He welcomed new member Martie Cook and return member Kevin Roy. Both are a 3-year term.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Chris Jensen nominated Mike Bruno to Chair. Kim Koprowski second. All in favor. 1-year term

Mr. Bruno nominated Anthony Rodrigues as Vice Chair. Mr. Jensen second. All in favor. 1-year term

Chair Bruno excused himself for the first conceptual. Copper Cannon. He is a board member.

Peter Christnacht director of Copper Cannon explained that the property is now also home to Gale River preschool. That serves Easton, Sugar, Franconia, Bethlehem, and Whitefield.

Copper Cannon is add a pavilion next to the pond. Fact: Grafton country has the highest concentration of melanoma. Martie Cook asked if it was open to rental groups. No, it is not Peter answered. Weddings venues are popular with past councilors.

Vice Chair Rodrigues asked about projected timeline. Peter answered: after mud season.

Kim Koprowski asked about the 8-foot section on the plan. It is for storage. Kayaks, lifejackets etcetera.

No further questions.

Chair Bruno motion to waive Site Plan for Copper Cannon. Mr. Jensen second. 5-0 carried

Closed copper cannon conceptual

Open 42 Maple Street conceptual. (Comic book store)

Mr. Jason Paige sells comic books, current card collectables and video games. He explained to the board that he would like to be open on Sundays 12-7 or 8. There is plenty of parking in the back. Vice Chair Rodrigues asked Mr. Paige to check in with the fire chief for any code violations.

Mr. Jensen motion to waive Site Plan for 42 Maple home business.

Kim Koprowski second. 6-0 carried

Closed 42 Maple conceptual.

Open Matt Scaccia Ammonoosuc River Walking Trail conceptual

Matt D. Scaccia

Recreation & Community Relations Manager

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Matt Scaccia spoke about the project.

In November 2020, The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (Forest Society)

acquired and permanently protected the Ammonoosuc River Forest (ARF). This 270-acre

property in the town of Bethlehem features 1.8 miles of frontage on the river and significant road frontage on Route 302.

The primary goals of these projects will be to create a gravel parking area and trails that lead to a shorefront access point. This will help support the quiet, non-motorized public enjoyment of the property and provide recreational fishing access to a

scenic section of the river.

Signage would be placed near the entrance to the property. Mr. Bruno said that the Select Board handle all signs, and the form is online.

The actual parking area is almost entirely within the Forest Society ownership, but a sliver of the western edge will be on the neighboring property (Bethlehem Tax Map/Lot ID 420-004-002-

006.

Trails: (Bethlehem Tax Map/Lot ID 420-004-002-000)

There will be a single trail leading from the parking area to the shoreline, divided into the

following sections:

Parking Lot to Former Railroad bed: This new trail will be approximately 500’ long and

4’ wide and will be partially located on property not owned by the Forest Society.

The final route has not yet been determined.

Railroad bed to shorefront path: This section will utilize an approximately 0.35 mile

long section of a discontinued railroad bed that leads west toward the Shorefront Path

Shorefront Path to Shorefront: This new trail will be approximately 100’ long, 4’ wide,

and will lead directly to within a few feet of, but not up to the high-water mark of the river.

Each of these trails facilitate non-motorized pedestrian access to the property and may include

typical trail obstacles and steep grades, which could present challenges to visitors with mobility

disabilities.

Chair Bruno asked about caretakers for the property. Mr. Scaccia said that the state has 100 plus land stewards.

The board agreed to waive Site Plan Review.

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

Chair Bruno motion to waive Site Plan Review for Ammonoosuc River Trail.

Vice Chair Rodrigues second. 6-0 passed

Close Ammonoosuc Trail Conceptual

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Open PMR restaurant conceptual

Presidential Mountain Resort restaurant conceptual

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Presidential Mountain Resort, the growing development of overnight visitor cabins along Route 302 between Cherry Valley and Brook roads, is looking at its next big piece — a new restaurant to replace the dilapidated Baker Brook restaurant that was a big draw in the 1950s.

David Eckman, of Eckman Engineering, the representative for property owner Yizchok Rudich, went before the Bethlehem Planning Board to present a conceptual before his expected return in the next few weeks with the full plans and a request for site plan approval.

Eckman said the plan is to have a crosswalk and a flashing yellow light and make a request to the state for a reduction in the speed limit.

An active state shoreland permit application was put in a few years ago, and Darlene Forst, supervisor of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services’ Shoreland Protection Program, is holding the issuance off on the permit for the last piece, which is the restaurant, according to Eckman. The shoreland permit came into play not because of the septic system, but because Rudich began moving some of the buildings around. Both the cabins and motel needed new septic systems, and the last system will be for the restaurant, which requires subsurface systems permit. We just got the permit for the restaurant, to allow construction of the septic system. What’s approved for the restaurant is a clean solution system.

David Eckman explained that PMR wants to build a new restaurant somewhat outside of the footprint of the existing building and not any closer to Miller Pond, though the new building will be set away from the existing foundation to accommodate parking spaces. The plan is for a total of 12 parking spaces by the restaurant, which he said is initially planned as more of a private establishment for PMR guests and is later expected to open more to the public. He said that it will accommodate approximately 70 people with 4 seats per table.

DOT wouldn’t allow us to back out onto 302, so this is the concept we came up with. It does allow us to move the building slightly. We also had to squeeze the building a little and rotate it to get that circulation for the driveway. You come in one way and go through and come out; we are trying to do the same restaurant, Unfortunately, we couldn’t build in the same footprint because of the driveway. It’s a tight area and we are trying to make it work the best we can … It’s pretty much the same building, except brand new and nice.

Board input:

Planning Board chairman Mike Bruno: Bethlehem’s zoning ordinance for restaurants calls for one parking space for every three seats, meaning the new restaurant would have to accommodate 23 parking spaces.

Mr. Eckman added that in addition to the 12 parking spaces at the restaurant, Mr. Rudich is considering putting in a sidewalk extending from the main area of the resort (and on the same side as the restaurant), so guests wouldn’t have to cross the road or walk along the road.

He told the board that the restaurant will only be for PMR guests. Mr. Bruno said that limiting it solely to guests might be a difficult task when you are just off 302.

Mr. Bruno: If you put a restaurant on an open highway, you will have to consider that in a worst-case scenario hungry people are coming off 302.

Mr. Bruno said that the board will discuss if parking will be allowed on the other side of the road when there is an application to act on. It has its own hazards because people will be crossing a road with a speed limit of 40 mph.

Chris Jensen said the Select Board previously reached out to DOT with concerns about PMR guests and traffic safety. Mr. Bruno said he might have a hard time agreeing to put parking across the street and have people cross the road.

Eckman. We are hoping for a crosswalk and a yellow light. If we can’t lower the speed limit, we can at least get drivers to know there’s a crosswalk ahead and to slow down. Across the street is a large area for parking, but that would mean guests would have to get across the road safely, thus the crosswalk proposal, said Eckman.

We are in talks with DOT Eckman said.

End conceptual for PMR restaurant

Minutes from February 9, 2022

Vice Chair Rodrigues motion to approve as amended. Mr. Roy seconded. 4-2

Martie Cook and Kim Koprowski abstained.

Board Business:

The board needs another alternate. Mr. Jensen is going to add this to the Bethlehem page.

Kim Koprowski is going to ask Kerry Sheahan (headmaster)at Profile if there is student interested in becoming a student liaison to the board.

Kim Koprowski mentioned to the board that the golf course is looking into Disc golf.

Next meeting April 13, 2022

Chair Rodrigues motion to adjourn. Kim Koprowski second. 6-0 adjourned

Respectfully submitted

Debra Bayley

Planning/Zoning clerk