

TOWN OF BENNINGTON
PLANNING BOARD
Minutes of the Meeting- February 8, 2010

Present Jeffrey Rose, Chairman
 Barry White, Vice Chairman
 Peter Eppig
 Melissa Stewart
 Deb Perry, Alternate
 Josh Hall, Alternate
 Sam Cohen, Alternate

Guests Patrick Terry, (Crotched Mountain Ski & Ride)
 Suzie and Tony Labor, abutter
 James Bolduc (Joshi Hospitality)
 Leigh Bosse (Joshi Hospitality)

Chairman Rose called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

The Board voted to accept Josh Hall and Sam Cohen as alternate members of the Planning Board. All were in favor and both Mr. Hall and Mr. Cohen were sworn in.

Peter Eppig gave the Board an update on the River Committee meeting. It was reported that the Contoocook River is in one of the best conditions of rivers in New Hampshire. A concern was expressed about invasive species of plant life invading the natural species. Minutes from the Conservation Commission and the River Committee will be available for the Board. The Conservation Commission set goals for the year. Projects will include a natural resource inventory of the town and perambulation of the town boundaries using a GPS. The Conservation Commission is interested in helping Barry White with work on the Master Plan.

Chairman Rose opened the Crotched Mountain Ski & Ride Hearing noting his disappointment that he still has not received a Fire and Rescue report from Kristie LaPlante. A letter was received from Chief Campbell giving an update on the ski area events. It was noted that all seems to be going well with the exception of one event. The night of the exception was reported to have problems with under age drinking, noise complaints including volume and content, and drinking outside of the building at the bonfire. It was noted that the drinking issue is not the responsibility of the Planning Board. If the noise issue were to continue, the Board can require the ski area to shut the music off at a specific time. Mr. Terry stated that he has met with the Selectmen and had been unaware of the extent of the problems. The direction of the speakers has been moved and a new policy has been established to deal with profanity. Both Tony and Suzie labor stated that the noise issue has not been as bad as it has in the past with the exception of the one event that was noted. Mr. Terry was asked about the possibility of a day and night volume level. The ski area sets a volume level control at 9 p.m. The Board asked about the off season events at the ski area in the last six months. Events were held in April and August. This year the ski area has five potential events scheduled. At this time no event is listed as having more than two hundred people in attendance. Melissa Stewart made a motion to schedule a continuance to review the ski area on October 11, 2010 at 7:45 p.m. All were in favor and the continuation was scheduled.

James Bolduc, representing Joshi Hospitality approached the Board for an informal chat session. Joshi Hospitality would like to convert the motel to thirty-two recreational condo units. The condo units would be for sale. Minutes of the July 13, 2009 conceptual meeting were reviewed noting that a life safety review was done on May 22, 2006. Both a site plan application and a sub-division application are needed. Mr. Bulduc stated that he was looking for help getting the building put back in service. It was also noted that Joshi Hospitality would be asking for waivers, as this is not a new building, but an existing structure. The Board stated that Mr. Bolduc would need to go to the ZBA to request a variance, as a thirty- two unit structure is not an approved use. Melissa Stewart noted that the building is currently taxed as a whole, but each unit would be taxed separately as condos. Sam Cohen inquired about the owner's business plans as far as the feasibility of the project. It was noted that the risk is that of the owner. Mr. Bolduc was asked about a time line for the project. At this time the project is behind schedule. When asked about the possible builders for the project, Mr. Bolduc stated that the plan was to ask the same people that had done work on the building in the past. It was noted that there will need to be a septic review and there will need to be a plan for parking. Mr. Bolduc was asked if the retaining wall was attached to the building. The retaining wall has a notable crack in it. There is a proposal to fix the wall. An independent engineer review will be required. The Planning Board will want to see the septic approval from the DES as well as an approval for the driveway from the DOT. The Board asked that they receive a letter of intent from Joshi Hospitality for the conceptual content. It was noted that the condos on Onset Road began as recreational condos and are now used as residential rentals. Chairman Rose made a motion to deny the informal preliminary consultation based on the fact that the density does not meet area requirements. All were in favor. The project may proceed to the ZBA to apply for a variance.

The minutes of the December 28, 2009 meeting were reviewed and accepted as written.

The minutes of the January 25, 2010 meeting were reviewed and accepted with the following correction, page 1, paragraph 2, sentence 4, change (terms) to (term).

Chairman Rose presented a letter to the Board from Mr. Gray noting the intentions of the sale of his proposed condo units. Chairman Rose noted that he has signed the required papers for Mr. Gray's approval.

The Driveway Permit Rules and Procedures were reviewed. It was suggested that a space be added between sections to make the document easier to read. Feedback is still needed from the Road Agent. It was questioned if there was a need to include definitions. There was a short discussion about the use of the word slope and grade. The document was tabled.

It was noted that there has been a very good response from the rental surveys.

There being no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Debra Belcher
Planning Board Recording Secretary