

Town of Searsmont
Planning Board Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2024
6:30 PM

1. Call to order: The meeting of the Planning Board convened at 6:30 pm. These minutes are a summary of the Board's discussions. A recording of this meeting is available at the Town office.

2. Roll Call - Members Present:

Christian Halsted, Chair
Sarah Crosby
Jon Robbins
John Lightner
Jack DeGraff
Jon Thurston
Evie deFrees

Others:
Walter Wetmore, CEO
Kenneth Cox & Gail Gary-Cox

Patricia Chapman, Clerk (on Teams)

3. Applications:

a. Section 1102.4 Site Plan Review Application Requirements for The Rage Release on the New England Road:

- i. This is a minor development.
- ii. We did receive the application seven days prior to the meeting.
- iii. The clerk did send a letter to the road commissioner, fire marshall, etc for comment.

iv. General Info

1. We have a complete, signed application with a boundary survey attached.
2. Owner and applicant information is included.
3. Name of development – The Rage Release
4. List of abutters – is included along with the additional abutter across the street that the board requested. There appears to be a second abutter across the street that needs to be included, lot 72. [The applicants live at lot 69]
5. Sketch map – not included but the board is comfortable that they know the location of the property and don't need it.
[W. Wetmore was not available to meet with the applicants since the last meeting but they did go over it with Selectmen Redman.]
6. Boundaries of contiguous properties owned by applicant is included.
7. Tax map and lot numbers were noted. Map 007, Lot 016
8. A copy of the Deed was included in the original packet. Exhibit A from the deed was added to this packet to show the distances and bearings.
9. Name, reg number, seal of surveyor or professional preparing the plan – that information is on the plan but partially cut off on the copy.

v. Existing Conditions

1. Zoning classifications – This information is included in the revised submission here tonight.
2. Bearings and distances of property lines – these are included on Exhibit A from the deed.
3. Existing sewer and water mains, culverts, etc. There are no public water or sewer systems to identify. The new packet has arrows added to the map indicating the flow of drainage.
 - a. There is not an actual contour map included but the town’s digital maps do show contours of the property. The board is comfortable using the town maps.
 - b. It appears to drain toward the back of the property away from the road. The culvert is in another low point.
 - c. The hand washing sink will be behind the building. It should have special drainage to make sure the runoff goes toward the culvert vs down to the back of the property. The paint they will use is non-toxic tempura paints.
4. Location, names, width of existing streets within or adjacent to property – there is enough detail on the survey for this (scale details)
5. Location and dimensions of all buildings – these details are included in the revised packet here tonight.
6. Location and dimensions of existing driveways, streets, parking and loading areas – this information is in the new packet.
7. Location of intersecting roads or driveways within 200 feet – this information has been provided.
8. Location of open drainage, trees, important natural features – use existing maps.
9. Direction of existing surface water drainage – this was addressed above.
10. General location of existing signs – no existing signs. They plan to paint their “sign” on the front wall of the garage; graffiti style writing painted on the building. This will still need to meet the requirements in the sign ordinance. Wall signs can not exceed 20% of the space.
11. General description of soils in the area – there is no earthwork involved in the proposal so the board does not feel this information is necessary.
12. Location and dimensions of easements, covenants, etc – there aren’t any to include.
13. Delineation of elevation of any area in the 100-year flood plain – the property is not in the flood plain area.
14. Description of wastewater disposal system from licensed plumbing inspector – Moore’s septic came out and located the septic system and tank but couldn’t pump it because it was still frozen. They will be back to pump it later and do a more thorough inspection.
 - a. The new packet indicates that applicants researched Maine laws they do not require a bathroom if you are not serving food or are not a shopping center.
 - b. They have checked with other rage rooms to confirm they don’t have restrooms.

c. The applicants did not consult with R. Hoey, the LPI. C. Halsted will consult with him just to make sure.

vi. Proposed Development Activity

1. The location, dimensions and ground floor elevations of all proposed buildings and structures on the site – we have the dimensions and they are not changing. We don't have ground floor elevations but the board doesn't feel these are necessary in this instance.
2. The location of all existing and proposed setback dimensions and buffers required by this ordinance – Since there will not be any changes to the location or footprint of existing buildings, this is not an issue.
3. The location and dimensions of proposed driveways, parking and loading areas, and walkways – this is included.
4. The type of water supply to be used, the location and dimensions of all provisions for water supply. There is an existing well but they plan to put in an artisan well in the spring. It will be right next to the existing well behind the house. The spigot for the Rage Release will be connected to the well at the house.
5. The size, location, direction, and intensity of illumination and method of installation of all major outdoor lighting apparatus and signs. There is an outside light on the garage and they are not planning to add any additional lighting.
6. The type, size, and location of all incineration devices. There are not any incineration devices in this proposal.
7. The type, size and location of all machinery likely to generate appreciable noise at the lot lines.
8. A report from a licensed site evaluator describing any proposed subsurface sewage disposal systems. This report shall identify the parameters for any proposed systems as well as a replacement area.
 - a. They have a copy of the original septic plan. The board took a copy for their records.
 - b. They do not have a proposed replacement area. This is an area where R. Hoey (or another site evaluator) would need to provide input on whether the current plan is acceptable.
 - c. The packet includes the original plan for a septic system but not an inspection.
 - d. Moore's was not able to pump the system or do a report when they visited. They did locate the system and plan to return.
 - e. If the septic system is servicing the house and not the business, why do we need more details? The board is not comfortable with the information that says the system is not needed for the business so they would like an official report.
 - f. Most of the rooms have time limits of about 15-20 minutes so people will not be on site for long periods of time. The longest is about 40 minutes for the room where they smash the car.
 - g. The max capacity would be 8 people at a time (the room with the car), most rooms will be 1-2 people at a time. This is not for class

- field trips or large groups. There will not be busloads of kids arriving.
- h. The rooms need to be staged before a group and cleaned up after. There will be set schedules and they do not expect to have groups of people waiting on site for their turn in a room.
 - i. The outside spigot is also a question. The board would like R. Hoey or another official to provide input on how “gray water” will be handled. The applicant’s plan is to use buckets for people to wash and to wash the rooms and will dispose of it in the house.
9. The amount and type of any raw, finished, or waste materials to be stored outside of roofed buildings, including their physical and chemical properties, if appropriate.
- a. There will be a dumpster.
 - b. Any paint would be safe, washable (Tempera). They do not expect to have any toxic materials.
 - c. Nothing will be stored outside – it will all be in the garage.
 - d. Cars will be donated from scrap yards and already drained of any fluids, etc.
 - e. Picture tubes would be removed prior to use; newer TVs don’t have tubes. Microwaves do not have mercury or dangerous chemicals. None of the appliances have chemicals. They will dispose of them at the Belfast dump as applicant has an account there for another business.
10. Proposed landscaping and buffering. None proposed.
11. Copies of applicable state approvals and permits. There are no required permits. The business will be DBA under the owner’s SSN.
12. Schedule of construction – the revised packet indicates the work will be done over the summer and plan to open at the end of summer or early fall 2024.
13. Will they have exit signs, etc? This is not necessarily part of the ordinance. They plan to have at least 3 exits/entrances. There is one big overhead door in the front to bring in cars. The building is split so the room with the car will have access through the overhead door and regular entrance as well as access to the back area. The rooms will have exits out the back. The observation area will oversee all the rooms. All doors will be at least 36 inches. There is a sketched floor plan but it wasn’t included in the packet. This needs to be submitted to the board at least 7 days before the next meeting so it can be reviewed before the meeting.
14. Board members are gun-shy because of the Threshers project where contingencies were not implemented and they did not meet the requirements of the plan that was approved.
- vii. C. Halsted made a motion to accept the two applications that have been submitted with a plan to get a floor plan and to talk to the LPI and have him review the plan. S. Crosby seconded. Motion passed 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

- viii. The applicant's need to provide proof to the board that they notified the abutters before the final review at the April 2nd meeting.
 - ix. The applicants should also talk to the LPI to confirm the water and septic requirements.
 - x. The board determined that a public hearing is not necessary. The review meeting on April 2 at 6:30 pm is open to the public if people have concerns.
4. Approval of Minutes:
- a. C. Halsted noted that in line 211 of February minutes – the landowner's name referenced is Casburns not Hasburns.
 - b. J. DeGraff moved to accept the February 6th minutes with above edit to owner's name. C. Halsted seconded. Motion passed with 5 in favor, 2 abstained (E. deFrees, J. Thurston) 0 opposed.
5. Treasurer's report:
- a. C. Halsted confirmed that the line item for legal reserves for the Planning Board were removed and combined it with the other legal reserves.
 - b. C. Halsted also confirmed it can still be used when the board needs to consult with legal for advice even if there is no legal trouble.
6. Communications:
- a. CEO Report:
 - i. Nothing new – pretty quiet in Searsmont.
 - ii. There is one new building permit to work on renovating a house – W. Wetmore will scan and email the permit to C. Halsted for the spreadsheet.
 - iii. No new information on the potential solar project on the New England Road.
 - iv. People on an island looking at getting an electric boat and wanting the ability to charge it on both sides of the lake. They want to put in a dock pedestal on the mainland side. They have engineered drawings, etc.
 - 1. They have removed some trees already.
 - 2. C. Halsted recommended W. Wetmore keep an eye on the project to make sure they follow the rules.
 - 3. C. Halsted had asked for a copy of their plan but never received anything.
 - v. C. Halsted showed how you can see where all of the building permits have been approved over the past few years on the town's digital maps.
 - 1. The whole lot is highlighted on the map, not just the specific building on the map.
 - 2. This doesn't currently indicate which ones are complete or still in process, etc.
 - 3. There isn't a set process for following up on the progress of projects but it falls under the CEO's purview.
 - vi. Charlie Marks may be approaching the Planning Board. He wants to put several 12'x20' cabins on his property on Appleton Ridge to rent out. Initially, he can meet with just the CEO, LPI, and C. Halsted to go over the relevant LUO sections.
 - vii. There is also someone who was talking about putting in a yurt village on their property to rent.

- viii. If they use campers, it becomes a health department issue. There are a lot of requirements for campgrounds.
- b. No new permits on the spreadsheet this month.

7. Committee Reports: None.

8. Old Business:

- a. Warrant Article – any last minute concerns or changes? C. Halsted will explain the basics at the town meeting – the presentation is on the website. C. Halsted is working with Joanne to get the article ready for the town meeting.
 - i. Some of the examples are confusing in the LUO are confusing and will take some explaining.
 - ii. People who participated in the comp plan survey may have more questions.
 - iii. The board would not have been able to work through these changes without MCOG's help!

9. New Business:

- a. Proposed projects for the year – P. Chapman will email everyone the list we've been keeping of potential future projects to review before the next meeting.
- b. The Comp Plan Committee will update the Planning Board on the plan and when it's done, the board will be given a work plan.
- c. People really appreciated the maps the Comp Plan Committee had on display at their meetings.
- d. Should we have B. Kelly come out to talk about where the state stands on grow houses and marijuana, etc? It is on our list to check in on the marijuana issues occasionally to keep on top of it.
- e. A. Philson is working with the selectmen to get a work group together to evaluate sites and determine how to move forward with the salt/sand shed project.

10. Adjournment: J. DeGraff made a motion to adjourn, seconded by J. Thurston. Motion passed by a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Chapman, Planning Board Clerk

J. DeGraff made a motion at the April 2nd meeting to accept the March 5th minutes as written. S. Crosby seconded. Motion passed with 6 in favor, 1 abstained (J. Robbins) 0 opposed.