

MINUTES OF A MEETING AS HELD BY THE
TOWN OF AURORA PLANNING & CONSERVATION BOARD

December 2nd 2020

Members Present: Donald Owens, Chairman
David Librock
Laurie Kutina
Douglas Crow

Alternate Member: Alice Brown

Absent/ Excused: Norm Merriman
Jerry Thompson
Timothy Bailey
Richard Glover

Also Present: Elizabeth Cassidy, Assistant Code Enforcement Officer
Greg Keyser, GHD
Luke Wochensky, Town Board Member

Chairman Don Owens presided over the virtual meeting which began at 7:00 p.m via Zoom. He led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chairman Don Owens stated that Alice Brown would be a voting member for the meeting.

Dave Librock made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 4th, 2020 meeting. Seconded by Alice Brown. Motion carried.

Upon a vote being taken:

ayes – four

noes – none

Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Referral from Town Board for review and recommendation re: Site Plan application for 1276 Mill Rd. as presented by Sammie Trent, Sprouting Minds Montessori School.

Ms. Trent begins by discussing the Sprouting Minds School. It is currently small and has three classrooms including toddler, preschool/kindergarten and elementary. The school is currently located on Main St. in the Village and are looking to move the this address on Mill Rd. No structural exterior changes are planned to the current building. There is a plan to change the

driveway to allow safe passage of vehicles. Two interior walls will be changed and will need a building permit.

Sammie continues by discussing the Site Plan that was submitted and the planned location of the sign. Mentioning the concept meeting, Ms. Trent addresses the traffic concerns that were discussed. Ms. Trent spoke with the Erie County Highway Department and they will put up a school warning sign in both directions.

Dave Librock reiterated the road in the winter isn't the best spot and it's good they are widening the driveway for ingress/egress. Also is good to hear the County Highway Dept will work with the school regarding school warning signs for traffic.

Doug Crow states it's a good location given the possible number of cars, etc. Doug also asks about the overlook across the street and if they will be utilizing it?

Ms. Trent reiterates they will not be crossing Mill to the overlook!

Don Owens suggests making the egress from the property a right turn only.

Doug Crow agrees that making egress a one-way turn would be a good idea. The proposal seems well thought out. Doug also reiterates to talk to the Building Department regarding signage for the school and the sign requirements based on the Zoning Code.

Dave Librock states to make sure to look at the requirements for any signage located within the right-of-way.

Don Owns asks if there is any further discussion?

Laurie Kutina discusses the letter from GHD engineer Greg Keyser and that his points have seemingly been addressed.

Doug Crow moved to recommend that the Town Board approve the Site Plan at 1276 Mill Rd. as presented by Sammie Trent from Sprouting Minds Montessori School.

Seconded by Dave Librock.

Upon a vote being taken:

ayes – four

noes – none

Motion Carried.

Preliminary/concept review plan for 523 Olean Rd. as presented by Jonathan Bennett, architect and co-owner Greg Shepard.

Mr. Bennett begins by discussing the current property which is a farm with some low marshland and an existing timber barn. We'd like to have a gas station (8 pump) with a convenience store,

and conversion of the existing barn to a restaurant and possible event space. Mr. Bennett discusses ingress and egress as well as general size of gas station and store building. There will be "buffer" zones with landscaping to provide some screening. Rear of the store will have a drive thru option. The timber frame barn is approximately 5500 square feet which they plan to convert to a restaurant and event space. Again, there will be a landscaping "buffer"/screen between the restaurant and event building and the gas station/store. The storage unit portion will have a dedicated entrance and driveway (approximately 220 units, one story, at 10x10 or 10x20.) Again separation via a screened fence and landscaping between the storage units and restaurant will be provided as well as a sliding gate for entrance. Mr. Bennett discusses traffic flow and turn around capabilities for the storage unit area. Mr. Bennett also discusses the marsh land topography of the site especially at the low lying marshland. There is also discussion regarding traffic.

Mr. Bennett and Mr. Shepard discuss the existing two-family apartment that exists. There are plans for underground storage water and storm water services. Wood frame style construction or craftsman style to dress up the buildings visually. They want to make it look nice.

Mr. Bennett discusses that the current zoning for the property will allow for these proposed uses and asks for confirmation from Liz Cassidy.

Liz Cassidy states that is correct.

Mr. Shepard states that the residents of the apartment building are not going to renew their lease. The plans for that building will be undecided at this time because of that.

Mr. Bennett states that house at the North side of the property will not be part of this site plan review, it will be addressed at a later date. In summary, the gas station will be low profile and set in the craftsman style to keep with the character of East Aurora. They would like to keep the barn as a focal point on the property and include landscaping buffer and screening areas.

Dave Libroch asks if Mark Jaworski owns all of this property.

Mr. Bennett confirms.

Dave Libroch asks if Mr. Bennett is representing Mr. Jaworski or if the property is for sale?

Mr. Bennett states he will be the architect of record on the project and ownership is to be determined.

Mr. Shepard states that it will be a partnership between myself and Mark. Mark and his brother may take fifty percent of the property and I will take the other.

Mr. Bennett states that the structure of ownership of the property will be determined and they are still working out how it will be split. They will not do any work in the marsh land area as it was too cost prohibitive.

Dave Libroek asks about the address of this development and also about 519 Olean.

Mr. Bennett responds that 519 is owned by Mark Jaworski and won't be part of this site plan. 523 is the address of this site plan and development, and is also currently owner by Mark.

Laurie Kutina asks who will own the lower tier marshland

Mr. Bennett states that Mark Jaworski will own that but the remainder of how the property will be split it still to be decided.

Doug Crow states that that portion of the property doesn't have much value because you can't build on it.

Laurie Kutina states her concern is how the property is split and if that portion is split on its own that it's not buildable, there is nothing that can be done there

Mr. Bennett states that it wouldn't be left of it's own as a landlocked parcel, it will be part of either the storage unit portion of property or something. I'm leaning toward having three parcels.

Laurie Kutina states that is something that needs to be considered. The lower area may be part of each property so that the responsibility for that area can be shared. This is an interesting use for the property. Water storage and drainage will be a concern.

Mr. Bennett states they will have an engineer begin to look at all of the drainage, etc. That will be our first hurdle to do all of the storm water designs and look at the topography. There will possibly have an easement agreement along the driveway as well.

Laurie Kutina reiterates that each split parcel should take responsibility for the maintenance of the marks land area. It would also be nice to see an electric vehicle charging station as part of this. You can get funding to install those systems.

Mr. Bennett asks about brownfields or if there are any other surprises regarding the land they need to know about?

Doug Crow states that there is some historically sensitive land along that area. That's something that will come up during the SEQR process. There is something in that area south of this property that has come up during other projects before so that may come up here as well. Doug asks about the frontage.

Liz Cassidy states the frontage is approximately 384’.

Doug Crow states that he doesn’t have a problem with the businesses proposed here and his only concern would be the number of people coming in and out, how much separation is there between the driveways. So depending on traffic flow, it sounds like there is plenty of space for the traffic flow. I like the concept but would recommend dividing the property rather than having easements to avoid any possible conflict down the road.

Mr. Bennet asks about any knowledge of endangered species in the area?

No board members have heard of any endangered species in the area (but possibly bats, if anything.)

Don Owns states that the wetlands will have to be delineated and marked especially because the slope differential changes toward the North side of the property. The DEC and Army Corp of Engineers will need to approve the wetland boundary

Mr. Bennett asks if that’s already been done on this property in the past?

Doug Crow states that there is nothing they are aware of.

Mr. Bennett states that will be something we need to investigate then.

Doug Crow brings up looking into the agriculturally sensitive area as well.

Liz Cassidy states that she looked into SHPO and that it’s a larger area than we think that may be impacted so that will need to be investigated.

Doug Crow mentions that it is a B2 district and the uses area allowed and the properties North of this location are business in nature as well. It works for the area.

Discussion about traffic counts (State Road).

Mr. Bennett asks about Cazenovia Creek.

Doug Crow states that the lower tier of this property would be affected by flooding, yes. The area up high where the development is proposed should be fine.

Mr. Shepard states that we want to know that the Town is supportive and behind us on this project. We plan to make it look nice and so on and my only concern is that the Town stands behind us. We’re ready to get going on this and we want the Town’s blessing.

Doug Crow reiterates that the Planning Board is advisory only and the Town Board typically asks for our recommendation but they will have the final say and official approval. I'm supportive based on what you have here.

Mr. Bennett discusses the property again and the location of the closest gas stations in the area.

Mr. Shepard again asks if they have the Board's blessing so they can begin the process of detailing everything and finalizing planning.

Liz Cassidy reiterates that this is only a preliminary discussion, the detailed engineered drawings, the floodplain delineation, etc. needs to be finalized and formally submitted by the applicant in order to officially give their recommendation to the Town Board. Right now this is just to give some guidance and notify the applicant of any points that may need to be addressed.

Mr. Bennett summarizes the plan and possible areas of concern that were talked about, etc.

Liz Cassidy states that once this is formally submitted to the Town Board then it will be formally referred to the Planning Board. It's been suggested for a long time that large scale projects like this come before the Planning Board to get initial opinions, etc.

Mr. Bennett states that their next step will be to fine tune the plans, SHPO, wetlands delineation, etc. Mr. Bennett thanks the Planning Board.

Luke Wochensky discusses the Planning Board, how to smooth the process, informing applicants of the processes, etc.

Discussion by board members regarding smoothing the process (mentions the flow charts currently on the Bldg Dept. website, etc. and regards to virtual meetings moving forward.

No motion or vote needed because this is concept review only.

OLD BUSINESS: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

CORRESPONDENCE: None

A motion was made by Doug Crow and seconded by Laurie Kutina to adjourn at 8:21 pm.

**THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY JANUARY 6TH, 2021
AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, 575 OAKWOOD AVENUE, EAST AURORA,
NEW YORK**