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GEORGIA PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

February 11, 2020

(Unapproved draft)

Board Members Present: Suzanna Brown, Greg Drew, Tony Heinlein, David Vincent, Lary Martel

Members absent: George Bilodeau

Staff Present: Larry Lewack, Planning Coordinator.

Others Present: Jay Renshaw, Engineer; Jim Jones (LCATV videographer)

Commission Chair Suzanna Brown called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Public Hearing:

PC-02-20: John & Marguerite McCracken, Owners & Applicants. Site Plan Amendment review to construct event venue structure on existing concrete pad. The property is located on a vacant lot on Mill River Rd., behind 7273 Ethan Allen Hwy. in the Business Zoning District.

- Chair Suzanna Brown read the project abstract into the record & swore the witness in.
- Jay Renshaw (JR), Engineer from Krebs & Lansing, presented the project on behalf of the owners/applicants. Discussed what's changed on the site plan since the initial site plan approval. Proposal is to build a 40x80' enclosed building on the existing 50x100 ft. concrete pad, previously approved for mounting large tents, for the same proposed use (event venue), providing more flexibility to host events in inclement weather. No changes are proposed for site features, parking, driveway, or circulation, except for an enhanced gravel footpath from parking area to new event building. Site would still accommodate up to 240 guests & 7 employees, but ZBA allowed them to increase # of events not to exceed 28 event days/year.
- Greg Drew asked if concrete pad is engineered to hold a structure of that size. JR: don't know, but this will be part of the state Dept. of Labor review. Tony Heinlein asked about managing stormwater runoff, which will be more intense due to roof pitch. JR replied: not a significant enough increase to trigger state stormwater review, still under 1 acre. Larry added that clearly, a downpour-type rain event would produce accelerated volume and velocity of runoff from the pitched roof, which will need to be treated effectively on site via swales.
- Lary Martell: any thought to paving the driveway or parking area? JR: no, it's really important to the owner to keep this parking area unpaved. No changes proposed for unpaved gravel driveway. David Vincent asked about walking distance from parking lot to new building. JR: about 400 feet, not sure, given bends in proposed new gravel path. LM: Suggest you add a paved driveway at this stage, so he doesn't have to return later to get permission with a future site plan amendment if they decide it's necessary later on.
- Suzanna Brown suggested that dumpsters be added at the building, to accommodate large quantities of discarded containers, utensils and food waste. Driving service vehicles repeatedly over a soft gravel path to & from parking lot would compact soils, so a driveway

- 47 access directly to the building seems preferable. It would also better accommodate access for
48 emergency vehicles, and vehicles that will service the port-o-lets.
- 49 • Tony Heinlein asked if Fire Chief has reviewed the proposal & lack of road access to
50 building. JR: he did, Fire Chief provided an ability to serve letter, mentioned he could get to
51 the building. Tony/David Vincent: yes, but an access driveway right up to the building would
52 be better for ADA access and vendors to get to the building more easily. Larry: a driveway
53 base made from permeable pavers would allow heavy vehicles to access the building, but still
54 allow grass to grow up through the roadway. Tony: if it rains a lot, grass will turn to mud &
55 high use would degrade the turf; installing an improved road base seems like a better idea.
 - 56 • JR reviewed the building design. Lary Martell: that roof pitch may lead to snow dumping,
57 may benefit from installing snow guards along the edge of the roofline above entry doors.
58 Suzanna Brown noted that not many events will be held in the winter, per applicant.
 - 59 • Suzanna Brown & David Vincent asked if owner would be amenable to placing shade trees
60 along the western edge of the parking area, and along the gravel walking path. JR: thinks
61 this would be acceptable if required.
 - 62 • Suzanna asked if there would be any new limits on event activity, or leaving tents up after an
63 event. JR: ZBA conditional use decision allowed them more events (up to 28 event
64 days/year, from prior limit of 7 events per year), with tents allowed to stay up for 7 days
65 before & after each event (i.e. 14 days at a time).
 - 66 • Suzanna asked about a traffic study, given likelihood of more intense/frequent year-round
67 use. JR: They provided one already, with the original site plan approval. He believes the
68 original use assumptions haven't changed & thus the traffic impacts likely won't change.
69 Applicant could be required to hire a sheriff's deputy to manage flows at Mill River Rd.
70 intersection for events, to increase safety for cars exiting the site.
 - 71 • Greg Drew pointed out that there is minimal screening for the row of port-a-lets whose back
72 side faces the rear of the church, on the west boundary. There are some trees there already,
73 but he suggests site could benefit from more plantings to improve screening of that area.
 - 74 • JR noted that the state's Project Review Sheet, and VT Dept. of Labor review of the building
75 design and equipment is pending & will likely trigger additional site plan & design
76 requirements. For example, adequacy of existing concrete pad to support the proposed new
77 building will be vetted then.
 - 78 • Suzanna asked if they are amenable to placing an E-911 street address sign at the driveway
79 entrance, and on the building, to enhance wayfinding and emergency vehicle access. (Site
80 currently doesn't have a street address.) JR: this makes sense & they would do that.
 - 81 • JR was asked about roofing materials to be used. Answered metal: not sure what type. JR
82 was asked to correct typo in project Narrative referring to Mill Pond Rd., said he would.

83 **Lary Martell then moved to accept the application as presented & close the public hearing.**
84 **David Vincent seconded, approved unanimously.** Jay Renshaw then left the meeting.

85
86 **Draft minutes of January 14, 2020 Planning Commission meeting:** were reviewed. Greg Drew
87 moved to accept minutes as corrected, seconded by David Vincent, approved unanimously.
88

89 **Draft minutes of January 28, 2020 Planning Commission meeting:** were reviewed. Larry noted
90 typo corrections. Greg Drew moved to accept with corrections, David Vincent 2nd, approved (Lary
91 Martel and Suzanna Brown abstained because they missed that mtg.)
92

93 **Draft Decision and Order for PC-021-19, Leeuw Final Plat amendment:** Suzanna presented
94 several minor wording changes to the draft; discussed and approved. Lary Martell moved to approve
95 draft with changes; Greg Drew seconded, approved unanimously.
96

97 **Revisiting & continuing our discussion of Sandy Birch Road LLC project, from Jan. 28th mtg.:**

- 98 1) Larry Lewack contacted the ANR Wetlands Specialist (Brock Freyer) who conducted the
99 onsite inspection in Oct. 2018 to validate the wetlands boundaries, as presented on the site
100 plan. We are awaiting a response. Lary Martell commented that the wetland boundaries
101 indicated on the state's maps are unreliable, since they're not based on actual site surveys.
- 102 2) Greg Drew commented that the internal road width appears to be 18 ft., which would not be
103 wide enough to allow 2 fire trucks to pass each other. Would be prudent to require posting
104 the hammerhead for 'no parking,' and require it be kept clear & not used for snow storage.
- 105 3) Suzanna Brown said we should consider requiring that the internal drive be built to town
106 road standards, which would be wider than what's proposed, with parking allowed on 1 side
107 only. We can suggest they add cul-de-sacs at both ends. Discussed requiring internal road be
108 paved, but do not believe that's justified at this scale.
- 109 4) Suzanna also agrees with the discussion from last meeting about asking applicant to
110 reconfigure Open Space Lot 13 and its proposed ROWs for better public access. Also wants
111 to require that applicant build a sidewalk along Sandy Birch Road (not just a ROW for a
112 sidewalk). If internal road is ever paved, sidewalks should be required there as well.
113

114 Staff will collate this feedback & concerns shared at January 28 Planning Commission meeting into
115 a draft sketch plan letter for the Commission's consideration at its next meeting.
116

117 **Agenda & Plans for scheduled February 25 PC meeting:**

118 Larry noted that we have no new projects scheduled for a hearing at that meeting; do we still want to
119 meet? Lary Martell and Greg Drew will both be traveling. We decided it was important to still meet
120 to review & approve draft Sketch Plan letter (for Sandy Birch Rd. LLC) and Decision & Order for
121 McCracken Event Venue that evening, even if someone (e.g. Lary Martell) has to call into the
122 meeting to attain a quorum. Also, we need to start our detailed review of the full draft development
123 regulations amendments. Two of us haven't even seen it & that process will likely take up the better
124 part of 2 meetings to complete. So we will proceed with that meeting plan per usual.

125 **Lary Martell moved that the Commission enter into deliberative session at 9:10,** seconded by
126 David Vincent. Approved unanimously.
127

128 **Lary Martell moved that the Commission close its deliberative session at 9:25.** George Drew
129 seconded. Approved unanimously.
130

131 *The following summarizes the Commission discussion during deliberative session:*
132

133 McCracken Event Venue: proposed conditions to include in draft Order:

- 134 1) Need to install a reinforced driveway (could be buried pavers with openings for grass) leading to
135 new building from parking area, to accommodate service vehicles and ADA access
- 136 2) Need to provide dumpsters within 50 ft. of new building; can be screened.

- 137 3) Need to add some landscape screening along northeast boundary to better screen row of Port-o-
138 lets from the back of the church, and plant some shade trees on the west side of the parking lot &
139 along new gravel pedestrian path.
140 4) Needs to obtain an E-911 street number assignment and marker sign where the driveway joins
141 Mill River Road prior to obtaining a building permit. Suggest a business identity sign at
142 driveway entrance.
143 5) Need to provide a letter from a structural engineer certifying adequacy of concrete pad to support
144 a large building, if not already required by Dept. of Labor & Industry for their review.

145 Staff will prepare draft follow-up Decision and Order with these details for later review.
146

147 **Also briefly noted:**

- 148 • George Bilodeau told Larry on the phone today that he plans to resign from the Planning
149 Commission, effective immediately. We should confirm this vacancy with the Selectboard,
150 so they can begin to recruit someone to serve, and appoint them to fill this vacancy.
- 151 • Timeline to transition to Development Review Board: will follow adoption of new
152 development regs, which is unlikely to be completed before June. It's probably not too soon
153 to 'talk up' the new role and start to recruit interested folks, but nothing will likely happen
154 before June.

155
156 **Motion made to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 p.m. made by Lary Martell, seconded by Greg
157 Drew.** The ayes were unanimous, the motion carried.

158
159 **Selectboard Concerns:** (See note about George Bilodeau's resignation, above)

160
161 **Next meeting date:** February 25, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

162
163 Respectfully submitted,
164 Larry Lewack, Planning Coordinator