

Charlemont Planning Board
May 4th, 2023, 6:00 pm Meeting Minutes
Via conference call and in person, Town Hall

Members Participating: Bob Nelson, Lori Shulda-Merrigan, Andy Mueller, Colleen Champ, Gisela Walker

Others Participating: Star Atkeson (Secretary,) Tony Walker

Called to Order by Bob Nelson at 6:00 PM

CITIZEN COMMENT PERIOD 6:00-6:15:

Trevor Humphry called in about Mountain View Drive. The Board told him to wait for the road to be brought up to standard before proceeding with building. Trevor asked what process remained after Town Meeting. They explained that it was first a Town Meeting vote; if the road was not adopted homeowners would form a group to take on maintenance of the road (Town Counsel would write something up) and work would proceed. There is a time limit for the grant of 2 years so it will be within that time period. Gisela noted that Sarah had reached out to the homeowners on the road and they had agreed that they would be in favor of the town adopting the road and if the town did not adopt the road, maintaining it themselves

Board discussed grant correspondence from Sarah. There are grants available that would fund the creation of a planning document in areas related to master plan; housing; zoning; and other strategic plans. Bob feels that Charlemont's Planning Board is not up to the task of helping with a new project and compared Charlemont to other towns with much larger Boards and support staff. LSM said that the grant was for hiring a consultant to help create the plan. G.Walker said that there would be many meetings and hours of work required.

6:16 Great Outdoors Public Hearing

- Bob Nelson read the Hearing Notice.
- Since it is a permit renewal from a previous 2-year permit, a lot of the concerns have been gone over already. The only change is to raise the number of cars from 120 to 225. They have 4 acres of field next to the river and will be able to fit that many cars in while staying 200' away from the river. Helen wishes to use 1.5 acres to park 225 cars.
- Bob Nelson asked for confirmation that all other aspects of the permit are identical. The Board had made a surprise visit, as promised, and found everything running smoothly and the conditions being met.
- Helen spoke of the situation of six cars parking up top at Shunpike and only 1 car parking at their lot with 30 people, and the one car going back and forth shuttling all the people back up to the top. She wants people to park in their lot instead of at Shunpike. Helen hopes to get up to 225 cars in 8 years.
- Bob asked that Helen choose a lower number and amend the number one or more times if it works out to increase the number of cars. Helen disagrees and says that there is nothing wrong with having 225 cars there tomorrow.
- Jennifer Mooney brought up the question of entrances and exits and how buses would turn around.
- The buses use the main driveway.
- G.Walker asked how it worked with the busses last year with the 120 cars. CJ said that the only issue was that there were often new bus drivers.
- Heritage Diner patron parking came up. Helen wants to be sure that he knows that his clients cannot park there on the west side on Saturdays and Sundays so that buses can come in and out. CJ is pretty sure that the diner will be closed once Great Outdoors business gets going on Saturdays and Sundays.

- The Board looks at the parking plan that Helen created—they want to know the orientation of the plan as it will be on the property.
 - Gisela Walker is concerned about traffic flow with the extra 100 cars. Thinks there should be an extra parking attendant. Money says that cars do use their driveway when exiting when they are impatient.
 - CJ has been conscientious about cars not using the post office side and the Mooney's driveway as it is a strategy to avoid paying. They talk about putting up a rope on the Mooney's side.
 - There is the question of Heritage Diner patrons, if they can't park in the usual spots, space which the buses need to use to turn around, they will end up using the post office and Mooney's driveway to get behind the post office. They are okay with Heritage Diner's 50 cars as opposed to Great outdoor's 225 cars.
 - G. Walker is concerned about the number of people on the river. Wonders if the other tubing place will also double their car allotment and if the river will just become a watery highway of people.
 - The Great Outdoors tell Gisela that they are only allowed to rent 200 tubes a piece as businesses, but that the public can come, unregulated and do what they want on the river. The environmental police from the State are the regulators. They regulate per section of river, not by town.
 - G.Walker asked if only 200 tubes are allowed, and a car is one or 2 people, why 225 cars? It circumvents the 200 number. Helen replied that they can't stop them, but they can direct them to regulated parking. Helen said it will not add people, they are coming anyway.
 - Bob Nelson spoke of the concern about Tubers from Hyytinen Hollow getting out at Great Outdoors, and that Marie picks the tubers up when called.
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- Mooneys are asked if they have concerns: Yes, Jennifer thinks that 225 is a lot of cars. They have 90 cars in their business and have a very wide access and egress, they would like a physical barrier keeping people away from Deraway and Mooney property/driveway. They tolerate Post office traffic on the driveway but don't want new cars on the driveway. They suggest a sign on Deraway and Mooney property telling cars not to use the east driveway. CJ assures everyone that they are aware and on top of that issue as people do try and sneak in and out that way.
 - The board asks that they put the fire pit on the plan in the application. Mooney wants to see the parking lot staked out with flagging tape around the area.
 - The Board wants the size of the lot to be updated and a few little tweaks on the map. Also, there was an issue of the measurements and orientation of the parking lot of the field. If it ran lengthwise, that would put them much closer to the river than intended. Helen will fix that.
 - There is no mention of retail in the current special permit. The Great Outdoors sells tubes and other tubing related accessories and products. They would like retail to be included. It was included in the hearing notice and in the previous permit's hearing notice.
 - Bob Nelson suggested finalizing everything except the map and measurement numbers. They went over the conditions in the current special permit with small updates.

Bob Nelson wants to continue to next meeting. He believes getting together to write the permit is easier in general when being recorded. They don't have time to do criteria, they will save for next meeting.

Bob Nelson motioned to continue the hearing next Thursday May 11th at 6PM. Seconded by Lori Shulda-Merrigan. All in favor.

B.Nelson motioned to adjourn at 8:41, All in Favor.

NEXT MEETING:

May 11th, 2023 Great Outdoors Special Permit renewal hearing continued

Respectfully Submitted by Star Atkeson 05/09/2023

Documents reviewed in meeting:

Agenda for 05/04/2023 Meeting

Great Outdoors Public hearing announcement

Great Outdoors Special Permit Application

Special Permit Hearing attendance sheet