

Morristown/Morrisville Development Review Board
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Meeting Minutes of 13 October 2021

Members Present: Susanna Burnham, Gary Nolan (Chair), Christy Snipp (Alternate), Laura Streets (Riverside Village hearing only), Paul Trudell, Mary Ann Wilson, and Chris Wiltshire

Members Absent: Melissa LeBlanc

Staff: Todd Thomas, Zoning Administrator

Guests: David Hursh, Engineer Tyler Mumley, Graham Mink, Conservation Commission Co-Chair Kristen Connolly, Brent Paine, Chris Devon, Chris Walsh, Michael Alexander, Rye Hardy, Kristin Fogdall, Bob Heanue (via email).

Call to Order: Chair Nolan called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Minutes: Member Wiltshire moved to approve the September 22nd meeting minutes. A vote of 6-0 affirmed the motion.

Hearing: Home Business for farm related sales & rentals at 3116 Randolph Rd (Hursh)

Applicant/landowner David Hursh appeared before the Board requesting §630 Conditional Use & §500 Site Plan Approval for a §415 Home Business use for a farm-stand, and farm related equipment sales and rentals, on Parcel 13-168 at 3116 Randolph Rd in the Rural Residential Agricultural Zone. Member Burnham related that her husband recently rented equipment from Mr. Hursh, but felt she could be unbiased while presiding at this hearing. Upon a question about the zoning exemption for agriculture in Vermont's State Statutes, Mr. Hursh said that even though he sold fruit from out-of-state producers at his farm-stand, more than 50% of his revenues were generated on-farm from things like dairy, compost, mulch, etc. He added that he also wanted to rent some of his farm equipment to the general public when it was not in use on the farm, and also use the existing farm bunkers to store and sell salt and sand in the winter. Board Members discussed the 25% size limitation in §415 (Home Business) of the Zoning Bylaws, but decided that the 25,000+ ft² of farm structures on the property meant that small area proposed for the Home Business easily complied with this ratio requirement. Member Wiltshire asked about hours of operations. After Mr. Hursh's response, it was decided the hours of operation for this Home Business would be from 6AM to 6PM, Monday through Saturday, with this hour limitation also enforceable for salt and sand delivery to the bunkers. Member Wiltshire moved to approve the project as proposed with the aforementioned limit on the hours of operation. Member Trudell asked for additional conditions regarding landscaping being planted to screen business parking. Member Wiltshire did not support landscaping conditions being added to his motion for a working farm. Member Wilson asked for a condition of approval that allowed the Board to conduct a full review of this permit request within 3 years from the date of approval. Member Wiltshire, and the larger Board by consensus, agreed to incorporate this 3-year condition into an amended motion. Member Wiltshire's motion to approve the application as proposed, with hours of operations limits of 6AM to 6PM Monday through Saturday, and a 3-year review of the permit (which the Zoning Administrator could require if the Home Business portion of the farm grows), was affirmed by a vote of 6-0.

Hearing: Cond. Use & Site Plan for 136 housing units on Gordon Ln (Riverside Village)

Applicant/landowner Riverside Village LLC appeared before the Board requesting §630 Conditional Use and §500 Site Plan Approval in the High Density Residential Zone for a 136-unit condo/housing development with 153 parking spaces (some underground), a pool,

clubhouse, and park, that will all be located off an extension of Gordon Lane (that loops back to Jersey Heights) on Parcels 23-041, 23-042-1, 23-042-2, & 23-042-3. Member Paul Trudell recused himself from the hearing because he was the architect of record for this project. Engineer Tyler Mumley, and developer Graham Mink, represented Riverside Village LLC at the hearing. Zoning Administrator Thomas said that because there was not a full Board present for tonight's meeting, discussion of the proposed project would be limited, and a more robust discussion would take place at the Board's October 27th meeting. The Board scheduled a site walk of the property for 5PM on Monday October 25th (where the Applicant would have grade-stakes set in the ground along the centerline of the proposed road, and at the corners of the proposed buildings, along with a balloon test to help the Board visualize the height of the 4-story buildings). Chair Nolan explained that a site walk is not open to the public, and because it is not a warned public meeting, no testimony will be taken on the 25th. Observances from the site walk, or Board Member questions that are generated by the site walk, would only become public record when the public hearing resumes at 6PM on October 27th. Mr. Mink invited the members of the public that present at the October 13th meeting to attend the site walk as well (additional members of the public will need prior permission before joining the site walk). Chair Nolan also read a letter into the record from abutting property owner Bob Heanue that requested fencing and foundation assurances regarding any blasting needed for the project.

Engineer Mumley provided a brief presentation of the proposed project, which included modifying the previously approved 2009 subdivision (utilizing a similar road layout out to Jersey Heights), to access 3 new buildings that would house 136 total dwelling units. He said that both proposed 4-story buildings include underground parking, will have a footprint of 169x62, and house 56 housing units (comprised of 32 1-bedroom apartments, and 24 2-bedroom apartments). The remaining 24-unit building would be 3-stories tall, have a footprint of 80x60, and be served exclusively by surface parking. Engineer Mumley added that a portion of the existing home at 426 Jersey Heights, which was recently purchased by the Applicant, would be used as a leasing / sales office. The existing barn on that property, which would be adjacent to the proposed in-ground pool, would be converted into a clubhouse/gym for the benefit of Riverside Village residents. Mr. Mumley added that taller buildings than normal were being proposed to retain as much open space and existing vegetation on site as possible, while also limiting stormwater impacts (with Conservation Commission Co-Chair Kristen Connolly having asked about stormwater treatment). Engineer Mumley also noted for the record that Act 250 approval, and a State Stormwater Operational Permit, would be needed for the proposed project. Mr. Mink said the proposed buildings would be largely screened from views from both Lake Lamoille and Jersey Heights / Route 100 by existing topography, existing vegetation, and generously proposed landscaping in the limited areas of the property that would be developed. Member Streets asked about the conversion of steep slopes, and if Village Trustee Bob Heanue was still part of the proposed project. Mr. Mink said that he now owned Mr. Heanue's subdivision lots, and that there was no development proposed on steep slopes. Member Streets asked for the project's surface parking to include landscaped islands. Engineer Mumley said that such installations were not needed, as they were typically designed for urban areas with limited stormwater treatment area, which was not the case for this site (which has ample sandy soils). Member Wiltshire asked what kind of open space would be provided within the project. Engineer Mumley spoke to the proposed village green and overlook park, with the park being approximately 50x100 in size.

Abutting property owner Mike Alexander asked for a stockade fence along his side property line, expressed concerns about traffic increases on Jersey Heights, and a desire to have the new roadway next to his property be one-way into the development site. Kristin Fogdall of Jersey Way asked how local traffic would be impacted by the proposed project. Commission Co-Chair Kristen Connolly asked the Board if a traffic study of Bridge Street or Brooklyn Street had been conducted as a result of the all the housing recently constructed in that area. Mr. Thomas said no, but noted pre (2012) and post (2015) Truck Route construction traffic counts conducted by VTrans that showed a 29% decrease in traffic on Jersey Heights, resulting in 2,176 less cars per day driving by the proposed project as a result of the Truck Route construction. Member Burnham said that she thought it may be hard to see oncoming traffic from the new section of the proposed development road due to the hill and vegetation to the southwest. Chair Nolan said that this subdivision road, and corresponding access onto Jersey Heights, was previously approved. Conservation Commission Co-Chair Kristen Connolly asked the Applicant to produce an invasive species remediation plan. Mr. Mink responded by saying that he was not aware of any invasive species within the proposed development area, but he would look into this request. Chris Walsh of Jersey Way said he was opposed to such a large project, and especially the height of the proposed buildings in relation to the natural gorge area in the river that is located directly north of the proposed development area. Member Snipp asked the Applicant what other residential buildings were of this proposed scale in Lamoille County. Mr. Mink said that he knew of only commercial buildings in town that were the size, or larger, than the proposed 56-unit buildings. Architect Paul Trudell suggested that Member Snipp could drive around town to find buildings of similar scale. Kristin Fogdall asked about the architecture of the 56-unit buildings. Mr. Mink noted proposed bump-outs in the façades of the buildings to break-up their massing. Architect Trudell said that the renderings did not provide the depth needed for the viewer to appreciate how the exterior decks/balconies, which were afforded to most units, softened the appearance of the proposed building. Member Wiltshire moved to recess the hearing to 6PM on 27 October 2021, with a Board site walk being conducted at 5PM on October 25th. A vote of 6-0 affirmed the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M. - Respectfully submitted by Zoning Administrator Thomas