

Charlemont Planning Board
April 18th, 2024, 6:00 pm Meeting Minutes
Via conference call and in person, Town Hall

Members Participating: Bob Nelson, Colleen Champ, Jennifer Mooney, Liz Bouyea, Lori Shulda-Merrigan (abstained, participating as resident)

Others Participating: Star Atkeson, Jeff and Jen Nielsen, Jim Scalise, Jeff Lacy, Dan Finnegan, Attorney, Residents of Charlemont (Hearing Attendance sheet)

Bob Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:00

Bob Nelson read the public Hearing Notice.

Jeff and Jen Nielsen wanted to clear up what they thought were some misunderstandings from the previous hearing: the project has been called glamping but it is more of an outdoor hospitality realm—retreat for mindfulness with a peaceful, wellness, yoga vibe. He wants to make sure everyone knows that that is what they will bring to Charlemont, after hearing concerns about excessive partying and concerns about littering from residents. He said people can continue to use the trails, and he had a meeting with the trail maintaining mountain bikers that went really well. The trails are a huge amenity for the resort, and they will not take them away.

Jim Scalise handed out aerial print outs of the area with alternative road options. They propose building a 5000' private gravel driveway using an existing logging road (part of it already used by Zoar zipline.) They will use the existing curb cut near the Zoar rafting parking lot. There are three areas of the road that need to be slightly rerouted off the existing logging road. It will be the same or less grade as Warfield Road (20% or less.) The driveway will be a highly crowned gravel road following the Berkshire regional planning commission gravel road standards. It will go up to the ridge, but as soon as it hits the Warfield property, will peel off the ridge. It will be its own easement and address, to lead guests to use the driveway instead of Warfield Rd. They expect emergency vehicles, Fire and Ambulance to use Warfield Road. If road conditions prohibit use of the driveway, they will use Warfield Rd. If resort people go the wrong way, they expect it to be fine for them to use Warfield Rd. They will share the driveway with Zoar zipline.

A Board member expressed concern about preserving the ridgeline, also some concern about disrupting nature and wildlife.

Scalise asks that the Planning Board give a Special Permit w/o the road details but with the commitment to build the road, same design as Warfield, 18 ft wide with turn outs. He will stamp the plans. It can be a required condition, rather than requiring the detailed finished plans which would be too costly without the assurance of receiving the Special Permit. They will own and maintain the driveway. It creates a better landing spot for guests as it eliminates traffic from the wedding venue.

Scalise then addressed some of Lacy's concerns and handed out an updated engineer's drawing of a cross section of a road and how it meets the cabin, upslope. They are happy with the design. The bridge is elevated to meet stream crossing standards and therefore the road needs to be elevated. Past the bridge there is a cross slope. The center line of the road is at grade, requiring half cuts into earth, half filled.

Scalise asked that there is some leeway in the plan that allows them to shift a cabin or path slightly to make it work with the landscape.

Scalise asked that the Board make a condition requiring adequate septic with FRCOG and sewer with the sewer commission. Sewer has gotten in touch with the 2015 agreement letter that was never signed. They sent the latest draft for them to look at. It will allow some flow, but they will build an onsite leach field for cabins, 3600 gallons a day. Will have FRCOG do formal inspection while doing percs. The leach field will be in front of Warfield restaurant in meadow downhill long septic with a curtain drain, built up with sand, elevated beds, long and narrow, through the meadow, it won't be seen.

Scalise submitted an NOI to the Charlemont Conservation Commission and has comments from the DEP to add signs around wetlands indicating that they are sensitive areas. He showed them a split rail fence with the signs.

The Board asked if the Timeline would work with the new driveway. It will not be open this season. 2024 will operate as it has. 2025 is the projected start opening season for Hinata. Bob Nelson read the letter from Brad Smith. Hussein Hamdan was there representing him and acknowledged that the building of the driveway was a major change and very appreciated and impressive.

He brought up water concerns, hoping that they can give some assurance to the neighbors. Scalise said at this point there doesn't need to be a new well drilled. They have enough water for their purposes. They will get holding tanks and are able to draw 3.2 gallons per minute. There is a process that the DEP regulates. A 72-hour test and then one graphs how long it takes to refill. This satisfied Hussein on behalf of his client. If they expand the water usage, they will get additional approval from the DEP. Storage Tanks for fire are separate. If they decide to build something in the protected radius around the well, they will relocate a well. Right now, there is adequate water.

- Lacy confirmed that the interior of the cabins was 500 sq feet, Jon Schaeffer suggested giving them 50 sq foot leeway.
- 5% (2) of the cabins will have ramps and be ADA compliant.
- The cabins will be numbered, and the streets named.
- Bill Coli, on the phone, questioned whether each cabin would need to be permitted individually. The BoH FRCOG price has recently been raised to 125\$, up from \$75.
- Scalise suggested the condition that the resort follow the standards of darksky.org they plan downcast lighting up ten feet on each cabin.
- Luke Toritto, one of several mountain bikers in attendance said they will keep maintaining the trails under the Deerfield River trails umbrella, a non-profit.
- Jon Schaeffer is working on a trail layout so that hikers and bikers can access them during weddings. Snowmobilers will also have an access.
- The Board commended them for allowing the public to use the trails.
- Eventually the main house will be used for staff housing
- There will be 15-20 positions available to start and they will grow from there.
- There will be construction traffic on Warfield Road. They need to build using Warfield Road.
- A board member suggested that the building of the driveway could be phased. Scalise appreciated the idea of giving them more time to build the driveway, suggesting a Special Permit condition that the driveway be built before year 2. Others were not in

favor. Lori Shulda-Merrigan was very concerned about the intersection of Warfield Road and Route 2. She lives in Town and has experience with the speeding cars. She thinks there will be accidents if the driveway is not built promptly. Jenn Mooney reiterated that the intersection with Rte. 2 is still bad. A resident encouraged the Board to have the road as part of the plan.

- Jonathan Schaeffer let people know that several years ago Franceska from Mass DOT out of Pittsfield had agreed that the intersection of Warfield Rd and Rte. 2 needed work. She needed a letter from the Select Board to start the process. He will try and get that going again and get a letter from the Select Board.
- The restaurant will be open to the public. When townspeople go to eat, they will use Warfield Rd.
- Several people expressed support for the project.

Bob Nelson motioned to end the hearing at 7:37. Colleen Champ seconded the motion. All in favor.

Bob Nelson made a motion that Jeff Lacy of Rural Planning Associates draft the permit. Jennifer Mooney seconded the motion. All in favor.

The Board listed many conditions to Jeff Lacy that they would like to see in the Special Permit.

Bob Nelson motioned to end the meeting at 8:20. Jennifer Mooney seconded the motion. All in favor.

NEXT MEETING: May 9th, 2024

Documents reviewed in meeting

Charlemont Planning Board Public Hearing Notice

6 page Document from Shelter Design /Architecture DPC re: Proposed Timber Frame Cabins at Warfield Road, Charlemont, Massachusetts 17 April 2024

3 page 11 x 17 Aerial view photos with road options prepared by Jim Scalise April 18, 2024

Letter Dated April 18, 2024 to Charlemont PB Re: Special Permit Application -Hinata

Mountainside resort for The Neilsen Team 133 Warfield Road from Jim Scalise SK Design Group, along with 7 pages of updated Plans to Accompany Permit Applications prepared for Neilsen Team

Letter from Brad Smith to the Charlemont Planning Board dated 4/13/2024 re: Hinata resort application