

Charlemont Planning Board
May 2, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Robert Malone and Bill Harker, Co-Chairs, Gisela Walker, Carlene Hayden, Bob Nelson.

Others Present: Byron Gilcrest, Pam Hazlett

Call to Order

Planning Board Co-Chair Malone called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

7:02 P.M.: Continuation of Backroads LLC Special Public Hearing to Operate a Micro Scale Distillery at 49 Potters Road

At 7:02 p.m., Co-Chair Malone opened the public hearing for Backroads LLC to operate a micro-scale distillery at 49 Potters Road. No one representing Backroads LLC was at the meeting. Their notice to that effect had reached the Board too late. The Board discussed the need to continue the hearing and Mr. Gilcrest, an abutter, let the Board know that he was taping the hearing and took the opportunity to express his strong opposition to the proposed project. Byron Gilcrest stated that he has lived at his address for 45 years and the applicant never contacted him about her plans. If Backroads LLC is allowed to operate their business, he plans to appeal and potentially will sue and go to the TTP board. He will also apply for an abatement for taxes. Mr. Gilcrest is concerned about the potential for fire. He has 318 feet of common border with the property at 49 Potters Road and fears a fire could burn through the wood lot he owns to his house. He is most opposed to the distillery, as they have been known to blow up occasionally. Additionally, he is concerned that his insurance rates could increase. Mr. Gilcrest said that the homeowner must supply a letter to authorize the use of the property for the business signed by all owners. He also said that they need to check with their insurance, as the rates are likely to rise for them as well. He said that if they used the garage on the other side of the property for the storage and do not perform any distilling, he would not oppose their proposal. The Board declined further comments on the desirability of the project as the applicants were not present. Gisela Walker motioned that the public hearing be continued until May 16, 2019 at 7:00pm. The motion was seconded by Harker and approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from their meeting of 4/18/2019. On a motion by Hayden and seconded by Malone, the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Board Discussion

There was discussion about the solar array that is planned for the site connected to the Green Communities Designation. Mad River Solar will need to meet with the planning board regarding the site plan approval prior to that project moving forward. Additionally, there are payments in lieu of taxes that need to be negotiated.

7:45 P.M.: Trevor Mackie/Charlemont Broadband Committee to Discuss Proposal for Fiber Optic Network Hub at Town Hall

In order to move forward with putting fiber optic cable throughout the town, it is necessary to build a 4' x 4' x 18" – 24" deep green-lidded vault next to town hall. They will also need to put a propane tank mostly

underground and a generator in a self-contained structure. These structures are within 25' of the property line and will therefore require a variance. There are also heavy black wires that will go from this location to two different light poles on Route 2, one going east, the other west, serving each side of town independently. The wires are aerial trespassing, but they have approval of the affected neighbors.

Board Discussion

The board briefly discussed the need to update the cellular tower bylaws. It is expected that once fiber optic is installed there will be little interest in cell towers. In any case, the bylaws do need some updating to add the potential of 5G installations in the future.

It is planned that a special town meeting will be scheduled for September or October 2019 to pursue various planning bylaw changes.

8:30 Review/Approve layout for Tower Road Bridge over Chickley River and West Oxbow Bridge over Wilder Brook

The proposed layout of these bridges was reviewed by the Board. Walker made a motion to approve the layout of the bridge. The motion was seconded by Malone and approved unanimously.

Adjournment

At 8:45 p.m., on a motion by Malone and seconded by Hayden, the board unanimously adjourned their meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Nelson

Documents viewed in the Planning Board meeting of 5/2/2019*

1. Agenda for meeting of 5/2/2019
2. Backroads LLC Statement of Intent to Operate a Distilling and Barrelhouse at 49 Potters Road, Charlemont, MA 01339
3. Draft Plan for Connecting Municipal Fiber Optic Network to the Network Equipment Room that will be Located in the Basement of Town Hall
4. Draft Meeting Minutes from April 18, 2019
5. Drawing of proposed layout for Tower Road Bridge over Chickley River and West Oxbow Bridge over Wilder Brook

*Documents are stored in their respective files