

**Charlemont Planning Board**  
**April 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes**  
**Zoom Video Conference**

Members Participating: Bob Nelson, Gisela Walker, Bill Harker, Carlene Hayden

Other Participants: Peggy Sloan, Marguerite Willis, Allison Couzens, Mark Kraatz, James Scalise, Mary Ellen Banks, Jon Schaefer, William Martin, Joe Pellegrino, Nicole Durant

Call to Order

Meeting commenced at 6:03pm.

Proposed Bylaw Provisions Discussion

The Board discussed agricultural use of land in the Town of Charlemont in an effort to determine an appropriate threshold for number of animals in relation to acreage and property location. Walker confirmed the current bylaws specifically prohibit small piggeries, cows, and male fowl on properties under 5 acres and all other animals require a special permit or site plan review. Sloan questioned whether there should be a provision in which there is no agricultural use of land in the Village Center and the requirement of a special permit in all other areas of the town. When determining their drafted revision of the current bylaw, the Board and Sloan took into consideration the limited number of lots in the village that exceed 2 acres, the AG's 2 acre lot size requirement and the importance of allowing abutters to be involved without the bylaw being too restrictive. The general consensus was that any parcel of land under 2 acres will require a special permit in the Village and the RR District and any parcel over 2 acres will be by right with a required site plan review in the RR District, along with a footnote that exempts up to 6 chickens (no male fowl) and 6 rabbits. Pellegrino called in after this discussion had concluded to which Nelson summarized the discussion for Pellegrino. Pellegrino expressed concerns about enforcement of the bylaw to which Nelson confirmed there will be another call to discuss his concerns in length. In regards to enforcement, Willis made mention that the Select Board is working towards giving Building/Zoning the ability to ticket zoning transgressions as part of the revision package.

Nicole Durant, to discuss building on Mountain View Drive

Durant and her partner Eric recently purchased lots 28 & 29 on Mountain View Drive. They are planning to build a homestead with a house under 2000 SF. The condition and width of the road leading to the property as it does not meet minimum requirements for safe passage. Hayden stated the Planning Board conducted a site visit and determined the entire road needs to be upgraded up to their lot for emergency response access. Harker confirmed the road will need to be sub-graded and then measured to determine whether or not the road will need to be widened. Durant's partner asked if they would need a permit to build a deck platform should they choose to put up a tent rather than a house, to which the Board confirmed as long as the platform is under 200 SF they would not need a building permit.

Jon Schaefer, to discuss recreational use at Warfield property

Schafer approached the Board about his intention to become the host of a "Ford Bronco Off-Road" facility, a new skills course for the launching of a new line of Ford Broncos, located on their Warfield Road property. Ford Motor Company is a client of the marketing agency Jackson Dawson. Schaefer shared that

Jackson Dawson and the Ford trail design team completed a site visit and expressed strong interest in Charlemont hosting their Eastern US facility. The general concept is a 1 ½ day course that teaches Bronco vehicle owners how to maneuver the all terrain vehicle in a safe and eco-friendly way while highlighting other attributes of the Mohawk Trail Region. Schaefer assured the Board that this is not your typical bunch of guys ripping up stream beds and the forest floor and introduced Jackson Dawson representative, Mark Kraatz. Kraatz shared a slideshow presentation highlighting the program.

The Planning Board expressed concerns of location, noise and traffic flow. Schafer confirmed the course would be entirely on his land and Kraatz confirmed the layout of the course is flexible and would be approximately the size of two football fields. Kraatz confirmed the vehicles are stock vehicles so they don't have souped-up engines or jacked tires and that the course is not about speed but rather control with one guide for every six vehicles, in which they host up to 18 drivers per course.

Engineer Jim Scalise expressed he didn't have any environmental concerns from an engineering standpoint after driving around with the Ford Bronco team. Kraatz expressed that the contract between Ford and Jackson Dawson was for 2.5 years but it is their goal to renew the contract. Walker expressed concerns of the Bronco Off-Roaders customers returning to Charlemont, and in time, turning it into an off-roading destination in which they go off-roading beyond Schafer's property and tear up the land. Kraatz assured the Board the goal of the skills course is to train Bronco owner's how to drive their vehicles in an eco-friendly way that doesn't tear up the land and educate them to practice the "leave no trace" method. Martin confirmed he learned about the demographics of the customers and that they are primarily the type of people to return to the Mohawk Trail Region to go rafting and kayaking and not necessarily just go off-roading. Martin confirmed they will have a plan ready to submit by the end of May and as far as he researched, since the food and lodging facilities are already permitted at Berkshire East, their special permits would be primarily focused on the Warfield side of this project surrounding the development of the track and the commercial use of the vehicles

#### Review/Approve minutes

The minutes from the previous Planning Board meeting will be approved during the next Planning Board meeting.

#### Reviewing Correspondence

Hayden stated a resident reached out about expansion of an existing shed that is currently non-conforming due to being too close to the property line. The owner is looking to expand the footprint further onto his own property. Harker suggested the owner attend a meeting to which Walker agreed, stating the Planning Board could make a finding that the change would not make the shed more non-conforming and the issuance of the finding would be then recorded in the minutes.

Hayden shared she received an inquiry from Luke Toritto seeking to buy land in Charlemont to build a tiny home on. The tiny home would serve as a full time residence in the summer months and as an AirBNB rental unit in the winter months. Toritto is seeking confirmation as to whether they will need to be connected to the grid and if they can have a compost toilet. The Board referred Mr. Toritto to the Board of Health for the toilet and any water supply questions.

Walker inquired about the status of Tatro's Trucking business and the screening trees that are falling down and are part of his special permit to maintain. Harker confirmed the owner is living permanently in Florida and that the business is closed. Hayden and Harker will compose a letter to the owner to get this matter resolved.

Walker inquired about the status of a letter that was to be mailed to Ken Stark regarding obtaining a Special Permit for a commercial sawmill. Hayden and Bill confirmed they drafted a letter and that if the Board approves of the draft, they will mail it ASAP.

#### Cap on the size of ground mount solar installations

Walker introduced the topic of capping acreage of solar fields. She questioned whether carbon storage makes sense when large numbers of trees are being cut down to create space for solar fields and presented the topic of solar fields and their impact to scenic views. Walker expressed there should be discussion surrounding the benefits and losses that solar fields present. Hayden noted there are certain solar protections in the Zoning Act and that she is not opposed to discussing limitations of solar fields and Nelson expressed he would like to learn more about capping of solar installations, echoing concerns of protecting the views of the scenic corridor. Willis noted that the solar field abutting her property is anticipated to generate \$50,000 a year to the town, highlighting one of the benefits of solar fields.

#### Holding meetings outside

Harker confirmed the trailers at the fairgrounds should be moved out of the way in time for the next meeting and should they run into any issues, the hall is empty upstairs with plenty of space and seating.

#### Upcoming tubing hearings

The Board determined that the Tubing Special Permit Hearings would not be ready for April 29th. After review of the initial submission of Hyytinen Hollow's revised special permit packet, the Board agreed the packet requires revisions. Hayden confirmed she has not yet received a special permit packet from The Great Outdoors and will reach back out to the owners. The board will coordinate the tubing hearings into the upcoming meeting schedule in an attempt to give the tubing outfitters enough time to prepare their documents and still hold the hearings prior to the start of the tubing season. Hayden confirmed she will reach out to both tubing outfitters to verify necessary revisions and asked that both tubing outfitters submit their final special permit packets to Walker and Nelson via email by April 23rd, allowing time to review prior to placing an ad in the Greenfield Recorder.

#### Anticipated Upcoming Planning Board Meeting Schedule

May 6th: Well's Provision

May 20th: Berkshire Bike Tours and The Great Outdoors Hearing

May 27th: Hyytinen Hollow Special Permit Hearing

#### Adjournment

Nelson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:33pm. Harker seconded the motion; the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

*Respectfully submitted by: Katie Banks, Minute Taker to the Boards*

#### **Documents viewed in the Planning Board Meeting on 4/15/2021\***

1. Agenda for meeting of 4/15/2021
2. Hyytinen Hollow Tube Rentals SP Application
3. Charlemont proposed Bylaw Revisions dated 4/1/2021

*\*Documents are stored in their respective files*