

These minutes approved as amended by a vote of 3-0 on April 20, 2016. Minutes revised by a vote of 5-0 on May 4, 2016.

Planning Board Minutes
Ashfield Town Hall
April 6, 2016

Present: Lauren Preston-Wells (LPW)
Ken Miller (KM)
Michael Fitzgerald (MF), Chair
Alan Rice (AR)
Jim Cutler (JC) – late
Meghan Bowen (MB), scribe

Absent:

Guests: Elliott Marsh
Teri Rutherford
Gloria Pacosa
Anne Yuryan
Joanne Ostrowski
Rachel Moore
Janet Clark
Ron Coler
Anna Fessenden
Bruce Bennett

Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM.

1. Judy Haupt (JH) officially notified Board of changes being made to plans regarding the dock in Ashfield Lake. Due to the expense of drafting new plans and building a dock from the ground up, the new dock will now be a premade floating model instead. AR moved to request further notification of the new plans when they are finalized, LPW seconded. MF said that the Board has no jurisdiction regarding the dock, so it is not necessary to see any further plans in an official capacity. AR withdrew his previous motion. MF made a counter-motion that the Board considers itself sufficiently informed of the plans, AR seconded. JC arrived too late to cast a vote. All in favor, 4-0, motion carried.
2. Board reviewed minutes from March 16, 2016. AR moved to accept minutes as amended, LPW seconded. JC arrived too late to cast a vote. All in favor, 4-0, motion carried.
3. AR reported that he received an email from Town Administrator Kayce Warren regarding her interest in getting the Board's associate member and telecommunications bylaws on the docket for annual Town Meeting in May.

These minutes approved as amended by a vote of 3-0 on April 20, 2016. Minutes revised by a vote of 5-0 on May 4, 2016.

Gloria Pacosa Special Permit Hearing, case no. 2016-01

I. Board opened Gloria Pacosa's (GP) Special Permit Hearing, case no. 2016-01. The hearing was called to order at 7:40 PM.

1. MF stated that the Board was holding a public hearing pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A to decide whether or not to grant an expansion of GP's current Special Permit. GP submitted her application and accompanying forms to the Board. GP stated that she wants to expand her business to include events in a barn on her property that is being renovated currently. The Permit would also allow GP to include in her events a greenhouse that will be attached to the barn. The Permit would not permit GP to hold any more events than she is already currently allowed.
2. LPW asked for clarification about the map GP provided, and about where tents are allowed according to GP's original two Special Permits. LPW also asked when and how often events are allowed under the previous Permits, since they state that events are only allowed three times per month. GP responded that she holds events primarily during summer months, typically May through October.
3. Elliott Marsh (EM) supplied the Board with 3D representations of where the new greenhouse would be and what it would look like. AR asked whether the greenhouse would be part of events held at night, since light pollution may be an issue. GP replied that the greenhouse would be used primarily as an agricultural space, not a total event space. She said that there are plans for there to be a partition in the middle to differentiate where guests can go during events, and that the partitioned area might be heated to allow for some winter events.
4. JC asked whether there are any established architectural concepts for lighting in the barn or the greenhouse designed to prevent light pollution. EM said that there were no specifics at the moment, but that the greenhouse would likely contain agricultural grow lights. He stated that there would be no flood lights either inside or outside the buildings.
5. JC expressed concern that the greenhouse would be a source of light pollution. MF suggested that light pollution could be ameliorated by plantings.
6. AR said that if the greenhouse will be used for events, then noise pollution may also be a problem due to the lack of insulation in the walls. GP said that she was not entirely certain yet whether or not the greenhouse would be used for events since it has not been built or examined by the building inspector yet. She requested that there be a provision that event lights be turned off at 10:30 PM, which is specified in her earlier Special Permits as the time at which loud music must cease. MF suggested that the Hearing table the conversation and come back to it at a later time.

These minutes approved as amended by a vote of 3-0 on April 20, 2016. Minutes revised by a vote of 5-0 on May 4, 2016.

7. LPW asked whether there will be insulation in the barn, and asked whether there would be sound pollution from late night events. GP stated that there will be insulation in the barn, and that there would be less sound pollution than there currently is during events because the walls of the barn are more sound-proof than an open-sided tent.
8. LPW asked how many events GP held last year. Teri Rutherford (TR) said that GP had held approximately 24 events on-site during the last calendar year. GP stated that under her current Special Permits, there is no limit to the number of events she can hold below a maximum of seventy five people. LPW pointed out that the way the Special Permits are worded, it appears that GP can only hold three events per month on her property. MF said that the wording in the previous Permits was unintentionally contradictory, but do not seem to limit the number of small events she can hold in her house.
9. AR asked when clean-up for events typically happens. GP said most of it happens the following morning, and there are never large trucks coming to take equipment away late at night.
10. AR asked what the maximum occupancy of the barn will be. EM said that the floor will be rated for three hundred people, but that GP would likely never have an event that size. GP stated that she has seating for one hundred and fifty people.
11. LPW asked how parking would be handled during events. GP said that there would be no change in parking from how it was handled under previous Permits. There is enough room in her lower driveway for approximately fifty people, and there is more on the street and behind the historical society.
12. JC asked whether it was possible that there might be an event held in the barn that also requires tents to be set up. GP said that this was a possibility.
13. MF noted a sentence in GP's impact statement that refers to a sign next to the road hanging on a tree. MF asked whether the tree was on GP's land or whether the tree belongs to the Town. MF said that if the tree is on Town land, which he suspected that it was based on its location, then GP must follow sign bylaws, which are not under the Board's jurisdiction.

II. Board opened the Hearing to comments from the public.

1. Anna Fessenden (AF) spoke in favor of granting the Special Permit and submitted a written statement (attached). AF said that she has never been bothered by noise related to GP's business, but she requested that GP continue to consider the impact of dust from large trucks driving on her upper driveway on her neighbors, particularly the Bennetts at 46 South Street. She also requested that GP ask guests to use the lower driveway, as the upper driveway points into AF's bedroom window and allows light from car headlights to enter when guests are leaving late at night. AF also asked whether the greenhouse would be running any fans in the summer to maintain temperature. GP said that there would be no fans, only venting windows in the

These minutes approved as amended by a vote of 3-0 on April 20, 2016. Minutes revised by a vote of 5-0 on May 4, 2016.

greenhouse. GP also said that there would be fewer large trucks if the is granted the permit because she would not have to hold as many events that require setting up tents. TR said that the new contract clients sign makes it clear that guests are only allowed to depart from the lower driveway. EM said that the upper driveway will have work done this summer to improve its quality and reduce dust.

2. Bruce Bennett (BB) spoke in favor of granting the Permit. He also spoke of dust from the driveway being a disturbance, since the driveway is less than ten feet from his house in some place. He also commented that there is too much pedestrian traffic along that driveway next to his windows. However, he expressed his appreciation that GP is working to address these problems. GP suggested that their client contract could prohibit guests from using that driveway during events.
3. Ron Coler (RC) spoke in favor of granting the Permit, saying that while he is not an abutter, he has attended several of GP's events and believes that all guest behavior he observed was respectful and considerate.
4. Janet Clark (JCL) spoke in favor of granting the Permit. She stated that GP's business supports the community by employing young people in the area, and that the business is respectful to the landscape and to history.
5. Rachel Moore (RM) spoke in favor of granting the Permit. RM is an abutter, and stated her belief that GP is conscientious about adhering to the terms of her previous Special Permits, particularly with regard to noise.

III. Board discussed conditions of the Special Permit.

1. MF asked how many inches of crushed stone would be added to the upper driveway. EM said there would be roughly eight to ten inches. Board suggested either that the lower driveway be improved enough to allow delivery trucks to drive on it, or that GP move her upper driveway so that it is no longer a disturbance to her neighbors. GP said that cost was a major factor in making this decision.
2. Board discussed lighting in the greenhouse and how to prevent late night light pollution. MF said that most agricultural lights are designed with light shields to direct light downward towards plants, which would prevent light pollution. TR said that Ashfield is a Right to Farm Community, so in her opinion, any grow lights would be protected. RM said that she and her husband are concerned about light pollution, but that shielded lights seem to be an effective solution.
3. Board decided that these conditions be placed upon GP's Special Permit: 1) All non-agricultural light shall be shielded from adjoining premises; 2) Pedestrians shall be blocked from upper (south) driveway during events; and 3) Sign shall be two feet by three feet (2'x3') unlit.

These minutes approved as amended by a vote of 3-0 on April 20, 2016. Minutes revised by a vote of 5-0 on May 4, 2016.

4. KM moved to close the Hearing, AR seconded. All in favor, 5-0, motion carried. The Hearing was closed at 9:30 PM. Board approved GP's application to expand her Special Permit 5-0.
5. KM moved to adjourn the meeting, LPW seconded. All in favor, 5-0, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Meghan Bowen