

Bethel Development Review Board
Tuesday, June 7, 2016
Draft Minutes of Meeting

Board Members Present: Eric Benson, Keith Bollman, Newt Whitcomb, Penny Griffin, Robert Leister.

Public Present: Geneiva Gaiko, Rebbie Carleton, Jim Robinson, Dan & Kim Prestridge.

The meeting was opened at 7:00 PM for a Public Hearing for a variance of use for a restaurant in the the property located at 88 North Road submitted by Martin Brothers Development LLC. Representing the company were Greg and Matt Martin, Chad Rogers, and their attorney, Jeff Lewis. The company has recently purchased the property and intend to convert the upper two floors to 8 residential rental units and are seeking to reopen the lower level as a restaurant and tavern. The property is in the Village Residential District where multi-family dwellings are permitted, however the restaurant use would require a variance. Prior use had been as Bed & Breakfast as well an accessory use as a restaurant, however, the property has been vacant for approximately 2 years thus requiring a new hearing for the variance of use.

The representatives were invited to present the details of their request. Matt Martin indicated that they have plans to invest a significant amount of money into the building and wish to retain the Victorian character of the exterior of the structure. They feel that the authorization of the variance is required to enable the reasonable use of the property. Upon questioning by the Board, Mr. Martin indicated that the operating hours for the restaurant would be 7 days/week, 11 am to 11 pm. The primary operation of the business would be as a restaurant and the tavern would be secondary. Concerns from the public present included which entrance would be used as the primary entrance to the building, exterior lighting plans, whether musical groups would be performing on a regular basis, and what, if any, outside dining areas were planned. Mr. Martin responded that the primary entrance would be moved from the tavern area to the traditional front entry near the carport. Exterior lighting would be down lighting on 8'posts in the parking areas and walkways. They do plan on moving the existing handicap ramp to the south side of the porch. A patio for dining will be constructed adjacent to the carport near the front entrance and there will be a few tables on the porch as had been done by the prior owners. There would be no live music other than possibly an occasional wedding during the summer months.

In responding to other questions by the public and DRB members, Mr. Martin stated that the residential units will each have individual kitchen facilities and not have use of the restaurant kitchen. The company plans on hiring a manager for the restaurant as they do not have experience in this area, but they do intend on being actively involved in the operation. Included in their plans for the property is and expansion of the parking area off the southerly entrance drive, increasing the septic system capacity, and upgrading the water line from water main to a 4 inch diameter pipe.

Once all question had been answered, the hearing was closed at 7:30, the applicants and public departed and the board went into deliberative session. Once concluded, a motion was made by Robert Leister to approve the request for variance of use based on the criteria in Section 603 of the Town of Bethel Zoning Ordinance that:

There are unique physical circumstances inherent in the structure that were not created by the appelland, and these conditions prevent the reasonable use of the property;

That granting the variance will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood

And that the variance will represent the minimum variance that will afford relief and would represent the least modification possible of this ordinance;

And that the variance be granted with the following conditions:

- 1) Hours of operation are not to exceed 7 days/week from 11 am to 11 pm, and
- 2) Any exterior lighting outside of the porches are to be down lighting on posts in the parking areas, driveways and walkways only.

Keith Bollman seconded the motion and was passed on a unanimous vote. The Board then approved minutes from the May 17 and April 19 meetings with corrections.

There being no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Benson