

Bethel Development Review Board
Tuesday, May 15, 2018
Minutes of Meeting

Board Members Present: Eric Benson, Penny Griffin, Charles Washburn, Ruth Clough, Brad Anderson.

Public Present: Greg Martin, Lloyd Prestridge, Rebbie Carleton, Jim Robinson.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

The first order of business was a request from Martin Brothers Development for the property located at 88 North Road that they have developed into 8 residential units and a restaurant/tavern on the first floor. This request is for a variance for lamp post lighting around the property and a request to host live music outside as weather permits. Chair Benson opened the meeting by reading from the minutes of the original Conditional Use Application from the June 7, 2016 meeting in which the Applicants stated that “exterior lighting would be down lighting on 8’ posts in the parking areas and walkways”. It was also further stated that “there would be no live music other than possibly an occasional wedding during the summer months”. The DRB ultimately did grant the variance with two conditions, one of which stated that “any exterior lighting outside of the porches is to be down lighting on posts in the parking areas, driveways and walkways only. The Board then reviewed Section 6.8 Conditional Use, of the Town of Bethel Unified Bylaws as adopted 6/2017.

Mr. Martin was then invited to describe the request that he was seeking with the variance. He indicated that he had researched “down lighting” fixtures but found them expensive. He indicated he would be willing to remove the overhead ‘string lighting’ as a concession. Regarding the outside music, it was his belief that it was only 5 or 6 times last summer and that the music halted by 9 PM.

The public was invited to comment and L. Prestridge, who lives across North Road from the project, stated that the lighting was not “too much” and he could tolerate the music but it did seem to get louder as the summer went on, especially the electric guitars. He also added that he would request that outdoor music during week days (Monday – Thursday) not be allowed. Mr. Martin agreed with that request and offered to notify the residents along North Road anytime outdoor music was planned.

R. Carleton observed that the lighting issue might be resolved by “frosting” the lighting fixtures glass. She noted that the porch and string lights also need to be shielded in some way as they provide glare to their adjacent property. She also felt that the presence of the outdoor seating on the porch and patio “shifted the balance” of property to where the use was becoming too much for the neighborhood. She thought that outside music twice a month would be tolerable if she was given prior notice of them.

J. Robinson (husband of R. Carleton) also thought the frosting of the lighting to dim it would solve that issue. He felt the music was too loud, even when he tried to block it out by using head phones in his home. He also commented that the outside lawn games were too much.

After some discussion regarding possible decibel levels, etc. the hearing was closed at 7:43 and the public present departed. The Board then went into deliberative session and emerged at 8:25 with no decision at that time. The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectively Submitted,

Eric Benson, Chair