

Bethel Development Review Board
Tuesday, December 20, 2016
Draft Minutes of Meeting

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

Public Present: (See Sign-in Sheet).

The meeting was opened at 7:00 PM for a Public Hearing for a request from Zarembo Group for appeal of denial for a zoning application of the property currently owned by Michael & Flormelin Bilodeau. The property is located at 428 Pleasant Street and is identified as ID #10-034.000 in the town records. It consists of an existing 9.26 acre lot that the applicants are attempting to subdivide out a 1 acre lot with proposed new commercial building. The property is located in the Flood Hazard Zone, as well as in the River Corridor, requiring conditional use review by the DRB due to its location within the Village District. In addition, the project also requires a Site Plan Review.

Mr. Billodeau was present and was asked to give an overview of the details of the project. He deferred to his property manager, Linda Labrie, for input. Ms. Labrie indicated that proposed development is for a Dollar General Store and their belief that the original application had been wrongly denied. Chair Benson made the point that, due to the property being in the Village District, the project was eligible for a conditional use and site plan review. The board reviewed the pertinent criteria found in Section 4.12; Section 6; and 6.9 of the Draft of the Bethel Unified Bylaw currently under review by the Bethel Selectboard.

Mr. Billodeau stated that he did not feel prepared to adequately provide the details and answer all of the questions pertaining to the project and asked for a continuation of the hearing in order to have someone from Zarembo Group available to provide testimony. The board was agreeable and invited input from the public present at this time. The comments were as follows:

Kevin Barry: Is familiar with the property and investigated developing it prior to the 2011 flood event. He now believes building in a flood hazard area is a bad idea, and this particular area is one of the worst. He is supportive of property rights but feels that community rights need to be addressed no matter what is being proposed.

Dr. Charles Davis: Dr. Davis is chair of the Conservation Commission and reported that they had voted unanimously to oppose this development at their last meeting citing the theory that flood events will become more frequent world wide in the future. He also pointed out that there were vacant buildings on Main Street, as well as a nearby property on Pleasant Street that could be better utilized for this project. There is also a concern for safety as the nature and location of this store being in relative close proximity to the school and in an area where there were no sidewalks or cross walks, there could be a potential hazard for children attempting to access the store on foot. His final point was that he had spoken with representatives from the Family Dollar Store in Randolph that had closed who cited the lack of commercial viability one the Dollar General had opened ¼ mile away.

Carla Hodgdon: Was also concerned with the lack of sidewalks forcing pedestrians to walk in the road as well as the needed curb cut for the business.

Ola Odell: Felt one Dollar General in the area was enough.

Adam Sappern: In light of the fact that the fire station is nearly opposite from this development, was concerned regarding the issue of fire trucks responding to calls in the southerly direction without the presence of a center turning lane. The second issue was the potential destruction of the view of the river as well as the view from the river looking back towards Pleasant Street. His third concern was the environmental impact of the run off from the asphalt parking lot.

Joann Wood: Expressed a concern that the river needs a "place to go" to dissipate energy and there should be no buildings in it's path.

Hillary Mullinns: Concerned that a small "box" store is not in keeping with the character of the town. Additionally, concerned how this would affect property values in the immediate neighborhood.

Margot Sappern: Concerns regarding scheduled deliveries during school hours as well as light and sound pollution.

Upon the completion of the public comment section, N. Whitcomb moved and K. Bollman seconded the motion that the hearing be adjourned and be continued on January 17, 2017 at 7 PM at the location of the Town Hall. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

R. Leister asked to be excused from the meeting at this time for a family issue.

Next on the agenda was a conditional use review for Cecil Washburn for a property located at 672 Camp Brook Road. C. Washburn requested to be excused from this decision due to the close family ties to the applicant. The property is located in the Medium Density Development District as well as the River Corridor. Mr. Washburn provided a sketch of the proposed 10' x 42' lean-to shed addition to the existing structure. The sketch depicted the addition to be in the shadow of the existing building and no closer to the brook that lies to the rear of the building.

The Board reviewed the criteria for Conditional Use found in Section 4.12.3.4. A motion to approve the request citing compliance with the above referenced criteria with no conditions was moved by K. Bollman and seconded by P. Griffin. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

There being no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Benson, Chair