

Antrim Planning Board

July 18, 2002

Members present:

Fred Anderson
Jen Cunningham
Ed Rowehl

Peter Beblowski
Tom Mangieri

Bob Bethel
Bill Prokop

Members absent:

Spencer Garrett

Mike Oldershaw

Craig Oskello

Public attendees;

Leigh Bosse, Representing Farmsteads of New England
Deborah Gray, Director of Farmsteads of New England

Chairman Rowehl called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and designated Ms. Cunningham to sit for Mr. Garrett who was absent. The first order of business was a conceptual consultation for Farmsteads of New England; however, since Ms. Gray was not present, Attorney Bosse asked that the consultation be delayed pending the arrival of Ms. Gray. Mr. Rowehl then moved to the business portion of the meeting.

Mr. Prokop gave his approval to the May 16, 2002 meeting minutes thus completing their acceptance. Mr. Anderson moved that the June 20, 2002 minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mangieri and passed. Mr. Beblowski moved that the wetlands map provided by Paul Dugre be accepted by the Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Prokop and passed. A dredge and fill application by Colleen Fitzgerald for Map 3, Lot 3 was presented to the Board for informational purposes only. A notice was presented for a public hearing scheduled for a PWSF in the Town of Hopkinton. Registration forms were passed out for the NH Land Use Workshop scheduled for September 17th.

Ms. Gray arrived at 7:20 and Mr. Rowehl asked her to present her proposal to the Board. Ms. Gray said that her organization, Farmsteads of New England, was contemplating purchasing the Sugar Hill Farm on Smith Road. Their intent would be to continue to run the farm in the same manner as the current owners except the facility would be for autistic adults and individuals with mental disabilities. The day to day farming activities would be to grow and sell the products. They would in time put in a few more residences and possibly apartments for those residents who could take care of themselves. They are a tax-exempt organization. Mr. Rowehl comment that the facility should offer something to the Town in lieu of taxes. Ms. Gray said that the facility would provide employment for local residents and perhaps they could have a no charge petting farm for Antrim residents and possibly a break on the tuition for Antrim students.

Mr. Beblowski asked how many people would reside at the facility. Ms. Gray said that there would be 18 – 21 with maybe 24 being the maximum. Mr. Beblowski pointed out that the facility cannot currently handle that many except perhaps at a daytime program only. Mr. Mangieri asked if Farmsteads of New England was an operating entity at this time. Ms. Gray said that it was not and that farming was a new concept. Mr. Mangieri asked if Ms. Gray had ever done anything like this before and she replied that she had not.

Mr. Rowehl questioned if such a facility would classify as a school or a farm, which were permitted uses in the Rural District. Mr. Prokop suggested that Ms. Gray contact the Building Inspector if they felt they were operating a school as there could be a number of special requirements which would have to be met. Mr. Mangieri felt that the primary purpose of the facility would be vocational training and in some instances, residents could remain there the rest of their lives. Mr. Beblowski determined by questioning Ms. Gray that there could be 20 full time residents, 20 daytime attendees and 40 staff members for a total of 80 personnel when the facility was fully operational. Mr. Prokop asked how much land was involved. Ms. Gray said there was about 200 acres of which 20 were devoted to buildings and 50 we farmable. Mr. Mangieri asked how the services would be paid for. Ms. Gray indicated that currently the organization relies on donations; however, in the future as they begin providing services, they would be reimbursed by Medicaid and Social Security.

Extensive discussion followed between Board Members, Ms. Gray and Mr. Bosse regarding the proper classification of the facility and the procedure to be followed to obtain approval for the operation. Ms. Gray and Mr. Bosse felt that it would merely be a continuation of the existing farming activity at Sugar Hill Farm and all that would be required would be to file for a change of use. Several Board members felt that the farming activity would be incidental to the main purpose of the facility and that in reality it would be a commercial activity requiring a Major Site Plan Review. Since a consensus could not be reached, the Secretary was instructed to obtain guidance from Town Council and report the decision to Ms. Gray.

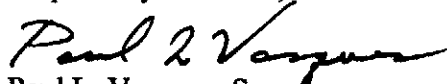
Mr. Rowehl reconvened the business portion of the meeting at 8:10 PM. Mr. Beblowski stated that he was still working on a draft of an ordinance for Excavation Sites. He has uncovered a workbook that SWRPC has regarding Excavation sites and he is comparing some of their recommended ordinances to what he has proposed to date. He hopes to have a draft ready sometime in August.

Mr. Anderson provided some additional information on Adult Oriented Businesses. The next step would be to prepare a draft of an ordinance for review by the Board. Ms. Cunningham will work with the material she has and hopes to have a draft available by September 5th.

Mr. Mangieri has provided information on the Shoreland Protection Act based on his research. The Secretary was instructed to disseminate this information to the Board members so a determination could be made as to whether or not a specific ordinance regarding Shoreline Protection should be adopted for Antrim.

The Secretary apologized for not having had an opportunity to review Zoning Ordinance definitions due to his absence and proposed to be prepared to continue the review at the August meetings. There was a brief discussion regarding the pending application for Anthony and Carole Rosario. The Secretary was instructed to advise the applicants that they would need to formally request a waiver for any information required by the checklist which they could not supply. Mr. Mangieri made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Beblowski and passed. Mr. Rowehl adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Paul L. Vasques, Secretary
Antrim Planning Board