



Town of Northborough

Office of the Town Engineer

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Groundwater Advisory Committee

February 19, 2019

Conference Room B

6:00 p.m.

Present: Bryant Firmin (Water and Sewer Commission); Theresa Capobianco (Planning Board); Tim Kaelin (Board of Selectmen); Diane Guldner (Conservation Commission)

Absent: Tina Hill (Board of Health)

Also Present: Fred Litchfield (Town Engineer); Robert Frederico (Building Inspector) Ryan Tarrant (Applicant), Tom Graham and Scott Stenstrom (Aspen Aerogels)

Ms. Capobianco called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

6:00 p.m. To consider the petition of Aspen Aerogels, Inc. for a Special Permit from Sections 7-07-010 D.(3)(c)[1], Groundwater Protection Overlay District, to allow an increase the storage of flammable liquids from 880 gallons to 1500 galls within an existing building, in the Industrial Zoning District and Groundwater Protection Overlay District Area 3, on the property located at 30 Forbes Road Building B.

Applicant: Ryan Tarrant, Aspen Aerogels, Inc.

Representative: Same

Ryan Tarrant provided some background: In 2002, Aspen Aerogels had a manufacturing and research facility located at 30 Forbes Road. They applied for and were approved for a Special Permit under Groundwater Protection Overlay District regulations. In 2006 they stopped manufacturing at that address and moved the manufacturing facility to East Providence, Rhode Island. They finished decommissioning the rest of the processing equipment in 2010. Since 2006 they have been maintaining volumes of chemicals far below the volumes that were approved in the initial Special Permit. They have provided an updated inventory that reflects the volumes they have been working with since 2006; one category listed among those chemicals is flammable liquids. At some point between 2002 and the present date, their license with the town for flammable liquids was reduced to 880 gallons and they have been operating with that. When they were approved for the original permit in 2000 they had 17,000 gallons. They are now requesting an increase (to the license with the town) from 880 gallons to 1,500 gallons.

Mr. Litchfield said Aspen Aerogels met with the Fire Department because they wanted to store some additional flammable material. They had 880 gallons that they are permitted for (Ethanol) and they wanted to increase that to 1,500 gallons. The Building Inspector, Bob Frederico, said if they were increasing the gallons, they would need a Special Permit

under Groundwater. Mr. Litchfield said in his review he looked at the Special Permit that was issued in 2002 and saw that Appendix A listed almost all the chemicals they are currently using but in much greater quantities. It was his assumption that they might not need a Special Permit and asked Mr. Frederico to attend the meeting to confirm that. Even with the addition, if they were less than what they were originally permitted for, they were not expanding the use or the building; therefore there was no Special Permit needed under Groundwater. The documentation that Mr. Tarrant sent confirmed that.

Mr. Litchfield said the current quantities are significantly reduced because they are no longer doing the manufacturing at this address in Northborough. Mr. Frederico says the bylaw talks about expansion and non-conforming uses such that expansion should not be substantially more detrimental to the water supply in the existing use. With the overall reduction in the quantities of chemicals from 2002, the danger portion has essentially gone backwards. They do have an application before the ZBA next week. Mr. Frederico believes a letter from the Town Engineer could be written with the new information and backup along with the supporting vote from the Committee that it is an issue that does not need to go before the ZBA finding that the level of danger as to what was originally allowed fifteen years ago has decreased. He could recommend they withdraw without prejudice to support that with a letter that Groundwater finds it to be a non-issue. No permit is required from Groundwater or the ZBA.

Mr. Litchfield needs to confirm with the Fire Department that they are in agreement that 930 gallons is adequate for storage in the H2 room. Having no other issues, Mr. Litchfield suggested a motion that based upon the evidence submitted tonight, the operation of Aspen Aerogels falls, even with the expansion of ethanol, within the limits of their original Special Permit; therefore the board does not feel the recommendation of a permit is necessary; Ms. Guldner moved that recommendation; Ms. Capobianco seconded; all voted in favor; the motion was approved.

Old/New Business:

The next meeting will be held March 12, 2019 if required.

Review and approve Meeting Minutes of November 8, 2016, February 14, 2017, June 20, 2017, August 8, 2017, January 16, 2018, February 13, 2018, March 20, 2018, May 15, 2018, August 14, 2018, September 11, 2018 and October 9, 2018 – Mr. Kaelin made a motion to approve all Meeting Minutes with changes as noted; Ms. Capobianco seconded; all voted in favor; motion approved.

Ms. Capobianco made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Guldner seconded; all voted in favor; motion approved. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Litchfield
Town Engineer