

COÖS COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
Gorham, NH  
January 18, 2016

**Present from the Board:** John Scarinza – Chair; Fred King – Vice Chair; Jennifer Fish – Clerk; Ed Mellett, Mike Waddell, Rick Tillotson, Scott Rineer; alternates Tom McCue and Mark Frank; Board Secretary Suzanne Collins.

**Also in Attendance:** Bernie Waugh, Esq.; Tara Bamford, North Country Council; Ron Anstey, NH Fire Marshal's Office; Howie Wemyss, Mt. Washington Summit Road Company; Josh McAllister, HEB Engineering; Burt Mills, Ed Brisson, David Norden, Clay Smith, Jeff Stevens, Dixville Capital, LLC; Scott Tranchemontagne, Montagne Communications; and members of the public and press.

John Scarinza, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. He appointed Mark Frank to sit in for Commissioner Tom Brady and Tom McCue to sit in for Representative Leon Rideout.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2015:**

Fred King made a motion to approve the minutes of December 9, 2015 as distributed. Scott Rineer seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS NOT RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Green's Grant: Site Plan Review Application - Glen House Hotel.**

Chairman John Scarinza stated that the Site Plan Review Application submitted by the Mt. Washington Summit Road Company for the Glen House Hotel appears to be complete.

Ed Mellett made a motion to accept the application as complete. Fred King seconded the motion. The Chair asked for any discussion. No discussion ensued and members of the Board voted unanimously to accept the application as complete.

Chairman Scarinza opened a **Public Hearing** on the Site Plan Review application and asked Josh McAllister to provide the details of the proposed project.

Josh McAllister, PE from HEB Engineering presented the plan which he stated will repeat the conceptual design presented to the Board on December 9, 2015. He noted that the hotel will be built in a General Development District (DD-G) in Green's Grant. The site is currently a gravel parking lot with a small shed located on the southern portion of the lot. Mr. McAllister's plan depicted site amenities including parking, landscaping, lighting and utilities.

The proposed building is a 3-story 67 room hotel that will be located in basically the same location as the former Great Glen Trails building which was destroyed by fire several years ago. The footprint of the hotel is 16,747 square feet.

The driveway access from Route 16 will be relocated 95' to the south of the current driveway. There are concerns with the structural integrity of the culvert at the current access. The parking lot will be paved and contain 75 spaces. Also included are 12 overflow grass paved parking spaces. Allowance is made for snow storage along the perimeter of the parking lot and along the entrance driveway. A bio retention basin is located next to Route 16.

Regarding sewage disposal, the 2 existing septic fields have failed and an application is being submitted to DES Subsurface Bureau on 1/19/2016 for the development of new leach field.

Regarding water, there is an existing well on site but it is not large enough to meet the needs of the hotel. An additional well will be developed in the spring and DES has approved the application for the location of the new well.

Two-hour fire suppression will be provided by a 6" ductile water main which crosses Route 16. The pipe originates from a 140,000 gallon reservoir located uphill of Route 16 and the proposed site. Mr. McAllister stated that he has met with the State Fire Marshal's office to go over the plans that also include a 2 dry hydrant system. Additionally, a brief meeting was held with the Gorham Fire Department. The final plans will be submitted to the Fire Marshal's office on 1/19/2016.

Mr. McAllister indicated that there will be a large geo-thermal field in the parking lot. There may also be some solar panels added to the plan.

There have been some minor changes to the plan since the December 9<sup>th</sup> conceptual discussion. Lengthwise islands in the parking lot have been eliminated to improve snowplowing and that resulted in the loss of 2 paved parking spaces and one grass parking space.

Mr. McAllister continued that they have received comments on both the Driveway application submitted to the NH Department of Transportation on 10/30 and the AoT (Alteration of Terrain) Permit submitted to NH Department of Environmental Services on 10/30. Responses to those comments will be provided to the state agencies on 1/19/2016. He added that they are still 2 to 3 weeks out to get feedback on the Wetlands Permit application.

Chairman Scarinza asked for comments from the public.

Paul Robitaille, Gorham Planning Board member, stated that he had some concerns about drainage into the Peabody River but those concerns were addressed in Mr. McAllister's presentation. However, he was still concerned about moving the access to the property 95' south of the current access. He asked if the new entrance is near the Auto Road entrance. Mr. McAllister replied that it is not. The new entrance is still several hundred feet – approximately 400' - from the Auto Road entrance. Mr. Robitaille continued that vehicles speed on that section of Route 16 but he understands that NH DOT has the last word about the location of driveways. John Scarinza replied that DOT will require 400' sight distance in both directions and stated that at the height of the land, the sight distances should be adequate. Mr. McAllister stated that he is working with DOT to calculate the sight distances.

Mark Frank asked if there is a stacking lane in the road. Mr. McAllister replied there is not. Mark asked about a breakdown lane and Mr. McAllister stated that there is a shoulder on both sides of Route 16.

John Scarinza asked if the Gorham Fire Department has any concerns. Gorham Fire Chief Rick Eichler stated that he originally had 3 requests and the developers met 2 of the concerns. He stated that the fire department can't get on the roof but for rescue they will be in good shape. The design includes roof access scuttles.

Mr. Robitaille stated there is an increased amount of pedestrian and bicycle traffic in that area of Route 16 and this hotel may lead to more pedestrian traffic and wondered what to do about it in that area. Mr. McAllister replied that NH DOT did not indicate anything in its review about pedestrian traffic. A tunnel exists to get across the highway. Howie Wemyss, General Manager of the Mt. Washington Summit Road Company stated he has worked there for over 20 years and there is virtually no pedestrian traffic; pedestrians use the tunnel during summer and winter.

Edith Tucker inquired about the solar panels. Mr. McAllister replied that there are 2 areas on site that have the potential for locating solar fields.

Barbara Tetreault asked if the hydro dam will be utilized for electricity. Mr. Wemyss replied that due to grants and rebates currently available, they are looking at improving and expanding the hydro system but it is not included in the plan for the hotel.

There being no further questions, Chairman Scarinza closed the Public Hearing.

John Scarinza asked if members of the Board had any questions and then asked the developers if they were requesting any waivers from the Board. Mr. McAllister replied they were not. He added that the Stormwater Management Plan is being revised and will be submitted to the Board. Section K. of the Plan requires a maintenance plan as part of the DES application. The septic and water system permits are in process. John indicated that parking requirements are okay. He asked Mr. McAllister if they are aware of the lighting requirements and Mr. McAllister replied that they are.

Tom McCue stated that he thought the 3-story building needed a waiver as it is 51.5' to the peak. John agreed that the maximum height is 35 feet. Tara Bamford stated that regarding height, the Board is able to grant exceptions, not waivers, according to the newly adopted zoning ordinances.

Ron Anstey asked if the reservoir is used for anything other than fire protection. Howie Wemyss replied, "some" to which Mr. Anstey asked how the Fire Marshal will know it won't get drawn down for some other purpose. Mr. Wemyss stated that the primary purpose of the reservoir is fire protection for the lodge; a secondary purpose is it is a hydro generation facility; and from time to time it is used for snowmaking but someone is up there to be sure the level does not drop.

John Scarinza stated that before the Board grants a request for exception, the developer will need to provide a letter from the Fire Chief that the roof scuttles will meet the concerns regarding height. Additionally, the owner will have to provide assurances that the reservoir level will be monitored.

Mike Waddell made a motion to grant conditional approval of the site plan for the Glen House Hotel. Conditions include assurance of adequate water storage, a sign-off on the plans from the State Fire Marshal and the Gorham Fire Chief, a written request for special exception from the height ordinance with proper documentation, the AoT Permit, DOT driveway approval, DES Septic approval, DES Wetlands Permit and DES Water Supply Permit. Fred King seconded the motion.

Tom McCue stated that he remains concerned about access to the lot. He understands that the Board will be hearing from NH DOT but wanted the minutes to reflect his ongoing concern. Howie Wemyss stated that on a few occasions, the Mt. Washington Summit Road Company has requested that DOT reduce the speed limit through this area but DOT will not hear of it. They want traffic moving.

There being no further discussion, the Chairman called for a vote and all members voted approval.

**B. Dixville: PD6/High Elevation Zoning Permit:**

Scott Rineer requested to be recused from the Board for this item and the Dixville Capital agenda item.

Scott explained that Wagner Forest Management is submitting a formal application for a permit to harvest timber in a PD6 High Elevation area located within the Blue Ridge area of Dixville. The application was filed on January 4<sup>th</sup> by Michael B. Richard, Operations Forester for Wagner. Attached to the application is a letter dated 1/5/2016 from Will Staats, Regional Wildlife Biologist, NH Fish & Game Department who visited the site on 1/3/2016. Mr. Staats supported the application based on Wagner compliance with a harvest prescription:

- a. Mature, decadent fir will be targeted for harvest;
- b. Spruce will be reserved from harvest;
- c. Mountain ash will be reserved from harvest;
- d. A no cut corridor will be established a distance from the ridgeline summit;
- e. A no cut corridor will be established which will separate the two harvest areas and will serve as a link between the reserve corridor on the ridgeline and the riparian brook buffer; and
- f. Large oversized hardwoods will be reserved as wildlife trees.

Ed Mellett made a motion to grant the Zoning Permit for the PD6 harvest. Fred King seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the vote to grant the permit was unanimous.

**C. Dixville – Development Agreement – Dixville Capital:**

John Scarinza stated that the Board would first address the Conditions document. He stated that on December 9<sup>th</sup>, the Board requested that Attorney Waugh and Tara Bamford get together with Dixville Capital, LLC to work on the Conditions document and Development Agreement. That took place about 1 ½ weeks prior to this meeting and a document was created. The Board was informed that Dixville Capital agreed with the recommended documents.

Fred King stated that the parties had complied with the Board's request, agreements were reached and these documents should be approved.

John Scarinza asked that Attorney Waugh go over the changes for the public.

Attorney Waugh stated that there is a substantive change in Condition #1 formerly labeled "Safety Valve" Condition. The change renames it "General Public Health and Safety Condition". The adverse impact language included public health, public safety *or upon the PUD criteria listed in Section 4.12.9 of the Zoning Ordinance*. He explained that the language about PUD criteria and Section 4.12.9 was moved to Condition 4.

Attorney Waugh continued that Condition 6 relative to Studies and Consultants had the following language added, *"In addition, prior to any such study or review being commenced, the Applicant shall have the right to review the scope and cost of such study or peer review, and to accept or reject them; provided, however that no such rejection shall affect the Board's otherwise lawful authority to deem an application incomplete, or to disapprove an application due to lack of sufficient information."*

On Page 6, the last sentence was removed from the old Section 13 as the new Section 18 covers it.

On Page 10, Section C. Conditions Concerning the Development Agreement, Paragraph A states that impact studies are limited to future phases of development.

On Page 12, the old Paragraph K. was removed. There is a paragraph covering that subject in the development agreement. The developers will present the Board with a compendium or Handbook of all the documents that apply to this PUD in the future.

Attorney Waugh stated that due to the revisions, some paragraphs will have to be renumbered and a clean copy of this Conditions document will be prepared.

Fred King made a motion to approve the Conditions document as revised and presented to the Board at this meeting. Mike Waddell seconded the motion.

Burt Mills stated that he is requesting two further word changes. Attorney Waugh stated that he had talked to the Board earlier in a non-meeting with counsel about the developers' further requests for wording changes.

Dave Norden stated that on Page 2, 4 lines from the bottom they are requesting adding the word "material" before the word "facts". Attorney Waugh stated that before he could address this request, he would need permission from the Board to waive the attorney-client privilege.

Mike Waddell asked the Chair to move the motion. The Chairman called for a vote on the King/Waddell motion and it was a unanimous vote in favor.

Chairman Scarinza then moved on to the **Development Agreement**. He asked Attorney Waugh for an overview of any changes.

Attorney Waugh noted the following revisions:

- a. Page 1, Item C: the word “amenities” was removed as the Board’s regulations do not contain the word amenities.
- b. Page 2, Item H: After the first sentence, a line space will be inserted to separate Item H into two paragraphs.
- c. Page 4, Item Q: The words “Exhibit A” were deleted. They should have been deleted in the revision but were overlooked. Item Q relates to Consistency and Compendium. John stated that the completed updated Handbook needs to be presented to the Board when Site Plan Review for Phase 1 is brought in or before. Burt Mills asked if that is when that document is due. Tara Bamford clarified that the Handbook should be brought in when the Phase 1 Site Plan Application is brought in. Dave Norden asked if they could submit it during the 15 day notice period whereby they would submit the application and then within 15 days they would submit the Handbook-Compendium. Tara noted that the Board would not have time to review it before addressing the Phase 1 Site Plan Application.

Rick Tillotson made a motion to approve the revised Development Agreement. His motion was seconded by Fred King. There being no further discussion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Dave Norden thanked Attorney Waugh and Tara Bamford for their time.

Dave Norden stated that they would like to present a conceptual description of Phase 1 with Ed Brisson covering Phase 1 of renovations to the Dix and Hampshire House hotel and Burt Mills having a preliminary discussion of the ski area development plans. Dave indicated that the Phase 1 application is being written right now. Fred King stated that when ready, it should be submitted to the Chairman and a meeting will be scheduled.

Dave Norden clarified that the Dix House – Hampshire House is one hotel, not two. Ed Brisson stated that the renovations to the Dix/Hampshire House will be one site plan application. The ski area expansion will be a separate application. He continued that the scope of the Dix/Hampshire House renovation will be less than the Balsams View application was a few years ago. It will also include a new water system. He noted that the old kitchen and ballot room area will be demolished as well as what remains of the partially demolished structure. The connector will also be demolished. What is left standing of the Dix House will be remodeled.

The Hampshire House will have air conditioning; it will be insulated, new windows, new exterior finish. The existing theater will be remodeled and retained. Ed described a new outdoor dining patio and new food and beverage facilities. The Dix House is in for some major fire safety updates. He stated that the original Dix House will be totally retained with new decks and new siding to replace the current vinyl siding. The façade on the north side will be reconstructed. The current ground floor where the lobby was located will be the location of a new indoor swimming pool. The new main lobby-guest entrance will be up one floor on the level where the former dining room was located. A new dining room will be located in the old billiards room area. The west side of the upper floors will lodge the Century Club and residential hotel rooms. The plans include a new Ballot Restaurant and speakeasy. Fractional ownerships for hotel rooms will be sold.

There will be a parking lot where the old factory stood and tunnels underground for access to deliveries and for hauling waste out of guest view. The tunnel will also connect to the new lake Gloriette House.

A new subdivision will be requested as the developers want the Dix House on its own lot with parking on an adjacent parcel.

Ed Brisson explained that the water system comes from the existing well fields and a new 80,000 gallon tank will be added, a new water line and the penstock from Lake Abenaki will be replaced. DES permits are in place for the water system. The DES permit for the Waste Water Treatment Plant will be renewed. He stated that all impacts from Phase 1 are incorporated into the Wetlands Permit.

Rick Tillotson inquired about the heating facility. Ed Brisson replied that there will be no central facility. Each building will be heated with wood pellets.

Mike Waddell asked if the hotel will be only fractional ownership and not a hotel as we know it. Ed Brisson replied that each room will be sold three times in 100-day fractional ownership blocks. The developers estimate that most owners will only use the rooms for periods of less than 20 days and if that is what they do, all maintenance and HOA fees will be waived. The rooms will then become available for hotel rental in addition to the 65 days over the 300 days of fractional ownership. To the average guest, it will seem like a regular hotel. The fractional ownerships are part of the financing package. It is anticipated that there will be 141 rooms and to date, 200 reservations have been received for the opportunity to purchase a fractional ownership. The Attorney General must approve all the contract language before ownerships are actually sold.

John Scarinza inquired about a conference center. Ed Brisson replied that the conference center will come in as part of the Lake Gloriette House.

John referred back to renovations to the old construction and asked about issues with fire codes. Ron Anstey stated that he has had a concept discussion with the developers. At this point he is waiting for drawings with more detail.

John asked if the developers have a sense as to timeline for the project documents. Ed Brisson stated they would be ready in several weeks. The water system has already been designed; the stormwater management plan is part of the Alteration of Terrain Permit; the septic system is connecting to the existing Waste Water Treatment Plant and will go to DES for final permitting.

Edith Tucker asked if restaurants will be open to the public and if major life events will be able to be held there. Ed Brisson replied absolutely yes.

When asked if an outside management company will operate the hotel, Ed Brisson stated that the hotel will be managed in-house.

Sue Collins inquired about where the Nordic Spa fits into the plan. Ed Brisson stated that the spa, marketplace and Lake Gloriette House will be designed in the spring with a site plan submitted late spring – early summer.

Fred King inquired about when the developers will present detailed plans. Ed Brisson replied that the Dix/Hampshire House plans will come in first and then the Marketplace/Nordic Spa/Lake Gloriette Plans will follow.

Edith Tucker asked when Dixville Capital, LLC will purchase the Balsams View, LLC ownership. Scott Tranchemontagne replied that within the next 90 days the details of the financing package will be put together.

John Scarinza inquired about the previously submitted subdivision application that had been retracted.

Ed Brisson asked if there was anything in particular related to the Dix/Hampshire House renovations of concern to the Board. Rick Tillotson stated he would like to see more information about the energy facilities, smoke stacks, etc. Burt Mills replied that the pellet boilers are direct vented.

John Scarinza stated that he will ask for Attorney Waugh and Tara Bamford to assist the Board through the review process.

Burt Mills then stated that his thought was that tonight presented the opportunity for a pre-application conference for the Ski Area Concept Plan. He showed Map K-3 that was included in the PUD permit application. The ski area will cover 3,200 acres. The plan will include an access gondola with base station located at the Lake Gloriette Village, a level lift to the base of the Wilderness Ski Area, another lift to the top, a service road - Winterset has been contracted by the State to construct an underpass tunnel under Route 26, a wooden ski-back bridge that spans Route 26, the existing ski area entrance from Route 26 to the Wilderness Ski Area and later on in the development, a 1 ½ mile access road from the Millsfield town line.

Mr. Mills continued that the acreage involved is divided into 1065 acres of open trails, 800 acres of glade terrain and the 135 acre Wilderness Ski Area for a total of 2000 skiable acres.

Power to the facility will come from the south in Errol where the line will be upgraded to 3-phase. The line from Colebrook will be rebuilt and the interconnection will be located over the ridge through the ski terrain and not in the Notch. He spoke of the 401 Water Certification Permit that will allow them to bring water from the Androscoggin through Errol and Millsfield for snowmaking, fire suppression and if needed, fire prevention. The site plan for the ski area does not include lodges, restrooms, etc. Those site plan applications will come in as necessary. The 401 Permit has a series of conditions:

- a. Pre-construction requirements;
- b. Actual construction process requirements; and
- c. Post construction requirements.

The permit also dictates certain snowmaking design and makes it clear that water runoff from snowmaking cannot end up in the Connecticut River. The site plan application will be submitted with permits attached including Wetlands, 401, and Army Corps. Mr. Mills expects to submit the application within the next 7-10 days and stated that the narrative is complete.

Mr. Mills stated that applications will be presented for 3 lot line adjustments and 4 subdivisions.

Mike Waddell asked if the application for initial build out is less than full build out. Mr. Mills replied that they will apply for an AoT Permit for the opening year activity but the



Site Plan application is for the entire ski area. Mike asked when they want to be on the land to begin work. Burt Mills replied that they would like to do the logging on snow if possible. It depends on how long it will take for the AoT Permit and the Planning Board process as well as the preconstruction requirements of the Wetlands and 401 Permits.

John asked where the first 100 acres of ski area expansion will be located. Burt Mills replied in Hodge Valley and 2 other areas. He added that the water line from the Androscoggin is a year one project. He stated that at the current Wilderness the triple chair lift and the smaller lift have to be upgraded. There are water bars that need to be maintained. There are 3 additional new lifts in Phase 1 and a dozen new trails.

Barbara Tetreault asked if the existing Wilderness Lodge will be used as a base lodge. Burt Mills replied that the Lake Gloriette base will be central. Edith Tucker asked about bathrooms. Burt replied that a building permit application will be submitted for a new lodge mid-mountain.

Mike Waddell asked if the power upgrade will be in Phase 1. Burt Mills answered in the affirmative. NH Electric comes in from Colebrook and Eversource comes in from Errol and the interconnection will take place without putting poles through the notch.

In response to a question about a power failure, Ed Brisson stated that ski lifts have back up mechanisms to get riders down.

John Scarinza asked if the ski area application will come first or will both applications be submitted together. He indicated that if they are submitted together, meeting-wise it will be beneficial.

#### **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Fred King suggested that the next meeting should be held in Colebrook. John Scarinza agreed and stated it would be scheduled after the receipt of the application(s).

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Rick Tillotson made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM. Ed Mellett seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne L. Collins  
Secretary to the Planning Board