

COÖS COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
Lancaster, NH
March 26, 2013

Present from the Board: John Scarinza – Chair; Fred King – Vice Chair; Jennifer Fish – Clerk; Jonathan Frizzell, Ed Mellett, Rick Tillotson; alternates Scott Rineer and Lindsey Gray; and Board Secretary Suzanne Collins.

Present from the Public: Daniel Hebert, Lisa Gravel-Hebert, Chris Hebert, Jerry McGee representing Balsams View, LLC; Architect Michael Couture representing Balsams View, LLC; Scott Tranchmontagne, Montagne Communications representing Balsams View, LLC; J. William Degnan, NH State Fire Marshal; Investigator Ronald Anstey, NH State Fire Marshal's Office; County Commissioner Richard Samson; Barry Normandeau; Edith Tucker, *Coös County Democrat*; Jake Mardin, *Colebrook News & Sentinel*; Barbara Tetreault, *Berlin Daily Sun*; Chris Jensen, NH Public Radio.

John Scarinza, Chair, opened the regular meeting of the Board at 6:03 PM.

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2013:

Fred King made a motion to approve the minutes of February 26, 2013 as distributed. Ed Mellett seconded the motion. With no comments, the Chairman called for a vote to accept the minutes and all voted in favor of approval.

LETTERS/CORRESPONDENCE TO THE BOARD:

Jennifer Fish reported that no letters or correspondence had been received since the last meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Dixville – Balsams View, LLC Application for Building Permit – Balsams Grand Resort Hotel and Biomass Plant.

Chairman Scarinza stated that after the last meeting he had convened a meeting in North Conway with State Fire Marshal Degnan, Ron Anstey, Daniel Hebert, and Architect Michael Couture at Mr. Couture's office in North Conway.

At this juncture, Jonathan Frizzell requested that he be recused from Board discussions and actions relative to Balsams View, LLC. He stated that he was in Lancaster anyway and did not expect to receive mileage reimbursement for attendance at the meeting.

Chairman Scarinza assigned Jonathan Frizzell's seat to Lindsey Gray and alternate Scott Rineer was assigned Mike Waddell's seat.

The goal of the meeting in North Conway was to determine the necessary and appropriate plans to present to the Planning Board. Also discussed were parameters of information that will be needed by the Board going forward. Time is of the essence relative to the owners' financing package. One concept was to have a phased process for plan review – a so-called Plan Phasing Schedule.

Mr. Anstey explained that it is not unusual for large projects to employ a phasing process. He continued that once there are preliminary site plans and civil drawings acceptable to the Board, there can be agreement to issue a building permit. Next in the process are the structural plans for footings, foundation, and site work and prior to work commencing, a substantial amount of these plan details need to be complete. Then the rest of the building plans come into play including mechanical, structural, electrical, fire alarm and sprinkler drawings. The developer is expected to meet certain benchmarks and in the process the builder can get the enclosure done during the best of the construction season. The plans, in compliance with all codes, need to keep up with project construction.

Fred King asked if the Planning Board gets involved in each phase. John Scarinza replied that the Planning Board is responsible to be sure the project meets life safety and fire codes and may need help with plumbing and electrical code compliance. In order to do this, the Planning Board would need to hire a building inspector to assist the Board in fulfilling that obligation. The State Fire Marshal's office has agreed to oversee life safety, fire and sprinkler compliance. The inspector will be hired by the Planning Board and the developer will pay associated costs.

Chairman Scarinza stated that there needs to be a dialogue between the developer and the Planning Board throughout the process. Later during the meeting he intends to discuss who the Board's contact person will be. He added that there may be some facets of the project that will not meet code and it will require someone appointed from Board to make decisions as those questions come up.

Mr. Anstey added that the Planning Board has to approve the project subject to the phasing process outlined. Benchmarks are established, the developer meets them, and then it's on to the next phase.

John Scarinza stated that it was agreed with the architect, Mr. Hebert and the Fire Marshal that the following codes will govern the process:

2009 Life Safety Code;
2011 Fire and Sprinkler Code;
2011 Electrical Code; and
2009 Building Code.

Architect Michael Couture will be required to provide written assurance that the design is for a barrier free building providing handicap access as required by law. Additionally, at project completion, Mr. Couture will review all final plans and prepare a letter assuring

the Board that he has reviewed the plans and that the building was built in accordance with the plans.

Balsams View, LLC principal Daniel Hebert presented The Balsams' architectural renderings to the Board including a view of the front of the building, rear of the building and indoor pool. He stated that the Hampshire House will be completely renovated and the existing Dix House will be reconditioned. He continued to describe new construction elements including a 7-story addition to the 7-story Hampshire House, a new lounge, a new entry-reception building, new kitchen, new conference center, Spa and indoor-outdoor heated pool. The John Dix Library and the Ballot Room will be relocated and are considered an important component to maintaining the historic significance of the hotel.

The rooms in the Dix House will be renovated and expanded. On the Dix House side, there are no stories above the first level in the new construction. Mr. Hebert anticipates requesting a variance on the Master Stairway that descends into the John Dix Social Room. Maintaining this stairway is for historic and nostalgic reasons and will not serve as a means of egress. There are new egress stairways incorporated into the building plan.

Mr. Hebert explained that the Hampshire House was constructed entirely of steel and concrete but it has a wood roof.

John Scarinza stated that in order to maintain certain historic elements and merge the new construction with the old, he had recommended to the County Commissioners that a Board of Adjustment be appointed to deal with waiver requests.

Rick Tillotson inquired about the dining room on the first floor. Mr. Hebert replied that it will be located basically where it is today. The design shows a hallway through it and there is a second dining room to accommodate overflow.

Mr. Hebert explained that when the Hampshire House is renovated, the exterior will look the same. A dryvit system (synthetic stucco) will be applied to the exterior after it has been insulated and the new roof will be simulated clay tile. There will be new windows throughout. All the steel trim on the building exterior (which he noted is exceptional) will be retained. Roofs on the new construction will tie in with the roof on the Hampshire House. The building will be heated entirely with biomass; the wood will be harvested on the property. This will reduce the heating bill from \$1,000,000 while the hotel was operating to \$100,000 annually. New construction will contain all rigid foam insulation with a new siding system on the outside. A major goal in plan design is to maintain the character of existing features.

Edith Tucker, *Coös County Democrat*, inquired about the square footage of the completed project. Mr. Hebert replied that the plan calls for retaining 123,000 square feet of the old hotel and 80,000 square feet of new construction.

John Scarinza stated that a proposed schedule for the phasing components has been submitted. He read the following schedule with components that must be pre-approved by either the Fire Marshal or other qualified professional(s) that may be hired by the Planning Board:

Civil Drawings	Complete (Need to add any Fire Marshal comments)
Structural Foundation Plans	30 Days from Commencement
Structural Building Plans	45 Days from Commencement
Architectural	90% Complete (wall types/construction details to finish)
Sprinkler	Will be Ongoing
Mechanical	Complete
Electrical	60 Days from Commencement

John Scarinza restated that the County will need a Board of Adjustment to address waiver requests.

Regarding fire protection, Colebrook Fire Chief Brooks has made some comments regarding access for fire trucks and a safe place of assembly should the building have to be evacuated. Mr. Hebert stated that the exterior site plan which will incorporate fire truck access and assembly place is not completed. Fire protection will come from the existing reservoir which feeds the sprinkler system by gravity. A new reservoir will also be built on the side of the mountain to provide adequate protection to the 7th floor of the Hampshire House. He added that the entire water distribution system will be new.

There being no further questions or comments, Fred King made the motion to approve the building permit application from Balsams View, LLC, the Plan Phasing Schedule, and the designation of John Scarinza as the Board's contact person for the project. Rick Tillotson seconded the motion. The Chairman called for a vote and all voted in the affirmative.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jonathan Frizzell resumed his seat on the Board.

1. Chairman Scarinza reported that he met with the Coös County Commissioners on March 20th regarding the make-up of the 9-member Planning Board. One member is a County Commissioner or designee (Commissioner Thomas Brady), one member is appointed by the County Delegation (Rep. Larry Rappaport) and one ex-officio member is from county administration. He explained that Sue Collins had filled that role for years but with her resignation at the end of December, that seat was vacant. The Commissioners appointed County Administrator Jennifer Fish to serve on the Board and John officially welcomed her. He added that the Board also needs a Clerk to attend to some business. He asked if any member of the Board wanted to serve as Clerk. No one expressed an interest. Fred King made a motion to appoint Jennifer Fish as Clerk. Rick Tillotson seconded the motion and the vote of approval was unanimous.

2. Chairman Scarinza continued that it is important for the Planning Board to have good minutes of its meetings. He reported to the Commissioners that the Planning Board had requested that Sue Collins take the minutes based on her good knowledge of the process and the history of the Board. The Commissioners approved the recommendation with a stipend of \$50 for each meeting.
3. Chairman Scarinza discussed the need for a building inspector/coordinator to work on the Planning Board's behalf for those phases of the Balsams project which fall outside the scope of practice for the NH Fire Marshal's Office. That person will be hired by the Planning Board and paid by the developer. John Scarinza stated that he had made some inquiries about qualified individuals and had 2 potential candidates:
 - a. Sean Bergeron, Bergeron Technical Services, Conway, NH; and
 - b. George Brodeur who has been involved with large building projects in Littleton.

Another alternative is to issue a Request for Proposals.

Rick Tillotson asked if the Board is required to do an RFP. Fred King added that there may be someone in Coös County qualified and for that reason he recommended that the Board issues an RFP. He suggested that Chairman Scarinza provide RFP language to Jennifer for an advertisement. John agreed. Regarding the selection of a qualified candidate, Rick Tillotson agreed to work with John to screen applicants and prepare a recommendation for the Board.

Fred King made a motion that once John Scarinza and Rick Tillotson have a recommended candidate, the Chairman and/or Clerk will do a telephone poll of Board members to ratify the selection. Scott Rineer seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, all voted in favor of the motion.

4. Chairman Scarinza emphasized the importance of having a Board of Adjustment in order to address the waiver requests that Balsams View, LLC intends to bring forward. He suggested that the best volunteers would be experienced members of Zoning Boards of Adjustment in other Coös County communities who would be ready to hit the ground running. John suggested that any Board member with a suggestion should call either himself or Jennifer so that the names could be presented to the Board of Commissioners at its next meeting. He added that by statute, a Board of Adjustment is a 5 member board. Jonathan Frizzell stated that Colebrook has a ZBA that is required to meet at least once a year.

BUILDING PERMITS:

Chairman Scarinza stated that he had received two building permit applications.

1. He stated that one of the applications recently received is for new construction. He has not had the opportunity to review it and will address it well before construction season begins.
2. He stated that the second application received was from Jesse Bushaw of Warren for a 12'x'12' attached deck on his existing building on **Millsfield** Pond Road. Mr. Bushaw applied for a Shoreland Permit which has been approved. Chairman Scarinza stated that all is in order and the application is complete. Rick Tillotson made a motion to approve the building permit; Lindsey Gray seconded the motion and all voted in favor of approval.

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC:

No comments were forthcoming from the public.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Fred King reported that funding for the study on the economic impacts of public land ownership in Coös County was approved by the County Delegation at the annual budget meeting. He was authorized by the Board of Commissioners to continue working on this study project and has met with North Country Council to plan the next step – interviewing a potential firm to conduct the study.

ADJOURNMENT:

Rick Tillotson made a motion to adjourn. Ed Mellet seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne L. Collins,
Secretary to the Planning Board