

Voluntown Planning and Zoning Commission
Wednesday, July 9, 2014

The regular meeting of the Voluntown Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order by Al Dawley at 7:00 P.M. on Wednesday, July 9, 2014 at the Voluntown Town Hall, Voluntown, CT. Members present were Arthur Nieminen, Dave Nieminen, Carl Grenier and Al Dawley. Also present: Town Attorney, Mike Carey and Peter Zvingilas, Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Approval of minutes: The minutes were read by the board members. Arthur Nieminen made a motion to approve the April 9, 2014 minutes as presented. Carl Grenier seconded it and all were in favor. None opposed.

Zoning Enforcement Officer Report: Peter Zvingilas stated the Rockville Road cell tower was all set up and getting final approval. The cell tower located on Gallup Road has the foundation in and being worked on.

Visitors: None.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

A. Chandra Benevento-80 Preston City Road.

Chandra Benevento was present. 80 Preston City Road property is a mixed use permit. She is proposing a restaurant downstairs, which would be done slowly on a five year plan. It would be a restaurant that would be locally sourced, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner a few nights. Eventually she would like to do internships with local students. Upstairs is currently two apartments and she wants to make it one. She presented the board plans for the apartment, which will have four bedrooms. Septic was discussed and she had already contacted Al Gosselin. The apartment is fine, but the septic may need to be redone. Parking was discussed, which would need to show on a site plan. The property is about .17 acres and could have 12-14 parking spaces. Ms. Benevento does not plan on having a bar in the restaurant. Peter Zvingilas stated she would not be able to get a liquor permit due to the proximity to the Church. The liquor ordinance was discussed, along with the building not being used commercially for over thirty years. Peter Zvingilas stated that Ms. Benevento has not purchased the property yet and wants to make sure this is a feasible project. This is a mixed use by Special Exception, which needs a Public Hearing, to be held within 65 days of the application. The Chairman suggested that an A-2 survey be done to make sure a septic system could be installed on the property at a future date to accommodate the restaurant and apartment. This survey would also indicate where the well is and parking. It will be up to Ms. Benevento if she wants to pursue the Public Hearing. She stated she did, but would be away in August, so September would be o.k. Ms. Benevento submitted her application and \$360 fee. She will have time to get a survey done by September. Carl Grenier made a motion to accept the application from Chandra Benevento for property located at 80 Preston City Road for a Special Exception, Zoning Regulation 5.2.11, to have a Public Hearing held on September 10, 2014. Dave Nieminen seconded it and all were in favor.

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B. VES Solar Panel Project.

Robert Sirpenski, First Selectman, came before the Board to present a Solar Project at Voluntown Elementary School. He explained that this project has been in the works since 2012. There are State and Utility incentives. It will be a twenty year lease on town owned land behind the school near the bus parking area. The contract and lease will be with the Town of Voluntown. The Board of Education has endorsed and approved the project. There will be no cost to the Town to install the system or maintain it, since it will not be owned by the Town or School. There will be a twenty year contract to buy power at a low fixed rate. The Town Attorney is reviewing the contract along with the Town's Insurance Broker reviewing the insurance requirements. Mr. Sirpenski introduced Craig Harrigan, Encon Solar, Stratford, CT. Mr. Harrigan explained the project. The school roof was looked at, but they opted for the ground. The project is being funded by the State of Connecticut Clean Energy Fund. The incentives were acquired in 2013 and it has taken a year to get everything in place. There is potential to expand in the future, with a possible roof project on the school that could include solar. It will be located behind the bus area and not seen from the road. Approximately thirty trees will have to be cleared. The panels will be placed on a poured concrete block, with the area fenced in. There is a limited window to complete the project. There are no wetlands and the panels will be placed where best suited for the sun and they are not moveable. Mr. Harrigan stated that all costs will be taken care of by them; including putting in the trench line, the inverters and the hook up in the school. The panel life is 30-40 years. After twenty years the Town has to make a decision to remove the panels or continue with a buy out. Mr. Harrigan feels that in fifteen years there might be a need for new inverters and updated panels and possibly set up a new contract then. There was a question as to the panels being individual or tied in. They are locked into a series of eleven panels. If there is a malfunction it would affect the whole series, but there will be a contact person and someone will be out to fix it. If there is any damage, from anything, the company fixes it. The size and kind of fence was discussed along with the placement of the inverters on the pad, use of and how many. Atty. Carey discussed the lease and had a few questions that were answered by Mr. Harrigan. There was a question if it would produce more electricity and CL&P would pay for the extra. Mr. Harrigan stated the system was sized accordingly. It will build up credit during the summer, but over the year it will even out. It will be a dual meter placed in the school. It was discussed that possibly in the future, solar could be applied to other Town buildings. Carl Grenier made a motion to approve the Solar Panel Project for Voluntown Elementary School. Arthur Nieminen seconded it and all were in favor.

Arthur Nieminen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. David Nieminen seconded it and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:08 P.M.

Respectfully submitted
Cheryl A. Sadowski, Board Clerk

Approved:

Al Dawley, Chairman

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