

Westfield Planning Commission Minutes
March 20, 2017 – 6:00 p.m. – Town Offices

Present were:

Planning Commission members: Yvan LaPlume; Brian Dunn; Loren Petzoldt; Bill Millar; Steve Dykeman; Dianne Laplante; and Shawn Baraw

Town Clerk: LaDonna Dunn

Zoning Administrator: Dennis Neumann

Applicant: Luke Backus

Community Members: Larry Berry; Olivia Craggs; Jordon and Momoko Antonucci

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** In the absence of a Chairperson, Town Clerk, LaDonna Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.
2. **Changes to the Agenda:** There were no changes to the agenda.
3. **Approve Minutes of the April 14, 2015 Planning Commission Meeting:** Motion by Steve Dykeman and second by Shawn Baraw to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2015 Planning Commission meeting. So moved.
4. **Elect Chairperson:** There was a motion made by Yvan LaPlume to nominate Loren Petzoldt as the Chairperson. There was no second so the motion failed. There was a motion by Shawn Baraw and second by Steve Dykeman to nominate Dianne Laplante as Chairperson and Loren Petzoldt to be the Vice Chair. The motion passed with all in agreement.
5. **Elect a Clerk:** Motion by Dianne Laplante and second by Loren Petzoldt to elect LaDonna Dunn as the Clerk for the Planning Commission. So moved.
6. **Warned Public Hearing:** Motion by Steve Dykeman and second by Loren Petzoldt to open the public hearing.

A. Request by Luke Backus and Merlin Backus for a Conditional Use Permit to renovate an existing barn and construct a new barrel house measuring 22' x 63' x 32' tall to be located at 379 Kennison Road, for the purpose of producing, aging and bottling bourbon whiskey to be sold offsite. Zoned: 304.03 Rural/Agricultural. Parcel ID: 06-001-09.

Luke explained the proposal is to ferment, distill and age bourbon whiskey at his location, 379 Kennison Road. He reviewed the project details and addressed questions from the public which included:

- Explaining the wastewater and backup system and showing a diagram explaining how it will work.
- The existing building will have very little change externally. A new support system and floor will be installed.
- Barrels will not be burned at the distillery.
- Road traffic will not be impacted greatly. Employees will include Luke, plus two others. There will not be tours at the distillery with the exception of an occasional special event. There will not be retail sales from the business which would create more traffic. Grain, barrels and glass products will be delivered one to two times per year.
- It will take four years before the first batch of bourbon is ready for sale.
- Production will take place five days a week for the five summer months producing approximately 150 barrels during a season.
- The three ingredients are corn, rye and barley.
- Waste mash: The liquid will be separated from the grain. The grain is then dried and sold as feed. The liquid goes into the wastewater system.
- This type of business is regulated at the state and federal level with fire regulations being very stringent.
- The signage will follow the current specifications in the Zoning Bylaws. No additional variance is being requested for signage.
- Lighting will consist of three flood lights on switches. The lights will not be left on overnight.
- Required fuel will be propane based as it is easier and cleaner burning.

- The designs for the Barrel House were reviewed. Botting of the bourbon will take place in this building.
- Employees will include Luke, one clerical person and one backup distiller. Luke is not looking to expand larger than the current system is built for.
- Luke is not planning to grow his own grain but rather purchase organic grain.

There was a motion by Shawn Baraw and second by Steve Dykeman to approve the conditional use permit applied for by Luke Backus. The motion passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Loren Petzoldt and second by Shawn Baraw to close the public hearing. So moved.

7. Procedure for Zoning Bylaw Amendments – Zoning Administrator Dennis Neumann: Dennis explained he has been finding some inconsistencies in the Zoning Bylaws and some things are coming up that are not addressed in the bylaws. He mentioned one of the areas not addressed in the bylaws is shipping containers which are being used for storage units in peoples yards. They are frequently beginning to appear around town and are currently not regulated. Another area in questions is the wording in the signage descriptions. LaDonna said she spoke with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) and learned changes are to be made through the public hearing process with advertisements in the newspaper, public hearings with the Planning Commission and Selectboard before changes are adopted. After discussion the consensus of the Planning Commission was for Dennis to keep precise notes of recommended changes and inconsistencies which will then be changed after the Town Plan is updated in 2018. Dennis was in agreement.

8. Other Business: There was no other business to discuss.

9. Set Next Meeting Date if Necessary: After polling the committee it was determined the next meeting will be on a Monday evening in June. LaDonna will forward links from the regional planning commission about updating town plans including statutory links before the meeting.

10. Adjourn: Motion by Yvan LaPlume and second by Shawn Baraw to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. So moved.

Minutes recorded and submitted by: _____
LaDonna Dunn, Clerk

Westfield Planning Commission Approval Dated: _____ **with** _____ **changes**

Dianne Laplante, Chair

Loren Petzoldt, Vice Chair

Steve Dykeman

Brian Dunn

Bill Millar

Yvan LaPlume

Shawn Baraw