

PLANNING BOARD

Monday, June 12, 2006
Belmont Corner Meeting House
Belmont, New Hampshire

Members Present: Chairman P. Harris; G. Flack, W. Peterson, C. Patten, and R. Caldwell.
Members Absent: J. Marden and J. Pike.
Alternates Absent: C. Shibles.
Staff: C. Daigle, R. Ball and E. Murphy.

The chairman opened the meeting at 7p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED - CAMPGROUND REGULATIONS.

P. Harris explained that this is a continuation of the public hearing on campground regulations. They received a lot of public input at the last meeting and will continue on page 8 where they left off.

Mr. Helmut Busack wanted to address campground access having to be located at least 150' from the nearest residence and from the centerline of any residential curb cut. He stated that campgrounds are allowed in the commercial zone so there would be no residences in that area. W. Peterson explained that it does not apply in the commercial zone. It is designed to protect the residences in the rural zone where campgrounds are allowed. P. Harris explained that the purpose of the regulations is to allow a commercial business in the rural zone while being compatible to the residential uses in the area.

G. Flack wanted to know why they chose the travel way height clearance of 16' on all campground roads. C. Daigle stated that it is the standard in other regulations. Mr. Busack stated that the road clearance standard is 14.6' for bridges. The Board discussed having 14' as the height clearance regulation the same as the road standards.

Mr. Busack wanted to address the road widths. The regulation state that two-way roads shall be a minimum of 38' in width with a constructed traveled way of 20'. He stated that Rte 106 is not that wide. If the roads have to be that wide you won't have any trees and bushes along the road. It would be like having Rte 106 through a campground. He explained that when campers enter a campground they don't travel at 30 mph. When two units meet on the road one will pull over to the side and let the other pass. There are campsites on both sides of the road so there is plenty of room for two units to pass when one pulls over. R. Caldwell wanted to know what Mr. Busack suggests for a road width. Mr. Busack stated that 20' would allow for two tractors trailers to pass. R. Caldwell wanted to know how two 17' wide RV's would pass each other. Mr. Busack stated one pulls over to let the other one by. It is standard practice in campgrounds. R.

Caldwell agreed that 38' is too wide but 20' wide is too tight. Mr. Busack stated that there are no shoulders on the road. P. Harris stated that curves are where it would get tight. W. Peterson stated that when Brown Hill Road was originally paved it was 18' and was too narrow he suggested staying with the 20'. R. Caldwell wanted to know about the pull off areas. Mr. Busack stated that campgrounds do not have fences or trees along the road so there are plenty of pull off areas including camp sites. He stated that cars are 8' wide and RVs are 14' wide.

Mr. Busack next addressed having to have pedestrian crossing marked. People walk down campground roads and through woods that is part of camping. W. Peterson stated that he has been to campgrounds that had pedestrian crossing marked to get from one building to another building. Mr. Busack stated that campground owner should have the option of putting something up in the heavy pedestrian traffic area such as the office. It should be up to the owner to make that determination.

Mr. Busack wanted to know how the Town can enforce the speed limits that they want posted in the campgrounds. R. Caldwell stated that it is just a suggestion and is up to the campground owner to enforce the speed limit in a manner that they choose. Mr. Busack stated it is a rule not a suggestion. P. Harris stated that a speed limit has to be posted in order for anyone to enforce it.

Mr. Busack had some concerns about the minimum campsite area and dimensions for tents sites being 1,000 square feet. He stated that if you a 10' x 10' tent you could have 10 tents in the area that is proposed for one site. Half of that area would be good. Mr. James Coviello wanted to know why they are more stringent than the State's regulations, which are 600 square feet and 1000 square feet for recreation vehicle sites. P. Harris stated it depends on the type of facility you want to build. The size is also to protect abutters from a commercial use in residential area. Mr. Busack wanted to know how are tent sites going to impact the abutters in a commercial zone. W. Peterson stated that a garage is 24' x 24' and you can barely put two cars in it so how are you going to put a tent and two cars on a small site. R. Ball stated you also have to include a recreation area, a picnic table and fireplace on the site. C. Daigle stated that the dimensions came from other New Hampshire regulations and industry literature. Mr. Coviello wanted to know if the 1000 square feet is for the site pad or the whole site. The Board stated that it is for the whole lot. Mr. Busack stated that campgrounds do not put children in the schools. They provide taxes and attract tourist to the area. If campgrounds are not allowed then developers will put homes on those sites which will add more expense to the town. He stated that Gunstock goes by State standards why should Belmont be more restrictive. P. Harris stated that they have a larger parcel of land where the sites in Belmont would be considerably smaller and you have to be concerned about overcrowding. Mr. Busack stated that the Board has to understand that the State has done research before developing their regulations and the Planning Board should use that research when developing the Town's regulations instead of making them more stringent.

Mr. Busack had concerns about having a team design a campground. It is up to the campground owner to design the campground they want. The Board stated that these are only recommendations and guidelines. Mr. Coviello stated that having to be 1000' from any offsite residence is unreasonable. C. Daigle stated that staff agrees the 1000' is unreasonable and they are doing an overlay map to find a more reasonable distance. Closer to 500' may be more reasonable. Mr. Coviello stated that they already have buffer standards and the campground owners should be allowed to use their property. P. Harris explained

that it is from the nearest house not the boundary line. Mr. Busack wanted to know what the setbacks in the commercial zone are. C. Daigle stated that it is 20'. Mr. Busack stated that he has a 10 acre campground and with all the setback and buffer restrictions and road widths he would be only allowed to use 5 acres of his property. The Board explained that the requirements are different in the commercial zone and the sites can be closer. Mr. Busack stated that they are concerned about the impact tent sites have on abutters but what about the impact the commercial abutters have on his campground. They are allowed to have parking right up to the boundary line and the vehicle noise and pollution affect the campers. C. Daigle stated that is why they are requiring buffers around the campground to protect both the campground and the abutters. Mr. Coviello stated that they cannot be any closer to a residence than 100' in the rural zone. Mr. Frank Sweeney stated that setbacks in the rural zone are only 50'. For seasonal campgrounds 50' would be adequate. Most campgrounds are fenced in and buffered. C. Daigle stated that it might be a reason to reduce setbacks but it would have to be looked at on an individual basis. She explained that setbacks in the rural zone are 50' from the structure to the boundary line not from structure to structure. She explained that the increased setbacks are because a campground tends to have more activities than a single family residence. The increased setbacks would help prevent complaints from abutters and to reduce the incompatibility of the uses. Mrs. Kathy Sweeney stated that she thinks the more distance between the uses the better. Mr. Coviello stated that a distance of 50' or 100' doesn't make much of a difference because voices travel. Mrs. Sweeney wanted to know if there are many lots that would be suitable for campgrounds in the rural area. R. Ball stated that any lot over 10 acres would meet the requirements and there are many lots over 25 acres. Mr. Busack stated that the setbacks should be 50' the same as any other lot in the rural zone. Mr. Coviello wanted to know if there is an empty lot next to the campground would that empty lot have to maintain the 100' setback when they build. C. Daigle stated they would not because they would know that a campground is there and it would be their choice to build next to it. The 100' is to protect the single family residence from having a campground build next to them once they are already there.

Mrs. Sweeney wanted to know if an RV is over 320 square feet would they have to meet structure setbacks. C. Daigle stated that it is part of the current zoning regulations. Mr. Roland Foster stated that if it exceeds 320 square feet it is not allowed in a campground. C. Daigle stated that they are allowed in campgrounds but they have to meet structure setback. Those setbacks are 15' from interior roads 20' from another RV 30' from another structure and full distance from the property line. She explained that the 320 square feet is the State's standard over what it is considered a manufactured unit. Mr. Foster stated that travel trailers, RVs and park models can be legal on the road but not legal in campgrounds. C. Daigle stated park models over 320 square feet are regulated as manufactured housing units under the current zoning. RVs under 320 square feet are not regulated as far as setbacks and can be put on any approved campsite. Mr. Foster stated that manufactures make the units 39.11' so they can travel on the road without an escort. With the tip outs they are more than 320 square feet. C. Daigle stated that they are looking at units over 320 square feet and are regulating for fire safety. Mr. Foster stated that the regulations are too restrictive. He stated that double wides are not allowed at Winnisquam Beach Campground. C. Daigle stated that the Town allows them if they are grandfathered. It is the campground regulation that doesn't. The Town cannot enforce the Associations regulations, that is up to the Association. The Association must also sign all permits before they are approved by the Town. Mr. Coviello stated that when designing a campground they would have to design it to meet the setbacks. G. Flack stated that they could have an area just for those units. Mr. Coviello stated to have RVs 320 square feet they would have to have a special site. C. Daigle stated that they would

take that into consideration when designing a campground. W. Peterson stated that they could design some sites to accommodate the larger units and some to accommodate the smaller ones. P. Harris stated that it is all done for safety reasons.

C. Daigle recommended that requiring toilets/showers service building be further than 400' from a property line be removed from the regulations as it is not a health or safety issue.

Mrs. Sweeney wanted to know about the feasibility study. C. Daigle stated it is just part of the narrative to better understand what the applicant is planning. It describes what the primary market is. Mrs. Sweeney stated that the town needs to look at having special pull off areas to allow RVs and trailers to pull off the road in the event they are lost and need to find directions. They need to consider how these units maneuver around town. R. Caldwell stated that the campground would have a staging area for the units while they are registering at the campground. Mrs. Sweeney stated that she is concerned about the unit trying to find directions to the campground and have to pull over to find directions. She stated that she thinks the regulations are good.

Mr. Elson Moody stated that they are talking about the same things that they discussed at the last public hearing and it is a waste of time. C. Daigle stated that it is a public hearing and it is important to get the public's input on the draft regulations. Mr. Moody stated that the Planning Board should come up with ideas for the regulations and compare it with the State's regulations. P. Harris stated that they have received some great input from the public that the Board will study before coming up with the final document. They want to design a regulation that will work for Belmont.

Mr. Busack stated that if the Board is looking at regulating campgrounds then he suggests that they look at marinas, storage facilities and golf clubs so that they treat everyone fairly. What you do for one you should do for everyone's safety.

W. Peterson stated that they may give consideration for having fencing between campground and residential units. C. Daigle stated that under the buffer requirements that may be allowed to reduce buffer area in exchange for fencing. Some lots need to have buffers and others may not. This regulation helps the applicant to know what is expected but allows room for adjustments on an individual basis. Mr. Sweeney stated that a lot of campgrounds put in fences to prevent illegal access to the campground.

Mr. Coviello stated that there are lines of liability and the property owner should have the freedom to design the campground the way they want because they are the ones who are liable for anything that happens on their property. The town is not liable for what happens on private property. The safety issues and emergency access can be addressed by the police and fire departments when they do their review. If it is not up to safety standards then they will not sign off on the project and they will not be given a certificate of occupation. P. Harris stated that Mr. Coviello has a good grasp on what he wants to design but not everyone does. The regulations are a guideline to help applicants know what will be expected when they submit an application. Mr. Coviello stated that the owners have the right to design what they want. P. Harris stated that the standards have come down from other regulations around New Hampshire as well as the State's regulations. The town has an obligation to protect abutters. It is responsible for public safety and protecting

property values throughout the town. C. Daigle stated that the standards are just the standards that are needed to service an individual campground. They are looked at on an individual basis. There are different road standards for different campgrounds. The standards are worked out during site plan review between the applicant and the Board.

Mrs. Sweeney wanted to know about having an RV on their own property and if there is a limit on how many they can have. C. Daigle stated that property owners are allowed one recreational unit on their property to be used by immediate family members for no more than six months if it attached to onsite water and septic.

Mr. Coviello wanted to reiterate his concern about having to break down seasonal sites. From a business aspect having to break down seasonal sites every year is defeating the purpose of seasonal camping. Seasonal campers want to keep their sites from year to year and don't want to have to move their units. Mr. Busack stated that if you look at Silver Lake campground the units remain on site and the campers take pride in their site. They put skirts on the units and have garden on the site. P. Harris stated the Board will do more research on this. Mr. Coviello stated that removing units would be cutting into the four season campground. Having the units remain on site would allow the campground owner to make sure the units are safe and secure. Mr. Busack stated that winter storage is an added income because you can charge for the unit to remain on site. It is the unit that stays there not the people. If it is a four season campground you would be required to move from one site to another. P. Harris stated that if it is a full time use then they would need to have provisions for snow removal. Mr. Busack stated that it is the campground's responsible. He stated that campers cannot put children in the school system. C. Daigle stated that it is using the site practically all year which is like a manufacture home park but the density and standards are different. Mr. Sweeney stated by shutting off the water it makes a campground different from a manufactured park. C. Daigle most campgrounds don't shut the water off. If it is going to be the same as a manufactured park then they would have to meet the same standards for roads and density. Mr. Busack stated that you could put in the campground regulations that children cannot be put in the local schools. C. Daigle explained that the Planning Board does not have jurisdiction to do that. Mrs. Anne Marie Coviello stated another argument for allowing seasonal units to remain on site is some unit owners live in condos and apartments and have no place to store their units in the off season. The Board stated that it may be a reason to have a storage area as part of the campground design. Mr. Busack stated that if the campgrounds have to close down for part of the year then they should be given a break on taxes because they cannot generate income from a closed campground.

P. Harris thanked everyone for their input and comments. The Board will take everything into consideration and draft another campground regulation incorporating the input from the public hearings. There will be another public hearing when the second draft is complete.

BOARD'S ACTION-MINUTES:

MOTION: On a motion by W. Peterson, seconded by R. Caldwell, it was voted to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2006, meeting as submitted. (4-0-1) C. Patten abstained.

STAFF REPORT:

SUNLAKE VILLAGE TAX LOT 101-001:

The chairman signed the subdivision plans for Sun Lake Village.

BENJAMIN AND ELIZABETH LAWHORN TAX LOT 225-013 & NORMAND AND ANITA MCKEOWN TAX LOT 225-014.

The chairman signed the boundary line adjustment between Benjamin and Elizabeth Lawhorn & Normand and Anita McKeown.

PHILIP & MARY CLAIRMONT TAX LOT 237-035:

The chairman signed the subdivision plans for Philip and Mary Clairmont.

LORI FITZGERALD TAX LOT 107-034:

The Board signed the merger document for Lori Fitzgerald.

EMAIL POLICY:

C. Daigle stated that the School Board is drafting an email policy and she thinks it would be a good idea if all the Boards in town have a policy in place. The Planning Board agreed and suggested that the Board of Selectmen draft an email policy for all the Town Boards.

BELKNAP MOUNTAIN COALITION:

C. Daigle stated that a group of citizens from Gilford, Gilmanton, Alton and Belmont are getting together to preserve the Belknap Mountain Range. The meeting will be June 29th. Ms. Denise Naiva from the Conservation Commission will be attending.

NEM TAX LOT 205-057:

C. Daigle stated that Metro Cast wanted an advertising sign on the McGreevy lot and applied for a variance for one. The variance was denied because they could apply for a business directional sign. As part of the variance application the McGreevy sign was to be removed. When Metro Cast applied for the business directional application they included those conditions as part of the application. Mr. Dave McGreevy signed the application and the permit was approved. She explained that removing the McGreevy sign is not a requirement of site plan regulation because directional signs are conforming and don't effect on site advertising signage.

MOTION: G. Flack moved that the McGreevy sign does not have to be abandoned as a condition of the directional sign permit.

The motion was seconded by C. Patten and carried. (5-0)

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: On a motion by C. Patten, seconded by W. Peterson, it was voted unanimously to adjourn

BELMONT PLANNING BOARD
2006

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JUNE 12,

at 9:10 p.m. (5-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M Murphy
Administrative Assistant