

The Town of Beekman Planning Board Minutes of August 23, 2018

The Planning Board met for a special meeting on Thursday, August 23, 2018 at the Beekman Recreation Center.

The following members were present: Chairman - Sean Johnston, William Mcgee, Michael Gallina, Doug Florence, Rob Lopane, Dave Anderson and Peter Poltrack. Also present was Town Attorney - Craig Wallace, Town Engineer - Jon Bodendorf and Secretary - Selene Haile.

Sean led the Pledge of Allegiance and noted the emergency exits.

PUBLIC HEARING

Tree Top Adventure (Barton Orchards)
Special Use Permit
Beekman Poughquag Road
6758-00-329577, 6758-00-365610, 6758-00-438672
Zone: R-45

Sean stated he would like to set some ground rules for this meeting. All questions should be directed to the Board.

This is not a question and answer meeting. The audience was asked to sign the sheet in the rear if they would like to address the Board. The audience was asked to state their name and address when they come forward to speak.

Mr. Berger and Mr. Barton approached the Board.

Mr. Barton thanked everyone for coming out this evening. He stated the Builder and Traffic Engineer are also present this evening to answer any questions. He stated he bought the property last year. He gave an overview of the project.

He stated there was an open house today and if people were not able to attend, they are free to drive in and see where it is located. He spoke about the history of this property. Mr. Barton introduced the builder of the project.

Gerhardt spoke about the project. He stated he is a forester and a social therapist and that is how it started. He stated these have been built all over the world. He stated there is one at the Bronx Zoo, the San Diego Zoo and at Catamount.

He said this is very safe and there have had zero accidents. There are about 220 parks in the United States.

Mr. Berger stated that this will bring about 120 cars to the area. There will be no more than 300 people using this per day.

They will use a website for reservations. The course takes approximately 2 1/2 hours to complete.

The traffic study engineer approached the Board.

They go out during peak PM hours and Saturday peak hour and count the current volume for a 2 to 3 hour period.

Then they look do traffic projections. They used a 5 year program to account for whatever else might be going on in the area. Then they look at the development and what it will generate. This is new (an endurance course) so there is limited information, so they therefore made assumptions. They looked at the number of people that can use the course in a day - and then they assumed that they won't be coming themselves.

They used the number of 2 1/2 people per vehicles which would be about 120 vehicles per day. They look at the worst case scenario - if all the vehicles came in and out at the same time and what would the impact be.

They looked at the level of service at all intersections. All the intersection are assigned a level of service - all were B or better except Beekman/Poughquag Rd which had a level of C. They stated all the intersections would continue to be at a level of B or better except Beekman /Poughquag Road would be a D. That was calculated using the worse case scenario of all the cars coming and going at the same time. The site can't accommodate 300 people at one time, so it was felt the traffic impact would be less. It was stated that there are other things going on at the farm that could impact these levels. He said DPW had some comments about that. They prepared an executive summary for the Board.

The letter from DPW had some comments about site distance and basically the plans need to be cleaned up and County requirement can be addressed.

The next comment was about the intersection of Beekman /Poughquag Road and the degradation of service.

He spoke to the County and explained the analysis was conservative. It was agreed the traffic lights but doesn't warrant a traffic light. The County had looked at the accident rate at the intersection.

They talked about a traffic management plan for events that occur at the farm. They will agree to use off duty Police Officers or flaggers to be at intersection. That is not specific to this project but trying to be good neighbors to the Town and the people who live there they will do it as part of their permit from the County.

Mr Berger stated the following:

had analysis on the endangered species and there were none

DEC stream permit to repair

CAC looked the plan over

they have done all the environmental review of the site

this is a passive use of the use

the trees will be preserved

wood chips will be used on the path underneath

there will be 2 sheds to store the equipment at night

this is very green - allowing open space and a passive use of the space

Jon stated he had no new comments. The July 24th letter addressed the majority of the comments and he has no further comments at this time.

Michael asked about the traffic study and what the difference of the levels meant.

It was stated that it is the amount of delay (the amount of time waiting at an intersection).

- A 0-10 seconds
- B 10 - 15 seconds
- C 15 - 25 seconds
- D over 25 seconds

Michael said that he agreed there needed to be a traffic management plan for Barton Orchards.

Dave said he agreed something needed to be done at certain times of the year for Barton Orchards and Stormville.

Bill asked about Saturday and Sunday with Barton Orchards. This study was done on off peak hours for Barton Orchards.

It was stated that this study is not to address Barton Orchards but for the application of Tree Top Adventure.

However it was acknowledge that this would add to it. It was stated the traffic from Barton Orchards would be addressed by the master plan for the farm which will be to the Town soon.

Bill said he read the letter from the County a little differently. He said he felt a traffic plan was part of the requirement of this going forward.

Mr. Barton's attorney - Victoria Polidoro, stated that the applicant has agreed to a special event plan for the Barton Orchard traffic but he can't be held accountable for the Stormville Flea Market traffic.

It was stated there are 3 months where the traffic is substantial.

Mr. Barton said that from September to late October there is the most traffic. He said he understands because he lives in Dalton Farms also. He said he has law enforcement of the farm and he will redirect them to help with traffic.

Ms. Polidoro stated this could turn into a benefit for the Town.

Rob stated this will be active from April to November when there is good weather.

Mr. Barton said he will be looking for school groups to use and that would be Monday to Friday. Peter said he still doesn't like the proposed driveway entrance and would like them to use the existing driveway. He feels that would have a more country like feel.

Mr. Barton said he respects that view hover the new driveway is much safer and there is no conflict coming out of. He stated that this could be developed into 21 acres of houses.

Ms. Polidoro stated the site distance is much better at the new location.

Sean said he understands the feeling of wanting to keep the rural character. He said this could have been developed into a 100 homes and there could be 1000 cars a day.

Rob agreed that this could be 100 homes and 150 kids added to our schools.

Doug said the DPW rejected the current driveway for good reasons and it would have been a bigger impact on Dalton Farm.

Ms. Polidoro said the biggest concern of traffic from Barton Orchard will be mitigated with a plan.

Sean made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Seconded by Michael. All in favor. Motion carried.

Sue Christiansen (Dalton Farm - The Glenn) She stated she has been Peter Barton's neighbor for 3 years. She said there is a half an hour waiting time during the fall to get out of her road. She said she is concerned because now they are adding more traffic. She stated she is also concerned about busses coming up from the city.

Kathleen Centura (201 Beekman/Poughquag Rd) She stated she lives across from this and said it will be a nightmare. She said the traffic is horrendous now. She said she questions the traffic study and feels the Town should have an independent traffic study done. She said this will generate more noise, trash and crime.

Kathyrn Halbert (Dalton Farms - The Glenn) She said that this is a two lane road and there is not enough space for emergency vehicles and she thinks that should be considered.

Robert Spacarelli (8 Mill Road - the end of Recreation Rd) She said she is concerned because this is 70 feet from his property line. He stated he has been here for 20 years and he is very concerned about his privacy. He stated he hunts on his property and has beehives. He asked if he can discharge his weapons within 500' of a dwelling.

Samantha Possenti (Milano Drive) she also works at Barton Orchard. She said she thinks it is great for the kids and adults in the area.

Jordan Padillioni - works at Barton Orchard. She thinks this is a great opportunity for the area. She stated there isn't much else positive to do. She thinks the traffic is a pre-existing condition.

Dave Wysocki (Circle Hill Road) He stated he has lived here for 53 years and has seen a lot of changes and development. He said he commends Mr. Barton for trying to keep the farm in town. He said he is favor of this. He feels it will be a good opportunity for the kids in the area.

Doug DeMasi (Beekman Road) He said he has been in town for 50 years. There have been many changes. He has concerns about the traffic coming from Barton Orchards. He also asked about the life span of the trail.

Sherry Olmstead (Lagrange) She said she thinks this a great for the kids and families in the area and will give them something to do.

Wayne Monroe (Baker Road) He stated he has lived in this town for 35 years and it is a dead town. He thinks this is great for the Town and maybe it will bring this Town back to life.

William Sterbenz (Washburn Rd) He said this has to be put into perspective. If this was a development for houses imagine the traffic and problems that would be added to the Town. Everyone wants open space and this keeps the open space.

Rebecca Florance asked about bathroom facilities and where do the customers get something to drink.

Kathryn Uland said the traffic problems are from Barton Orchard and it shouldn't effect this,

There were no more comments from the audience.

Sean asked Jon about closing the Public Hearing.

Jon said the general concerns of the public aren't going to change so the Public Hearing can be closed.

Rob made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Seconded by Michael. All in favor. Motion carried. Mr. Berger addressed the question of the facilities. There is no septic. Porta Johns will be used. There are no food or beverages to be sold on the property.

Dave asked how many of these are successful and if they are unsuccessful what cause it. It was stated that there have been none in the US that have gone down and they age very well.

It was stated there are not external lights and there will be no night climbing. They have proposed daytime operation only.

To summarize the concerns expressed:

concern about zoning - this will have a Special Use Permit

Noise - there is an ordinance and would have to be addressed with the Town

Traffic Study - should there be an independent study

Traffic Study Saturday and Sunday traffic, time of year (fall), 5 days a week, 7 days a week
emergency vehicles coming in and out
privacy issues
bus traffic
Sean asked the Board if they felt an independent traffic study should be ordered.

Dave - feels the traffic study was done correctly and was reviewed by the County
Peter - okay with traffic study that was done
Doug - okay with traffic study that was done
Rob - okay with traffic study that was done
Michael - okay with traffic study that was done
Bill - okay with traffic study that was done
Sean - okay with traffic study that was done

Ms. Polidaro thanked the Board for holding the special meeting this evening. She stated they would like to move forward with the application. She stated this will bring tourist dollars to the area and preserve land. This is a low impact use for the land.

She stated they are requesting a Negative Declaration and a Conditional Final Approval.

Bill asked Jon about the DPW issue. Jon said he agrees with the County that the site distance where it is shown is the best location.

It was the opinion of the Board that an independent traffic study was not needed especially since it has been reviewed by the DPW and they are asking for a mitigation plan. He stated the plan is out of the Towns hands and that the County will dictate the plan for traffic management.
Sean made a motion to that the Planning Board as lead Agency hereby determines that the Tree Top Adventures project would not have a significant adverse effect on the environment, and that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be required for the reasons set forth in the SEQRA Conditional Negative Declaration for Type 1 action dated August 23, 2018.
Seconded by Dave. All in favor. Motion carried.

Sean made a motion that the Planning Board grant a Conditional Site Plan Approval for the Tree Top Adventure Plan subject to the following:
Department of Public Works comments by letter dated August 22, 2018
DCDPW Permit
Submission of a performance bond in amount and form acceptable to the Town Board in connection with the SWAPPP.
No lights unless they come back to the Board and a note will be placed on the map. They will be closed before dusk
No restrooms (porta potties) within 100 feet of the property line.
Seconded by Michael. All in favor. Motion carried.

Sean made a motion that the Planning Board grants a Special Use Permit for the Tree Top Adventure Plan. Seconded by Dave. All in favor. Motion carried.

Bill made a motion to close the meeting. Seconded by Sean. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted

Selene Haile
Secretary
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