

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD  
PLANNING BOARD  
Minutes - May 11, 2005**

Members present: Doug Read, Steve Bluhm, Christopher Hunt, Dick Maher, Glen Brown.  
Also present: Mike Izard, LRPC and Eliza Conde, Secretary.

Glen Brown moved, seconded by Dick Maher, to accept the minutes with a change to the first paragraph correcting the required ZBA applications. Motion passed.

**Mark Hayes: Application for a Major Site Plan Review for a Mountain Bike Park on Ski Hill Drive (Tax Map R17, Lot 21) in the Conservation Zone.** The board reviewed the Planner's Report noting the following deficiencies in the application:

- The impact statement does not include refuse disposal, land erosion, loss of tree cover, surface drainage, etc.
- The map does not indicate the location of the buildings relative to the boundaries.
- No mention of the size and location of signage.
- Site plan does not include location and screening of solid waste disposal.
- Surface drainage features and water management plans are not clear in proposal
- Natural features of property, wetlands, etc. are not shown.
- No trails for biking or pedestrians are shown on the map
- No plan for erosion control

Fran LaBranche agreed that the application is not complete and had concern specifically with erosion control and the affect the biking trails will have on Northfield's valuable resource of Bean Hill.

Mark Hayes responded that when he bought the property there were 4 wheeler trails with deep ruts and erosion. These trails have been repaired with water bars, swales, bridges, etc. to control water runoff. It is in his best interest to have trails that are not eroded in order to attract and maintain customers. Christopher Hunt asked about silt in the ponds after all the spring rains. The installation of hay bales has kept any silt out of the ponds. There will be several narrow bike trails and the only clearing will be of the small growth currently on those trails. There will be one wider area for the terrain park.

After discussion of whether the application is complete at this time, Doug Read moved, seconded by Fran LaBranche to accept the application as complete. Motion passed 4-1.

Mark Hayes reviewed the history of mountain biking and described the activities planned for a mountain bike park. The ski lift will carry riders and bikes up the hill and the trails are of varying difficulties similar to ski trails. There will also be a terrain park where bikers can "free ride" using stunts, rails, etc. The lift has been repaired and inspected by the state. After hearing that other ski areas are considering installing parks, Fran LaBranche asked how Mr. Hayes plans to compete with bigger areas. Marks response that they will be focusing on biking only and the area will reflect that passion for biking. Dick Maher asked about the access road's use by home owners, the WHRS land liability and safety issues. Mark Hayes responded that each landowner on the road has a deeded easement to the road and that the road needs to be

maintained in order to get customers to the park. He is currently working out liability issues with the school in order to use their land which is located near the top of the ski area. There will be an on-site EMT or "OEC" (Outdoor Environmental Care) similar to Ski Patrollers at ski areas. The OEC will be full time with part time patrollers on the mountain.

Mr. Hayes presented the board with a parking plan for the parking lot showing at least 140 parking spaces and a drop off area. He does not plan to have a snack bar or retail shop for this summer, but does plan them for the future. Steve Bluhm inquired about the capacity of the ski lift and the impact of traffic on Ski and Bean Hill Roads. The impact won't be as much as the ski area was and the lift can carry 80 people every 12 minutes.

Dick Maher asked about additional parking area to the left of the lodge. Mr. Hayes replied that there is currently some question about ownership that is being resolved along with ownership of the old well belonging to the Highland Condo Assoc. He would prefer to use that extra area for vendors during racing events. He currently has plans for two trails and will gradually add more.

Public hearing: Judy Dupuis asked about the location of the entrance sign and noted that dust from the road will be an issue. The current sign is on town land, but there is room to locate a sign on Mr. Hayes' land at the end of Ski Hill Road. If dust becomes an issue, he will water the road to help curtail any problems. Lisa Martin asked if WRHS students will get a discount. Yes, 30% discount on season passes. Rich Bellerose commented that the Fire Dept. now has a Polaris 6-wheeler that can be used for rescue. Patsy Brunt asked about the cost of tickets. A season pass will be under \$300 and a day pass will be \$28. Jerry Teal asked if Mr. Hayes objected to a speed limit sign on the road. He has no objections. Public hearing closed.

Dick Maher commented that a small water trailer will not be sufficient to keep dust down and A tanker may be necessary. Mark replied that he will do whatever it takes to keep dust down. Steve Bluhm expressed concern that there will be added demands on the Fire Department for rescue. Mark Hayes replied that they will have the means to bring people off the mountain and normally people transport themselves for small broken parts Normally there would be no need for the fire department to respond.

Glen Brown moved, seconded by Dick Maher to continue the application until June 8, 2005 with the requirement that the above noted deficiencies be addressed or a waiver applied for. Doug Read noted that the liability issue with the school land needs to be resolved and the Conservation Commission should be involved to oversee water runoff issues. Fran LaBranche commented that the Board needs to specify what is required for the next meeting.

Items needed for next meeting:

- Be specific about location of buildings, refuse location, screening of refuse container drawn to scale.
- Ask for waivers on the required full scale and surveyor's stamp.
- Note distance of buildings from lot lines.
- Show location of signage
- Show dimensions of the buildings

- Show the ponds, surface drainage
- Ask for a waiver from the requirement to show the natural features of the land other than the ponds.
- Locate the well and septic system – have the base lodge area at a larger scale
- Show location of pedestrian walkway
- Obtain liability resolve from WRHS.
- Show access to town and school property.

The Board will ask the Conservation Commission to work with the owners relative to drainage, erosion control, etc.

Christopher Hunt read a letter from the Selectmen relative to access to the town's property. Mark Hayes responded that the request did not include his right to use the property. The access road to the tower is not open to the public. This issue needs to be discussed with the Selectmen.

Motion passed.

**ALV, Inc.: Application for 13 lot subdivision of 215 +/- Acres on Keasor and Bean Hill Roads (Map R11, Lot 9) in the R-1 zone.** Glen Brown moved, seconded by Fran LaBranche to accept the application as complete. Motion passed.

Trevor Towne, Belanger Surveying presented the plans showing the proposed 13 lots on approximately 40 acres of the total 215 acres. The lots are designed to meet the town's regulations for size, wetlands buffers and soil types. There will be six lots on the existing roads and another 7 on a 1000 foot road ending in a cul-de-sac. The road will require an impact to wetlands and buffers.

Christopher Hunt read a letter from the Selectmen relative to the current condition of Keasor Road with the recommendation that an engineer be obtained to determine the needed improvements to the road. A letter from the Conservation Commission requested a site walk and suggested the board require a study of the impact of the development upon the Wadleigh Meadow. Fran LaBranche moved, seconded by Glen Brown to conduct a site walk on the property. Currently the proposed road is flagged but the lots are not. Mr. Towne agreed that simple flagging could be placed to locate the lots. Dick Maher commented that there is runoff from Bean Hill that flows through this property and any changes could affect the meadow. Motion passed.

Discussion of how to conduct a site walk, who would be included etc. followed. It was determined that it has to be open to the public, it is a continuation of this meeting, notes will be taken, etc. Fran LaBranche moved, seconded by Steve Bluhm to reconvene this meeting Saturday, May 14, 2005 at 9:00 am, meeting at the corner of Bean Hill and Keasor Roads. Motion passed.

**Other:** Mike Izard questioned the board on whether a checklist should be included with all applications. It would be helpful to an applicant, but he is concerned that they would just do the checklist and not look further at the regulations in order to have a completed application. It was suggested that the wording be change to “guideline” and make the notation that there are further requirements in the subdivision regulation document.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza Conde, Secretary