

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
December 27, 2010**

MINUTES

Members present: Dave Liberatore, Kent Finemore, Keith Murray and Phil Cain. Also present: Peer Kraft-Lund, LRPC.

Minutes: Dave Liberatore moved, seconded by Keith Murray to accept the minutes of November 22, 2010 as read. Motion passed.

Highland Mountain Bike Park, Inc.: Application for a Special Exception to allow campsites and a bunkhouse with a 24 hour comfort station on 186 acres at 75 Ski Hill Drive (Tax Map R17 Lot 21-2) in the Conservation zone. Dave Liberatore moved, seconded by Keith Murray to accept the application as complete. Motion passed.

Mark Hayes, representing Highland Mountain Bike Park, presented maps and plans indicating the location of the proposed campsites, bunkhouses and comfort station. Each bunk house, to be located on the edge of the parking lot, will house twenty and include a bathroom and shower facility. The separate comfort station is required for the campsites. Mr. Hayes plans for an eventual 45 campsites, 3 bunk houses and 5 mini cabins, however the application appeared to be for phase 1 which is for 5 campsites and 1 bunk house. Peer Kraft Lund cautioned the Board to consider the first phase only at this time as he has not reviewed the expanded plans and its impact on the Conservation zone. Discussion followed whether both phases need to be considered at this time and whether granting a Special Exception would be for a specific number of units or not. Keith Murray questioned whether the area can handle the impact of the total sites planned. Mr. Hayes replied that he would have to expand the septic system, the water supply is more than adequate and the traffic would actually be reduced as bikers would stay on site rather than go down town for lodging and return in the morning. He indicated that he has no interest in running a campground other than as an addition to the biking operation. Keith Murray pointed out that once the campground is established a new owner could operate as just a campground without the biking. Peer Kraft-Lund agreed with Keith stating that this is actually a new use of the property rather than simply an expansion of the bike park. Dave Liberatore asked if a condition could be added that tied it to the bike park so that it is discontinued if the campground is discontinued. This prompted Kent Finemore to comment that the Board should seek counsel advice for conditions of approval to avoid various problems associated with a campground.

Public Hearing opened: Roger Stock, abutter, raised concern about the noise levels as there is a fair amount already. He envisioned fire works, noisy parties, etc. and asked if there would be any control of these issues. Public hearing closed.

Mark Hayes explained that the bunk house is intended for kids who attend a week long biking camp. Currently they stay at a hotel which is not ideal. Kent Finemore has spoken with Police Chief Adams who indicated that there have not been any specific problems with speeding and did not have concerns about the application. Mark Hayes added that his intention is to keep the camping situation under control and tidy. Kent Finemore read a letter from the Conservation Commission with questions relative to the camp sites. Most of the questions have been answered. Vehicles will be allowed at the campsite, camping is for tents only, there will be no water at the sites, fire permits would be granted for each site and the comfort station is 30 seconds away by bike.

Responding to Mark Hayes' concern about timing and wanting to get started on building, Peer Kraft-Lund suggested limiting the approval to just Phase 1 at this time. That raised questions about whether the issue could be revisited after an approval has been granted. Members agreed that a site walk would be helpful and it should be scheduled early enough to be able to seek and receive counsel before the January regular meeting.

Dave Liberatore moved, seconded by Phil Cain to continue this application to January 24, 2011 and schedule a site walk on January 5, 2011 at 3:00 at Highland Mountain Bike Park. Motion passed. The ZBA will invite the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, Chief Adams and Chief Ober to the site walk. Motion passed.

Initial questions for counsel:

- Is the use appropriate? Are the bunk houses "lodging" or "wooden tents" with plumbing?
- How can noise and/or a curfew be controlled?
- Can hours be limited?
- Can this application be approved for Phase 1 and then consider Phase 2 at a later date or would the Phase 1 approval limit expansion?
- Can approval be tied into the bike park business only? If so, would it then be an expansion of the business rather than an exception for a campground?

Keith Murray requested input from the Fire and Police Chiefs relative to any impact the camp sites would have on services. Further questions for counsel will be developed at the site walk.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza Conde, Secretary

Minutes approved 01-24-2011