

Town of Princeton, Mass. -- Town Hall Annex

PLANNING BOARD Meeting Minutes--- October 18, 2018, 7:30 PM

Present were:, Chairman John Mirick, Ann Neuburg, Ian Catlow, Tom Sullivan, & Rud Mason

7:30 PM Chairman opened meeting.

Lauren & Steve Stimson were in and have a building permit and plans to move their landscape design operation from 2 Mountain Rd. at Gregory Road into a new building at their 18-acre farmstead at 17 Gates Road. They gave an on-screen presentation which included history and current agricultural activities at Gates Road as well as the Thompson Road (10th generation) family farm. It has evolved from a dairy farm to hayfields and a tree nursery on 100 acres. The Gates Road site includes the town hayfields and sheep pastures. They explained future plans such as grass-fed beef cattle.

The operation at 2 Mountain Road included a retail store selling a number of craft items besides farm products. They noted that this store would not be moved/duplicated onto the Gates Road operation, where the only retail items would be agriculture-related. They are looking at a niche market of custom trees, perennials and farm products.

They showed board members a plan for a 3,280 sq.ft. L-shaped building to house a horticulture lab, kitchen & bath, and office/studio for the landscape design operations. They described their “newer version of agriculture” as a design-to-grow function of the industry. The building inspector has approved their plans as fitting into an agricultural use—by right—from a zoning perspective. This approval includes the landscape design office/studio as it is an integral part of the horticulture lab and nursery. They also host classes and workshops for clients and community groups.

Board members noted that the design office may be doing work for clients that has no agricultural connection, but fits the zoning description for uses allowed under Home Occupation Sect. XVIII, 3. (A) .which requires a special permit from the Pl. Bd. It was suggested that the Stimsons might consider getting a special permit as a form of insurance, to mitigate any possible risk from being challenged about non-agricultural uses in the R-A zone. They said they would consider it.

8:00 PM John distributed a draft of some proposed additions to site plan review under Zoning Sect. XII to require site plan review for any marijuana facility and to incorporate maximum building/structure size for agricultural (or any) use. He also distributed the Board/Committee Code of Conduct that the Selectboard has adopted. The board discussed possibly requiring site plan review for site work that involves clear cutting, as there is little jurisdiction over tree cutting and some clearing projects have had major negative impacts on abutters.

8:45 PM The board voted all in favor to approve minutes from Oct. 4

8:50 PM Board adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted: Marie Auger, Admin. Assistant

Upcoming meetings: Nov. 1 & 15, 2018

Referenced Documents: Proposal/plans from the Stimsons on developments at 71 Gates Road; Board/Committee Code of Conduct

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