

**APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
August 21st, 2023**

Chairman Tim Doherty called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Secretary Danielle Masse-Quinn called roll:

PRESENT ROLL CALL: Tim Doherty – present
James Bergeron – present
Roger Montbleau - present
Danielle Masse-Quinn – present
Joe Passamonte – present
Bruce Bilapka – present
Selectmen’s Representative Charlene Takesian – present
Alternate Paddy Culbert – present
Alternate Hal Lynde – present
Alternate John Spottiswood - present
Alternate Scott Sawtelle - present
Planning Director/Zoning Administrator Jennifer Beauregard – present
Recording Secretary Heidi Zagorski - present

NOT PARTICIPATING: Selectmen’s Alternate Representative Jaie Bergeron
Alternate Samuel Thomas

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Charlene Takesian requested the following corrections to the August 7th, 2023 Meeting Minutes: Change the word “Board” to “Department” on Line 366 and on Line 367.

MOTION: (Passamonte/Bilapka) To approve the amended August 7th, 2023 meeting minutes.

VOTE: (7-0-0) The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

PL2023-00023

Map 41 Lot 6-122

ON WHEELS, INC., MAXIM SOCHIRCA (Applicant), ZJVB Properties, LLC (Owner) - 29A, B, C Bridge Street – Seeking Minor Site Plan review of an existing 3-unit commercial building to establish the allowable parking area and, quantity and location of used cars for sale. This property has previously been utilized as a used car business with no definitive parameters for what is allowed. The purpose of this review is to clarify the limits of how the property is to be used.

Chairman Tim Doherty stated that the Board had asked the applicant to prepare a parking layout of how they would

arrange their vehicles on site.

Mr. Maxim Sochirca introduced himself.

Mr. Doherty confirmed with Mr. Sochirca that there is a fire lane along the building with enough room to drive through. Mr. Sochirca said the scale on the site plan is 1:20.

Ms. Takesian shared with the Board and the applicant that the Town passed a commercial new construction tax exemption. She clarified that Mr. Sochirca is only the renter, however, said that if the owner of the property chose to make any improvements, he would only be taxed 50% on the improvements of the property. She added it is an encouragement for him to improve the property and would be a benefit to the applicant as well to have a better-looking location. Ms. Takesian asked if the applicant could encourage the owner to take advantage of this. Mr. Sochirca said that he could share this information with the owner.

Mr. Jim Bergeron stated a correction that the plan is not scaled to 1:20. He said it is a reduced sheet and the 1:20 scaling would not work on this sheet. Ms. Jennifer Beauregard added it was scaled 1:20 on the larger scale.

Mr. Paddy Culbert asked the applicant about the landscaping. Mr. Sochirca stated that they took care of the grass and bushes along the property.

Mr. Bergeron said he spoke with the Planning Director and the Fire Chief and noted that the building does have a fire lane. He added to have a fire lane is an important aspect of a site plan.

Ms. Danielle Masse-Quinn asked about the handicapped parking. Mr. Sochirca stated the handicapped parking is marked on the plan. Mr. Culbert asked the applicant how many handicapped parking spots there were. Mr. Sochirca stated there are two parking spots in front adding that he thought by regulation he should have at least one. Mr. Doherty added that there are only eight customer parking spots altogether.

Ms. Takesian asked how they can have the property owner be responsible for cleaning up the property. Mr. Bergeron wondered if the owner was aware of the tax incentive. Ms. Takesian expressed her thoughts on having the owners be responsible for coming before the Board instead of the renters for site plan reviews. Mr. Bergeron stated he does not believe the Board has the ability to do so on a change of use plan.

The Board discussed the handicapped parking spots available on the plan. Ms. Takesian stated that there is only one handicapped parking spot marked on the site plan. Mr. Bergeron said he is required to have one and he has one. Ms. Takesian suggested making a second handicapped spot available next to the one noted on the site plan. Mr. Bergeron said space #26 could also be a handicapped spot. Mr. Doherty stated parking spot #3 could also be a handicapped spot. Mr. Bergeron said you need to have signage for handicapped parking so it can be a legal handicapped spot and have municipal enforcement. Ms. Beauregard added that when Mr. Sochirca gets his occupancy permit, the building inspector will be certain that the parking meets the ADA requirements.

MOTION: (Passamonte/Bilapka) To approve the revised plan as presented.

VOTE: (7-0-0) The motion carried.

BOARD MEMBERS/PLANNING DIRECTOR UPDATES

Mr. Doherty stated that the Board received a handout for a Local Regulation of Agriculture Toolkit. Ms. Masse-Quinn said initially at the last Master Plan Subcommittee meeting, they went over local land use and agricultural items. She said Mr. John Spottiswood brought the Local Regulation of Agriculture Toolkit to the Members' attention.

Mr. John Spottiswood said the conversation was about supporting or encouraging different things with agricultural land. He said the Toolkit was put out by the State about 20 years ago and has probably improved along the way. He said it deals with suggestions for regulations on how you can help out people with farms and protect the farmland.

Mr. Doherty asked Mr. Spottiswood if he had happened to notice anything the Board should be doing on a Planning Board level with changes to zoning or regulations. Mr. Bergeron said he knows that the Masterplan had talked about adopting an overlay Agricultural District. Mr. Bergeron said that they would have to officially adopt that and he thought that the Agricultural Commission Members that are Planning Board Members would work on a draft ordinance that would give an overlay district to protect anyone who is farming or might want to farm.

Ms. Masse-Quinn said on page 4 of the Toolkit it states: “Update your Master Plan to express the value agriculture contributes to your town’s quality of life through open space, wildlife habitat, water quality protection, natural resource preservation, and preservation of rural character.” She added this is how they started to discuss the item.

Mr. Doherty said because it is mentioned in the Master Plan it is a working tool for other Commissions and Boards to implement some sort of regulations of enhancements, controls, and enforcements to have the abilities of Right-To-Farm. Ms. Masse-Quinn said Pelham is a Right-To-Farm town. Mr. Bergeron asked if that would stay as such. Ms. Masse-Quinn said the Right-To-Farm is a State statute and within the first year of the Agricultural Commission being put together they did adopt that to make sure the Town of Pelham is a Right-To-Farm town. Mr. Spottiswood said the State of New Hampshire is a Right-To-Farm State and you can enhance it more at a local level. He explained if the farm was here first, it gives it protection when people come in and buy the land around it and try to squeeze the farm out. Mr. Spottiswood said it gives the farmer more protection. He said the Toolkit gives suggestions for putting a larger buffer around the farm to protect it. Mr. Spottiswood gave an example of agritourism. He explained if the farmer would want to use their barn to host a wedding, they are running into local regulations not allowing this in a residential area. He expressed there are a lot of ideas to allow the farmers to branch out a little.

Ms. Takesian added that farms do not always include animals, some include just growing crops. Ms. Takesian said we should be encouraging open space, farms, and agriculture to keep the rural character in the Town of Pelham.

Mr. Hal Lynde said if we look back in time, we will find that most of the land was farmland, and it has evolved into a land that people want to live in.

Ms. Masse-Quinn stated that Ms. Takesian is Selectmen’s Representative for the Agricultural Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Montbleau/Passamonte) To adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:28 PM.

VOTE: (7-0-0) The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi Zagorski, Recording Secretary