

Ryegate Planning and Zoning
January 29, 2018
Special Meeting - Unapproved Minutes

In attendance: Members – Alice Allen, Kate Davie, Mary Dole, Steve Genereaux, Reggie Hazel, Fremon Nelson, and Nancy Perkins.

Also: Bill Elder, Richard Hodgedon, Alison Low, and Ron Morgan.

Call to order – Meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chairman Nelson.

Minutes of the 12/18/17 meeting – The minutes were approved as read after correcting “third Saturday” to “third Monday” in the section about scheduling the next meeting.

Ron Morgan / Paper mill project – Mr. Morgan discussed the current plans for converting parts of the former paper mill in East Ryegate to a rye whiskey aging, bottling, and distribution plant. He made the following points:

- Upkeep of the plant is costing \$65,000 per year.
- It would cost “a million and three” to upgrade the sprinkler system.
- He plans to begin with the purchase of 5000 gallons of whiskey from Alberta.
- The Evergreen board has visited the Barr Hill and Whistle Pig plants, and were surprised at how small the footprint of the operations were.
- The whiskey will be mixed in the former lab, and barrels will be stored in a part of the building which already has storage built for barrels.
- In a later stage, five stainless steel tanks for distilling will be installed.
- The whiskey will be aged in previously used barrels.
- The Act 250 office is okay with the project.
- The ANR has placed a limit on the volatile organic compounds (VOC) which a distillery can emit.
- Mr. Morgan feels that this limit is arbitrary and intends to sue the state to have it altered or eliminated.
- Mr. Morgan asserted that, aside from the VOC issue, the production process doesn’t “need any permits from the state”.
- The plant will be producing less than 300 gallon of effluent a day.
- The eventual installment of the still and mash tanks will be where the boilers are now located.
- There is no asbestos on site.
- In later stages the lighting and windows will be replaced, and a restaurant over the river is planned.
- The project is due to start in late March or early April, after funding is secured from the sale of a power plant in Maine.
- The state limits production to 1449 barrels of fifty-three gallons per year a total of 76,797 gallons.
- Mr. Morgan said that the environmental review of the project has been completed.
- Mr. Morgan was requesting review of his applications because the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms wants to be certain that the town government approves of the plan before it is initialized.

Bill E. noted that the plant is not accurately represented on the new zoning map, although that has no bearing on the current application. Reggie H. noted that the taxes may be altered when the business develops. Mr. Morgan said that he will be happy to pay taxes when the business is up and running.

Alison Low – Chairman Nelson suggested that Alison L. be moved up in the agenda in order to permit her to leave earlier. She distributed for review copies of her work on several sections of the town plan. She also suggested that the plan committee schedule a couple of more meetings prior to town meeting in order to distribute it there. The next meeting of the plan committee, and any other interested parties, will be held at Reggie H.'s house at 7:00 p.m. on February 7th.

The consensus of the board was that the pursuit of Village Center Designation be included in the town plan.

Solar array / Nelson property – The state Public Utility Commission has decided that the solar array planned for Bruce Nelson's property will not be built due to lack of appropriate screening and landscaping.

Solar array / Leete property – The Green Lantern company is interested in building a solar array on a former gravel and sand pit on the Leete property on the north side of Route 302, across from the junction with Scotch Hollow Rd. As presently planned, it would fall within the requisite fifty foot setback from the adjoining land which is a 198 acre Thomas property on the Ryegate town line. Since the communication in hand was addressed to the selectboard, no action was required at this time.

Zoning Administrator's report – Bill E. reported that, other than the whiskey bottling plant, there was only one other permit issue. He stated the need to determine whether or not the employee housing on the Bruce Nelson farm is considered an agricultural building which is therefore entitled to have its permit fee waived, in accordance with past town practice. Reggie H. moved, and Kate D. seconded, a motion to waive the permit fee for the addition on Bruce Nelson's employee housing unit. The motion was carried on a three to one vote, with Nancy P. abstaining.

Bill E. also indicated that he will review the status of the whiskey bottling plant applications with some of the state offices involved.

Adjournment – Chairman Nelson adjourned the meeting at 8:58.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Davie