

Planning Commission
Town of Ferrisburgh, Vt.

DRAFT – Minutes for meeting of February 19, 2020

Members present: Walter Reed (vice-chair), Arabella Holzapfel, Mike Quinn, Bessie Sessions, Kristen DeBellis. **Absent:** Bob Beach, Gail Blasius, Al Chamberlain, Anne Cohn.

Town official present: Bonnie Barnes, zoning administrator.

Visitors present: Peter and Liz Markowski, Zach Sullivan.

Walter Reed, vice-chair, opened the meeting at 7 p.m.

Approval of minutes: In the absence of a quorum to vote on the minutes for the January 15, 2020 meeting, the minutes for that meeting were not approved.

Application No. 20-008 by Ray and Donna Brands for a two-lot subdivision at 4060 Sand Road. The 10.12 acre lot is in the Rural Agricultural District (RA-5) and identified in Town of Ferrisburgh tax maps as parcel 08/01/12.1.

Walter Reed opened the discussion at 7:10 p.m. Zach Sullivan, authorized to represent the Brands at the hearing, was present to speak for the application. They are proposing a two-lot subdivision of a ten-acre lot, to create two five-acre lots. Lot 1 has an existing house. Lot 2 depicts a proposed building envelope and septic area. An initial survey and examination of the soils and vegetation indicates that there are suitable soils for a septic system on the proposed new lot, and the building envelope is located at a slightly higher elevation, in an area of small trees and shrubbery. The applicants intend to preserve mature trees. The applicants have applied for an access permit, approved by John Bull, the road foreman. The proposed two lots have adequate road frontage, width and depth.

Arabella Holzapfel made a motion to approve the two-lot subdivision, with the conditions that the applicants supply a copy of the access permit and obtain state septic approval for lot 2. Kristen DeBellis seconded. All voted in favor. **Motion approved.**

Other business: Peter and Liz Markowski asked for an informal discussion of potential uses for their 190-acre tract of land south of Monkton Road and east of U.S. Route 7. The parcel, identified on the tax maps as parcel 15/02/12, lies partly in the Highway Commercial (HC-2) and partly in the Rural Agricultural (RA-5) Districts. They see potential for a high-end carpentry business to locate in the barn with access to the Monkton Road southwest of the Vermont Railway line, and for several small houses to be clustered on small lots on a west-facing knoll. The potential carpentry business would entail the construction of another barn. The Markowskis would like to commit to setting aside at least 100 acres of woods, wetlands and meadows to remain conserved. This area would include some fairly old-growth woods and is on the atlantic flyway. There are existing trails through the area.

From Route 7 the land rises from seasonally wet meadows to woods. The houses would be small, typically two-bedroom. Preliminary work with Jeff Kelley of Kelley Environmental Geology suggests that drainage should be good, adequate for the residential design under consideration.

There was discussion about the need for smaller houses in Ferrisburgh, close to services. The lots would have town water. The minimum acreage necessary for each unit in a planned unit development would be dictated by water and septic capacity. The Markowskis are looking for ideas and designs that will have the least impact on the land and the most benefit to the local community. They asked what would be the ideal lot size.

Arabella Holzapfel mentioned that the town has received a grant to study appropriate density designs in rural towns such as ours. The Markowskis are interested in learning more about the grant opportunity. Kristen DeBellis stated that this proposal might be an interesting test case for the grant.

The Markowskis asked what they should be taking into consideration as they develop their plans. The commission stressed location and protection of wetlands and more details about the structures that might be constructed. Mapping of the environmental features such as wetlands and forest will assist in determining appropriate boundaries and sizes of lots. Walter Reed emphasized that maps would be important, and that the commission would likely want to conduct a site visit. Mike Quinn asked whether the project might be suitable for a community septic system.

Adjournment: Arabella Holzapfel made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. Kristen DeBellis seconded. All voted in favor. **Motion approved.**

— Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Barnes