

Town of Colebrook
Planning and Zoning Commission
January 23, 2019 Colebrook Town Hall
6:30 pm Special Meeting
Minutes

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COLEBROOK TOWN CLERK

Present: Regular members Chairman Ed Lord, Jim Bickford, Ed Allen, Chuck Buchanan, along with alternate Marty Neal who sat for Jim Millar. ZEO Michael Halloran sat at the table also.

Ed called the meeting to order at 6:32 and a quorum was established.

Old Business:

Deliberation continued from the January 14, 2019 closed Public Hearing for application, #18-020 from John Auclair, 204 Stillman Hill Rd. for a modification to a special exception for a farm brewery. The Commission discussed and reviewed the Colebrook definition of a Farm Brewery and the regulations of Farm Breweries/ Wineries/ Distilleries.

The Commission decided to review the letter sent to John Auclair dated November 20, 2018 and the returned email from John to the land use office dated November 21, 2018. The Commission is hoping to review all of the changes made from the original approval in 2017. And to be able to somehow put them into a narrative to be included in writing with any further decisions made. It was also determined that Michael will make John aware that anything he does could require a modification to his approved special exception. The list of additional changes were;

1. The original parking approved was for 13 spaces with an overflow to the north for buses. There are now 82 spaces with 6 unpaved spaces and bus parking to the east.
2. Changes to the lighting in the parking lot and driveway.
3. The mechanical room which John did come to the Commission for on 3/12/2018.
4. Expansion of approved usable area from 2,736 sq. ft to 5,386 sq. ft.
5. Signage has expanded with second sign on road.

The Commission also wanted it clear that the second barn constructed, (#2) (permit #17-014) which was attached to the original structure, was for equipment storage only for the farm, with no heat or plumbing.

The Commission then began deliberation of the six requests in the Norbrook application.

1. Request: "We'd like to allow food trucks to set up in our parking area to allow our customers another option to 'bring your own food'."

Discussion: The Commission noted that food trucks are not allowed in the R-2 zone and that a revision to the regulations would be required before the Commission could consider this request. However, there was also discussion that an underlying Town ordinance allowing food trucks would be necessary and that the revised regulations would then be able to address how this ordinance would be applied. The Commission also questioned whether they needed to be regulating "bring your own food"? Nothing in the definition of Farm Brewery discusses food.

2. Request: "We'd like the ability to make our own spirits ciders and wines, but also showcase other offerings from regional cideries and winerys. This would also be desirable if our own inventories should drop below a certain level."

Discussion: The Commission agreed that the regulations allow for the production of wines and spirits on the Farm Brewery.

However, there was no approval from FVHD regarding water and sewage for such an expansion at this time. The Commission concluded that the applicant would need to come before the Commission with completed plans including evidence of the FVHD approval before a decision could be made. The offering of spirits, wines and beers made by others for tasting and/or sale is not allowed under the current regulations. It was also noted that entities selling alcoholic products made by others does not fall under the States definition of a "Farm Brewery" and the current approval, only allows the sale of product produced on the farm.

3. Request: "We'd like to expand into the farm storage/hop processing area for more "Farm Store" merchandise display, and occasional large group seating. (Birthday parties, Christmas parties, meetings)."

Discussion: "Expansion into this area for the sale of products produced by the farm and products related to the Farm Brewery (hats, tees with logo) may be considered for approval. The enlarging the farm barn capacity for large group "events" raised concern such as noise, traffic and large crowds similar to the unapproved events held at Rock Hall. The Commission noted that

large group events are not currently allowed under the regulations. In addition, the hosting of large group weddings, parties, and meetings would not be considered an accessory use to a "Farm Brewery".

4. Request: "We'd like to section off part of this area [expanded kitchen space] for a stove/sink/refrigeration unit. This would be for buying unbaked pretzels and baking them on the premises."

Discussion: The addition of kitchen space for the preparation of light snacks, including pretzels, is consistent with the prior approval.

5. Request: "We'd like to add 2,200 sq ft. to the brewery end of the building. [T]his is needed to support wholesale (keg) accounts. No increase in traffic.

Discussion: The addition of barn #3 (2,200 sq ft.) per sheet four of the application may be approved for the brewery operation to support wholesale keg accounts, if approved by FVHD. The Commission would need the approval.

Approval of building #4, identified as a "later phase" on sheet four of the application has not been requested by the applicant and is therefore not to be approved at this time.

6. Request: "We'd like the ability to close later on certain nights (holidays, etc.) no more than 15 nights per year.

Discussion: A brewery function such as an Oktoberfest, to showcase the Farm's beer, is accessory to a farm brewery, and possible with some sort of notification to Land Use. However, such a function would have to be consistent with the regulations and their present restrictions on large group settings.

The Commission tabled discussion of expanded hours of operation to the next meeting.

Jim made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Ed. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.


Michael J. Halloran