

**Castleton Development Review Board
Tuesday, August 17, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.
Castleton Fire Department Meeting Room
Meeting Minutes**

RE: Senior Living Facility Permit

In Attendance: Development Review Board members included: Dan Forcier, Sean Steves, Don Wood and Pat Keller, chairman via Zoom

Others in Attendance Included:

Mary Lee Harris, Paul O’Leary, Bryan Curner, Laura Jakubowski, Katy Culpo, D. Adams, Joe Bruno, William J. Adams, Jr, Zak Hale (Bennington), Jon Hale (Bennington), John Rehlen, Patricia Berlickij, Dick Norris, Brian Hughes, Mike Holden, Jim Leamy, Richard Combs, Bell ? (illegible), Christina Ryan, Barbara Levine, Robert Levine, Liz Mckay, Cornell Dawson, Jill Potter, Kevin Fleming, Brad Dousevicz, Bryan Courier and 2 others.

via zoom/phone: Ed Davis, Tammy Davis, Marly Rosario, 1 unidentified caller

Dan Forcier called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

Design specifics were presented by Bryan courier as follows: there are three parts to the facility: independent living, assisted living and memory care.

- 24,000 sq ft
- 65 space parking lot
- behind 100’ of the hill to reduce visibility
- hills hide most of the building
- water/sewer will be brought to the facility at the owner’s cost.
- 3 phase power will be brought to the site at the owner’s cost.
- northern wing is 3 stories, others are 4 stories
- similar project in Berlin, VT
 - about 1 year in with march completion
- building elevation 565’ (4 stories)
 - land elevation 570’ (approx)
- Similar type of housing building going up in Berlin, VT
- company is locally owned and has been in existence for 30 years

Zak Hale stated that there were two housing studies conducted that indicated that there was the need and the viability. Brad Dousevicz described housing operations

- nursing care/memory 18%
- assisted living 30%
- independent living 50%

- anticipating 2-3 shifts per day
 - **50-70 staff**
 - **8-10 hour patient care**
 - **1-3 food service/maintenance**
 - **wages will start at \$15 and increase with job description**

Conditional use approval is needed for planning & development for this project. (height and density to allow 4th story)

Town Manager asked

- about the projection of how much dirt would be removed
- 3 phase power – would anything need to be redone / upgraded
 - **builder stated that he had reached out to GMP**
 - **power comes from the north**
 - **underground power will come up the driveway to the building**

Zoning Administrator asked about more detail of each level of care

- goal is to have majority of residents eat in the dining room
- nursing/memory care residents may use the dining room, but that will be determined on a daily basis according to needs
- facility van will allow safe access to local stores / restaurants / events with stops at the University
- comprehensive traffic study has not been done but will be done.
 - **owners stated that at the change of shifts there could be approximately 25 additional cars on Sand Hill Road**
- have delivery times been scheduled to avoid congestion
 - **no schedule has been set up to date**
 - **large trucks (trailers) will be limited**
 - **box truck twice per week**

Public Input:

General Concerns

- increased traffic:
- availability of enough water/sewer capacity/fire
 - Town Manager - spoke with Castleton Fire Department and water capacity was adequate and the Fire Chief was confident about fire response and safety
 - **owners were confident that they could resolve any water pressure issues in house for fire suppression** - sewer capacity is adequate and lines have been checked
 - owners stated that they will cover incurred cost
- threats to wildlife
- patient security

- staffing
 - state shortage for early education and elder care levels
- “ugly” design
- patient safety – no sidewalks on sand hill road (
 - walkers being hit by a tractor
- lighting – parking lot lights on all night
- increased noise to the neighbors
- location – open space could be put to better use – no suggestions
 - undeveloped land needs to be left pristine
- what would the tax impact be for taxpayers?
- walking paths to connect to Castleton university
- more consideration of neighbors in conversation
- discuss larger “idea” for more development
 - value of undeveloped land

Specific Concerns

- driveway measurement
 - **owners stated both entrance and exit driveways are 60’**
- warranty deed from the university back to the town stated specific use as “community development”
- clarification of lot size - does not impact
- property map error - does not impact
- future development of adjacent
 - leave undeveloped as not to endanger rabbits
- can residential and commercial designation co-exist
 - town manager - yes with certain guidelines
- set back distances - can the building be moved
 - **owners - building has some room for movement, but not enough to “hide” the building**
- will any changes to the original permit specs be brought to another public meeting – Town Manager - yes
- late/no notification of permit for limited amount of Sand Hill residents
 - Zoning Administrator - the Town went over and above the guidelines for notifications. the obligation is to notify only abutting property owners and, for the most part, most residents of sand hill road were given written notice.
 - owners will review public input for round 2 plans

Other Public Comment

Laura Jakubowski

- stated her support of the facility sighting the benefits of cooperation and collaboration among Castleton University, town residents and this facility
- stating the potential of more learning experiences for the university students
- **unable to hear her entire presentation**

Joe Bruno

- stated he wanted to put a positive spin due to the negativity expressed by many of the attendees
- being involved in the town for many years, he was aware that most residents who come to a public meeting were opposed to whatever was being discussed
- suggested that a “whole town approach” be taken when commercial development projects were being proposed
- residents need to stop the “it’s a great idea, but not in my neighborhood” mindset
- if Castleton continues to decline the opportunities to develop then it’s the town that loses because of these negative development attitudes
- businesses will go elsewhere to do their business
- Castleton will lose the opportunity to increase its tax base which impacts the property tax rate
- “Is Castleton open for business?”

letter from David Wolk (past Castleton University President)

- enthusiastically supports this project
- presented the historical perspective and its connection to Castleton University and the Town of Castleton
- letter is attached

deliberative session: 9:40 P.M. Out at 9:53 P.M.

action taken - schedule a site visit date and time not set

Adjourn 9:53 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Martha Clifford

Words in Bold were answers from questions.