

WEST WINDSOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
Draft Minutes
October 15, 2015

Members Present: Shannon Harrington, Barbara Truex, Genevieve Lemire, Jane Hoisington

Applicants Present: Deb Shearer, Laura Farrell, Jim Lyall

Others Present: Mark Lather, Tom Kenyon, Edson Pierce, Jack Deslandes, Pat Deslandes, Bill Ley, Preston Bristow

1. Call to Order – DRB chair Shannon Harrington called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.
2. Changes or Additions to Agenda – none
3. Public Comment – none
4. Approve Minutes – the minutes of September 24, 2015 were approved with the corrected spelling of Dick Beatty’s name.
5. Public Hearing:

The **public hearing on application #2604 by Mt. Ascutney Outdoors and MFW Associates, LLC** to install a 1000-foot long skiing rope tope off Ski Tow Road (parcel #3-3) was opened with the reading of the hearing notice. No DRB member disclosed any ex parte communications or conflicts of interest. No one requested status as an interested person. Deb Shearer, Laura Farrell, Jim Lyall and Tom Kenyon were sworn in.

Deb Shearer, Laura Farrell and Jim Lyall presented the application on behalf of Mt. Ascutney Outdoors (MAO), a newly formed nonprofit corporation with tax exempt status pending. Deb Shearer read the mission statement for MAO which is “To create, develop, manage, and protect the recreational, educational, and environmental assets of the West Windsor Town Forest and adjacent land on Mt. Ascutney, while maintaining affordable access for all, for their year-round enjoyment.”

MFW Associates, LLC is a co-applicant because they currently own the 460± parcel #3-3, which is soon to be conveyed to the Town of West Windsor. Mary Vitullo, Vice President of MFW Associates, LLC signed the application but no representative was present.

Although a 32-foot diameter ski warming shelter was included in the hearing notice, that structure has been dropped from the application. Instead a tent with sides which will be set up and taken down daily will be provided for medical and other uses in the parking lot.

The applicants have provided a state project review sheet and are in the process of applying for an Act 250 permit.

The 1000-foot rope tow will be built to ANSI (American National Standards Institute) standards for tows (passenger ropeways). Technical assistances is being provided by Jimmy Chochran of Cochran Ski Area in Richmond, VT, and Ross Stevens of Stevens Engineering For Passenger Ropeway Design in New London, NH. Mike Nellis of the Vermont Passenger Tramway Board has reviewed the design and will provide safety inspections.

In response to questions the following statements were made:

- The poles will be placed about 100 feet apart and set in holes approximately 6 feet deep and installed by a tractor with a post hole auger and not by excavator.
- Dig safe will be consulted.
- Power will be by a gas motor (or possibly propane) at the top of the tow and will have 2 safety gates and a stop button.
- At least one ski patroller will be on duty during operation.
- At least two staff members will be on site at all times during operation.
- Access to the tow from the parking lot will be across the ski bridge and a path for pedestrians will be maintained between the parking lot and the rope tow.
- The Town will delegate authority to operate the rope tow to MAO and MAO will provide insurance coverage.
- The current portable toilet in the kiosk will be available and serviced weekly.
- The tow will close before dark and MAO plans to provide no pedestrian lighting.
- The fire department has portable lighting and generators for emergencies.
- Outdoor propane heaters may be provided.
- A snowmobile with tracking device will be used for grooming.
- There will be no fee for use of the tow. A donation box will be established.

The vision of Mt. Ascutney Outdoors is to develop the rope tow in 2016 and a tubing lift and chair lift in 2017. The intent is not to expand beyond one chair lift to keep the operation financially sustainable.

The expected operating hours of the rope tow will be weekdays from 1-4 pm, weekends from 10 am to 4 pm, and holiday weekdays from 10 am to 4 pm.

The DRB reviewed the following sections of the West Windsor Zoning Regulations:

- Section 2.3-4
- Section 3.3
- Section 3.5
- Section 3.11
- Section 3.14
- Section 3.16
- Section 5.2(A-D)
- Section 5.3(C) 1-5
- Section 5.3(D) 1-3

Based upon the testimony received and to be documented in separate Findings of Fact and Conclusions, the DRB voted to approve the application as presented with the following conditions:

1. The applicants provide a letter from the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department to confirm that they have reviewed the project.
2. The applicants provide a letter from the West Windsor Volunteer FAST Squad to confirm that they have reviewed the project.

3. Any outdoor propane heaters will be approved by the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department.
4. The tow rope will be stored in off-season in a manner that will be safe and not be an attractive nuisance.
5. Night skiing will not be allowed except for special events for which a town public assembly permit is obtained.

The hearing was closed at 7:55 pm.

6. Other Business – the date of Thursday, November 12 at 6:30 pm was selected for a public hearing on a subdivision application by Frederick Hilles and Jane Osgood.
7. Adjourn – the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Preston Bristow, Zoning Administrator and DRB Clerk