

Jim Thorpe Planning Commission
June 6, 2017

Meeting called to order: 6:35 p.m.

Members present: Lou Hall, Joe Micko, Joanne Klitsch, John McGuire, Nancy Porambo

Visitors: Paul Fogel, Pocono Whitewater, Robert Hale, Regional Vice President of American Wine Society, Jake Arner, Jane and Todd Mason

Approval of Minutes: March and April, motions carried.

Discussion of Project:

Market Expansion – final plan approval. All conditions are met. Joanne motioned, John seconded for final approval of project. Vote passed.

Hearing of Visitors: Jake spoke with Greg of Zoning and Maureen. She forwarded the revised ordinance on June 1st. She asked for comments. By 20th comments could be reviewed. Jake was ready to have a person present who would help with his thoughts on the ordinance and how easy it is. Jake heard about this special meeting. It was important to get comments in. Maureen called him and he thought she would forward the comments.

The proposed ordinance, Jake provided copies of his comments. The ordinance should be fair and even. He is interested in making changes to the ordinance. He felt lodging should be in the Agritourist Farm. Paul can't find any rooms to book because the B&B won't commit to having rooms. Paul Fogel would like cabins to rent so those who are using his business would have a place to stay. Jake feels it would increase business likely. The goal is to benefit the Borough and take the traffic congestion off the downtown.

Paul Fogel felt there is a shortage of lodging in town. Eighty rooms in town is not enough. He felt they would benefit by being able to make packages. He felt cabins would be good, an outdoor feel, it would fit the Agritourism atmosphere rather than having to stay in town. He stated Jake could put cabins on his property on the 143 acres. It surrounds the organic farm. There will be a development plan. He would like to know if this can be done in the district.

He spoke with Maureen, she would talk with Greg. He feels it would complement Paul's rafting business. Also, Barb Green in Blue Mt. Ski Area, they need 70,000 rooms over the winter. JT downtown suffers every year by not having business downtown. Having the lodging up on Flagstaff, cars would be up there, they would visit downtown, spend time at the shops.

When people come to a winery, people like to have snacks, food pairing. Catered events are a normal part of the business. Blue Ridge Winery, Randy Dietrich on Leisure and Travel Magazine was awarded for his winery. Jake said he took a class from him and asked him to look over the ordinance. He felt it didn't have a food provision on it, but needed to.

This Ordinance was drafted in Stroud Township. Royce Fetterman is in an open space area, not an R1 with limited development. They wanted everything packaged there. Dietrich said it's unlikely anyone could produce enough grapes to produce their own wine. Jake would like to state we buy PA grapes and food and would buy from people in the area. The goal would be to reach more vineyard in the area. This would make them covered under the PA Winery Statute.

John indicated he asked Isaacs to produce something and that's what this Ordinance is. John asked Jake to get involved in it. Lou indicated this is the first he saw this and he feels we need to look over this and we would be better able to comment on it.

John asked if the State would regulate the standard for food? What happens with wine? Who regulates this? Jake indicated the State would regulate. LCB license, Jake has it for production in Nesquehoning. This will be an additional location, he can have up to 5, he wouldn't have to build another building. As business improves, he would like to produce the wine in Jim Thorpe. He also hoped to have the benefit of accommodations. It would bring more people to the winery.

Bob Hale was asked to come in to talk about the American Wine Society (AWS), 6,000 members, 160 Chapters. Most wineries have limited kitchens. It takes 3-5 years to get a wine, it takes 10 to get a preferred label. Nobody grows their own grapes, they ship them in. Jake, you do have to grow some grapes. Cherry Valley buys all their fruit and their juice. Bob stated PA Extension helps out the wineries in the state.

Lou asked about the roads. He made a call and said they have enough buyers to begin the project. He has several real estate contracts that are pending. This reassessment problem got solved. Buyers were watching that. He hopes to have that this year and he hopes he can have the money to begin the project.

When you change from R1 to R2 district, be aware, the numbers in section 2, 500-14 is R-1. He wants to be sure they are in the right zoning district. Lou, how many acres? Jake, he has 5 acres below that sit on top of Mt. and he has 5 acres of farmland. Rodale will get back to him in the organic farming issue. Lou, so about 10 acres for the winery. Jake, yes.

One cabin per acre is what Jake stated he can produce.

Zoning change on C3, public hearing July 12th (Wednesday – 6:30 p.m.). This will be at Memorial Hall.

Readdressing – July 1st rollout. All is approved by the Post Office. All the signs are written down that will be needed. It will be done by a printer that does the Borough signs.

Nuisance Ordinance – next meeting we will need copies so we can comment and move forward. Lou is sending a message out to Clem to make copies.

Downtown Parking Study – We have a grant. We are unaware of where we are with that. Lou will check with Maureen on that.

Railroad Communication Tower – Lou will check with Maureen as to whether we have a response. John said they have to meet our Zoning, etc..

Jim Thorpe Memorial Sign – Signs are falling down. Hall of Fame is handling it.

Short-term Rentals (VRBO's) – We will postpone till next month.

Motion to Adjourn: 8:35 p.m. Nancy motioned, Lou seconded, motion carried.
