

Town of Ghent Planning Board

Meeting of 12/2/20

Planning Board Chairman French, Member Barufaldi, Member Machiz, Member Groom, Member Stoner, Member Lazar, Member Ocean, Attorney Mitchell Khosrova and Code Enforcement Officer Keefe.

Called to order 6:00PM by Chairman French via Zoom.com.

Motion to approve the November 4th meeting minutes as amended was made by Mr. Barufaldi, seconded by Mr. Machiz, all in favor, motion carried.

New Business:

Coon Self Storage

– Application for Special Use Permit/Site Plan Review

1840 Route 9H

Tax Parcel ID# 73.2-37.1

Chairman French begins by stating the application is for a Special Use Permit due to the change in the Town Code in 2017 and is for the addition of more storage buildings. Conrad Coon begins with an explanation of the maps as Chairman French shares the maps on the screen. Conrad states one of the new buildings will be 45'x260' and the other will be climate controlled and will be 75'x150' and will be the same height and color as all the other buildings. The only lights to be added will be on the climate controlled building and are motion censored. Mr. Coon reached out to the fire department for input as well. Mr. Khosrova asks about the Google map that was submitted which doesn't have the most recent buildings approved, Lucas Coon states the Google maps are old and haven't been updated by google. Mr. Barufaldi asks about the approval previously to build a 280' building but instead built two at 95', Conrad states it would have been a lot more excavation, they have not been built yet but they were previously approved. Mr. Keefe states the maps are stamped April 3rd, 2019 and match what are up on the screen, Mr. Khosrova confirms these maps are what the applicant is looking for approval on and what the building permits have been issued for.

Chairman French asks about the landscaping, Conrad states that Mr. Keefe came by today and confirmed that the shrubs on the previously approved site plan were planted. Ms. Lazar states the previously-approved site plan had about 60 shrubs but the presented site plan only shows the trees. Mr. Khosrova states all 60 shrubs that are planted need to be on the site plan as existing. Mr. Machiz asks about the photos of the shrubs taken by Mr. Keefe this week and states they really don't function as effective screening, Conrad states they were planted about a year ago. Mr. Ocean states the plants were not planted effectively and were not cared for properly to flower again next year, Conrad confirms some need to be replanted next year. Mr. Barufaldi states the shrubs are not providing any screening at all and the Board has an opportunity to remedy this now, Conrad suggests adding some blue spruce to provide some color year round. Mr. Ocean suggests coming up with a more effective type of screening and Mr. Machiz adds that the applicants don't want screening and the Board does. Mr. Khosrova suggests the applicant look at 190-18I of the Town Code for buffering/screening. Chairman French states screening is to block a view from a different adjacent land use which is a different category of landscaping than a street view. Mr. Khosrova adds that using the buildings as advertisement is

understandable, however the Board is not concerned with that because that is what signage is for and that should be included in the Site Plan if that is to be added. Chairman French adds that Section 190-13E of the Town Code addresses landscaping standards and that the previously approved landscaping plan isn't doing what the Board had intended it to. Conrad states he will have a landscape plan drawn for the Site Plan Review. Mr. Barufaldi adds that he would like to see what the buildings will look like even if they will look the same as the existing buildings, Chairman French adds that any building over 100' should comply with Section 190-13G(E) of the Town Code. Mr. Machiz states the Board had passed on fenestration before since they believed there was going to be screening. Mr. Jurkowski adds they indicated an area for storm water drainage and asks if there was a study done for this site as well as any type of SWPPP requirement, Chairman French states they did have one done for this site as well as a buildout analysis. Conrad confirms the Board wants a drawing of the building, a landscaping plan, future development plan and a letter from the Fire Department.

John H. Fuss, Jr.
– Application for Minor Subdivision
1508 Route 9 (Arnolds Mills Road),
Tax Parcel ID# 76.-1-21

Fred Haley, the Land Surveyor introduces himself and Chairman French shares his screen of the maps. Mr. Haley states the applicant has 17.73 acres and the house is on one side and the owners would like to sell the house and keep the field; they created a conforming lot around the house and don't have any plans to build. Chairman French states this is under 30 acres, therefore not subject to the Conservation Subdivision Law and it is located in the RA2 zone, which is a minimum of 2 acre zoning. Mr. Haley explains the Lots width and the location of the house, well and septic system. Mr. Barufaldi asks if there are any structures on Lot 2, Mr. Haley states none.

Motion to schedule the Public Hearing for January 6th, 2021 was made by Mr. Barufaldi, seconded by Mr. Groom, all in favor, motion carried.

Old Business:

Nexamp Solar
–Application for a Special Use Permit/Area Variance
NYS Route 9H
Tax Parcel ID# 91.1-4.100

Chairman French states they had received the requested information from the applicant, except the inter-connect agreement with NYSEG. Chairman French asks if the Board has any further questions, Mr. Khosrova states the applicant should give a full presentation for the Public. Mr. Machiz states this is divided into two projects, but actually may be viewed as one permit, Mr. Stout states it is two different projects with different access drives, etc.. and there is always the possibility that years from now they could sell off one of the projects. Mr. Groom asks if the Permit could be revoked by the actions of a party, Chairman French states the Board needs to know if they are issuing one or two permits.

Motion open the public hearing was made by Mr. Barufaldi, seconded by Mr. Machiz, all in favor, motion carried.

Chairman French states the applicant will do a presentation and then the board will ask for public comment. Alex Curlin of Nexamp shares slides on the screen and explains the project. Chairman French asks if anyone from the public has any comments; Eddie Kelman and Joan Fedder state they are on Stockport Road and not only support but welcome this project given its environmental and energy efficiency benefits. Lyle Truid is on Old Post Road and is in support of the project as it's non-polluting and quiet. Gunnar Wordon states this will not have any significant environmental or visual impacts. Mal Mort asks about the height of the panels and if they move, Mr. Curlin states they will not move ("fixed tilt") due to the topography of the land. Sheldon Evans states they live on Leggett Road and this project seems like a winner for the town's taxes and the residents get better energy. Mr. Morrison adds that they had submitted documentation of approximately 50 residence in support of this project. Ms. Stoner asks if the applicant could share the number of residents that can benefit from this project, Mr. Curlin states about 1,000 average homes annually and they have to be within the NYSEG territory and anyone in Ghent is eligible to sign up. Mr. Ocean suggests using Evergreens (Norway Spruce) or White Pine instead of the proposed Blue Spruce and Balsam Fur for this region and agrees with the majority of the shrubs and suggests the Hamamelis virginiana (native witch hazel) as well as the Grey Dogwood, Mr. Khosrova asks if the applicant would like this information in writing.

Motion to close the Public Hearing was made by Mr. Barufaldi, seconded by Ms. Lazar, all in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Barufaldi asks if they could make Ghent residents a priority for the benefits of the project and how the applicant intends to do that, Mr. Curlin states they will be conducting outreach to Ghent consisting of mailers, social media and advertising and Nexamp is also willing to host online workshops. Mr. Barufaldi states he had hoped they would provide a 30-day priority period to Ghent residents first as a mailer campaign gets very small results, Mr. Curlin states that is not something they are capable of committing to but they will absolutely prioritize the residents of Ghent. Mr. Khosrova asks if there is a maximum number of subscribers, Mr. Curlin states it depends on the usage. Mr. Khosrova asks if there is a maximum number of subscribers (where if a Ghent resident wants to subscribe but is unable to), Mr. Curlin states yes because signing up is on a first-come first-serve. Mr. Barufaldi states the Board needs an answer to how Nexamp is going to prioritize the residents of Ghent, Chairman French asks what other methods is Nexamp going to do to prioritize Ghent residents first, Mr. Curlin suggests putting something on the Town website because Nexamp can't order exclusivity. Mr. Machiz asks why the applicant can't guarantee exclusivity to Ghent residents for a period of time, Mr. Curlin states Nexamp doesn't know how they are able to do that. Mr. Curlin explains how the bill credits work on the electricity bills. Mr. Barufaldi asks about the Decommissioning Plan; he noticed that the language requiring Town attorney approval was removed and stated that it should be put back in and the shrubs need to be guaranteed for the life of the project, not just one year. Mr. Khosrova states the Board is looking for the applicant to come up with a plan of some of the requests of the Board tonight. Mr. Khosrova states the Board does have the ability to change their SEQRA decision if they felt that the community benefit had been changed. Chairman French asks Mr. Khosrova how the community benefit can be part of the Site Plan/Special Use Permit as it was reviewed during SEQRA and the applicant stated they would prioritize Ghent residents and that has not changed, Mr. Khosrova states the basis of the determination was based on the fact they were told that the applicant was going to prioritize Ghent and it was a little bit of a retraction now. Ms. Stoner states in the presentation Nexamp states Ghent/Columbia County will save millions of dollars with this solar array and asks if Ghent residents are

going to have the opportunity to subscribe for electricity costs savings prior to the rest of NYSEG customers, Mr. Curlin states he cannot guarantee 100% of the subscriptions will be available to Ghent.

Mr. Khosrova asks with whom he can discuss the Decommissioning Plan, Mr. Curlin states he would be the one to work with to come up with something agreeable. Chairman French asks about how the Board will handle the permits, if it is one or two permits. Chairman French states the subdivision is not a normal subdivision since there is no septic or well to deal with and therefore the conservation subdivision can be waived.

Motion to waive the conservation subdivision was made by Mr. Groom, seconded by Mr. Barufaldi, all in favor, motion carried.

Chairman French asks about Site Plan issues, the applicant will take into account landscaping comments. Mr. Barufaldi asks about the poles, Mr. Curlin states they will bury their side of the wiring. Ms. Lazar asks about signage at the property, Mr. Curlin states there will be a sign noting for emergency information. Chairman French states that will need to be included on the Site Plan.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Reis

Secretary