

Town of Jefferson Board of Adjustment

Minutes

October 17, 2019

Acting Chairman Jason Call opened the meeting at 7: 35 p.m.

Members present: Chairman Kim Perry; Rodney Houghton, alternate; Tom Walker, Jason Call

Members absent: Biff Wyman, Cricket Ingerson

Others present: Charlene Wheeler, Board secretary; Chris Milligan, Barry Nelson, Wayne and Denise Bilquin, Michael Fraser

In the absence of a regular member, Rodney Houghton was designated a voting member for this meeting.

Hearing of Appeal – Fraser

Chairman Perry opened the public hearing for case # 191-2019. Michael Fraser of P.O. Box 1748 Sagamore Beach, MA is applying for a Special Exception in compliance with Article III, Section 2 of the Land Use Ordinance. The applicant proposes to operate a tourist accommodations and lodging business at 959 Presidential Highway, Map 8, Lot 44. Chairman Perry read the application. Application fees had been received but the total was incorrect. Another \$4.00 was due for a certified letter mailing. Notices were mailed and posted as required. Mr. Fraser introduced himself and gave a brief history of the property once known as the Iron Dog Inn. He said he wanted to contribute to the tourism industry in the town. He said the house is a unique blend of Victorian architecture he wants to highlight in his renovations. Different business have occupied the site over the years. A sign is now in front of the building advertising the name as Jefferson North. Mr. Fraser said if he can't operate the business as an inn he would do it as an Airbnb. He said he had approached the fire department to do an inspection of the premises. The fire department has made a report to the Select Board of their findings assuming an occupancy of more than 16 people which would define as a hotel under the fire code, it's irrelevant whether it is called a rental, lodging units, Airbnb, or a hotel. He listed a multitude of improvements he has made to improve the building safety saying he has probably spent over a quarter of a million dollars. Local contractors in the area have benefited. I don't want to make changes that interfere with the Victorian esthetic. Starting over at this time other than what I'm doing would be ludicrous. Jason Call asked how many room are available for rent and was told 8 or 9 among 3 floors. Some have baths, some don't. There is a private owner's residence also in the building downstairs. Upstairs there is a large kitchen available to guests. Oil, gas, and pellets are all used for fuel to produce heat and there some fireplaces in the building. Mr. Fraser was asked about his plans for the large barn on the property. It wouldn't be for large events, a night before the wedding party for example or a small group staying as a retreat or for training. Guests staying could use the space on an individual basis. What about parking? There is parking for nine cars in back, 3 to 4 more in front. Are there any plans for expanding the parking. Mr. Fraser said he was trying to acquire an adjoining piece of property Jason called as about a driveway permit which would be adequate for more than a residence. This would have to come from the state not the town as Route 2 is a state highway. Mr. Fraser said there should be no problem with the driveway.

Deliberations began. The proposed use would not diminish surrounding property values. The lot will be put to good use. It appears to be an attractive structure and there is a tree buffer from the westerly lot line and the road. The structures will be sufficiently downslope so as not to interfere with neighboring views.

Granting the variance will not harm the public interest. The town would receive an increase in tax revenue without an impact on services.

Granting the variance would do substantial justice because due to the steep slope and angle of the proposed driveway location it would prevent a vehicle from sliding into a corner of the house.

The use is not contrary to the spirit of the ordinance because the size of the lot and the location of the buildings would still maintain privacy and significant distance between them and their neighbors.

Rodney Houghton made the motion to grant the variance requested, seconded by Biff Wyman. The vote to accept the motion was unanimous. Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler thanked the Board and he and all other members of the public attending left the meeting.

Minutes

The minutes of the July 11, 2019 meeting were read. Biff Wyman made the motion the minutes be approved as read, seconded by Rodney Houghton. The vote to accept the motion was unanimous.

Other Business

The Board secretary said over the period of time she has been working for the Board of Adjustment she has been paid less than she is being paid for her work for the Planning Board, currently \$11.23 as compared to \$14.39 an hour. Both jobs have exactly the same job descriptions even though the Board of Adjustment meets much less frequently than the Planning Board, she is responsible for meeting minutes, record keeping, communications to the Board and to the public as well as assisting the public with questions and applications. Tom Walker made the motion to increase her salary working for the Board of Adjustment to be commensurate with the salary working for the Planning Board of \$14.39 an hour. The motion was seconded by Rodney Houghton. The vote to accept the motion was unanimous. A memo requesting the increase in salary will be sent to the Select Board.

The Select Board has sent a letter to a property owner who is operating an inn or tourist accommodations as Jefferson North, the Old Iron Dog and has put up a sign and is advertising the business telling him that he needs to apply for a special exception. The Board secretary was directed to contact the owner and supply application forms. The Board would also like to see how the business is being advertised on the internet.

The Planning Board has started work on the Master Plan update and approved a final proposal from Mapping and Planning Solutions. Work sessions should begin in September and continue until at least December. The Zoning Board of Adjustment members will be asked for their help along with other stakeholders in the town.

Biff Wyman made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Tom Walker. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Charlene Wheeler
Secretary to the Board