



Town of Barnard, Vermont

Chartered July 17, 1761

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DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MINUTES

DECEMBER 11, 2024

SITE VISIT

4:30PM ZP24-24, 452 Royalton Turnpike

Present: Ellen Miles, Edythe Wright, Doreen Hurley, Doug Blain.

Also Present: Kassie Hull (Clerk, Administrative Officer), Richard Lancaster, Abby Dery, Marc Desmet, Michael Beardsley, John Graham.

The physical characteristics of the site were reviewed and observed.

HEARING

5:00 PM TOWN HALL

Public Hearing: ZP24-24, 452 Royalton Turnpike, Twin Farms, LLC/John Graham, construction of a new spa building, utilities, landscaping, parking areas, and walking paths, as well as improve/modify existing entrance on Sugar Hill Road.

Opening Procedures

The DRB Chair was unavailable to attend. Vice Chair Ellen Miles assumed the duties of the Chair. Ellen opened the hearing at 5:02PM by reading the warning of the hearing. Ellen reviewed the order of events and asked DRB members to disclose any conflicts of interest. Edythe Wright stated that she received a "Neighbor" (abutter) letter and explained that she does not have an interest in the plans and that the parcel of the proposed construction is not abutting her land, so believes that she is able to act in a fair and objective manner and in the public interest. Edythe submitted a letter stating the same to be part of these minutes. Ellen asked the DRB members to disclose any ex parte communications on the topic. There were none. Ellen acknowledged the interested party present: Richard Lancaster. Ellen swore in the interested party, applicant, and applicant's representatives.

Testimony

APPLICANT

John Graham spoke on behalf of the owners, management group, and team at Twin Farms. He said the current spa is no longer meeting guest expectations and cannot keep up with the demand; the construction of a new spa and pool will also help to answer the question, "*what do you do at Twin Farms when the weather is not cooperating?*" John expects the new facilities will be most popular in the shoulder seasons and on rainy days. He does not believe the facilities will have an impact on driving demand in the summer. For the design, they want to create a facility that looks like it was "always there" and belonged there, as the Twin Farms model is to create a resort experience that does not look and feel like a resort experience. The design will preserve the landscape and reinforce their nontraditional model.

Marc Desmet believes the design accomplishes a narrative that is natural to the landscape of Vermont, specific to Barnard and to Twin Farms. The concept includes stonework to softly allude to the potential of a rock foundation of a structure that was previously in existence; the structure is a nod to an old farmhouse that was added on, as is traditional to New England. The footprint is approximately 6,000 square feet and the building will be two levels that are nestled into the hillside, for a total of 9,000 square feet. There will be six treatment rooms for spa services and a pool.

Mark said the anticipated start date will be March 2025 for the 18-month project and he does not think there will need to be blasting, but there does need to be a test drill to confirm. Although, based on previous tests in the area, they do not believe there is ledge stone.

Abby Dery stated that there is an existing onsite wastewater system that serves all of Twin Farms and will also serve the proposed spa. There will be a new gravel wetland in accordance with state requirements. She also said the existing road that connects the lodge/lower carriage house area to upper maintenance will be excavated and repositioned, new utilities will go in, and it will be repaved. The goal is to not have the road be so short and steep.

Ellen mentioned that for the previous treehouse project there was a lot of traffic and noise during the excavation period. Is this to be expected again?

John said that there is a lot less excavation required for this project, and all material is staying on site. Mark said that part of the strategy will be to cut away from one part of the hill and put it in the other part. John said that there were a lot of "lessons learned" from the treehouse project and that he remains aware of their impact on the immediate Barnard community and is always trying to make sure it's positive.

INTERESTED PARTY _____

Richard Lancaster asked if the reflection from the windows on the south side were considered, especially in the late winter when the sun is reflecting.

The Applicant stated that no such study was conducted.

Closing Procedures

Doug Blain moved to close the proceedings and enter a deliberative session on ZP24-24. Doreen Hurley offered a second to the motion. The DRB voted unanimously to go into deliberative session at 5:42PM. Ellen stated that this was the final public hearing on the matter.