



PLANNING AND
ZONING COMMISSION

LYME TOWN HALL
480 HAMBURG ROAD
LYME, CT 06371

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting

The Lyme Planning and Zoning Commission held a regular meeting on November 12, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. at the Lyme Town Hall, 480 Hamburg Road, Lyme, CT 06371.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ross Byrne, Chairman, Dave Tiffany, Bill Koch, Ann Rich, Hunter Ward, Phyllis Ross, Bernie Gigliotti ZEO, and Jennifer Thomas Secretary

Also Present: Steven Mattson, First Selectman

Regular Meeting

1859 Associates LLC (Reynolds Subaru), 287 Hamburg Rd. Map 27 Lot 46; discuss rectification of improper cutting of shrubbery designed to screen the off-site parking for the dealership.

Present: Hayden Reynolds and Tom Reynolds

H. Reynolds stated that he felt the letter he received was not accurate when referencing "screening." He stated the approved layout was to "soften" not "screen" the parking lot. Gigliotti stated that the premise of the plantings was to comply with the regulations which say that the adjacent properties have to be screened from the property line. The original plan showed a lot of plantings along the road, and then the commission agreed to reduce these plantings at a later meeting, but this did not include the plantings on the north and south ends. In addition to that, a stipulation of the approval is to "maintain the landscape buffer for the period of use of the access drive for commercial purposes."

T. Reynolds stated that additional trees have been added since the original planting, some of which have made it and others not. The plants and trees that were cut were either dying or causing erosion.

T. Reynolds then showed an image of the area to the commission on his phone.

Mowing around the beds was an issue. Topsoil was brought in to help establish the grass. One of the dead trees was removed by the State. Some dying evergreens were removed. He believes the area looks better than it did before the work was done.

Byrne stated that there is no softening of the landscape anymore now that the juniper has been removed.

Tiffany stated that he thought the site was to be more of an off-site storage rather than a display area.

Gigliotti said that he believes the original application did reference the area as a "display area."

T. Reynolds asked whether there have been any complaints from the public.

Gigliotti said that there have not been any complaints.

P. Ross stated that the commission was able to grant past applications by Reynolds' in part because of thorough presentation and careful planning of landscaping. She would like to come together and agree on where to go from here and come up with a solution that works for everyone.

H. Reynolds stated that the work that was done did not change the screening of the cars at all. The juniper was under two feet and did not screen anything.

Tiffany suggested the commission review the prior application and revised application.

Gigliotti showed the commission the original plan that was presented. Following that plan, Reynolds' came in to ask for relief to not put in all of the plantings on the plan. There was a back and forth discussion of what the commission would accept based on the original plan, but no finalized modified plan was ever submitted on paper.

Gigliotti stated that the commission needs to decide whether the removal of the material was unwarranted and in any way a violation of the original permit.

Byrne asked what was supposed to cover the concrete blocks at the rear of the parking lot and T. Reynolds stated that ivy was planted to grow onto the back wall.

P. Ross asked if the ZEO or chair knows specifically what must be done to make it acceptable and suggested a site visit might help the commission determine if anything needs to be done. Byrne stated that he looked through the file and went through the minutes and could not determine what the final planting agreement entailed.

P. Ross asked whether a landscaper had been consulted and T. Reynolds stated that they have been discussing the issues with Novak Brothers Landscaping.

Byrne asked Gigliotti for his opinion on the matter.

Gigliotti stated that he thought the junipers are a waste of time and money. Unless the commission goes back to the original plan, the same problems with the erosion and maintenance will occur. The north and south end plantings are a separate issue to look at. There have been no complaints by the public.

T. Reynolds stated that they would be willing to replant some things on the north end.

Gigliotti cautioned that the commission should be mindful not to require any plantings that would impede the sightlines.

Byrne stated that in light of the comments, the commission can continue for a month, allowing members to visit the site if they wish and look back at the minutes and materials from the prior application, and will let Reynolds' know if they would like to see them again.

Mattson, having been on the commission during the original application, stated that he agreed with Tiffany that there was a discussion at that time of display versus storage and if it was purely storage, the approval could be granted, but not if it was considered a display. He stated the north end was level with a planting bed and a tree was added to that section during the modification. He also mentioned that a push mower could be used in lieu of a riding mower to alleviate some of the maintenance issues.

Rich stated that the commission may want to ask for an updated planting plan since there was never a modified plan submitted in writing. This would alleviate any future confusion as to what the commission required.

Koch asked for clarification of what was done exactly that was a violation of the modified agreement.

Gigliotti stated that the removal of the juniper and the removal of the material on the north end were both violations of the agreement.

Old Business

Update on Lini Holdings LLC, The Tiny Tiffany Farmhouse, 134 Sterling City Road Map 26 Lot 53, refusing to halt operation of an inn offering accessory services without permits.

Byrne updated the commission on the Lini Holdings LLC rental operation. The ZEO sent a cease and desist letter, a call was made to the owner, and a follow up letter was sent warning the owner of potential legal action if they did not take down the online advertising sites. Byrne spoke with the owner on Tuesday November 14, 2019 and he agreed to take the sites down. Byrne has verified that the sites are no longer active online.

New Business

Discussion of potential planning opportunities by commission.

Koch stated that he would like to discuss the planning aspect of the planning and zoning commission in terms of what the commission might do to keep the town from becoming stagnant. There are several smaller projects the Town might want to take on in order to raise the aesthetic of the town and make the Town of Lyme feel unique and special. Projects mentioned included bridges, the concrete wall upon entering Hamburg, the entrance to the town landfill, the future of the grange, and guardrails.

Mattson agreed with the general intent of what Koch mentioned. The grange is a concern and he is keeping informed on what is happening with that property. There is a plan in place to address the bridges in town. The cement wall is state owned and so the most the town can do is to put pressure on the state to update it. Mattson asked that Koch and the commission come up with specific ideas and present them to the Board of Selectmen.

Byrne thanked Koch for bringing this to the commission and agreed to discuss this again at a future meeting.

Approval of Outstanding Minutes

A motion was entertained by Byrne to approve the minutes from the October 2019 meeting. Tiffany made the motion, seconded by Rich, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Thomas, Secretary