

Town of Homer Planning Board

Minutes for Wednesday, October 26, 2022 at 7:00pm

Board Members (absent *)

Michael McMahon, Chairman

Jon Miller

Erin Mahunik *

Bruce Crandall

Zach Young

Chad Butts

Michael May

Others Present

Lindsay Andersen, Recording Secretary

Kevin McMahon, CEO

Pat Snyder, Attorney

Public Attendance: Gaelen Head, Sarah Head, Robert Foxen, Diana McClure, Emily Barrett, Gary Bush (PE), Theresa Dafoe

Public Hearing

Chairman McMahon opened the public hearing for **an application by SPEC Consulting on behalf of Diane McClure for a conditional use permit and site plan approval to construct a new house, storage barn, horse barn and stables at 4478 Cosmos Hill Road, tax map numbers 66.00-07-04.111 and 04.120.**

The applicant stated there will only be two horses at the proposed location.

Her representative stated he would like to note that the same two horses already live in the area she is just planning to move them down the road.

Chairman McMahon asked the applicant what her plans are for the manure. He stated one horse produces more than 12 ton of manure per year. He stated in his experiences with other committees there are a lot of complaints and disturbed neighbors because of the manure piles and run off problems.

The applicant stated that she does not currently have a plan for the manure but if the permit and plan is approved, she will make a plan and notify the board. She also stated that she will be living near the barn and does not want to live near piles of manure.

I think she also stated at some point that she would not object to having a permit condition that no more than 2 horses will be allowed there.

Chairman McMahon opened the public hearing for **an application by New Hope View Farm, LLC, for site plan approval to construct a new barn on the south side of Little York Crossing, tax map no. 47.00-02-01.120.**

Sarah Head stated that their digester has been shut down since 2018 due to an interconnection problem with National Grid which eventually burned up the generator to the digester and National Grid had not solved the problem at the time the generator stopped working, therefore they did not want to continue investing in the operation. They plan to work with UGI which is a global company who is studying energy projects. The number of calves and cows currently housed at the Route 11 barn do not produce enough manure to meet the company's requirements. The proposed new barn will allow them to bring the calves that are currently housed outside in hutches inside and will also create the space to relocate their calves from the Route 90 barn which is in desperate need of being rebuilt. Instead of building a new barn at that location they will have all of the calves more centrally located at the main barn on Route 11.

Mary Dafoe stated she has lived in the area her entire life and believes the county needs a moratorium to limit the number of cows in Cortland County. She would like to know what the Town plans to do to decontaminate the aquifer. She stated she believes digesters have a hideous reputation and that the amount of manure being spread on the ground in Cortland County is ridiculous. She believes all of the farms need to get together and build a treatment plant for the manure.

Sarah Head stated that the proposed project will not be increasing the number of cows they have. They will only be relocating them from another location. She explained that the digester will be capturing gases which will reduce the runoff concerns and improve the environment. They take a lot of pride in protecting the aquifer and the manure from the farm is very valuable to them.

Sarah's brother, Gaelen Head explained the farm's current CAFO plan and how detailed the regulations are. He also explained what a loss it was to have the digester shut down in 2018 and explained how effective it was when it was operating.

Chairman McMahon explained that in 1997 EZ Acres became a study farm for Cornell University and at that time voluntarily installed 5 test wells at various locations including where the runoff drains towards the municipal wells in the Village of Homer. The samples are collected by a third party and the farm's participation is voluntary. The wells are tested every 3 months and he

throughout the years the nitrate levels have actually declined. He believes this is due to the CAFO plans.

Regular Meeting

Chairman McMahon made the motion to approve the meeting minutes from the August 24, 2022 meeting. Member Young seconded. With all members in favor saying “aye”, none opposed, and none abstained. The motion was carried unanimous 6,0,0.

Chairman McMahon opened discussion of **the application by SPEC Consulting on behalf of Diane McClure for a conditional use permit and site plan approval to construct a new house, storage barn, horse barn and stables at 4478 Cosmos Hill Road, tax map numbers 66.00-07-04.111 and 04.120.**

At that point, the recommendations from the County Planning Board were read. Attorney Snyder stated that there was not an official determination due to the meeting lacking a full quorum.

The county planning department’s recommendations were:

1. The applicant combine parcels 66.00-07-04.111 & 66.00-07-04.120
2. Compliance with SEQR requirements

Attorney Snyder stated this is considered a type 2 action under SEQR and therefore there is no short environmental assessment required.

CEO McMahon stated this property is located in a residential district therefore at this time only a conditional use permit is needed to have the horses at the proposed barn. He stated that the barn will meet the zoning requirement based on the layout of what is considered the front of the property.

Member Butts made a motion to approve the site plan and conditional use permit contingent upon the combining of the two parcels, the manure plan be submitted to the code enforcement officer for approval. This conditional permit will only permit two horses on this 6.93 acre parcel. Member May seconded the motion. With all members in favor saying “aye”, none opposed, and none abstained. The motion was carried unanimous 6,0,0.

The applicant stated she will come up with a plan for the manure removal which will be submitted to the code enforcement officer.

Chairman McMahon opened discussion of **an application by New Hope View Farm, LLC, for site plan approval to construct a new barn on the south side of Little York Crossing, tax map no. 47.00-02-01.120.**

Member Miller asked the applicants if they plan to have the piping inspected prior to re-starting the digester. The applicant stated they plan to have the roof taken off and the entire operation will be inspected but he did leave a small amount of manure in the system prior to shutting down the operation to protect the piping.

At that point, the recommendations from the County Planning Board were read. Attorney Snyder stated that there was not an official determination due to the meeting lacking a full quorum.

The recommendations of the county planning department were to approve the application for site plan review to construct the dry cow / young stock barn.

Chairman McMahon reviewed the short environmental assessment form with the board. Part 2 of the EAF was filled out with all questions being answered in the negative.

Member Miller made the motion to approve the site plan for New Hope View Farm to construct a new barn. Member Young seconded the motion. With all members in favor saying "aye", none opposed, and none abstained. The motion was carried unanimous 6,0,0.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

Lindsay M. Andersen, Recording Secretary