

TOWN OF BENNINGTON
PLANNING BOARD
Minutes of the –Meeting- July 13, 2020
Draft

Present David McKenzie (via zoom)
 Sam Cohen
 David Hardwick, Ex –Officio
 Luke Hardwick
 Alex Mason (via zoom)

Guests Michael Munhall, zoom administrator
 Joseph Cuddemi
 Jordan Cuddemi
 Christopher Stephenson
 Karen Stephenson

Planning Board Chairman McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Alternate member Alex Mason was made a voting member for the meeting.

The minutes of the June 1, 2020 meeting were reviewed and accepted with a minor change.

Joseph and Jordan Cuddemi approached the Board for a chat session about the use of outdoor seating at their restaurant, Alberto's.. Currently the restaurant has minimal seating in an area outside due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Cuddemis would like to know if they will be allowed to continue the outside seating as well as use the porch area for seating after the pandemic has lifted. Chairman McKenzie stated that Administrator LaPlante has brought it to the Town's attention that this could be an expansion of use therefore the business would need to comply with the Bennington Zoning Ordinance. At this time it is alright to have the outside seating which has been approved by the Fire Department and the State. Mr. Cuddemi would like to make this seating option permanent. Chairman McKenzie stated that the Board would revisit this when things return to normal. The Cuddemis would like to be pro-active about this. Alex Mason noted that he is a neighbor to the restaurant and it has had no impact on the neighborhood. The extra seating outside would be a total of 32 seats on both the lawn area and porch. Currently the restaurant has a capacity of seating 140 people though in its history the maximum has not been met. It was noted that as long as the allowed cap does not exceed 140

people there is no need to come to the Town to expand it. The Cuddemis will return for a final decision when operation can go back to 100%.

In other business, Sam Cohen noted a concern that David Hardwick sitting in as Ex-Officio puts the Planning Board in the position of having a father and son who is employed by him both on the Planning Board. To avoid this being seen as a conflict, it was suggested that either of the other Selectmen hold the position. The Chairman of the Board will send a formal note to the Select Board about this matter.

Christopher and Karen Stephenson approached the Board for a chat session about the possible sub-division of their property at 11 Birch Glen Drive, Map 13, Lot 4 and 4a. The Stephensons own a 4.25 acre lot with a road intersecting the center of it. They would like to divide the lot on one side of the road to be able to put two additional houses on. As they do not have adequate acreage, they would need to apply for a variance from the ZBA. It was suggested that they have a survey done.

As there was no other business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Debra Belcher
Planning Board Recording Secretary