

Royalton Planning Commission

APPROVED – Minutes

Monday, April 25, 2011

Members Attending: Barcelow, Beguin, Boles, Brandau, Levasseur

Guests Attending: Phil Gates (Select Board), Robert Tabor, Joan Tabor, Joan Goldstein (Select Board), Winston Sadoo (Nava Biodiesel Co.), Kevin Madden, Ted Kenyon, Christian Petrangelo (Note Taker)

Meeting came to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Winston Sadoo – Nava Biodiesel Co.

- Sadoo explained that he currently runs a biodiesel production facility under the name Nava Biodiesel Co. (“Nava”) in Brookfield. The 20 x 20 facility services the local farming community. Sadoo would like to expand his business by setting up a biodiesel production unit and office on Rt. 107 in Royalton.
- Levasseur asked if Sadoo meant the Sarnoff property off Rt. 107.
 - Sadoo responded yes, but starting at the woods line and not including the house.
- Sadoo elaborated that Nava has capacity to produce 800 gallons of biodiesel per day. But since Nava uses restaurant veggie waste, actual production is usually around 350-400 gallons per week.
- Levasseur inquired about the refining process.
 - Sadoo described a mini-processing unit utilizing methanol.
- Beguin asked about the current facility’s emissions rate.
 - Sadoo responded that there are no emissions or pollution. Also, since methanol is flammable, Nava uses explosion-proof material.
- Beguin inquired whether the proposed Royalton facility would be “under one roof.”
 - Sadoo said yes and gave an example of a simple shed.
- Beguin asked about potential parking and road access issues.
 - Levasseur responded that an approved access road, officially sanctioned about 6–7 years ago, already exists.
- Levasseur asked what happens after the biodiesel is prepared.
 - Sadoo said that generally we take it to people. We would like to have an on-site retail pump down the road. U.S. Gov’t is pushing use of biodiesel to cut back on foreign oil imports. Biodiesel is already becoming popular in the Midwest.

- Sadoo added that Nava is registered with the IRS and gets a \$1 credit per gallon of biodiesel produced. EPA visits Nava's current facilities and has approved them.
- Levasseur explained that Royalton's Town Plan mandates consideration of, e.g.: Is the project suited to the Town Plan? Is there access? Will it be located in the railroad/Waterman Road area, where industrial uses are preferred?
 - Sadoo mentioned that Nava actually attempted to purchase Mr. Wilkinson's property on Waterman Road, but Wilkinson ultimately retracted his offer.
- Levasseur emphasized that Sadoo's project must also pass Act 250 in Royalton.
 - Sadoo explained that he actually wants to move his business to Royalton for that very reason. Act 250 representatives contacted him recently to say that Nava Co. would tie up Sadoo's partner's entire 16-acre property under Act 250.
- Brandau asked whether Sadoo plans to expand Nava in the future.
 - Sadoo answered yes, but in the production sense as opposed to the physical plant sense. Larger tanks may be needed, but he has no plans to expand the building itself.
- Barcelow asked if the facility will give off a smell.
 - Sadoo said that he did not think so.
- Barcelow inquired about any potential waste byproducts.
 - Sadoo explained that glycerin is the only waste product. We recover methanol from the glycerin, and the glycerin can be sold to those who make soap, etc.
- Sadoo added that expected employment is 6–8 people. It is currently 3 people.
 - Brandau asked how that would contribute to traffic generation.
 - Sadoo said that Nava has one F-250 and one F-350—no huge sixteen-wheelers.
- Levasseur asked Sadoo whether he considers Nava a “small business” or an “industry”?
 - Sadoo responded a small business. Dep't of Energy has granted Nava money from its sustainable jobs fund.
- Sadoo added that his biodiesel is currently about \$1 cheaper than petroleum, which benefits the farming community.
- Levasseur asked about current technology conversion issues.
 - Sadoo said that older diesel engines may present some problems. New tractors, especially those made by companies like Fiat, are now equipped to operate on 100% biodiesel.
- Levasseur emphasized that many factors fall in Sadoo's favor: (1) small business, (2) lack of waste and pollution, and (3) existing access.
 - Gates added Nava sounds like “light manufacturing” as opposed to an industrial designation.
- Brandau, observing no foreseeable problems with Sadoo's proposal, recommended that Sadoo move forward with his plans.

2. Follow-Up on Dollar General

- Levasseur said that she spoke briefly with Peter Dohrn, chair of Bethel Planning Commission. Bethel's Town Plan, unlike Royalton's, does not contain a provision prioritizing the economic viability of village centers over sprawling development. Larry Wheeler (Dep't of Transportation) also said that Dollar General's ("DG") existing permit is expired and a new one is needed. Wheeler has not succeeded in obtaining a site visit.
- Brandau added that Two Rivers has contacted DG and has not received a response.
- Levasseur said that some RPC members took a "field trip" to the Randolph DG. Merchandise bears likeness to Welch's and Belmains.
 - Beguin added that Rite Aid is potential competition.
- R. Tabor explained that he owns Bethel Central Market ("BCM"), which has struggled lately given the economy, and is starting his 17th year in business. He is concerned about inventory overlap with DG. Only difference is that DCM has fresh meat, beer, wine, and cigarettes.
- Discussed ensued about what "piece of the [local economy] pie" DG would consume.
- Brandau moved to recommend that DG does not fit the Royalton Town Plan as for type of enterprise and location. Beguin seconded. Levasseur in favor. Boles and Barcelow against. Motion at 3-2 fails to pass.
- Discussion ensued about the DG road access issue.
- Discussion ensued about specific of the Town Plan.
 - Brandau referenced Chapter 5, Object 2: Economy. Village Centers are primary place for commerce, culture, and residences.
 - Levasseur mentioned Chapter 10: Land Use. Strip development is discouraged. Emphasis on reusing pre-existing areas in the Exit 3 interchange area. But when does a "strip" arise?
 - Brandau offered that "strip" is a style with varying characteristics. DG could be the first chink in a strip development.
 - Barcelow responded that DG is only showing RPC one building, not a strip.
 - Discussed ensued about potential traffic issues.
 - Levasseur referenced Town Plan, p. 56. Development in Exit 3 interchange area should be mixed-use, not detracting from village centers, catering to safe access, and preserving carrying capacity of Rt. 107 as minor arterial road.
 - Brandau referenced Town Plan, p. 68, Appendix 2. Rt 107 is low density— i.e., offices, medical facilities. Primary retail and related businesses should be located in village centers. Retail businesses in Exit 3 area are "generally discouraged."
 - Levasseur added that that superstores, restaurants, and fast food restaurants are also inappropriate uses for this area.

- Discussion ensued between RPC members and Kenyon regarding growth, e.g.:
 - Kenyon emphasized the benefits of an added tax base plus employment. More regulations make it difficult to start up business in Vermont.
 - Levasseur responded that an open working landscape is in popular demand. Strip development and polluting industries are unpopular. These attitudes are reflected in the Town Plan and zoning regulations.
- Barcelow added that DG could encourage people to shop closer to home on Rt. 107 rather than drive to West Lebanon. This in turn would save on gas and energy—e.g., one less trip to West Lebanon each month.
- Gates added that he does not think DG as described fits the Town Plan. But if this type of business is generally desired in this location, perhaps public hearings on possible amendments to the Town Plan should take place.
 - Levasseur responded that these issues came up for public comment recently and that voters accepted the current Town Plan. Burden is on Select Board to change the Town Plan.
- Brandau moved to approve DG’s application for Rt. 107. No member seconded. Motion fails to carry.

3. Minutes of April 11, 2011

- Levasseur stated that her name was misspelled once on p. 1, § 1. Barcelow moved to accept minutes as amended. Beguin seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

Barcelow moved to adjourn. Brandau seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.

Meeting ended at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christian Petrangelo
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