

## **Zoning Board of Sugar Hill**

**November 22, 2022**

**Members:** Mike Hern, Jim Keefe, Rick Quintal, Carl Hjelm, John Colony, Amy Venezia

**Guests:** Reggie Tarr, Sarah Desrochers, Mark Desrochers, Ben Merrill, Glen Bailey, Jane Bailey, Cliff Hughes, Cindy Van Amerongen, Ben Van Amerongen, Angela Hawkins, Charles Cushing, Robert Benson, Kate Wetherell, Harry Robertson, Ben Robertson, Minnie Cushing, Grant Ruggles, Cathy Cushing, Erin Godbout, Hugh Hawkins, Ralph Bradley

Chairman Mike Hern called the meeting to order at 5:30PM on Tuesday, November 22, 2022.

### **Case 22-02**

#### **Clifford Hughes**

##### **Special Exception – Event Venue**

Cliff Hughes addressed the Board and audience to explain his application for a special exception on his property located on Streeter Pond Road and known as Ski Hearth Farm. Mr. Hughes explained that he has owned the property for almost 3 years now and during this time he has developed ideas to help economically sustain the farm. Mr. Hughes gave a brief history of the farm and previous owners explaining what they all tried to do to accomplish this and never fully accomplishing it. Mr. Hughes explained he is proposing a special exception for farm events and activities and gave examples of possible Christmas Tree sales, apple picking, cider producing, farm and garden tours, roasting coffee, corn maze, honey production, weddings, flowers, Nordic ski center, cross country running center, fly fishing, and bird center. He expressed a desire to hold community events at the farm including partnering with local towns and schools, hosting community charitable events, running, biking, cross country school events, walking trails, local art gallery, and creating an outdoor space for hay or sleigh rides. He noted he regularly meets with the Select board on the happenings at the farm now and plans.

Chairman Hern opened the meeting up to hear from abutters and others in attendance. Some of the concerns brought by the abutters were concerns of noise, especially at wedding events in the evening, increased traffic and parking at the site. Other comments from the audience consisted of past denial from the Sugar Hill boards for other ideas from previous owners, planned size of the proposed barn to host weddings and events, lighting and noise, current road for increased traffic, property value decreasing, and what granting this special exception would allow future owners. Chairman Hern noted there is a noise and lighting ordinances in place and that event venue is new to the Zoning Ordinance this year being approved by ballot vote at the town meeting. It was noted that four abutters could not be present at the hearing tonight and sent emails – 2 in support and 2 objections.

Concerns about weddings being held at the farm was a common concern among many abutters and neighbors. Concerns with these types of events included increased traffic on an already busy road, noise from music, occupancy of the barn, and parking. Discussion about placing limitations on hours of these events and if the Board has the right to do something like that. Abutter, Erin Godbout suggested that the Board consult with an attorney to see what rights the Board has in placing limitations. Mr. Hughes addressed the parking concerns by stating he estimated approximately 100 parking spaces in the corridor from the big red barn up to the back barn. He noted that the barn has not been designed yet so a solid number for occupancy was not determined but thought 150 was an approximate limit. A question was asked of Mr. Hughes on what his break even number is and how much income is anticipated from weddings to make this viable. Mr. Hughes answered by stating he does not have a solid number but does not want it to be for solely weddings but all events. Chairman Hern questioned Mr. Hughes on conservation easement on the property. Mr. Hughes explained that the conservation easement is held by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests.

With no more comments from the audience, Chairman Hern closed the public hearing of the meeting so the Board could deliberate. On a motion was made by Chairman Hern to table the hearing until Tuesday, December 20 at 5:30PM, seconded by Rick Quintal. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

### **Other Business**

On a motion made by John Colony, seconded by Jim Keefe the minutes of the June 14, 2022 meeting were moved to be approved and accepted. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Meeting adjourned at 7:10PM.

Submitted by:

Amy Venezia

Secretary to the Zoning Board