



Town of New Paltz Planning Board
Regular Meeting of Monday, **January 22, 2024**
7:00 PM In Person
Town of New Paltz Courthouse
59 N. Putt Corners Road, New Paltz, NY

APPROVED MINUTES

Present: Chair, Adele Ruger, Lyle Nolan (Deputy Chair), Jennifer Wells, and Adrian Capulli

Also present: Jane Schanberg attended via Zoom
Ashley Torre (Planning Board Attorney)
Andrew Willingham (Planning Board Engineer)

Absent: Matt DiDonna and Lauren McPadden

Administrative Business

A motion to approve the minutes of January 8, 2023 meeting, was moved by the Deputy-Chair and seconded by Ms. Welles with no further discussion and all voting in favor.

Public Comment

The Deputy Chair asked if there was anyone in attendance wishing to make a public comment and there was none.

Application Review

SITE PLAN/SPECIAL USE APPLICATION

PB22-423

MOHONK BROOK FARMHOUSE REHAB

Location: Lenape Lane/Butterville Road

Applicant: Mohonk Preserve

Zoning District: A-3 SBL: 86.1-1-40.121

Ryan Weitz from Barton & Loguidice appeared before the Board with Chuck Reid and Kevin Case from the Mohonk Preserve, and attorney Mike Moriello.

Mr. Weitz outlined for the Board the updates and adjustments which were made to the applicant's previous submissions based on Mr. Willingham's review. Comprehensive lighting, signage and landscaping plans were submitted. Lighting fixtures are facing downward, except for the two sconces by the front door, which are historically appropriate. Signage will be minimal, because it is an operations project. The site will be used by authorized Preserve staff only. In

additional to an ADA sign, there will be a post and wood panel having directional information for the accessible route to the building as well as the cascading bluestone steps. There will be a couple of vehicle access signs on the other side of the building.

In phase one of the landscaping plan, the Preserve proposes to renaturalize the wetland buffer areas by scalping the turf (leaving the sod) and install a biodegradable paper type of weed fabric, and place compost and mulch on those areas before seeding with native riparian species of wetland seed mix. The plantings around the farmhouse will also be native species. There are a number of shade trees scattered throughout the site, one of which is in poor health and will be removed. Several trees to the rear of the house are of an advanced age and the Preserve intends to plant some additional tree cover for the future.

In phase two of the landscaping plan, the majority of the area is a succession of fields that used to be mowed down, but have had some growth coming up. This is the area where a couple of the outbuildings are structurally unsound, and will be coming out. The applicant proposes to use a couple groupings of cedars for a level of buffering from any kind of viewsheds from the river to Ridge Trail along Butterville Road and then Butterville Road itself. There will be a couple of sycamore trees scattered throughout in the Kleinekill adjacent area leaning into that setting and then the bioretention area being seeded with a rain garden seed mix, a lot of which are biennial seed so it takes a couple of years to take off, but it provides a great filtration benefit in stormwater management and will also have a lot of multi-seasonal interest.

Mr. Willingham stated his firm's landscape architect will review the Preserve's landscape submissions.

Mr. Weitz turned his attention to the Preserve's single stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPP) for both phases of the project. Due to the very minimal changes in impervious cover behind and in front of the building, the applicant proposes that those areas remain as is. Phase one will be treated as a redevelopment project under the SWPP. Phase two, with the .08 or 0.1 acre increase in overall imperviousness, will be collected through a series of catch basins and directed to the retention area that's going to provide both water quality and water quantity treatment for large storm events.

Updated information on the sizing and design of the relocated septic system included the authorization by the town building department to proceed with the placement of fill, due to the County's requirement that it settle over the winter. Mr. Weitz had reached out to the County to see if the existing septic tank could be capped so it could be used as a holding tank in the interim until the new septic is built. Their response included a request for a dye test to be conducted, which was done, and the results showed no dye being brought to the surface. The County's Department of Health stated if the dye test is not indicating failure of the system, they would not permit the Preserve to go forward with capping it and converting it to a holding tank.

Mr. Weitz referenced the revised EAF submission and Mike Nowicki's assessment of threatened/endangered species habitat, and concluded the project would not result in an adverse impact to those protected species.

Four bicycle parking spaces are proposed near the farmhouse for both phases.

The applicant requested three waivers.

State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) review via the CRIS system, recommended the applicant develop a letter of resolution with SHPO, and in conjunction with planning board as lead agency, and New York State Energy Research & development (NYSERDA) as the funding partner to the Preserve, to identify any mitigation measures due to the loss of these contributing structures. SHPO's letter of January 5th detailed six different items as potential mitigation measures. Mr. Weitz stated they are fully onboard with five or the six items – the request to preserve the historic wood windows in the farmhouse. The main goal of the redevelopment of the Brook Farmhouse is to look at energy efficiency.

Preserve Director, Chuck Reid provided an overview to the board regarding the work they have done with the town's Historic Preservation Commission. He reiterated one of the main objectives of the proposed rehabilitation was to maintain the historic preservation while trying to increase efficiency to bring the building back into a functional use for the Preserve. Messrs. Case and Reid met with three members of the Commission in December and reviewed the applicant's site plans. Mr. Orfitelli stated the Commission did not object to the proposed energy efficient windows so long as they were six over six and exact replicas that were going over the top of them. Mr. Reid said "The goal has been to bring the historic preservation in but also increase the ecological energy efficiency here so we are sitting here right now trying to make that last determination of what would be the best process and that's what we're presenting over for the planning commission to help give us some guidance."

Mr. Willingham went over his written review of the applicant's submissions. He indicated the applicant needs septic system approval from the Ulster County Health Department and a disturbance permit from the NYSDEC. The applicant also needs a Letter of Resolution which will include recommended mitigation measures to compensate for the removal of the existing farm structures and documentation related to New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation's (NYSOPRHP) approval of the planned building renovation/demolition. Correspondence from NYSOPRHP related to potential impacts to archaeological/cultural resources or additional study or mitigation requirements should also be forwarded to the board. The proposed landscaping plans will be reviewed by Mr. Willingham's on-staff landscape architect. Lighting fixture cut sheets should be provided for board review. Clarification of an existing stone located where the new septic system is requested.

Ms. Schanberg confirmed with Mr. Weitz that the sconces on the front of the house are decorative sconces that are historically in keeping with the building and they'll be used at night when people are in it, but it's not anything where you're going to use them to partially light the building at night. Mr. Weitz indicated he would make a note on the plan to utilize a timing switch or a smart switch for these lights.

Board members questioned Mr. Weitz about the existing window replacement plan choices. There are over two dozen windows involved. The Deputy Chair asked what the applicant is proposing instead of wooden windows. Alternatives include replacing the windows with double-hung, six over six Marvin windows with a wood and aluminum cladding, meeting the Secretary of the Interior standards for replacement windows. The alternatives are replacing the windows

with energy efficient, historically appropriate windows that would be an insulated glass or restoring the existing wood windows in place and adding a storm window. The building will have an HVAC system and be air conditioned, but the new windows will have screens and will be operable, which the current windows are not. Mr. Weitz was not sure if the proposed windows are true-divided-light windows. Mr. Reid stated they are simulated-divided windows.

Mr. Weitz stated the assembly of barns two through four and salvage of intact building components will either be reused on site or donated to salvage organizations. The structural foundations for some of these buildings are in really rough shape so there may be areas where it is unsafe to do so and as part of phase two stabilization and adaptive reuse of barn one – reuse some of those materials and store them in there until that time. Mr. Weitz said they are agreeable to SHPO's request to review the design of the proposed maintenance building, and in fact there is an existing letter of resolution for the entire Foothills parcel that requires the Preserve to do so. They are also agreeable to SHPO's continued consultation with the Preserve to review stabilization renovation plans for barn number one. The applicants are going to do a triage stabilization as recommended in the Stinemire Engineering report, and then phase two would be a full stabilization adaptive reuse of that structure. There are no objections to the salvaging and reuse of the intact wood flooring in the Brook farmhouse. Mr. Weitz will share their drafted letter of resolution to SHPO with the planning board before issuing it.

Deputy-Chair Nolan told Mr. Weitz that the board in the past has asked other applicants of similar projects, that someone be on site during the excavation/site work to watch for vertebrates, turtles (near the wetland), mink – there should be somebody there during the operation to make sure that they're not run over by a bulldozer. Mr. Reid pointed out that during construction of the Lenape Lane bridge across Butterville there were conservation student staff present through that pre-reconstruction process to claim and relocate any of snakes.

Ms. Schanberg asked if it was possible to have the Preserve's historic people do some kind of videos that would explain what they are doing and how they're doing it and the reasons they're doing it, that could be viewed by the public and just be an informational service on the preservation of the character of the community and this property in particular, because people will be walking by it all the time and will recognize it. I think that could be very useful and accessible to the public rather than a speech somebody gave at a hearing. There could be videos or any kind of explanation with a narrative and photographs. Mr. Moriello responded by describing a historic kiosk which was used for the Kingstonian project he was involved with, which described the history of the site and what was there and the progression. Mr. Weitz said there would be a three-paneled small kiosk on the site, and on one of those panels they want to do exactly what Ms. Schanberg talked about.

Ms. Schanberg said she wasn't thinking about a kiosk, since obviously someone would have to go there. What she was thinking about was more about a public information service that helps tell the story of what's going on here and why it's going on, and all of the very intricate and expert things that are taking place to preserve the character of the community. Based on public comments she sees, even just casual things, there are a lot of people that feel that "we don't want this, we don't want that, we're here, we love it here, we want to keep it the way it is." So she thinks there's a story here, and all I'm suggesting is that be a part of any presentation that could be separate from a physical visit.

Mr. Weitz agreed and said he will definitely, between their partners at Alfandre Architecture and Coppola Associates, will look at – between the Preserve’s internal staff - and we have a lot of that information in the Coppola assessment talking about what that building was used for over decades and then its new life. He thought it was a great idea and would see about weaving that into the project.

Mr. Willingham went over his comments on the stormwater pollution plan. The Preserve is disturbing more than three acres, so they have submitted a full stormwater pollution prevention plan which is in good shape.

Additional design detail should be added to the grading and utilities plan to better show how stormwater will be conveyed to the proposed catch basins and culverts. Additional grading detail should be implemented in the stormwater area between the facilities offices and salt storage to ensure adequate drainage and discharge of stormwater to the bioretention facility. Roof leader locations must be added to the proposed buildings as well as the conveyance to bioretention facility. Details for the stabilized aggregate path for handicap access to the farmhouse should be updated to show the gradation of the material used to ensure it is wheelchair accessible. The retaining wall height must be added and any retaining walls higher than four feet will require design by a professional engineer as part of the building permit processes. Mr. Weitz confirmed the wall is over four feet and they will add the heights as part of phase two for the building permit application. Some type of retaining structure may be necessary to use a reinforced concrete retaining wall, but because it is a shale bank, he hopes to maintain a slate or shale face with drainage at the bottom, to minimize costs and in permitting.

Mr. Willingham stated the waivers the applicant is seeking from the board are reasonable.

Deputy-Chair Nolan asked, in regard to the rain garden, if the Preserve was going to make any provision if there isn’t enough rain “the whole thing could fall apart or degrade in only a couple of years because there isn’t enough water to maintain the system.” Mr. Weitz acknowledged that’s the challenge with rain gardens in bioretention areas because the soil they’re putting in is three parts sand to one part top soil, so it drains really quickly. They have this type of system working really well at the bioretention areas at the Testimonial Gateway trailhead. The species in the seed mix has shown drought tolerance. Mr. Reid said it took about three years to establish the major rain garden system that went in there. The pollinator mix that was put in included sedges and grasses has let it back balance, and is only cut once per year in the springtime.

A motion to approve the applicant’s waiver numbers 1, 2, and 3, for the reasons stated in the applicant’s letter of request was moved by Deputy-Chair Nolan and seconded by Ms. Schanberg with all voting in favor with no further discussion.

A motion to assume lead agency status was moved by Ms. Schanberg with Ms. Welles seconding and all voting in favor with no further discussion.

A decision was made by the Chair to wait until after February 12 to make a referral to the Ulster County Planning Board.

Ms. Torre reminded the board that they needed to make a determination if the applicant's habitat study is sufficient or if they want that reviewed by any of the board's consultants. And the applicant needs to submit the applications for the wetlands permit.

A motion was moved to schedule a public hearing for the site plan and wetland permit applications for February 12 by Ms. Welles and seconded by Mr. Capulli with all voting in favor with no further discussion.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was moved by Mr. Capulli and seconded by Ms. Welles with all voting in favor with no further discussion.

Submitted by Kristine Tabasko

NOTE: A full viewing of the January 22, 2024 Planning Board meeting can be found at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wL9pbd7z9qc>