

August 17, 2009 Special Town Board/Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Special Town Board/Planning Board Meeting held by the La Fayette Town Board/Planning Board on August 17, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Center at 2508 Route 11 in the Town of La Fayette.

- Present: Gregory Scammell, Supervisor
David Knapp, Councilman
Adrian Shute, Councilman
Jim Nakas, Planning Board Chair.
Barb Lasky, Planning Board Member
Shawn Adam, Planning Board Member
Rick Markoff, Planning Board Member
Bill Turner, Alt. Planning Board Member
- Absent: Thomas Bailey, Councilman
William Mc Connell, Councilman (listened on cell phone)
- Recording Secretary: Mary Jo Kelly, Town Clerk
- Others Present: Kevin Gilligan, Town Attorney
Dave Hardy, Andor Projects
Tom Blair, Andor Projects
Brig Brown, Andor Projects
Karl Hughes, Andor Projects

Supervisor Scammell called the Town Board Meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

The Town Clerk took the Roll. Councilor's Bailey and McConnell absent. All else present.

Carl Hughes and Brig Brown showed a slide presentation of an economic development project for the Town. The development would be an Andor Spa and Wellness Resort. There would be condo living, an equestrian ranch, spa, restaurant, micro brewery, jellorium, general store, gift store, butcher shop, bakery, café, wine tasting house, weight management center, Kneipp treatments, young at heart playground, hotel, and an amphitheater.

The equestrian ranch would have horse boarding, horse trips, riding lessons, wagon treks, canyon rides, horse training, horseback riding, horse shows and other events, sleigh rides, covered wagon rentals and snowmobile rental.

The spa would be 3 stories. It would have a Himalayan Saltwater Floating Pool, a Himalayan Salt Mine grotto and an Alpha lounge. It would also have Russian Massage, Ayurveedic, etc. There would be a center room for yoga or meditation.

The Spa Hotel would have 80 individually designed guest suites. It would have saunas, a state of the art athletic center and large pool. These items would also be available to the condo owners. There would be a restaurant on top of the lobby. There would be a multifunction hall in the lobby that would fit 350 people at tables or 700 seated in rows if it were used as a movie theater, conference hall or convention center. This hall can be divided to host several functions at the same time. The restaurant would serve organic gourmet with a weekly changing menu. It would have enough space to hold two events at the same time and still service the bar, private dining rooms and general dining area.

The Schenk Grill Restaurant and Micro Brewery would be next to the Old World Plaza. An assortment of onsite brewed beer would be served. Nightly entertainment such as comedy night, open mike, blues night, country mix, etc. would offer an attractive diversity.

The bakery would provide fresh German rolls, breads, and pastries every day. Lunch would also be provided at the cafes.

The Jellorium creates rare signature jams, jellies, syrups, salad dressings and chutneys. People can watch the production through large windows.

The butcher shop crafts signature sausages, smoked meats and cold cuts for the visitor to take home.

The Western Store would have western attire such as hats, boots, clothes and accessories as well as a full lineup of saddles and tack.

The General Store would be open 12 hours a day. Anything from toothpaste to shoe polish can be purchased here.

There would be 150 three bedroom condos, 100 two bedroom condos and 50 one bedroom condos. Owners can choose a wood or gas-fired fireplace or German Kachelofen and walk-in Jacuzzi bath tub. The condos would all be surrounded by a beautifully designed edible landscape with several water features. The structures would be considered "green" and there would be solar roofs. Geo-Thermal heat pumps would provide additional energy options. There would be two clubhouses with swimming pools and several gazebos.

The Young at Heart Play Area is for adults. The swings, seesaws, climbing walls, etc. are all oversized for adults to play on and feel small again.

The Kneipp Village and Weight Management Center would be a one-story treatment building. There would be 20 timeshare cabins with living roofs and several Kneipp paths. Weight management guests would learn how to prepare their own food under the supervision of a nutritionist. Sebastian Kneipp was a German monk who lived in the 1840's. he created a wellness treatment much loved in Europe to this day. Thousands of Americans travel to Germany every year seeking the benefits of Kneipp treatments. Kneipp products have been sold in the U.S. in high end stores for many years and will be sold here too.

The business will contract with an onsite maintenance company to maintain, monitor and clean the site. The maintenance company will also provide transportation services, guest vehicles, shuttle service and food delivery to the village. The landscaping and recreational areas will be overseen and maintained by this company. The maintenance company is also responsible for providing security to the entire resort.

Brig Brown said they need the town to be part of this project. She came to the U.S. 23 years ago from Germany. The property they are talking about is the Sirota property on Eager Rd. It's a total of about 500 acres. They would have about 300 upscale condo's there.

Councilor Shute asked if they would be year-round condos.

Brig Brown said a condo could be purchased for year-round living or could be an investment by folks for when they get older which they might choose to rent out during certain times of the year.

Councilor Shute asked what she saw as the demographics of the community.

Brig Brown said the larger part is geared towards adult living but they will have a part for family living as well.

Chairman Nakas asked if financing for this project is in play.

Brig Brown said presently they are seeking some funding. This project will largely finance itself. They have investment companies involved. She is confident they have no funding problems.

Member Markoff asked the cost of a condo.

Brig Brown said the price would be from \$175 a square foot and the square footage would range from 1500 square feet to 1800 square feet. The base would probably be in the \$300,000 to \$500,000 range.

Councilor Shute asked if she envisions this being done in stages.

Brig Brown said they do have phases and if everything goes well, they would be able in 3-4 years to complete the entire project.

Chairman Nakas asked if she had pitched this idea to other areas in New York State.

Tom Blair introduced himself as the attorney for this project. About 80% of his practice is municipal land use and development. If the community doesn't want this project, they do not want to go forward with it. They are not focusing in on doing this on the backs of the taxpayers. They would like to know if this is something the community would like to embrace. This would bring 300 permanent jobs to the community.

Kevin Gilligan asked if all the roads will be private roads.

Tom Blair said yes.

Kevin Gilligan confirmed all the plowing, etc. would be private.

Tom Blair said yes. The maintenance company will handle all the maintenance, etc. of the roads and there will be a condo/homeowners association.

Brig Brown said they are using the money they are making on the condo's and putting it right back into the property. All her life she has traveled all over the world. One of her dreams is to find a community she can call home. She would like to belong and be part of the community.

Chairman Nakas said the only project he can remember that would have the scope of this project would be Greek Peak. He discussed the raising of taxes on the properties around Greek Peak.

Tom Blair said they heard about this. He doesn't think it was just Greek Peak. He thinks it was also some town policies and building some infrastructure that the project didn't participate in.

Dave Hardy said the road ended up as a tax burden and the water and sewer had to be expanded.

Chairman Nakas said the articles that appeared in the paper were about individual homes.

Brig Brown said the Town of Virgil invested a lot of money in the Greek Peak project. They are not going to do that on anybody's back here.

Chairman Nakas said by virtue of the scope of the project the surrounding properties would become more valuable and then would have to pay a higher tax rate.

Brig Brown said however, you have more of a tax income from the project.

Tom Blair said they would have to provide the economic studies on this to the town.

Kevin Gilligan asked the overall project cost.

Tom Blair said 120-150 million.

Kevin Gilligan asked regarding the phasing, what would come first?

Brig Brown said Phase 1 would be the time share cabins. Phase 2 would be the condo properties and some retail. Phase 3 would be finalizing the rest of the retail properties.

Kevin Gilligan asked about water supply.

Tom Blair said he talked to the Town Engineer about this.

Kevin Gilligan asked if OCWA could supply the water for this.

Tom Blair said they haven't finished their study yet. There is a water line on Apulia Road now.

Chairman Nakas said water and septic would be on the top of the list for the Planning Board.

Tom Blair said they are sensitive to this. It's one of the main concerns of any project he works on.

Councilor Shute asked what they are looking for from the town.

Tom Blair said they are looking to see if this is a project appropriate for LaFayette. This is an informational meeting tonight and to see if the Andor team has selected an appropriate site and a location that wants them.

Member Lasky asked if they had talked to any of the neighbors in the area.

Brig Brown said they felt the Town Board and Planning Board should be the first ones they talked to. Out of respect, they would not do this until they had discussed the project with the Town Board and the Planning Board.

Member Lasky said if they are figuring on 600 residents, do they have any idea on the number of children?

Brig Brown said about 50 of the condos will be family condos.

Member Lasky asked about the impact on the school system.

Brig Brown doesn't think there would be a big impact.

Councilor Shute doesn't get the feeling this would impact the school. He thinks many of the students could be private school kids.

Brig Brown said not necessarily.

Dave Hardy discussed the design and taxes. If the tax base goes up, no additional roads, water or waste systems are added to the town, it should be a bonus for the town.

Brig Brown said everyone on her end has a passion for the project. She would like to have a warm welcome from a town that this project would go into.

Dave Hardy said one of the positives of the project would be employment and a way to keep our kids at home.

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Brig Brown asked what the Town Board and Planning Board thought of this project.

Chairman Nakas said what matters is that they will come into the Planning Board with an application if they wish to go forward. The Planning Board will help them as much as they can. They will meet the criteria for parking, traffic, lighting, etc. If they meet all the criteria, it will be approved. Whether the Planning Board likes it or not has no bearing on the case.

Councilor Shute said it will require a zone change.

Tom Blair said there is a section in the Zoning Ordinance for CPD (Commercial Planned Development). His intent would be to request the zoning be changed to this.

Chairman Nakas said his advice would be for them to submit an application.

Tom Blair thanked the Boards for listening to them tonight.

Brig Brown thanked everyone and said she would like to know as soon as possible as she does have some funding deadlines she will have to meet.

Councilor's Knapp moved and Shute seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

The Special Town Board/Planning Board Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Kelly
Town Clerk
Planning Board Secretary

Adopted 8/24/09