

Town of Plainfield
Development Review Board (DRB)
Minutes of Meeting held on October 8, 2014
18 High Street, Plainfield Town Hall Opera House (PTHOH)

Final Minutes Approved on: November 12, 2014

Present:

___x___ Janice Walrafen, Chair

___x___ Rob Bridges

___x___ Neil Hogan

___x___ Sarah Albert, Clerk

(Full DRB in attendance)

Also Present:

Karen Storey – Zoning Administrator (ZA) (absent)
Mary Lane – Administrative Assistant

Signed in as Interested Parties:

Mary Lane – Plainfield Water/Wastewater Commission
Marcy Shaffer Hale'
David Hale'
Alice Merrill -- Plainfield Select Board
Jill Bessette
Dena Cox
Scott Stewart
Josh Pitts
Claire Dumas
Liz Pettit
Scott Emery

Ryan Horvath
Ellen Selkowitz
Fred Woogmaster
Otto Hanson -- R.L. Vallee, Inc., Representative
David Grayck – Black Bear Biodiesel, Attorney
Charles Cogbill
Bram Towbin -- Plainfield Select Board
Paula Emery – Planning Commission
Jon Anderson -- R.L. Vallee, Attorney
Chris Galipeau -- R.L. Vallee, Engineer
Tim Phillips

6:45 P.M. Meeting Called to Order by Chair Walrafen.

Agenda Item #1 – 6:46 P.M. -- Review/Adjust Agenda.

- Chair Walrafen makes 2 additions to the agenda:
 1. Irene Nagel’s Invoice
 2. Address Z.A.’s question about PTHOH 6 ft. privacy fence
- Member Bridges update: Planning Meeting and Unified Regulations

Board Members leave for site visit to 230 High Street, for R.L. Vallee, Conditional Use: General Retail Space.

Agenda Item #2 – 7:30 P.M. – R.L. Vallee Commercial Site Plan Review and Conditional Use Hearing: General Retail Space.

Chair Walrafen swears in all Interested Parties at 7:34 P.M.

- Chair Walrafen asks Chris Galipeau, Civil Engineer for R.L. Vallee, and Otto Hanson, R.L. Vallee’s Representative, to explain the proposed changes to the building and property. Using a large satellite map, Mr. Galipeau explains there are no planned changes to the footprint of the building, the interior will be updated, and dark sky lighting will be installed over all doors. The current 2-story apartment space of approximately 1390 square feet on first floor will remain, and an additional 1030 square foot apartment, and a 1800 sq. ft. retail space will be added.

- Chair Walrafen asks for DRB member questions/comments prior to opening it up to Interested Parties. Discussion focuses on traffic flow/parking, and right of way between this property, and Black Bear Biodiesel to the West. The Board Members question the number of parking spaces, since regulations change depending on the nature of the retail space. Jon Anderson, attorney for

R.L. Vallee, reports typically the actual retail space is used for this calculation, bathrooms, office space, etc, are not included. They have used all the square footage., so the allotted parking spaces should be adequate for any business going into that space. A handicapped parking space, and tenant parking have been designated, as well as the current garage space will be available for the tenants.

- Discussion turns to the nature of the retail business. The application reads, "General Retail", so the Board Members want to be assured no porn shops or gambling will be in the retail space. Mr. Hanson reports they expect a boutique type store selling local crafts, novelties, or food items like a farm stand. Because it will be difficult to market an empty space, they want to do the work the space needs, to make it more presentable to perspective renters; this is why they put general retail on the application. DRB member Bridges asks if they have any idea what is going in the space. Chair Walrafen mentions a rumor going around town that a Dollar General is going in the space. Mr. Hanson states there is no plan for that, and the space is too small for that kind of store. Mr. Anderson adds that R.L. Vallee will accept any conditions the DRB would like to include, limiting the nature of the of business.

- DRB Member Bridges asks about the covenants placed by R.L. Vallee on the sale of the property to not allow dispensing of fuel, or a convenience store. Mr. Anderson believes this would only be in effect if the building were to be sold.

- The Water/Wastewater permit was discussed. Mr. Galipeau reports he spoke with Greg Chamberlin, the Chief Facility Operator, who said there was capacity available. Mr. Galipeau reports they expect to use less than the historical use. Mary Lane, Chair of the Water/Wastewater Commission, reminded them to go to the Town Office and get an application, and follow the process to obtain their permits. In response to Clerk Albert's question, they say there will be a restroom located in the retail space.

- Clerk Albert brings up questions about issuing permits for the retail space. She reads out loud the Change of Use permit regulations because they change depending on the type of business. Also, the hours of operation and the signage will need to be known. Mr. Anderson suggests they permit for a general retail space, and Mr. Hanson states they will modify the space, but stop prior to the final finishes specific to the business. Mr. Galipeau adds if the conditions of approval change, they will have to return before the DRB for another permit.

- Parking is discussed. DRB Member Neil Hogan questions why the same area R. L. Vallee did not want the neighbor to the West's food trucks to be located because of right of way issues, now shows parking places? Mr. Anderson reports that a food truck would take up more space, and the planned spaces for this project are all available for parking. He also reports, "they can use our space, and we can use theirs". DRB Member Bridges wonders about the distance between spaces (size of parking space). Mr. Galipeau points out the parking spaces will be on the larger end of the regulation range of sizes.

- Chair Walrafen asks Scott Stewart who owns neighboring property to the East, to show on the map, where he pointed out during the site visit, that the property boundary is not correct. Mr. Galipeau reports they have not performed an actual boundary survey, but they can minimize the width of an aisle to accommodate this. Clerk Albert requests that the site plan include the actual measurements.

- The DRB members have no more questions. Chair Walrafen opens the hearing for comments/questions from Interested Parties who signed in and took the oath.

Jill Bessette, neighbor to the East, has a number of comments. She wonders if anyone actually spent time in the parking lot observing what goes on. She states what looks good on paper, or in theory, may not actually work. She reports that people use that space to pull over to talk on their cell phone, 18 wheelers pull in there, and it is the Sheriff's speed trap location. She also reports the recent Water Line Replacement Project used that area as a place for their equipment and vehicles, and wonders if R.L. Vallee knew that or allowed it? Next, she had a bad experience with trying to contact the property manager last winter when they broke some of their trees during snow removal. She does not want to have to repeat that every winter. Next she agrees that the DRB cannot permit something that is unknown to them. And finally, she reports she is concerned about the traffic, as it is very difficult to take a left out of that location. Both Mr. Hanson and Mr. Galipeau provide answers to her questions/comments. Snow will have to be removed off site due to State Regulations, and if there are problems they encourage her to call Mr. Hanson. They also remind her that with 2 apartments and a smaller store than the Red Store, the traffic will be low.

- Attorney Anderson reminds everyone they want to be good neighbors, and the people in the residences will also want noise and light to be at a minimum. He again states the DRB can impose Conditions.

- Peter Young, who owns the property to the West of R.L. Vallee where the Black Bear Biodiesel (BBB) business is located, asks if there will be two permits, the building permit, and another one when the retail store is proposed.

- Clerk Albert suggests the hearing be continued to November 12, 2014, so answers to all the questions can be researched.

- David Grayck, attorney for Peter Young, requests that if R.L. Vallee's application is going to be submitted to the DRB in writing, can it be sent to him a week or so prior to the meeting. He points out the current application has no signatures, and it states it is currently rented to tenants. He is also concerned about the Right of Way, and that the parking could create problems with entry and egress. Mr. Anderson reports he will email anyone who wants anything. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Grayck state they will get together to hash this out prior to the next meeting.

- . Some of the Interested Parties asked if the packets that are sent out following the hearing could be sent by email rather than snail mail. Chair

Walrafen suggests email contacts be written on the sign in sheet, and possibly a contact list could be created so "reply to all" can be used.

- Chair Walrafen states she hopes that tensions between R.L. Vallee and the Community can be resolved. Mr. Anderson states he believes everyone has worked well together. He states he would like Mr. Grayck to state all his concerns at this hearing. Mr. Grayck responds that he is concerned with the application. He would like the email correspondence between Z.A. Storey and Chris Galipeau dated September 24, 2014 including traffic flow information, to be submitted as part of the record, as well as show property line set backs.

- Bram Towbin, Plainfield Select Board Member, states that Plainfield Citizens are concerned about the direction of the property. Some citizens have mentioned eminent domain, but mostly everyone would like to see economic development. Citizens are aware that the place was purchased to provide decreased competition to Maplefields. He asks if they would be ok with a small bakery or food service of some kind going into the space? He also asks that the DRB not put too many restrictions on the space, as everyone would like to see that space rented.

- Josh Pitts, Plainfield business owner reports that even small retail spaces will have deliveries, and he sees no provision for delivery vehicles on the plans.

- Paula Emery, Planning Commission, asks again about the deed restrictions placed on the building. She was told that because the restrictions are not in writing, R.L. Vallee can waive the restrictions. Because no one knows the actual answer, Chair Walrafen asks Mr. Anderson if he could research and clarify this for the next meeting.

- Charlie Cogbill, Interested Party, brings up storm water drainage, and lighting. He reports the increase in pervious surfaces in the NW corner of Town and wonders what this is doing to storm water run off, and says the whole watershed needs to be studied. Next, he is concerned about the lights in town. On the West end of town there are lights on businesses from 6am to 10:30pm, and on the East side, 5am to Midnight. He requests the DRB address this at some point, as the illumination goes past the boundary lines.

- Bram Towbin, speaking as the Road Commissioner agrees, and reports a culvert was unplugged on Rt 2, and the drainage pond at the Health Center is bad as a result. Discussion ensues about pervious and impervious materials.

- Clerk Albert inquires as to the changes to the outside of the building. She suggests they have the façade of the building facing the street, as it looks nice. Referring to a previous comment by Jon Anderson, she also does not believe being able to park on one another's property is a good idea. She suggests it is in the best interest to have designated parking, and she encourages both parties to work out: the right of way, parking, property boundaries, distances, and traffic flow, for the meeting in November. The DRB will figure out how to permit the building. Scott Stewart will look into the wetlands.

- Jon Anderson reports he does not think there has been any animosity between R.L. Vallee and the neighboring property owners/renters.
- DRB Member Bridges makes a **motion** to continue the hearing on November 12, 2014 at 7pm at the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House. Motion seconded by DRB Member Hogan, and passes unanimously.

Agenda Item # 3 -- 9:15 P.M. – Fence Behind the PTHOH.

- DRB members decide to start meeting at 6:30pm on 11/12/2014, to discuss the issue with the fence. **Motion** made by DRB Member Hogan, seconded by DRB member Bridges, passes unanimously.

DRB Member Bridges updates board members on the Planning Commission meeting he attended. They had no questions about the Unified Regulations, but he is not certain what the next step is. He said the discussion was about making P.U.D.s more attractive than sub-divisions.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:35 P.M.

- DRB Member Bridges **moves** to adjourn the meeting, Clerk Albert seconds, and the motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mary Lane, Administrative Assistant