

TOWN OF RUTLAND  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
6-11-15

Meeting open at 7:00 PM

Commissioners Present:

Howard Burgess, Andrew McKane, Dana Peterson, Barbara Pulling and Alan Biederman

The meeting opened at 7:00 P.M.

Town resident Mr. Mark Foley Sr. met with Commissioners and made a presentation regarding the possible future use of his 400 acre Redfield Farms property located off US Route 3 property.

Mr. Foley referred to a wall size map as he explained the history of his property and the manner in which he sees his property being developed. Mr. Foley told Commissioners that his property has a high value for private recreation. He said he envisions his property being developed as a corporate retreat.

Mr. Foley said individuals would relax for a few days and chill-out while staying in one of possibly 10 guest cottages, which he said, could be built on the 400 acres. Mr. Foley cited a location on his property where three rock formations known as "The Ledges" is located.

Mr. Foley said the ledges are an un-tapped natural beauty. He said the views are spectacular from the top of the ledges. Mr. Foley said he estimates that the ledges are about 10 acres in size. Mr. Foley said the ledges can also be used for rock climbing. Mr. Foley cited the fact that his property is adjacent to the Pine Hill Park recreation area in the City of Rutland.

Mr. Foley told Commissioners that he has a network of unpaved roads on his property for hiking. Mr. Foley said his roads are 7 feet wide and kept mowed. Mr. Foley said individuals using Pine Hill Park come on to his land and use the trails that he often walks in Pine Hill Park. Mr. Foley said Pine Hill Park is a good neighbor and that he has never had any trouble with Pine Hill Park users.

Mr. Foley told Commissioners that he has lived on the property for the past 28 years and that the road that leads to his home is steep but is a very good road. He said because the road faces the morning sun by 10:00 A.M. the road is dry.

Mr. Foley told Commissioners that he envisions his home being used as the headquarters, with up to 10 upscale cottages being constructed throughout his 400 acres.

Mr. Foley said the main house would be used for dining, spa, library, pool and a health club. Mr. Foley said his property would be used for corporate retreats with up to 30 individuals.

Mr. Foley cited the Twin Farms retreat located in Woodstock, Vermont as an example of what his property can become. Mr. Foley said the highest and best use of his property would be recreation and light residential & commercial.

Mr. Foley requested that the Commission leave his property's land use designation as R40 C for the reasons he cited.

Mr. Foley said he would like to keep his property in R40 C because of the financial impact it has for him and his family. He said leaving the property in R40 would also be good for the Town in the future. He said his property represents something the Town does not have. He said it would be an opportunity to grow the tax base. Mr. Foley answered questions from Commissioners.

Commissioners discussed the various land use designations which have been considered for the Foley property. Mr. Peterson said the Commission has considered changing the land to a mix of Conservation and Forest land use districts.

Mr. Zingale said Commissioners also discussed designating anything above 15% slope as conservation and the land below 15% slope as residential. Mr. Biederman said the fact there is 15% slope on the Foley land could be a positive for certain uses.

Mr. Zingale cited a possible problem in that Town subdivision regulations will not allow a new road which exceeds a 10% grade. Mr. Biederman said such an issue is really a landowner problem and that the Town should not be concerned.

Mr. Biederman said the Town could allow land owners to do as they choose regardless of whether the land exceeds a 10% grad. Mr. Biederman said if a landowner knows he cannot have fire protection and still wants to build then the individual should be allowed to do so.

Mr. Biederman questioned whether the Commission should care if someone wants to build a house that is totally inaccessible. Mr. Peterson said a house fire in a wooded area, which is inaccessible, could spread to other properties. He said in such an example the public interest would be greater than the individual's homeowner's interest.

Mr. McKane questioned if the parcel should be left as R40 C. Messrs. Burgess, Peterson and Biederman said the Commission should wait and make a decision when considering other possible land use changes.

Commissioners discussed possibly including the Pine Hill Park Carriage Trail as a natural resource.

Commissioners discussed other matters including whether the Commission minutes are up to date and writing a Town Plan compliance letter for the proposed Alderman's Chevrolet showroom building.

Mr. Biederman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Burgess made a second to the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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Andrew McKane, Chairman  
6-18-15