

TOWN OF DRYDEN
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
October 28, 2021
Zoom Hybrid

Present: John Kiefer, Chair, Craig Anderson, Tony Salerno, Daniel Bussmann,
Joe Wilson, Alice Green (alternate), Simon St Laurent (alternate)

Absent: Linda Wagenet

Staff: Ray Burger, Planning Director

Liaisons: Dan Lamb and Loren Sparling (Town Board)
Craig Schutt, Conservation Board

J Kiefer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He announced the Rail Trail presentation will be next month.

Knickerbocker Bed Frame Company

Ray Burger explained Knickerbocker Bed Frame Company is interested in moving their business to 17 Hall Woods Road, the old VanGuard Press building. They are applying for a special use permit, a manufacturing use in a light industrial zone. The prior operation was a printing business, so this is somewhat similar, but will vary from the prior use. This will be a hearing for a special use permit before the Town Board in November. The Planning Board tonight will review the site plan and recommendations will be forwarded to the town board. He introduced Rich Polevoy, owner of Knickerbocker Bed Frame Company, Jeff Robbins of Hunt Engineers, and Russ Robinson from LeChase Construction Contractors.

C Anderson said did he did not receive all documents beforehand. He received an application that was incomplete and nothing on sketch plan. (Paper copies were available on the table tonight. Some items were sent to board members yesterday.)

Jeff Robbins said they submitted an application over a week ago and R Burger requested some additional information that was provided this week.

Rich Polevoy thanked the board for having them on short notice and said they are excited to be in Dryden and the Finger Lakes Area. He and his three sons went to Cornell. They enjoy the area and think they understand the culture and love the work ethic here. The most important part of relocating is the people; the most important component of having a successful business. His grandfather started the business 102 years ago and have been in New Jersey since then. They are in the bedding support business. They make frames and bed springs and are the only ones in the industry that are 100% American made with 100% domestic components. They make products that are unique and different. For 22 years they have worked in Skaneateles with Brownlie Design. They have reinvented their whole category and have a unique product line that is completely different. They sell to every major retailer in this region, just about everyone that is quality-conscious in their industry.

This building presents a terrific opportunity because it is perfectly situated and laid out in the way they want it to be in terms of manufacturing. It is within their supply chain routes and everything works out well. He has met some former employees of the building and they expect to try to hire back people who lost their jobs three years ago. He is impressed with the caliber of people he has met so far. They will rely on local knowledge between the people that previously worked in the building, Hunt Engineering and LeChase and feel comfortable coming to Dryden to put down new roots. They might get better tax incentives in other states, but those only last so long and they are in it for the long run. They appreciate any incentives they may be able to get from the county or state. They have a definite business plan, and the building and people match with their idea of how to run a good business. They look forward to being good neighbors and working with the town for many years to come.

J Kiefer said he appreciates hearing from the applicant, and he was excited when he heard the company was interested in coming to Dryden. The application for a special use permit and site plan review is before the Town Board and the Planning Board offers them comments and advice in an advisory role. Because this board does not have complete application materials, any advice given to the Town Board is based on what the board received last Friday.

Jeff Robbins said they did not anticipate the special use permit requirement, and they are trying to get through the process before closing on the building. They will not change anything square footage wise. They expect to move into the facility and utilize the square footage that is there. They expect to refresh the exterior, tend to the plantings, clean it up, repave and restripe the parking lots, make sure they have ADA compliant parking, provide bike racks and all those things that are in the town's initiatives. They want to be a good neighbor and supportive of the community.

The expectation for truck traffic is minimal, maybe 7 a day and a few more at times as they grow. There is plenty of parking for employees. They do expect to build the company and grow and transfer the operations a bit at a time. That will happen over a couple of years. They will come for a building permit when necessary. Most of the work will be interior and basically removing some interior walls, replacing some of the dated mechanical systems to higher efficiency equipment, making the building work for the applicant's activity. They do expect to do some exterior façade upgrades. They would like to put a sign on the side of the building so that it is identifiable. Any current way-finding signs on property will be updated with Knickerbocker's information.

Questions/Comments from the board:

- Explanation of parking - The lot by the office would be mostly for office staff and the other one for factory staff. The parking areas will not be expanded, and both will be used. There will be ADA compliant parking on both lots and as close to entry to the building as possible.
- Are there retail sales? – No.
- Where do trucks come in, where is the loading dock for trucks? There are two loading docks. One will be used for shipping and one for receiving.
- Are there exhaust hoods or fume emissions from the building? No, they are not manufacturing. They are basically heating up resin into a shape in a mode. There are no emissions.
- This sounds like a happy reuse for that gigantic building.

- What is the repaving plan? They believe they can take the top inch and a half or so off and repave it, but further testing is required to be sure the subbase hasn't been compromised. There may be some box out areas in places that have been compromised. The fire lane is currently gravel and they will reuse millings on the fire lane to improve that. It will support a fire truck.
- What is the primary energy source? Electricity. Some natural gas will be used for heating sources. There is plenty of power available.
- Are the fire lanes adequate for emergency vehicle turns? Applicant was instructed to contact Varna Fire Department to review that.
- Stretch code – Any internal work will need to comply with NYS Stretch as adopted by the new town law. The town is not enforcing the ventilation section because of the conflict with the Uniform Code. That law will be posted on the website.
- The Rail Trail Task Force has been seeking an easement along the back part of the property for many years for the trail. How does the applicant feel about that? They have heard that, and will try to fit in as well as they can and be as cooperative as they can with the town. Randall Marcus is representing them, and they think the town will be pleased having them there.
- Are about 60 employees expected? They anticipate starting with about 60 employees in the next few years. They don't want to over-promise and currently have 95-100 in New Jersey. If everything goes as expected, they will move everything up here over time.
- Two shifts? Right now, they are doing one main shift. With plastics equipment you try to run it 24-7. There will probably be a small 2nd or 3rd shift for maintenance to keep the machines running. The main shift will probably be from 6:30-7:00 a.m. until 3:00-3:30 p.m. but they are flexible on that.
- R Polevoy said he appreciates all the welcoming comments, from the board and everyone he has met here. They have been welcoming and warm.

Recommendations to Town Board:

Applicant will check with the fire department to be sure they have adequate access.
Foot print of the building

Regarding Stretch Code:

Applicant will have to get someone to do the 3rd party stretch inspection.
EV car charging stations are required in the stretch code.

Public Comment

Jolene Lyon, of Mineah Road, read the attached statement.

Paula Parker, of Irish Settlement Road, read the attached statement.

Shirley Lyon, Mineah Road, said she has walked the proposed trail from Pinckney Road to Hall Road three times. (She brought pictures on a thumb drive and there was difficulty displaying them. R Burger will send them to Planning Board members.) She is not against a trail, but as a businessperson is looking at this business-wise, including cost, aesthetics, and what is best for Dryden. She has not been able to mitigate a crossing at Pinckney Road. She described the pictures that were able to be displayed and does not believe that the pictures would promote tourism. There was dust that day and it was not pleasing to walk with that and the mosquitos from the swamp. There are transformers within 10 feet of the trail, piles of dirt, and large concrete chunks. She is concerned that this is not pleasant or aesthetic for tourism. If there is contamination from the damaged transformers, it is right next to the trail. Most of the entryways to the trail have a 3-4 car capacity and people will park on the roadways. That will ruin the quality of life for people along the road and that should be mitigated. Aesthetically it is loud, we know the danger of Pinckney Road, and there is possible contamination from PCBs.

Gerald Lyon, said he owned Gold Sport Cycle at the corner of Route 13 and Hanshaw Road and was in business for 43 years. During that time, he was a member of the Ithaca Dirt Riders and they put on many national Enduros (150-175 miles long through the woods). He worked extensively on trails with the DEC because they used a lot of state land and did not want to leave erosion and damage. He is well acquainted with trails. He now runs a business call GS Groundwork and removes trees, stumps, and clears pathways. They worked well with the DEC and tried to mitigate issues. He walked the other side of Hanson Aggregate. They started at Route 13 and walked the alternate trail from Route 13 bridge to Pinckney Road. The old trail along there is easily identifiable. They walked it quite easily. They could have walked it in their sneakers, and it had been wet. If you walk along the creek from Route 13 to Pinckney Road, it is beautiful. This whole section along Fall Creek is gorgeous. You could put a park bench every 100 feet. This is an asset to the Dryden community. How many will use the industrial park trail? You would be holding back the use of this lower trail from the whole Dryden community. It is an asset. There are some wet spots and fallen logs but that could be taken care of. There is one large ravine, but you can get around it easily.

He studied the 2015 report of the Cornell students, and they were spot on. It's doable and would benefit a larger number of people in the community. There are a couple of swales that were dry. A sluice pipe behind the last house on Hall Woods Road might do it. He could clean it out in maybe a day. He would like to see the RTTF open their eyes. How many people will they serve in the community? If we are going to do this, let's give the taxpayers their money's worth and something good to enjoy. He doesn't think they've done their work.

Only two of the photos provided were able to be shared. R Burger will send them to the board.

Joe Osmeloski, 2180 Dryden Road, said we are now hearing a lot of talk about PCBs. And people freak out for good reason. They were banned in 1978 or 1979. They were one of the main oils in NYSEG's transformers before they were banned. None of us know if there are PCBs out there, but if it is a possibility, it behooves the town and the RTTF to find out. If you are going to go through there, it seems they would want to at least test for them.

The problem with what Jerry brought up is the Todd Bittner report. T Bittner's position is that Cornell would not be willing to give up this land. He said Cornell has worked with the town in other instances. If you work with Cornell, you can get an access/usage agreement, similar to what the town did with the Game Farm. Cornell is not exempt from eminent domain. If you are going to use it on private citizens, he sees no problem with using it on Cornell. He agrees with some of Bittner's report,

but the fact that he says Cornell wouldn't be willing to donate this goes against what he has seen in Cornell's history with Dryden. If there is contamination on the other part of the trail, obviously you'd want to go this way.

S Lyon said when she walked the suggested alternative trail with her husband she envisioned Cornell students working on this project with town volunteers and meshing with Cornell and expanding the Cayuga-Monkey Run trail and making it a positive experience.

Craig Schutt expressed concern that the lights in back parking lot are not working.

Approval of Minutes

July 22, 2021 – Approval moved by T Salerno, 2nd J Wilson - all in favor

September 23, 2021 – Approval moved by T Salerno, 2nd J Wilson – all in favor

November/December Meeting Dates

After discussion, the board decided to combine the November and December Planning Board meetings to one meeting on December 2 at 6:00 p.m. If need be another meeting could be scheduled later in December.

Coordination with Town Board

Dan Lamb reported they have a couple prospects for filling the Planning Board vacancy. The board has made a lot of progress on the budget. Revenues are in a good place due to the sales tax offset. They were asked for more resources for the Planning Department and will do that the proposed budget includes \$60,000 for a new code enforcement/planner. The overall tax rate will go from \$5.08 to \$5.19. This is a 2% tax increase in tax rate and 4% increase in the levy. The Knickerbocker news has made a lot of people happy. This is 60 new jobs for and a several million-dollar investment in the facility. He is pleased to see are they open to granting an easement for Rail Trail. The RTTF was front page news in The Ithaca Journal yesterday. The broadband project will impact the town even more. The project is real and moving forward. They have 1.5 million in federal money for the project and the USDA Rural Development Agency has announced the next round of the Reconnect grant program. Regional Director for Rural Development has said this project is right up the alley of the program and we should apply for the whole 15 million in the grant application. That is up to the broadband committee. This project is the quiet giant right now. They intend to wire every home in the town of Dryden with internet access that will be faster, less expensive, and more reliable than what is available now. It will be a game changer and people will want to move here and invest here.

Planning Department Update

The Plantation Inn has gone through the demolition phase so there is movement, but there is no application for reconstruction yet.

The 2022 budget has provision for a new position for the department. There is also \$30,000 comp plan implementation to start the project.

The Drinking Water Source Protection Plan will be before the Town Board in November or December for adoption. It can then be appended to the comp plan.

A member pointed out that it is important to have a list of inspectors that people can use for stretch code inspection purposes. There needs to be third party inspections for commercial and residential. There have been a dozen residential permits issued since September 1. R Burger said the code enforcement officers are working on this.

Comp Plan Update

J Keifer said he has spent time reviewing the master draft and implementation matrix. Regarding the matrix, he has asked for an introductory section there describing what it is. It looks like a lot, but it is a plan until 2045 with limited resources. He asked that there be an explanation that this is a list of all the recommendations from the plan, that we are limited in how much work can be done. The process for rolling this out is to choose things that you think you can do and work on them. Overall, he was pleased with what he saw and proposes that the implementation matrix be added, add the appendices, and when that is done, release it to the boards so they can begin their review. This won't mean this board stops its review; it means we add reviewers. It is a big document, and he doesn't expect immediate feedback. After discussion, the board agreed so long as it is noted that this still in draft form.

Planning Board Process

J Kiefer explained that this agenda item had to do with the issue at the VFW and a particular board member having had a target on his back as being responsible for that. The topic of the Planning Board commenting on zoning violations is as old as the Planning Board. The board's task for site plan review is to see that they are consistent with the code. The board takes pride in the work that they do, working with applicants to produce site plans that are consistent with the codes here, encouraging development, and are successful at that. As part of that, when members drive around town and see violations, it isn't good for member morale. Sometimes things don't get enforced and it is not unusual for a member to bring a violation up at a meeting. He has never seen it blow up from that point. The Planning Board doesn't make the laws or decide whether they should be enforced. The Planning Board does not enforce them, but occasionally makes comments that there has been a violation. His question is how did a comment that a member made last summer, which the board agreed with, paint a target on his back. There are people very upset about this and thinking that one member is responsible for what has gone on. That is wrong. You can't attract new members to the Planning Board this way, blaming Planning Board members because the town is enforcing the law. It isn't right. He doesn't want this to happen again.

The board discussed the matter and there was some public input. J Kiefer said that in the future as a best practice, when board members and town staff are talking about an action of the Planning Board, it should be referred to as a board action and not attributed to any particular board member.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bambi L. Avery