

Town of Romulus Planning Board

Town of Romulus, 1435 Prospect St., Willard, N.Y. 14588

Meeting Minutes August 3, 2020

**Call to Order**

Sue Ellen Balluff, Chair

Tom Bouchard

Bill Karlsen

Cindy Meckley

Al Nivison- excused

Kate Sinicropi

**Guests:** F. Brandon Mallory

Pat Morrell, Attorney

Ivan Zaravillow(?)

Janet Lynch

**Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence**

Approval of July 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes – on page 3 add, “followed”. Tom made the motion to approve as corrected, motion second by Bill. Minutes unanimously approved.

**Specialty Crop Farm Labor Contractors** – Mr. Brandon Mallory, President of Specialty Crop Farm Labor Contractors, Rochester, N.Y. was introduced by Sue Ellen. This is not an official application, Mr. Mallory explained that they were looking for looking for direction and information from the planning board. Mr. Mallory thanked us for our time and for the information from Sue Ellen. We do not know if any labor housing exists in the town of Romulus. We do not want to spend money on the project currently. Mr. Mallory provided a history of their organization. They provide Agri Placement services and have been associated with Dairy Lea Services, providing labor contract services for 20 years. Their main clientele are dairy farms in New York state.

They have provided permanent year- round work for dairy farmers through their contracts. They are now looking at providing seasonal workers. There is a shortage of labor for vegetable farmers, dairy, etc. Mr. Mallory worked for the New York State Labor Department. and is familiar with Wayne Co. and with grape growers. There is not enough labor in the US for producing food. Therefore, the H2A program provides non-immigrant workers, guest workers that come into the country seasonally and then return to their country. This program benefits the town, our producers, and local businesses. The H2A program is 75 years old. Most of the laborers are Mexican due to proximity. Why are we here now? Every year more and more laborers under H2A are coming to harvest seasonal food and it is extremely expensive. Under the rules of the program, you must keep them busy for the entire length of time that they are in the country. A group brought in can be shared across producers. Farmers need someone to coordinate the program for them. We must provide housing for them while they are here. We need 20 – 25 people for this housing application. Sue Ellen asked if the

housing is dormitory style or apartments? They are not individual apartments, but it is two men in each room with a shared communal kitchen. Transportation wise the site we have identified (in Kendaia) is in the middle of nowhere. We will use a van and other vehicles to transport the laborers to work and to the grocery store etc. The site, on Kendaia Road, we have known about for a month to 6 weeks. We have looked at other property but need 6 acres of land, on which we would build one building to house 24 people. Tom asked what size is the building? We do not have that information yet. Mr. Mallory explained that Federal and State Labor Departments determine the regulations for the housing. Discussion followed. Cindy asked what is the water source? Sue Ellen responded that there is public water on Kendaia Road. Pat Morrell, Attorney asked if there are 12 rooms on one floor? Yes, 12 rooms, all on one floor. We would build it to be able to expand it if necessary. The showers and bathrooms are private and all together. The clients we already know, as they are the wineries. On the dairy side the workers are domestics, different than H2A guest worker, which cannot be used for dairy farms, as they are seasonal only. Tom asked what happens to the building for the rest of the year? We will rotate workers in, i.e., for an early crop, then bring in another group or keep the same crew for another crop. We do not expect to shut the building down. The building will not be empty. There are other states that have programs like this. Here in New York we generally have individual farmers bringing in laborers. The H2A program what is it? Government? Is this private? There is no government support for this program. The Dept. of State, Homeland Security etc. are involved due to the regulations of the program and the laws applicable. It is expensive, as it is paid for by the client (the farms). There are no grants for the farms. Specialty Crop Farm Labor is responsible for the laborer, not the farms. Responsible for health needs of laborers? Yes. This planning was in place prior to Covid 19.

Tom asked if there is a minimum number of hours and minimum wage under the contract? For 2020 the wage is \$14.29/hr. The laborers must pay taxes and pay for their food. Sue Ellen asked if the wineries are interested? Yes, there are 8 or 9 wineries here that are interested and other wineries in western NY. This has been done for domestic workers in New York. (ex. Wineries) Sue Ellen asked if any dairy farmers are interested in our area? Yes, a lot of them. Tom asked how are workers vetted? We do the Human Resources work with an apple farmer in Wayne County. After apple season, we would move the laborers right into the vineyards work. This is the first group and we are familiar with these laborers. This fall we are leasing housing for the laborers. This is a pilot program.

What is your main concern? Mr. Mallory asked us. Pat Morrell responded that my concern is what if it does not work? Or next month the H2A program changes or no longer exists? What happens with the building? Mr. Mallory responded that the winery industry will no longer be here if the H2A program ceases to exist. The labor has to come from somewhere. Tom asked what could the building be repurposed into? We have had to deal with large buildings having to be repurposed explained Sue Ellen. Bill

clarified that the Town of Varick has a site that is vacant, Hillside Children's Center. Bill suggested contacting the Seneca County IDA for information.

Sue Ellen clarified that the zoning is agricultural in the area that you are looking at for building.

Sue Ellen explained that the process here would be to complete the application for Special Use (d/t ag versus residential). She explained the Public Hearing etc.

**Borchard & Dethier Subdivision Application** Discussion. In reviewing the map, where is the right of way that was on the previous map? Do we need a public Hearing? Yes. Pat Morrell clarified that our Zoning Code requires 100 ft. frontage on the lake and the 20 ft. lake frontage is not enough.

The applicants were reached by phone. They stated that they want to subdivide 1.7 acres. If the Planning Board rejects the application, they will go to the ZBA for a variance. What about the access to the landlocked property? They (landlocked property) lost their lawsuit as we own the land. (Pat clarified that the case is being appealed) The lake frontage requirement is way off from or zoning. Are there any septic and water issues? There is no sewer there. There is public water there so someone can tap in if they want to.

Pat Morrell explained the process to Mr. Borchard. What would the potential use be? What is the terrain's ability to have water & septic etc.? The Planning Bd. determines if it is subdivided or not. The lot lines are determined by the Planning Board. The landlocked parcel does not have access. These are the issues.

Sue Ellen determined that the Public Hearing will be the 21<sup>st</sup> of Sept.

**Mast School Special Use Permit** The County Planning Board approved the application subject to water and sewer confirmation. Motion made for Public Hearing on Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> by Tom and seconded by Cindy. Motion approved unanimously.

**Borchard & Dethier Subdivision Public Hearing Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>** Motion made by Cindy and seconded by Tom. Motion unanimously approved.

**Comprehensive Plan Update** Tom gave information to Mike. Mary got a digital copy from Daryl Martin. Mary is using Hector's Comprehensive Plan as a template. Attachments include a history by Walt Gable, and information from Tom Strumpf. It compliments what we are doing, and Mary is moving forward on it.

**Planning Bd. openings** Two people are interested, and we are looking at one as an alternate and one as a new member. Dave Hayes, Supervisor will get in touch with Sue Ellen.

**By- Laws** Sue Ellen redid them. Pat clarified that the Terms of Service are determined by the Town Board. We do not need them in our by-laws. Discussion. Sue Ellen noted that we can review them and adopt at the next meeting.

Next meeting is Sept. 21st.

Cindy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tom. Motion unanimously approved.

Adjourned 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Sinicropi, Secretary