

****DRAFT****

TOWN OF FORESTBURGH

PLANNING BOARD

JULY 26, 2016

Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairman Richard Robbins

Members Present: Richard Robbins, Chair
Karen Ellsweig
David Groskin
Susan Hawvermale
Robert Sipos

Absent: None

Attorney Present: Jackie Riccianni

Recording Secretary: Wendy Wells

Moment of Silence for Carl "Butch" Buckstad

Approval of Minutes:

- **Motion: Approve minutes from 26 April 2016** made by Karen Ellsweig Seconded by: David Groskin
- After a brief question from Susan Hawvermale that was answered by Richard Robbins the vote on the minutes continued.
- **Vote: All in favor**
- Resolved: Minutes from the 26 April 2016 meeting approved without modification

Business:

Richard began by noting that the Mr. Andrew Unterberg had requested the opportunity to make an informal presentation and get some feedback about his concept called "Tent Days" for the 300 acre parcel on Tannery Road, which he is considering buying . A brief description was included in the July Newsletter that is on the website and posted on the memo board in the Town Hall. Mr. Unterberg began by noting that he is considering a 100 site tent only campground that is geared towards people who are not experts in camping. They will provide all the necessities needed to have an enjoyable camping experience. More accessible to people and families with a disposable income living in New York City. The property already has clearings, many wells and a few outbuildings that will be utilized in the design. The lodge on the property will be a general store and café, the driving range area will be a community area, some fairways will be adult only camping and the other fairways will be family camping. Mr. Unterberg is considering a no-glass policy and no alcohol brought in by the campers. He is hoping to be able to serve beer and wine in the café. His intent, as far as environmental impact, is to make it as small an impact as possible. By minimizing the use of disposable products. He envisions one day to become self-sustaining. He's not intending on clearing any large areas of land, but instead using the already

cleared areas for camping. There is a plan of building permanent bath houses that would require septic systems.

Comments/Questions by Board:

Richard briefly described the steps of proceeding further with Mr. Unterberg's concept. David Groskin asked if this is a franchise or an original idea. Mr. Unterberg's response was that this is an original idea that has never been done. This would be the very first of them. Richard commented that it is his understanding that Mr. Unterberg's intent is to have these types of campgrounds in other areas also. Mr. Unterberg followed the comment with saying that if this idea works out well in this area that he would like to eventually have them in other areas as well. Richard brought up the importance of having fire protection not only to keep the campers safe but to keep the forest safe also. Mr. Unterberg fully agreed. The question of how long would the season be was asked and Mr. Unterberg's response was that he envisions it to be 6 months. The tents are not winterized, he has not budgeted or planned for a winter camping season. Unless there is a great demand for it, then he would consider extending the camping season in to the winter months. Susan Hawvermale brought up the concern with bears in the area and how he plans to keep them at bay. Mr. Unterberg remarked that his plan is to have the campers hang their garbage on hanging posts and the staff will remove the garbage to a large bear proof compactor every evening. He plans of having a staff that is well educated in forest and wildlife management. When asked if he is considering being a member of CONY (Campground Owners of NY) he responded that he is as well as a larger national campground organization. Susan asked how he plans on marketing this campground. He plans on using word of mouth, social media and bringing other partnerships in, like specialty chefs, and joint marketing as well as camping specific publications. A question arose on the public's ability to use the café. Ms. Riccianni looked in to the town code briefly on this matter and found that it would only be available to the campers as the property is zoned RR. When asked if there was a way around this, Ms. Riccianni responded that the code would have to be amended for that to be possible. Karen Ellsweig addressed the potential that noise that may be an issue with some campers bringing loud music devices. Mr. Unterberg assured her that there will be quiet hours that will be imposed as well as staff that will be going around the campground to check that the rules are being followed. He envisions about 30 staff members working in different capacities during the season as well as security staff year round not living on site. He plans on being up here during the season. David Groskin asked the question about the permanence of the tents. Mr. Unterberg discussed how the tents are going to be set up on an as needed basis then taken down and cleaned after use. This will ensure the freshness of the equipment and help maintain the grass. The tents are constructed from a heavy duty rain proof canvas material. There will be a 3 tent/ 6 person per site limit instilled at the campground. His turn over plan is 2-3 days mostly on the weekends with less campers during the weekdays. Bob Sipos brought up concern about the traffic that will be going up and down Tannery Road, and across the one lane bridge. Mr. Unterberg responded by raising the idea of staggering the check in and check out times so the traffic wouldn't be constant. He also assured that there will be plenty of signage stating to drive slowly. When asked if he plans on building any other permanent buildings, Mr. Unterberg's response was that he only plans on building the permanent bath houses, and that the existing club house structure may well have to be torn down and rebuilt. He stated that he will have staff that are educated in wilderness and regular first aid. He plans on having training before camp opens and the have an emergency action plan in place with the local hospitals and first responders. Susan asked if he plans on having access for emergency vehicles to every

tent. Mr. Unterberg is uncertain at this time if that will be possible but plans on looking into it further and including it into his plans.

Comments by Public:

Jim Steinberg commented on the importance of supplying the fire company with the emergency and fire plan for the campground. Olga Orseck, who is a very experienced camper, spoke her concern about the necessity of having alcohol on site. She believes that it is not necessary to enjoy nature. Peter Schuman asked how he became aware of this property. Mr. Unterberg stated that he had been looking for property and addressed some of his local real estate companies that focused on farm land. Barbara Leone spoke in favor of the project and asked that Mr. Unterberg consider involving and employing local residents at his facility. Sheldon Pasternak asked about the proximity of fresh water to the campsites. Mr. Unterberg stated that there are several wells on the property and that the state code says there needs to be fresh water within a certain distance to each campsite. Mr. Pasternak also showed concern at the proper storage of food to deter bears. Mr. Unterberg plans on having some sort of literature to hand out to campers or signage and verbally when they check in on how to properly store food. He also plans on having coolers available to the campers to use. Gabrielle Kahn spoke in favor of the concept, noting it to have as minimal an environmental impact on the town as possible. Gene Raponi asked about the master plan for the size of the campground. Mr. Unterberg reiterated that at this time he plans on having 100 sites, but if there is a strong need in the future he may need to add 10 or more sites but the reality is that there is more land than this plan needs. He wants the campsites to be spread out enough to have room and green space. Dan Hogue commented that there is 300 acres and about 200 acres being the golf course area and 100 acres of wooded area which goes all the way to Route 42. Mr. Unterberg assured everyone that he doesn't plan on doing anything with that part of the property and keeping as is as buffer and utilizing the layout of the golf course. David Groskin asked what the estimated time of opening and Mr. Unterberg hopefully stated that he would like to be open for the 2017 season. Karen Ellsweig raised concern over there would be motorcycle or other off road vehicles allowed on the premises. Mr. Unterberg assured her that there would be no allowance of any sort of off road vehicles on the grounds. The staff will be using golf carts to get around. There will be no activities that involve motorized vehicles or any loud recreational sports. Karen also asked whether he has plans for a swimming pool or a stable. Mr. Unterberg's response was no stables, swimming pool is a possibility. He was wondering about using the ponds on the property for fishing and he would like to look into a "natural pool" that uses natural plants to filter the water. Bob Sipos raised concern about how he plans on keeping the campers from wandering on the neighbor's property. Mr. Unterberg plans on overly posting the property to draw an invisible barrier. Possibly making trails on his property for the campers to walk through. Steve Budofsky asked where he plans on getting the wood for the campfires. Mr. Unterberg said he will only fell the trees that need to be removed otherwise he will be using an outside source to supply the wood from someone that can do it responsibly.

Dan Hogue asked Richard Robbins to go over the steps needed to proceed with this idea, should he want to go forward with an actual application for a special use permit. Richard explained them for Mr. Unterberg, and his attorneys.

Richard asked if there was anything not on the agenda that needs to be addressed and Susan commented that in respect to the minutes of the meetings, she would like to have the motions reflected.

Motion to Adjourn. made by David , seconded by Karen and approved by all.