

## Planning Board Meeting

9.26.2019

- I. Opening:
  - a. Steve S. opens the meeting and reads the hearing notice
  - b. Reviews the agenda: presentation by Clockwork; then questions from the Planning Board, the questions from the audience to the Board. Then, deliberations by the Planning Board. If we need additional time to deliberate, we will meet on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 6PM. That meeting will be open to the public, but not for comments.
- II. Moody Center and Clockwork: Emmitt Mitchell and Christian Arnold
  - a. Indicates that he's been part of the process to find a "suitor" for the Moody Center. Shares that there were three criteria:
    - i. Are there the resources to maintain
    - ii. Are there the people to support
    - iii. Do they have the ability / desire
  - b. The campus requires high maintenance and the heritage – Moody was born here, taught her, and died here.
  - c. Devised a plan to divide the campus – the academic – St. Thomas Aquinas is a good fit. Needed to maintain the Moody Center and sustain the archives of Moody. Clockwork devised the first plan. Once the campus was divided in two, he also discovered the section that has the woods and trails. Is looking forward to a plan for the future and a master vision – body, mind, spirit (nature – body; St. Thomas Aquinas – mind; and Moody – spirit). He sought to find a way to make Northfield a destination; "it's not really on the way to anywhere – you have to be going to Northfield to get o Northfield."
  - d. Indicated he knows some people are here because of what they heard. And suggests that this upscale campground will take away concerns. Sees the Moody Center as a benefit to Northfield and points to the campground as a way to keep people there.
  - e. Clockwork rep, Christian, indicates that they want to set the tone for people to be inspired by nature. The campground might conjure ideas; this will be the first location of its kind on the east coast. It's an "eco-friendly resort." There's a prayer walk that works its way up and around the campus. The name Idyllwood is intended to reflect the peace and calm of the area; a formal drawing was submitted to the town in May. The technical requirements have been met.
    - i. In creating the plan, they looked at the Master Plan for Northfield
    - ii. Indicates they're meeting or exceeding the zoning requirements
    - iii. Upper garden intended to stay a garden – clusters of trees, fellowship
    - iv. Blue line represents the brook; all structures 250 feet from the brook and trying to create a high quality product.
    - v. 12 A-frames and 27 furnished tents; it's similar to a hotel room. I think some people thought it would be an RV park, but that's not this. It's post and beam construction with exposed wood. Cabins are fully plumbed, bed and kitchenette. The other tents are between the cabins.



- vi. Shows furnishings in the tents and showing the authentic and craft nature of the furnishings.

III. NAME

- a. Explains the purpose of the prayer walk
- b. Question from Steve: asks about the treeline and whether there's a slide to show or describe – Christian indicates that they're trying not to impact the old growth trees and that they buildings would be screened by the trees
- c. CEO of the Moody Center says that they've received questions over the past weeks and are responding. Some emerging from the public hearing in July.
  - i. No outside trailers / RVs allowed
  - ii. It's family friendly and there are quiet hours, which will be monitored by the staff – 10pm to 8am
  - iii. No alcohol is able to be sold on the property; people could bring their own
  - iv. Wood is able to be burned; all provided wood is seasoned
  - v. 12 cabins and 27 furnished tents
  - vi. Rates are \$125 per night; trying to set a price point to attract the "right kind" of people.
  - vii. Amenities: facilities are fully furnished; it's got modern utilities
  - viii. Wants guests to have a private and secluded experience
  - ix. Minimizing exterior lighting; want to preserve the night sky

IV. Planning Board:

- a. Trash: managed by a third party; there are trash and dumpsters on site.
- b. Check in – check out (4-7pm check in; then 11am check out)
- c. Cars: they're proposing 39 total facilities and 1 car per facility. In the initial part of the project we project less (15-18).

Planning Board Questions:

1. Homer: used the word "hotel" – and wondering if you're proposing a hotel in pieces – check in, lobby, emphasis on intending to maintain an orderly house; wondering about the intent.
  - a. Reply: attempting to counter that this isn't an RV park – it's trying to convey that all things are provided.
2. Tammy: asks about regulations with the building inspector.
  - a. Met with Andrea, then with the building inspector. Needed to figure out the appropriate steps, but no problems and that since it was approved use, it would be relatively straightforward.
3. Steve: water and sewer
  - a. Allows them to tie into public water system
  - b. Sewer – closest manhole is on Winchester Rd., and about ¾ miles away by road and then ¼ as the crow flies. Determined early on that extending the sewer isn't feasible. Had a local consultant do soil testing and it looks like it's able to be accommodated for the private containment system.
4. Homer: parking – indicated 1 space per unit. On vacations, usually meet a couple of cars; trying to minimize the amount of parking. Right now just trying to meet the building code.
  - a. There will be a small parking lot near club house.



**Open questions:**

1. Bob Hughes: indicates his membership in Board of Health; to determine the kind of system to put in, the Board of Health should be involved. Suggests talking with them and not to go too far down the road.
2. How long will the road be from Pierson. Subdivision laws indicate it needs to be 800 ft. Indicates that a campground should be seasonal.
3. Will A frame be built on site and have heat? Are they built to the Mass codes? Are they permanent dwellings?
4. Will there be security on site 24 hours a day at the camp? Would our police department be checking in there?

Reads out the definition of "campground." This seems more like a dwelling instead of something seasonal. This is 400 ft. beyond the code for the subdivision.

This seems like a hotel instead of a campground. Who pays for the infrastructure that needs to support what are basically 40 additional homes?

What are the taxes going to be? This campground is a for-profit venture, but the campground is an LLC and considered taxable. Response: Northfield will benefit from the tax. Property is taxed and it's the same whether it's 100 people or 10,000. The question is for the Assessors.

Also in zoning – do they have the total costs and benefits to the town? We haven't seen this yet (pg. 59, #9).

5. Moody Center: a 501c3; if anything commercial, want it to be an LLC to pay taxes into the community. Want to have partners in this.
6. Indicates that this is different from in July. Mentioned that there would be a store selling alcohol, and there would be a structure with an 8,000 square foot building. Suggests that this is a subdivision, but Steve indicates that it doesn't. Says that this organization is effecting 35 homes adversely.
7. Statement - - considering the transients to the neighborhood and worry about environmental impact.
8. Building inspector has the final say and seems that this doesn't qualify as a "dwelling."
9. Joe – Historical Commission – concluded that there was 9000 years of. Mass law ch 40, section A-D. Asking the Board to consider that if a permit is given to go ahead with this, that test borings be done at the areas for the roads, septic, water, and conditions that allow for people to monitor tree removal and building. Could share in an executive session.



- a. Steve indicates that he's asked for the map and that it would be made available; asks if it's certified. Map is a combination of archeological standards. Mass Law 114 indicates that we need to ensure that we should do core samples and Northfield Historical Commission is requesting.
- 10. Matt – East Northfield water company – indicates that more usage of the water will make this useful for people in the town.
- 11. Wondering if there will be food delivery trucks and size / wondering if there's something local.
  - a. Response: intent is to use stores on Main Street. There is a plan to create some pre-packaged things for people to buy, but haven't worked through menu development. Will likely be small provisions, but still evolving – no commercial kitchen. Indicates that some of these are minutiae details that will be fleshed out in the process.
- 12. To be able to take on the campus this size and one that has no students, I don't think the financial constraints should prevent the core samples.
- 13. I was confused when you talked about alcohol. You're not selling?
  - a. I'm a Baptist – we don't have alcohol. We have a different standard than others. Other people may bring alcohol.
    - i. Citizen: see no benefit to the town and voice concerns from the community re: alcohol. Response: indicates that no alcohol is sold and that Catholics might have a different standard. Apologizes for not being present at the initial meeting and didn't realize that people would be threatened. The goal is to introduce Moody's heritage and make it a highest level of experience. We want to enhance it – doesn't want to do commercial activities that aren't taxable. Works with Clockwork on commercial ventures. People love this area.
    - ii. Citizen – thinks that this isn't enhancing
      - 1. Response – it's a zoned use, and wants to add to the city and area
      - 2. Citizen – it's bringing in the money
- 14. If the campground goes through, if it fails, wondering if there's a way to put the property back to what it was so that there aren't rotting buildings across from others' homes? What will happen to the structures? The property would go back to the Moody Center and they would continue to operate it. Moody Center has a revision clause and if it fails it could become a non-profit and wouldn't be taxed
- 15. Is it possible that there could be an environmental impact study given the brooks and the impact of the wildlife on that area? We're afraid that this will disappear.
- 16. Is meeting on October 7<sup>th</sup> open and are we allowed to ask more questions?
- 17. Wondering what the steps in the process are -- this is just to approve as concept for the campground. Says this might be anti-business.
- 18. Alex: Chair of the Select Board – at what point decided to populate the field with a business idea and is it about money or about Northfield? Response: Moody Center President indicates that he's trying to spread the impact of Moody's work, and needs to upgrade the facilities. The Master plan for the property asked, "how can we minister to people in the best possible way: body, mind, and spirit. Says that a guy like me can rent a tent for a weekend with my family and would tell friends and come back. Wants to enhance the area and wants to make it a destination – recreational activities attract people. I can hike or kayak. The "why" is because of body, mind,



and spirit. Alex: so not about money. Moody: everything's about money, but we have an LLC and hope it will be profitable, if successful.

19. Agrees with the beauty and kids experienced nature. But don't want grandkids to be there with the tents – you can see all of that and it'll change the area. That's why we came to Northfield and we've lived here. You're dropping something right into the middle of it, and we don't like it. How do we know that they're going to be nice, Christian people?

Steve: we're devolving into the "we like it or don't" but we need to consider the zoning.

20. It's detrimental and offensive – that's what we want to say.
21. Who's the permit for? It's for Christian Arnold at Clockwork. It's not through the Moody Center. I think this hearing is a challenge – one person is doing this and someone else owns the land.
22. Indicates that this doesn't meet the definition of a campground and the Master Plan.
23. Speaking for the Historical Commission, if we have additional questions, are we able to provide them with questions for discussion; we indicate that we will pursue these questions, if we need additional information.
24. Came tonight because he's concerned about the services – police, fire, water, and wondering about school. Is there any impact on the school, or expectation that if there's a family with children that they would attend school? The school budget is bursting at the seams already. Will the project have an impact on the town tax rate. If it raises it "one damn dollar, then I want to vote against it."
  - a. Steve indicates that he checked with law enforcement, and sees no issue
  - b. Doesn't see anyone visiting the campground attending school
  - c. Thinks that if it's approved, will contribute taxes.
25. If permitted, the permit will indicate that it's a seasonal property?
  - a. Steve – no.
26. If there are additional questions can we ask them afterwards? Asks about what's changed – beer, food, and amount of locations, parking, and septic system.
27. Will Board consider property values?
  - a. Assessor indicates it's hard to predict.
28. By when can people submit questions?
29. If motorcycles want to come, can they?
30. If anyone as gone down Pierson, it's quiet – fox, eagles – we're going to lose all of that and it would be sad to lose that.
31. Is there smoking allowed, guns allowed? Marijuana?
  - a. Christian indicates that it would be non-smoking inside the facilities; needs to learn the MA law re smoking. Would need to look into concealed carry in MA, and that this wouldn't be encouraged.

Hearing closed and will continue deliberations on October 7<sup>th</sup>. If comments or concerns please put in writing to the Planning Board.



### Planning Board: Notes and Next Steps

- Question by Homer: We're not in a position to ask to post a bond in the event that the business fails? Steve indicates "No."
- We ask about the Environmental impact. That's for the building inspector
- We can catalogue the concerns identified and then address / embed conditions as appropriate

### Next Steps:

1. Steve will seek legal advice to see whether we would need to require archeological conditions (legal or a request)
2. MR: would like a better understanding / definition of campground on page 4 – manufactured housing and seasonal
3. We should include conditions: Steve shares rules / regulations
4. At next meeting, we either approve and indicate stipulations or come up with reasons why we wouldn't approve.