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GAC Minutes
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Town of Northborough

Office of the Town Engineer

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Groundwater Advisory Committee

May 12, 2021

Remote Zoom Meeting

6:00 p.m.

Present (Remotely): Jason Perreault (Board of Selectmen), Theresa Capobianco (Board of Health), Bryant Firmin (Water and Sewer Commission), Diane Guldner (Conservation Commission); Fred Litchfield (Town Engineer)

Members Absent: Amy Poretzky (Planning Board)

Attendees (Remotely): Karina Silva De Almeida

Mr. Perreault called the Zoom meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Order of March 12, 2020 due to the current state of emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. In order to mitigate the transmission of the virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend all public gatherings and, as such, the Governor's Order suspends the requirements of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. The Order on the posted Agenda allows the public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. This meeting will not feature public comment. The process for the meeting was explained.

Member and Staff roll call was taken: Jason Perreault (Chair); Bryant Firmin; Diane Guldner; Theresa Capobianco; Fred Litchfield (Town Engineer)

To consider the petition of Karina Silva De Almeida for Special Permit in the Groundwater Protection Overlay District for a proposed Dog Grooming business on the property located at 369 West Main Street, Map 81 and Parcel 19, in the Business West Zoning District and located entirely within Groundwater Protection Overlay District Area 2.

Applicant: Karina Silva De Almeida

Representative: Same as above

Ms. De Almeida stated that she plans to open a dog grooming business at 369 West Main Street. Mr. Perreault commented that the application lists the applicant as Elise Viera. Ms. De Almeida confirmed that is her partner. The contact information is Ms. De Almeidas. Mr. Perreault explained that this Committee, with respect to the Zoning Bylaw, confines our review to the technical aspects pertaining to groundwater protection. Our Committee is Advisory Committee; we are not a permit granting authority and do not approve projects. We review the groundwater aspects of the proposal and make a recommendation to the special permit granting authority, which in this case, is the Zoning Board of Appeals. Our recommendation will go to that board; they will evaluate the proposal and may look more broadly at the Zoning Bylaws to make their determination.

Mr. Litchfield reviewed his comment letter. The first comment dealt with the portion of the Zoning Bylaw that the applicant applied under. He explained that if you are in a groundwater district and your activity could include toxic or hazardous materials, there are some obligations needed to get this permit. The applicant had previously indicated that some of the chemicals she would be using on the dogs did have some. She supplied the MSDS sheets; some of them indicated they could be considered toxic or hazardous; they are working towards proper containment to allow the business to go forward. Since that time, she has indicated she now wishes to use only natural or organic shampoos and chemicals on the dogs. She did supply some MSDS sheets today; he was not sure if there are more. He reviewed them and said they are quite harmless; they do not require any containment. She proposed a cabinet she would like to store them in; the cabinet is appropriate for the chemicals that she submitted today. It would not be appropriate if there were toxic or hazardous chemicals; it does not have the standard floor area that could provide containment of anything if there were a spill inside the cabinet. As long as the Committee is accepting the fact that she wants to use natural and organic shampoos and products on the dogs, there is no need for any other kind of containment.

If the applicant confirms all of the products are natural and organic, he would recommend to the Committee to recommend to the ZBA that a condition of approval be to indicate that they verify that fact to the Building Department and the Board of Health on an annual basis. In the event storage is required for any chemicals which are considered toxic or hazardous, a different kind of cabinet would be necessary. The applicant is not proposing any changes to the exterior of the building or the parking lot; therefore, the site plan submitted is adequate to confirm for the Building Inspector that there is adequate parking for the entire building; there are other multiple businesses there. Ms. De Almeida said there would only be herself and her partner.

Mr. Litchfield was not quite clear on how long the dogs would be in her care and how she would handle pet waste. Ms. De Almeida said she does have bags she will provide to her clients. She will also walk the parking lot and pick up any waste not collected and put it in a dumpster behind her business. She was not sure if she would have one for her business or share with the other businesses; she will check with the owner. Mr. Litchfield said that would be acceptable, but was concerned whether there is a restricted area for the dogs; the parking lot does not have any fencing. He asked if there was an area that is sectioned off for the dogs or are they only going to be on a leash. She said they will be on a leash when the customers pick them up. She will keep the dogs inside all the time. She will call the customer 20 minutes before the dog is ready for pickup.

Mr. Litchfield said she might want to require, and the Committee may want to recommend, that she have dedicated parking spaces so her customers know that's where they are supposed to park. It may also give her a better target area to look for waste from the dogs that she needs to pick up if the customers don't. She said she would do that.

Ms. Guldner asked how she would handle a customer that doesn't come back promptly. Ms. De Almeida said she does have one room with pillows and toys for dogs to stay and rest when she finishes the grooming.

Mr. Perreault wanted to make sure she understood that from the Building Inspector's determination that this is a grooming operation only; no care, boarding or kennel-like operation. She understood it is strictly a grooming operation. Mr. Litchfield will include the comments in his letter as recommended conditions for approval, he would also add dedicated parking signs for her business, and would recommend the Committee add a condition that no boarding of dogs is allowed under this permit.

Mr. Litchfield asked for clarification on the chemicals. He asked if what she sent today (8 gallons of shampoos and conditioners and things for the dogs) was all there would be. She said it was; she does not need a large quantity on hand. Mr. Litchfield recommended to the Committee that they recommend to the ZBA that she is limited to those chemicals that are non-toxic and non-hazardous only. Should that change, she needs to come back to this Committee and the ZBA to amend the permit. She would then be required to have containment which is a different kind of cabinet than what is proposed. There will be a condition that she report to the Building Department and Board of Health annually that that is still the case.

Ms. Capobianco asked if it was recommended that we include a condition that limits the amount of chemicals to be stored on site. Do we want to say that she can have up to x number of gallons on site at any time before she has to come back so long as it's organic and non-toxic materials, or do we leave it at the eight gallons? Mr. Litchfield confirmed that a condition such as that is not necessary as all chemicals proposed to be stored are not toxic or hazardous. The products proposed are all organic and natural. The proposed recommendation should include a condition indicating no storage of toxic or hazardous chemicals will be allowed. Coming back to this Committee and the ZBA would only be triggered by a change in the type of chemicals that include some kind of toxic or hazardous chemicals within them thus requiring a cabinet with containment.

Ms. Capobianco made a motion to recommend approval of the special groundwater permit for the business at 369 West Main Street with the conditions stated in Mr. Litchfield's letter as well the conditions for dedicated parking spaces in front of the business and pet waste to be collected and disposed of daily; Ms. Guldner seconded; roll call vote: Guldner-yes; Capobianco-yes; Firmin-yes; Perreault-yes; motion approved.

Old/New Business:

Review and Approve Minutes of April 13, 2021 – Tabled to the next meeting.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for June 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Capobianco made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Guldner seconded; roll call vote: Guldner-yes; Capobianco-yes; Firmin-yes; Perreault-yes; motion approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Rich
Committee Secretary