

Members Present: Herb Rest, Chair; Cindy Wilcox, Lew Sorenson, John Warren, and Pat Jaquith. Alternates Rick Sullivan and Jack Lilly.

Applicant representatives present: Shirley Schulz, Chris Dugan, and Nicholas Mercede.

Also present: Richard Romanoff, Beverly Romanoff, Chris Garofolo, Paul Normandeau, Paul Nelsen, Mary Louise Nelsen, Art Benedict, Muriel Taylor, Robert Taylor, Jean Momaney, Judy Placey, William Menezes, Roger Turner, Susanne Weinberg, Charlotte Annis, Sam Farwell, Lois Reed, Jennifer Sargent, Pat LaBelle, Karyn Tyler, Tad Tyler, Brian Tyler, Ian Doak, Hector Galbraith, Tom Simeon, Ezekiel Goodband, Calvin Farwell, John Willis, Pauline Brett, Lou Zopf, Tom Zopf.

Herb Rest called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. and explained the operational logistics. He swore in all who planned to participate in the hearing.

Hearing on Application # 3265 by MVS Associates who seek a Conditional Use permit and Sight Plan Approval to resume use of the property at 3219 West River Road as a four- season recreation area. This parcel is in both a Rural Commercial and a Reserve District on the West side of Route 30. A noticed site visit by Board members, applicant representatives and interested citizens preceded the public hearing.

Chris Dugan, attorney for Mr. Mercedes, described the intent of the application. Owner Nick Mercede proposes to make the facility into a four-season, multi-use operation. It is proposed to be much like it was when it was last operational in the 1990's. The State will require many permits with their oversight of the many facets of the operation. Proposed additional activities, to make it into a four-season facility include mountain biking, a zip line, a bike shop with rentals and repairs, a restaurant and perhaps a mobile food facility. They also propose to use it as an event facility for concerts, social functions, trade shows, etc., both indoor and out. They went through the list of possible uses as outlined in the application with many deletions and changes. One additional use was proposed, a mobile food vendor serving travelers on Route 30.

The facility has sat fallow for 10 years; it is projected it may take a year or more to accomplish the renovations and become operational.

Questions from the Dummerston Review Board elicited additional applicant testimony:

They propose a venue that would host 500 attendees at either indoor or outdoor events.

The top of the mountain is in a reserve area. The only use of that area would be cleaning up and repairing existing trails; no additional construction is proposed.

In re noise generation: two diesel generators for electric back-up; snow making equipment; pumps are located at the river side. Trail grooming and snow making are done at night. These activities will be started at 10:00 when the night skiing ends.

There are existing lights which are shielded from houses in the area.

There are several little (5) work buildings on the mountain for the use of ski patrols and housing some equipment.

Hours of operation: 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. maximum for outdoor activities. The lounge might stay open later. The facility will be open 7 days per week.

Signage: when there is a bike or ski shop, they will apply for a sign permit. The signs on premises are pre-existing from the 1990's. The main sign at the front of the building is lighted. There is an additional sign on the front of the building.

They have no plans for renewable energy at this time.

Lew Sorenson stated that there is not a complete site plan with this application. The applicant agreed to provide such if the hearing is continued.

Questions from interested parties elicited additional applicant testimony:

The intent is to get school programs involved. This is intended as a community facility, to serve the local families at reasonable cost

In re state permits: they will have a list of state-required permits at a continued hearing.

It was clarified that Act 250 permits do not expire, even though the facility has been dormant for 10 years.

Concerns from interested parties:

Noise and light, given prior experience with such. (numerous accounts of prior negative impacts in surrounding residential areas.)

Diesel exhaust impacts on air quality

Chemicals used in snow making?

What impact does the Dummerston "no idling" regulation play?

The multiple uses of the flat area north of the buildings where one of the septic fields exists (skating rink, toboggan out-run, people walking back and forth to the upper parking lot and the north lift line.

All-night snow making has been a major intrusion in the past.

Will cross-country skiing intersect safely with other uses of the facility?

Could proposed bicycle use could morph into motorized bikes; could cross country skiing morph into motorized use?

Impact on other local businesses

Point of interest: climate research projects that this type of facility will require a great deal of investment; it is projected that such facilities will only be feasible much farther north in a few years. Is it reasonable to make such an investment/intrusion into the town for what may be only a few years?

Requests were made that application materials be available to the public, along with any exhibits and complete site plan.

Three statements expressing support for the development of the facility were made and general applause indicated support for the sentiment expressed.

Concern was expressed that careful consideration must be given to all expectations environmentally, economically, and in all other aspects of the development.

The hearing recessed at 9:15 p.m., to be continued to July 26 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Jaquith, Clerk