

## **New Braintree Planning Board Minutes December 13, 2022**

Present: Genevieve Stillman, David Thompson, Jody Kablack, Stephen Thaddeus Thomas

Called to order at 6:35 pm, New Braintree Grade School

### **Public Meeting on New Braintree Airport**

CMRPC presented ideas for possible future uses at the New Braintree airport. Uses that were identified at the proviso public meeting on Oct. 3, 2022 included:

- Preserve the airport
- Preserve the habitat
- Create a rail trail
- Allow some commercial development for increased tax revenue
- Flight school
- Senior housing
- Lodging
- Wedding venue

Next CMRPC unveiled their sketches for potential uses:

- Relocated rail trail - 6500 linear feet
- Senior center
- 7200 square feet of residential housing
- 11,000 square feet of community space
- 16,500 square feet of commercial space

Comments:

There was a discussion as to the status of the sale of the property, and it was noted that nothing has happened. No sale, no offer.

It was noted by a participant that there is no internet on McAvoy Road, nor 3 phase power, which will make development difficult.

Community members wondered if residential uses were incompatible with the airport (noise).

Residential development could be marketed as thematic - aeronautics, cars, etc.

There was a question on the condition of the runway, and it was noted that it was adequate for the current users but not in good shape. Currently there are approximately 1-2 users/week in good weather. Most do not use the paved runway.

The airport is available as an emergency landing area for safety personnel

If the Hardwick race track is successful, this property could be overdeveloped.

Charter flights are not currently possible at the airport due to the runway condition.

Creating a business model to entice developers could be helpful.

Why preserve the airport if it is economically unfeasible?

The property lends itself to multiple uses by several parties:

- Fish and Wildlife for habitat protection
- EQLT for the rail trail
- Aeronautic users, runway renovation may be fundable by the state

Cluster zoning could be used for the residential uses

Possibly create an Economic Development zone and get the state involved for infrastructure funding

The Planning Board's idea is to create an overlay district on the property, which would include:

- parameters for specific parcels to be included in the overlay district (unique characteristics, size, location, etc)
- density limits
- permitted/prohibited uses
- use definitions, etc.

Town Meeting would vote on each parcel for inclusion into the overlay district. Creating a district could provide opportunities for public funds.

There was concern over how to limit which properties could be included in the overlay district.

The public forum portion of the meeting concluded and the Planning Board resumed its regular meeting.

#### **Proposed new use at Reeds Restaurant, 637 Barre Rd**

Jody Kablack noted that the Select Board will be having a meeting to discuss this property on Dec. 21, 2022. The current proposal is to convert the restaurant into a retail store selling and repairing guns. The potential owner is Paul Paradis, who currently operates a similar establishment in North Brookfield. This will likely need a special permit from the ZBA.

#### **Summit Solar**

The Board took a roll call vote to enter into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing the Summit Solar application, and noted that it will not return to regular session. Stillman - aye; Thompson - aye; Kablack - aye; Thomas - aye.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.