

Minutes of Zoning Board Meeting
Town of Whately
Town Offices Building, 4 Sandy Lane
March 1, 2018

Members Present: Roger Lipton, Debra Carney, Bob Smith
Members Absent: Kristin Vevon, Fred Orloski

Attending:

Gail Matthews, 6 North St.; Maddy Oldenburg, Quonquont Farm; Dan Denehy, 330 Haydenville Farm; Jenelle Wilkins, 9 North St., Ann Barker, 6 Christian Ln.; Allison Bell, 3 North St.; Leslie Harris, 3 North St.; Niki Lankowski, 22 North St.; Sara Cahillane, 8 North St.; Elizabeth Wroblecka, of Etheredge & Steuer, P.C., 64 Gothic St., Northampton; Joan Long, 212 Chestnut Plain Rd.

PUBLIC HEARING: QUONQUONT FARM: Application to amend the Special Permit decision dated June 27, 2011, to allow no more than 75 events (increase from 48) between May 1st and November 1st (same season) each year. All other conditions are to remain.

Roger opened the hearing. Attorney Elizabeth Wroblecka introduced Ann Barker and Allison Bell, owners of Quonquont Farm, and Janelle Wilkins, the events manager at Quonquont. Ms. Wroblecka described the positive history of Quonquont Farm as an events venue, noting that since it opened in 2011 business has been so good that the owners are requesting permission to host 27 more events per season, for a total of 75. She noted that Whately is a right-to-farm town and that the farm events business is no longer novel, with more farms hosting festivals, fun runs, performances, etc. Janelle Wilkins then spoke, referring to the narrative submitted with the application. She said that more events will strengthen the farm's ability to contribute to the local community through its success and give-back efforts.

Roger asked about current demand for events, and about how the farm had decided on 27 as the ideal number of events to add. Ms. Wilkins said that 27 would leave the business room to grow without the need to request more expansion in the near future. She added that the 2018 season is already sold out and that they are now booking into 2019. She explained that advance bookings are usually for events requiring the most long term planning, such as weddings, and that she will spend the next five months turning away five or ten potential clients per day.

Roger asked for any comments from the public. There was no answer from those attending the hearing. "No opposition?" he asked. There was no answer from anyone. Roger moved to close the public comment portion of the hearing, and Debra seconded the motion. In the following brief discussion, all board members were in favor and voted unanimously to grant the amendment to the original 2011 special permit. The board wrote the decision.

2.

The board then voted to:

- approve the minutes of December 7, 2017 as amended
- approve the minutes of February 15, 2017.

Documents reviewed (kept in the ZBA files)

1. A 2-page untitled narrative explaining the reasons for the request

Mary McCarthy,
Secretary
Planning Board
Town of Whately