

TOWN OF TUFTONBORO  
PLANNING BOARD  
December 21, 2023  
6:00 PM  
Tuftonboro Town Hall, 240 Middle Road

MINUTES

Members Present: Gary Qua, Chair; Tony Triolo, Member; Bob Murray, Selectman's Representative; Anthony Mirando, Member; Kate Nesbit, Member

Absent: Carol Bush, Vice Chair; George Maidhof, Member; Jeff Reisner, Alternate Member; Matt Young, Alternate Member

Staff: Susan Burnside

Public: Kathy DelMedico and Barbara Lobdell, Ember Escapes, LLC.; Peter and Marsha Ventre, Abutters and former owners of Ember Escapes property

6:00 PM Call to Order

1. Public Comment – none
2. Approval of Minutes from December 7, 2023 Meeting – Gary asked for comments or concerns with the draft minutes. There were none. Gary asked for a motion to approve the minutes with the member attendance corrected. Bob so motioned and Tony seconded. All approved and the motion passed.
3. Ember Escapes Site Plan Review – Kathy DelMedico, principal owner of Ember Escapes presents her proposal for site plan review to establish Ember Escapes as an outdoor wedding venue. As it currently exists, Ember Escapes rents their property for meetings through AirBnB. She proposes to hold up to 4 weddings per year during the summer months only. The anticipated attendance will be approximately 75-100 people except for one event of up to 150 people. This event is a personal/family wedding event and will take place in August 2024. The weddings will involve setting up tents for guests, catering facilities and music – band or DJ, port-a potties and portable generators for electricity for the day of the event only. All these items will be removed the day following the event.

Gary, Anthony, and George visited the site and walked the property with Kathy to gain a better understanding of the proposed set up, including an assessment of the proposed parking areas, the existing house and gate house, and the distance from neighboring properties. The Fire Department also visited the area and submitted a report that included the need for State of NH-mandated Tent Inspections each time a tent is raised. However, at the time of the Fire Department's visit, it was not understood that the current house and gate house would be used as a rental to guests attending the wedding. With the information, the Fire Department noted this would require a change to the Fire Department assessment, as the buildings will become a commercial enterprise and will require additional changes to bring the buildings into code. Kathy will work with the Fire Department to assess the required changes.

Gary asked for questions about the proposal from each Board member. Anthony asked about the location and amount of allocated parking spaces for what could be up to 75 or more cars. Kathy said that there is more than adequate space on the grounds to accommodate parking of all cars in flat areas. Kathy also said that she would consider using golf carts or trolleys to transport guests. Bob noted that no parking would be allowed on the public street and signs should be placed on both sides of the road near the entrance to indicate on-street parking is not permitted.

Anthony also asked whether the noise from music would cause a disturbance to neighbors and whether the music. Kathy informed the Board that all music would stop at 9:00pm and guests would

leave the area by 10:00pm. However, at this time she is not sure what direction the music will face until she gains some experience with the best location to set up the music. Bob cited the Town Zoning Ordinances 5.2.2 regarding “nuisance” and read the ordinance directly for the record. Kate stated that it is possible that complaints about noise may occur, but as long as neighbors are informed ahead of time, any disturbance to the neighbors could be minimized. Kathy stated that she intends to notify all neighbors about any events that take place and is very attentive to maintaining a good relationship with all neighbors.

Kathy noted that for each wedding, she will be partnering with professional wedding planners and they will be informed of the Town Zoning Ordinance on nuisance and asked to ensure compliance.

Gary asked about the temporary lighting and Kathy explains that all lighting will be LED “pub” type lighting and will be directed downward to minimize disturbance from bright lights.

Bob noted that Kathy’s proposal already received a special exception from the Tuftonboro ZBA. Gary read the minutes from the November 15, 2023 ZBA meeting regarding approval of the special exception.

There were no other questions from Board members.

Gary asked for a motion to accept jurisdiction of the application as it is complete. Tony so motioned and Anthony seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Gary asked for a motion to open the public session, Tony so motioned, Anthony seconded and all were in favor. The motion passed.

Gary asked for input from the public. The abutters, Mr. and Mrs. Ventre, stated that they have no problems with this proposal and that Camp Merrovista, which is located nearby, have music events frequently during the summer and they do not present a problem for neighbors. Barbara Lobdell stated that she has no issues with the proposal. There were no other comments from the public.

Gary asked for a motion to close the public session. Bob so motioned, Kate seconded and all were in favor. The motion passed.

Gary asked for motion to accept jurisdiction of the application. Tony so motioned and Bob seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Gary reviewed the Site Plan Review Checklist that lists the regulations and the waiver requests. Gary explained that this checklist is a comprehensive list all site plan regulations, which broadly cover various types of site plans. Gary noted that many of the regulations do not apply to a simple site plan application such as this one; therefore, many of the regulations could be waived. Gary read each regulation and asked the Board members whether a regulation could be waived or if adherence was required. The Board members voted on each regulation and whether a waiver of each regulation was acceptable. A copy checklist is attached to these minutes and designates waived regulations and regulations requiring compliance by the applicant.

Gary read the conditions for approval of the application as would be listed in the Notice of Decision:

1. This approval is for a maximum of 4 wedding events up to 100 people per year. The owner will have 1 personal event of up to 150 people that does not come under the jurisdiction of this Notice of Decision.
2. The approval is subject to all applicable local, state, and federal permits and any conditions attached thereto, including the application itself dated September 28, 2023. This includes the approval of the new septic system plan for the Gatehouse in case the current septic fails.

3. The approval is subject to the Tuftonboro Fire Department requirements for both the first and second inspection, but limited to. The Fire Department report will be made available to the applicant and the Planning Board. In addition, the Fire Department will inspect the tents to ensure compliance with the State of New Hampshire Safety Tent Inspection Checklist.
4. The approval is subject to Hours of Operation, which shall be 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Outdoor music will end by 9:00 PM.
5. This approval is based on upon the Tuftonboro Zoning Board approval for Ember Escapes, LLC application for special exception 3.6.B.1 dated November 15, 2023, Case # 575.
6. All events over 75 people will be required to notify all abutters to maintain a good neighborhood relationship.
7. No on street parking will be allowed and signs indicating "No Parking" will be placed on the street near the entrance to the property.
8. Since the events will take place with a partnership with wedding planners, they must be notified and made aware of the Town of Tuftonboro Nuisance Ordinance (5.2.2).
9. Outdoor music will be situated to minimize noise to the surrounding neighborhood.
10. Site Plan Review Regulation 5.8.2.H will be in effect, which states that All Light Sources shall be shielded so that they will not create a nuisance or hazard caused by glare to neighbors, pedestrians, or drivers.

Gary asked for a motion to open a public session to discuss the conditions of approval. Tony so motioned and Kate seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed. There were no comments or questions from the public. Gary asked for a motion to close the public session. Tony so motioned and Anthony seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Gary asked for a vote from each Board member to accept the conditions of approval as follows:

Anthony – yes  
Kate – yes  
Bob – yes  
Tony – yes  
Gary – yes

Gary asked for a motion for approval of the application with these conditions. Tony so motioned and Kate seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Gary asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15. Bob so motioned and Tony seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Burnside