

Jim Thorpe Planning Commission  
July 20, 2021

**Members present:** Lou Hall, Nancy Porambo, Joanne Klitsch, Bob Schaninger, Dr. Clem McGinley, Joe Micko, John McGuire (via phone), Borough Manager, Maureen Sterner, Borough Solicitor, Nanovic, Borough Engineer, Kerry Good

**Visitors:** Joe Irwin, Kartina Gonsorick, Jake Arner, Tom Romanchik

**Minutes from June:** Lou motioned to approve minutes from June, Bob seconded. Motion carried

**Flagstaff Camping** – Off-Trail Outdoors camping project. Katrina Gonsorick spoke on behalf of her organization pending final approval to open. Jake Arner met with CC Planning Commission. After reviewing, CC Planning recommended final plan approval.

Lou Hall asked for an explanation: Gonsorick stated it's full camping overnight and will teach beginners how to set up tents, navigate trails, how to berry pick and how to get the best of nature. Joe Irwin, partner, said they are advocates of living off the land, tapping maple trees, picking elderberries, huckleberries. They don't want to develop the land, they simply want to use the land. Most people don't have knowledge of how to camp, so we are there to teach them.

Lou indicated agritourism states the activities must be directly incidental to the winery.

Joe stated the primary site is designated to be a winery. He also indicated he has made wine with the berries and would be able to add grapes, as well as raspberries. Wine is being produced in Nesquehoning. Camping provides support for the winery. It might be a nice idea to have a bottle of wine while camping. Hiking, winemaking, the farm, camping, he said this is a nice mix. Jake Arner said they fit the agritourism license. They are a licensed farm.

Lou said those activities are incidental. They must show the activities (berry picking is incidental, not incidental to the winery). Joe indicates they teach how to live off the land. Katrina's personal property has chickens, crops.

Solicitor - If you're leasing from Jake, how big an area? They are leasing 143 acres total. How many campsites are they allowing (5) sites plus Joe and Katrina's tent. They will be using Bell tents, (looks like a yert-18' wide tent, put on top of land). It sleeps two. There are no permanent structures. They provide the tent. Are these people who are renting tents picking berries? Joe said they had their own families visit recently and they were intrigued with what they can do with berries.

Solicitor – to Jake, do you allow others to pick? Jake said there are so many acres it's unlimited. The only limit is labor. It takes a lot of people. He doesn't charge people to pick. Solicitor, do you provide containers and they can pick. Jake said they are just picking. He said they can get into charging, but right now they are building a community, it brings awareness. He feels it brings something new and exciting to Jim Thorpe.

Solicitor – Jake, he does not have a sign to pick berries. Signs on PenDot, they have to direct you to a scenic lookout. Free view only. Solicitor – its camping and under accessory use. What is the accessory, the winery. Does it exist. Jake said he got insurance this week. There was a delay in getting winery insurance because of COVID. People don't want close interactions with people because of covid.

Solicitor – did you get a permit for a permanent building? He said he has approval for a farm-stand building and a farm-stand tent. The state would not let them serve wine because they couldn't sell food. Are you open? Jake said, yes. We're open Saturdays and Sundays. Joanne asked, the poles were there, but the tent is taken down a lot. What do you do with the products? He said by law, he cannot keep liquor unless it's in a locked-up building. It's in Nesquehoning. Boro Council approved a farm-stand. The state wanted them to be a farmer's market. He has a farmer's market tent. They put it up and take it down every day. They may have kids from the Boro selling things, food trucks, etc. It adds to the environment in JT.

Lou, how many acres are leased? Jake Arner Farms, (zoning in that area is agritourism – special zoning – camping is not permitted). Jake said its part of the agritourism. Camping is provided that two conditions are met. A 10-acre lot, and activities are similar in use and operations. Picking berries is not closely similar in use and operations. Those conditions have to be met prior to any kind of tents to be permitted. It doesn't change the S-zoning to change to camping.

500-50-1-d-12 – lodging, cabins, etc. (provided you meet a and b). The camping is a subset of a and b.

Joe said this back and forth is unfortunate. They are not Jake. Lou stated they have been through several plans.

Jake said he is a limited winery. As such, accessory uses are permitted. It means camping is included. They can make the argument. Part is yes, learning, educational about wineries.

Lou asked again how many acres? There are 143 acres they can use for the trails. They are leasing an acre for tents. They want to use the rest of the land for hiking and berry picking.

Jake wanted to clarify, zoning use is what they area here for. It's use approval. They applied for subdivision and land approval. Carbon Planning said 500-1b-1-a-12. Permitted use for approval. (1K), needs approval only when a permanent building is to be erected. He said even CC Planning Commission is on board.

They want approval for rustic camping. If we approve, we are approving camping as an accessory use to a limited winery. It will go to Boro Council. He submitted the plan for 6 units. If this is approved and council approves. If you wanted to put in more, they would have to come back here for approval.

Bill Breyers' assistant, Rob Floodgate, visited the site and inspected the port-o-poty. This is a fine use. Jake asked for something in writing, he said he would only if Boro asked for it. Jake will give Maureen the phone number so she may call.

Joe asked Lou what's with the location. Lou said if its only limited to one acre, he's in a special zoning area. The entire Boro is zoned. Everything has a reason why you can and can't do something. Jake asked where is camping allowed. Jake said it is allowed in (S), special. JT Campground and the lake are in the special district. You may want to ask what came first.

Joe Micko said even if it were approved and increase density, it changes the whole program. The lot width is 70 feet. Joe's concern is that down the road might it be an issue. It will have to be revisited.

Solicitor – what is the ultimate size you are looking for? Jake said he wanted to comply with what the building code official said. He showed them the plan. They have 6 tents. He said we could easily accommodate 50 people with the two port-o-potties.

Katrina said she has testing, the cost. Maureen said you can make your request larger. He would like to see beyond six. They can't expand to a larger level yet. They invited the PC to come and see what they're doing.

Jake said they are 100' from property line, a buffer. He said they are 1,000' away from the home. Everyone that is purchasing property in the future, has been advised, in an agreement they will have a winery and camping on the site.

Bob asked what size tents 7' x 18', that's for two people. Their dream is to have JT as a home base. If you get zoning done, how many tents would you like to have? The whole top of the mountain doesn't need to be there forever. They are working on a solar shower for the future.

Maureen said plans from June 28 and July 9<sup>th</sup>, no paperwork was with the July 9<sup>th</sup> paperwork. Are they different? The ones the PC signed, those were updated to meet various sections regarding plan size requirements, 50' to an inch. The second plan was to correspond with that. Mrs. Klitsch asked for a bigger page. The smaller plan was to answer the question as to where it was.

The best of his knowledge, the plan complies with the ordinance. The one the Carbon Planning is the one they want to go with. Jake insists it's the same plan. Maureen indicated this is confusing and needs clarity.

Engineer said he looked at one from June 22<sup>nd</sup>. That's the plan we will approve.

Lou motioned to approve the land development plan as submitted, Clem seconded. Motion carried.

**Joanne Klitsch – lot line change** - Reverse subdivision – We have the breakdown of lot sizes. Total acres is over 2.5 acres. Recommend plan approval. Entech listed things: Can be viewed as a final plan. 1.118A should be listed on the plan. The other acreage is on the plans as well. There needs to be a waiver on #4 contours are not shown on the plan provided the other setback lines are notated before taking to council.

Clem motioned that the engineer's recommendations are added with the exception of #4, the requirement of 2' contours. Seconded Bob. All in favor, Joanne abstained.

Lou motioned to recommend the waiver requested by the applicant regarding section 390-20.B.6 and 7. Seconded by Bob. All in favor, Joanne abstained.

**Mauch Chunk Parking LLC – request for waiver of occupancy permit** - The issue is that he is not changing access, it's the same as always. PenDot doesn't want to get involved on Broadway. The church tore down a building and created additional parking. Lou thought it would be a benefit to the Boro and his personal opinion is to not force him to have an occupancy permit. Lou felt backing out into Broadway shouldn't happen, they have to be in a forward direction. John McGuire was on phone and indicated the cars have to back out of the spot and pull out onto Broadway. Jim's building has had a driveway since 1964.

There needs to be a notice. His plan has to say that a HOP is required per the highway occupancy law. We don't grant a waiver. It has to be on the plan and we can approve the plan. They, (PenDot), then has the ability to approve, deny, etc.

Solicitor just has to note it according to the highway occupancy law. If they ignore it after 60 days, its permitted. We can get his land development plan approved, he has to deal with PenDot.

**Multi-modal project** – Borough is asking for ways to improve travel downtown. They need a letter that supports their project which is in our comprehensive plan. It is also tied into the traffic study that was done. Lou put together a letter to help with vehicles and tourists. Parking kiosks are part of this solution. This is coming from grant monies. We are working with Pocono Mt. Tourist Agency and the JT Tourist Agency. Matching funds are not required. Partnerships will also help us with reviews. Crosswalks in various areas, Broadway and Susquehanna, Lehigh, etc.. Repair, replace, sidewalks over town and some sidewalks need to be widened.

Borough needs a letter from PC. We will also be asked to support two more grants coming out of the parking study.

Lou motioned, Bob seconded to approve the multi-modal support letter. Motion carried.

**Future Projects - Elderly Assistance** – Lou indicated we need to tap into some of the community service programs. Will continue to discuss.

**Motion to Adjourn:** 8:20 PM, Lou motioned, Bob seconded. All approved.

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Motions 7/20/21

**Flagstaff Project** - Lou motioned to approve the land development plan as submitted, Clem seconded. Motion carried.

**Multi-Modal Project** - Lou motioned, Bob seconded to approve the multi-modal support letter. Motion carried.

**Klitsch Property** - Lou motioned to recommend the waiver requested by the applicant regarding section 390-20.B.6 and 7. Seconded by Bob. All in favor, Joanne abstained.

**Klitsch Property** - Clem motioned that the engineer's recommendations are added with the exception of #4, the requirement of 2' contours. Seconded Bob. All in favor, Joanne abstained.

Things to Do

**Multi-Modal Project** - Borough needs a letter from PC. We will also be asked to support two more grants coming out of the parking study.

**Klitsch Property** - 1.118A should be listed on the plan. The other acreage is on the plans as well. There needs to be a waiver on #4 contours are not shown on the plan provided the other setback lines are notated before taking to council.