

**TOWN OF LOUDON
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2012**

Chairman Dave Powelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present: Chairman Dave Powelson, Roy Merrill, George Saunderson, and Alternates Jim Venne and Earl Tuson
Jim Venne and Earl Tuson were appointed to be voting members in the absence of Howard Pearl and Ned Lizotte.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Regular Hearing – George Saunderson made a motion to accept the minutes of June 28, 2012; seconded by Roy Merrill. All were in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING

Application #Z12-15, Miles Smith Farm – Variance for Off-Premise Sign, C/I District, Map 50, Lot 18 on Route 106. There were no abutters present. Applicants Carole Soule and Bruce Dawson were present. The property is owned by Ground Lease Acquisition Trust and the application was signed by their agent.

Ms. Soule explained that their farm is toward the end of Beck Road, off Route 106 across from the old Landry property. She stated that they have a farm store where they sell their own products as well as other local product. Ms. Soule said they have a state off-premise sign but that does not promote special events, have their hours, etc so they would like to have more options. She said they currently use temporary signs which have to be put out and taken in every so often. Chairman Powelson spoke about the reasoning of the temporary signs being limited. Ms. Soule stated that they need a variance to have a farm sign with changeable copy. She handed out copies of a drawing of a sign similar to what is currently on this property for the Farm and Flea Market. She also presented copies of a proposed sign that would be installed as two sections in a V formation. She said the angled sign would allow for better visibility because of the trees and brush in the area where it would be placed. There was discussion of different sign options relative to farms, off-premise, etc. Ms. Soule said they do use temporary signs for their events but they want something more permanent to promote local products. She pointed out that they would be permitted to have a sign for the farm under Section 501.1 and an off-premise sign under Section 501.6. It was noted that the off-premise sign that is permitted by the Zoning Ordinance would be 20” high by 8’ long. The chairman pointed out that they are asking for a bigger size than permitted for off-premise signs. The drawing handed out was for an 8’ x 5’ sign with 3’ x 5’ sign under for changeable copy.

The chairman went through the points of the application with Ms. Soule. He noted that the application reads 24 sf with ½ as changeable copy which is what is permitted for farm signs. Ms. Soule said they would like to change that to 55 sf with 15

sf of that being for changeable copy. Point 1) George and Jim agreed. Point 2) Ms. Soule added that it would be consistent with others in the area. Jim agreed with the point. Earl said the spirit is to constrain sign growth yet intends for farms to be able to be visible and promote local products. Point 3) Ms. Soule stated that a permanent sign would look nicer than temporary signs. George and Jim agreed with the point. Point 4) George and Jim agreed. Point 5) Ms. Soule said the special condition of the Route 106 property would be that it allows the public to know about the farm. George noted that the ZO does allow off-premise signs. George and Jim were in agreement with the proposal. Earl said they are allowed an off-premise sign of about 13 sf. George said a bigger sign on Route 106 would make sense because of the higher speed as compared to Route 129 or Ridge Road.

Ms. Soule said they would probably have to take down the state directional sign. It was asked what would happen should the property where the sign is to be located be sold. Ms. Soule said they would try to work with the new owners. Dave Powelson pointed out that a variance runs with the lot. He then went to Section A of the application. Earl said he feels it is reasonable as farm signs with changeable copy are allowed. He said the size of the sign is not addressed in the application. He stated that the sign that is already on this lot is for a different use and is for an on-premise business. Ms. Soule stated that the bigger sign would be easier to read, it would be attractive, and it would promote farming in town. She said the tourist sign is not effective as it does not have their hours or tell what they have at the farm.

Chairman Powelson went through the application with the board members. Point 1) George Saunderson said it would be hard to think why this would be contrary to public interest. Dave Powelson, Earl Tuson and Jim Venne agreed. Roy Merrill said it was not to the public's interest. Point 2) Earl Tuson said that businesses have their primary signs on-premise and off-premise signs are more directional. He said farms being able to have seasonal signs and signs with changeable would be within the spirit but he is not sure that a sign twice the size permitted for on-premise sign is within the spirit. George Saunderson said he would agree but in this circumstance on Route 106 it seems justified due to the speed. Roy Merrill said he feels everyone should be able to have signs but it is a big issue and he would urge the board to be prepared for other situations. He said Ms. Soule would probably put up a very nice sign. Dave Powelson said he thinks the spirit of the ordinance is observed and the size is consistent with signs already there. Jim Venne said he agrees with the application. Point 3) Jim Venne said he thinks it is important to have changeable copy to promote their special events. Roy Merrill said he feels it would be alright but maybe the ordinance needs to be changed. George Saunderson agreed with the application. Point 4) All agreed. Point 5) Earl Tuson said the special condition of the lot is being on Route 106 and since the farm is not visible it needs the supporting property. There was brief discussion about the variance staying with the lot and if any future use could use it as an off-premise sign. Earl said there would be hardship if they could not have changeable copy. The chairman asked if board members were talking about a two-sided sign with a panel below or the two-sided angled sign. Jim Venne said he would prefer the two-sided sign like is there now. He said the angled sign would take up a larger area and seems massive. George agreed.

Jim Venne made a motion to approve application #Z12-15 for a 55 sf sign with 15 sf of changeable copy for an off-premise farm sign; seconded by George

Saunderson. A roll vote was taken: Jim Venne – yes; Roy Merrill – no; Dave Powelson – yes; George Saunderson – yes; Earl Tuson – yes. Yes – 4; No – 1. Majority in favor - APPROVED

BOARD DISCUSSION

Zoning Workshop – The first workshop is scheduled for Thursday, October 18th at 6:00 p.m. prior to the regular monthly meeting of the Planning Board. George Saunderson said he would like to see firewood processing better defined. There was discussion of defining forestry, including portable sawmills, and the need to have something in writing for that workshop. Accessory dwelling units were discussed last year. The subject is addressed on the survey that is out for the Master Plan update. Donna reported that Ned Lizotte plans to submit something on the topic.

Letter from abutter – Chairman Powelson acknowledged receipt of a copy of a letter from Pauline Haines to Plourde Sand and Gravel, declaring herself and her heirs as a disapproving abutter pursuant to RSA 155-E-a-II.

ADJOURNMENT

George Saunderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.; seconded by Jim Venne. All were in favor.

Submitted by,

Donna White
Administrative Assistant