

Village of Fort Edward
Planning Board Meeting – Public Hearing
Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Roll Call: Bernie Taylor, Tadgh Nealon, Doreen Rabine, Nasrene Haj

Absent: Tabitha Fish

Public Attendance – See attached

A motion to open the public hearing was made by **Bernie Taylor**, seconded by **Tadgh Nealon**.

All ayes. Motion carried.

Summary

The meeting focused on the public hearing for Grumbellies Eatery's new location in Fort Edward, discussing community support, competition, and the establishment's unique offerings. Key concerns included the potential impact on existing businesses and the need for collaboration among local establishments. Additionally, discussions covered local business competition, particularly in the pizza and restaurant sector, and the importance of collaboration among businesses to enhance community offerings. Key decisions included the need for further discussions on business plans and signage to ensure aesthetic consistency in the area.

Outline

1. Opening of Public Hearing

- A motion was made and seconded to open the public hearing, which was unanimously approved by all present.
- Copies of the business plan were made available for attendees.

2. Presentation by Grumbellies Eatery

- Irma Hamblin introduced Grumbellies Eatery, highlighting their previous success in Fort Ann and their commitment to positively contributing to the Fort Edward community.
- Jeffrey Hamblin discussed the establishment's focus on music and diverse menu offerings, emphasizing that they are more than just a pizza shop.

3. Community Support for Grumbellies

- Several community members expressed their support for Grumbellies, citing their positive impact on the community and previous successful events.
- Pamela Harrington praised the eatery for its family-friendly atmosphere and community involvement.

4. Concerns About Competition

- Amy, a local business owner, raised concerns about the saturation of restaurants in the area and the potential impact on her business.
- Other attendees acknowledged the need for collaboration among local businesses to ensure mutual success and community growth.

5. Call for Collaboration

- Board member, Tadgh Nealon suggested that Grumbellies and existing businesses, particularly Stumpy's, should communicate to foster a cooperative environment.
- The importance of supporting each other to enhance the overall business landscape in Fort Edward was emphasized.

6. Discussion on Business Viability

- Concerns were raised about the current economic climate and whether there is enough demand for another food establishment in Fort Edward.
- The need for diverse business offerings beyond food and drink was highlighted as essential for the town's growth.

7. Local Pizza Preferences

- Scott Heydrick, Irma Hamblin's son, shared his personal experiences with various pizza shops, highlighting a strong preference for local establishments.
- The discussion emphasized the community's diverse pizza options and the importance of supporting local businesses.

8. Business Competition and Coexistence

- Mike Mason discussed the coexistence of multiple restaurants in Hudson Falls, suggesting that variety attracts customers.
- Mr. Mason emphasized that competition can be beneficial and that local businesses should collaborate rather than compete destructively.

9. Business Plan and Collaboration

- Board member Tadgh Nealon stressed the importance of open communication and collaboration among business owners to resolve conflicts and improve community offerings.
- There was a consensus on the need for a well-structured business plan that includes input from all stakeholders.

10. Safety and Access Concerns

- Kris March, owner of SlickFin Brewing raised concerns about access routes for emergency services in the event of a fire, emphasizing the need for clear pathways.
- The discussion included the importance of maintaining access to properties and ensuring that emergency services can operate effectively.

11. Signage and Aesthetic Consistency

- Board Chairperson, Nasrene Haj expressed concerns about the proposed signage for a new business, suggesting it may not fit the aesthetic of the existing businesses on Broadway.
- The need for consistency in signage and architectural design was highlighted as part of the village's master plan.

12. Community Engagement and Future Planning

- The board members stressed the importance of ongoing community engagement to ensure that new businesses align with the community's vision.
- Board member Tadgh Nealon reiterated the importance of working together for the greater good of the community and fostering a supportive business environment.

Board Discussion

The board took a brief pause into executive session and review the Master Plan.

The board would like to focus on reviewing the new business plan and discussing the design protocols for signage, with a decision to reconvene in a month for further evaluation. Action items include gathering more information on the master plan and setting a follow-up meeting date.

1. Review of Business Plan

- The team is currently undecided about the new business plan and requires additional time to review it.
- A vote on the business plan is scheduled for the next meeting.

2. Signage Design Protocols

- There is a need to ensure consistency with the existing master plan while considering economic growth and support for local businesses.
- The board is open to exploring different design options for signage, emphasizing the importance of curb appeal.
- The Planning Board received an updated Business plan for Fort Edward at the end of the meeting. The board agreed to accept the new plans and review for the next meeting.

3. Scheduling the Next Meeting

- The next meeting is proposed for March 11th, with discussions about potentially scheduling it sooner.

A motion to table the application for the next meeting on Tuesday, March 11th at 6:00 p.m. was made by **Doreen Rabine**, seconded by **Bernie Taylor**. All ayes. Motion carried.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by **Bernie Taylor**, seconded by **Nasrene Haj**. All ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Janelle Rose – Planning Board Clerk

Attendance

Jeff Hamblin

Irma Hamblin

Scott Heydrick

Pamela Harrington

James Adams

Nancy Tracy

Peter Smith

R Constantaneau

John Blanchard Jr.

Pamela Landi

Denise Mayer

Kris March

Amy Stumvol

Jeff Caprood

Edwin Robbins

Kyle Cozzens

Mike Mason

Hollis Brownell

Pam Ryther

Brenda Fosco

Keith Deniston

Bob LaPoint

Jean Blackmer

Buddy Blackmer

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