

HOPE BOARD OF APPEALS AND ASSESSMENT REVIEW

March 10, 2021 Meeting at 6:30 pm

Hope Town Office

Attending: Brian Powers, Sr., Steve Bowman, Bradley Boyd, Nancy Ford, Mary Ireland, John Jensen
Lindsay Pinchbeck, Samantha Mank (Argy Nestor and Chris Pinchbeck streaming)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

The OATH OF OFFICE was administered by Samantha Mank to members Mary Ireland, John Jensen and Bradley Boyd for their new terms.

*John Jensen moved and Nancy Ford seconded that we retain THE SAME OFFICERS as before (last election in January 2020 with no meetings since then) and, with no other nominations, the board voted unanimously in agreement. Chair is Brian Powers, Sr., Vice chair is Steve Bowman, and Secretary is Mary Ireland.

The board then moved on to the BUSINESS OF THE MEETING: Special Exception for applicant Lindsay Pinchbeck concerning her desire to purchase the Katherine Brown Home on Ludwig Road for use as an additional space for her arts center, Sweet Tree Arts at Hope Corners, and school, Sweetland School.

The Board's role was to consider the application and request to change the use of the Ludwig Road site from its former assisted residential Institutional use to School – Commercial, Public and Private. Confusion was noted by the Chair over the board's role initially, lack of sufficient information, and the timing and relation to the Planning Board's role, public hearing, and site visit. It was also noted that the applicant had provided a more detailed application this week than the original one provided.

*Steve Bowman moved and John Jensen seconded to include the ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SUBMITTED tonight by Lindsay Pinchbeck. The vote for approval of the motion was unanimous.

Although the Appeals Board was focusing on the items beginning 10.3.1 in the Land Use Ordinance, the Chair noted that there were regulations specifically for schools such as the PARKING SPACES REGULATION found in 5.3.22 of the Land Use Ordinance that the Planning Board should consider in its discussions concerning this application.

The Appeals Board then focused on the items for SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS 10.3.1 to 10.3.9.3 with Lindsay Pinchbeck reading her answers from the newly submitted material. Some items did not pertain to her proposed use, while discussion followed on those that did apply. The major issues raised involved traffic and parking. It was also suggested that possible next door neighbor, Jim Ecklund, be made aware of the new plans in progress.

It was learned that Sweetland School has 33 students at the present time; is K-8; is considered an alternative school covered under the original 501-C3 designation for Sweet Tree Arts. Few students come five days a week; some coming only three or four days a week combined with home schooling.

Samantha Mank offered a very positive assessment of the school's use of the Town Library/meeting room as a classroom for the past year during the COVID pandemic. She considered the middle school students to be quiet, ideal neighbors just across the hall from her own work space.

Streaming Argy Nestor, a teacher at the school after a 45 year career in arts education, added very positive comments about the school's methods and tone.

*John Jensen moved and Nancy Ford seconded to APPROVE THE REQUEST by Sweet Tree Arts to GRANT SPECIAL EXCEPTION for school and arts center as described in the application WITH A RECOMMENDATION that parking and traffic be more specifically defined. There was no further discussion and the vote of the Appeals Board was unanimous in approving the motion.

Meeting was adjourned at 8 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ireland, Secretary