

TOWN OF MILAN PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES – FINAL
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joan Wyant, Chairman
Jeffrey Anagnos
Nathaniel Charny
Kim Godfrey
James Jeffreys
John Mautone

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Radford West

ALSO PRESENT:

Chairman Wyant opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Public Hearings: None

Administrative:

- Approval of Minutes: Mr. Jeffreys motioned that the Planning Board accept the minutes of January 4, 2017 as presented. Ms. Godfrey seconded.

Joan Wyant, Chairman	Aye	James Jeffreys	Aye
Jeffrey Anagnos	Aye	John Mautone	Aye
Nathaniel Charny	Aye	Radford West	Absent
Kim Godfrey	Aye	Motion carried	6-0

Applications: None

Discussion Items:

1. **Taconic Retreat Center** – Paul Bowen, Executive Director, was present to present the Taconic Retreat Master Plan to the Board. The property is located on White Drive, tax grid number 6571-00-584466. Mr. Bowen said the camp is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. He said the property was purchased in 1966 and used as a fresh air fund camp for the Tribune Newspaper. As many ministries appear to be changing directions, the Taconic Retreat Center felt a new Master Plan was in order. The Plan started with a Ministry Master Plan produced by Fletemeyer & Lee located in Colorado that has done over 200 Christian camps and conference centers and pivoted into the Facility Master Plan. This company has done master plans for two other local camps, one in Hyde Park and one in Connecticut.

Mr. Bowen said he received the questions asked by the Board at the January meeting and worked with Fletemeyer & Lee to answer each question. Starting with the question as to who is the parent organization of the Taconic Retreat Center, Taconic is an integrated auxiliary Metro District of the Church of the Nazarene. The Camp is part of the Church's 501c3 status and based on that, is a not-for-profit ministry of the Church of the Nazarene. All district churches within

80 miles of Manhattan are part of this district so our camp serves all those churches, approximately 132. The mission of the Church of the Nazarene is to serve God, the Church, and our community by offering retreat, rest, refuge, and renewal. We welcome and serve churches of all denominations including Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim and Hindu. We also serve local groups in the community including the Milan Volunteer Fire Department and Red Hook and Pine Plains High Schools. We have hosted the Milan Fire Department for trainings free of charge and they have asked to participate in any demolition work once we start this new project. As far as environmental conservation, 3.2% of 212 acres is developed and 96.8% is open space. One whole side of the lake is preserved and used by deer, bobcats, otters, etc. Guests never go to that part of the property or to the part of the property that is adjacent to the town hall. Development is measured as roads, paved surfaces, building footprints and roof lines. If this master plan is approved and fully implemented, upon completion 5.2% of the property will be developed and 92.4 will remain as open space. We are requesting to develop 2% more than what is developed today. This is a year round camp with the high season April through October and the low season November through March. During the high season, we often will have two churches in on the weekend but during the week, mostly school groups. Last year, seven different schools used the camp. We also have charter schools in New York City that bus the kids up once a month. In the summer, church groups come in on Wednesday and stay until Sunday. Sunday lunch is the last meal and then the groups go home. Also, the soccer team from Rhinebeck practices in the gym and will have soccer tournaments on Saturday and a couple of the Pine Plains softball teams will practice at the camp when it rains. The camp may have two overnight group weekends in January, possibly three weekends in February, then pretty much every weekend by March. The maximum summer headcount is 204 during July and August. The groups of kids are usually around 190; adult groups are less. Upon project completion, we will be able to comfortably rent out 200 beds year round. The main reason we would keep this at 200 is food service. At present, they won't rent more than 175 beds due to the heating and there is no insulation. The biggest plus for us with this plan is the outdoor and indoor chapel. We use the gym as worship space now and the acoustics in that room are not the best. Upgrading the dining facility is also important to us. As I am sure the Board understands, these master plans are aspirational documents. You put in everything you want and if your capital campaign goes great, you can accomplish everything in the plan. The value of this project is between \$30 to \$40 million and it is what we hope to do. However, it probably won't be accomplished even in the next 10 years. Mr. Bowen said in the last 2.5 years, he raised \$2 million plus. Nazarene churches are dropping off so the camp is doing more with local churches and raising money outside the church.

The drop off circle, the rotunda, is not a wet area. It is on the hill that rises above the lake. It is 200 to 300 feet above the lake. The septic fields are all under the village green for the main camp and there is another field located by the berger cottages. A company by the name of GPI did the septic work. There had been no improvements done within the past ten years. In 2016, we invested more than

\$30,000 in improvements to our existing fields and we plan to spend at least \$30,000 more in improvements over the next two years. GPI replaced some grids and lines and repaired 8 to 12 quadrants. What is left now is repair work on the field by the berger cottages. The dining hall has its own 2,000 gallon tank that connects into a field and that will need replacement. One of the reasons we don't want to go above 200 people is that what is there currently, since the work was done by GPI, is adequate to serve our current needs and we are fully compliant with state codes. The water treatment plant that is proposed would be located behind the new church space and would not be seen from the chapel. However, the engineers are saying a treatment plan is not necessary but the DEC is very interested in it. It is possible we may be able to get funding from the state and the Department of Agriculture if we install a compliant waste water system but then we would need to hire someone to monitor it. We located the proposed waste water system whether or not we need it now since this is a ten year master plan and regulations change over the years so the plant may be required someday whether we want or need to install it. Part of the question of whether the septic systems will need to be expanded is whether or not the camp will be able to grow and expand. In order to fund the whole project, we will need more adult groups.

Regarding the question about areas impacted by wetlands and water crossings, environmental protection is important to us and our mission supports it. Preserving wetlands means more to us than just being DEC compliant. We strive to be good stewards of all flora, fauna, birds, and the eco system. The only bridging we are doing is the temporary floating bridge that can be moved and is fully compliant with the DEC. Because it is floating and moveable, there is nothing sunk down to the bottom of the lake to support it. It can be moved any time. It is just a foot bridge. The DEC likes movable bridges. We traverse the lake in a fully compliant way. The one bridge we will need is the permanent bridge over the Wappinger Creek which will be fully compliant. While you could drive your car over the permanent bridge, we prefer no cars and use golf carts to cross the bridge. As far as maintenance to the lake, every ten years we drop the level leaving pools deep enough to save the fish and then we dredge, one part at a time, to prevent the lake from becoming overloaded with weeds. There are other streams on the property that feed the wetlands. That is all wetland vegetation which we don't dredge. We dredge where it gets waist deep and higher. Part of our plan is to add an indoor pool. Pine Plains is very interested in renting the pool to start a swim team if we build the pool to high school varsity school standards. The lake is not a swimming lake, it is a boating lake, as there are snakes and snapping turtles living there. Once the pool is installed, then we can offer swimming.

There were also questions as to what is existing, what is proposed and what will be renovated and/or demolished. Mr. Bowen referred to the map produced by FLA which answers these questions. The map is coded to show existing structures to be removed or relocated, existing structures to remain and/or be upgraded, relocated existing structures, new structures, existing vehicular circulation to be abandoned, proposed vehicular circulation which consolidates

some existing with the proposed, new outdoor site paving, decks, and plazas, new or improved outdoor recreation zone, and new outdoor water recreation zone. The map also answers the other questions posed by the Board. The camp has been renovating buildings in disrepair all along and have added bathrooms, all done with appropriate building permits. The buildings will be modular including the lodges. To stick build in the camp and lodging industry is rare and the DEC likes it that way. The year round staff consists of Mr. Bowen who is the executive director, the facilities director, the financial director, the office manager, the maintenance person and the coordinator for Latino ministries. The camp partners with a Lutheran Church from the Bronx and hosts refugee children from Latin America twice a month on Saturdays year round. We contract out the housekeeping and during the summer months, hire an additional person to help out. We outsource our laundry which is actually what has preserved our septic system. As far as counselors, we are not a program camp, we are a rental turnkey facility. The churches that come in bring their own counselors. We offer lifeguards, low and high ropes staff, buildings and grounds, and food service. We hire a chef as needed in the winter but have a full time chef May through October. We also bring in four full time college students for the summer months. We have a day use fee, a per night fee, and a per meal fee. We are tightly regulated by the Health Department. Guests can bring in snacks but nothing unprocessed so no meat, cheese, dairy, etc.

One question from the Board was if the temporary immigration change by the government will affect the program with the Lutheran Church. Mr. Bowen said we started doing day programs in 2015. The kids love it, they love being outdoors. The Law actually requires they get fresh air. The Lutherans were asked to grow their shelter and add more beds so they came to us and asked if we would consider creating a short term shelter. Mr. Bowen came to the Town to see if that was an allowed use for this property and was told it was once the definition in the code was amended. At that point, we submitted a grant to the Office of Refugee Settlement to create a permanent shelter in the three berger cottages. These cottages are remote and separate from the camp. They have their own kitchen and dining facilities and a security gate could be added. Then, the government changed and as we know, the new government is not a fan of refugees so we don't know what that means for us at this point. If this were to move forward, it would be temporary shelter for children, never adults, mostly ages 13 to 17. Most younger kids do not survive the trip from Mexico but if they should, the younger kids would be placed in temporary foster care or could stay with a sibling and that is how they may end up here. Most of these kids get into the country as victims of sex trafficking (the girls) or gang violence (the boys). They get their day in court to prove this and get 30 to 40 days to prepare for the court date. We would provide a temporary protected place for those 30 to 40 days. The children would get help with trauma, medical and dental and a deal has been worked out with Northern Dutchess Hospital to provide those services. Once they leave here for court, they won't come back. If the kids can prove their case in court, they would be entered into the foster care system or if not, they would be immediately deported. So, at this point, we don't know how this will go

but it's not looking too positive. However, the refugee day groups are still coming every other Saturday and that will continue. Family services is continuing on with the licensing but they are moving slowly and are not optimistic. If the program does get approved, it would be for a one year grant and that would include security people. We would never have more than 24 refugees here at one time though. When the Saturday group comes up, they come with their own security people also. However, we believe security is everyone's responsibility. The layout here allows for us to see anyone who passes through. We do allow local people to fish and walk their dogs here. There is plenty of room for the emergency vehicles to maneuver up to the berger cabins. The fire department is very familiar with this site so they would know which truck to bring depending on where the call came from.

The Board wanted to know what the next step is. Mr. Bowen said they will be replacing the 80 bed dorm facility and the Miller house then will do either the gym or the chapel. If we get a long term lease for the indoor pool, then the pool will jump in front of the chapel as that will bring in revenue which will allow them to continue with the project. All the funds need to be raised for this expansion/renovation so that will depend on how they move forward with the plan. Mr. Jeffreys said the Board will need to see a Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3 plan understanding that priorities will be adjusted as funds come in.

Taconic Retreat will need to submit a site plan application and the phased plans. An escrow account will need to be established for review by the planner and/or engineer for the Town when the application is submitted. There was no action taken at this meeting.

Correspondence: None

Mr. Jeffreys motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Mr. Mautone seconded.

Joan Wyant, Chairman	Aye	James Jeffreys	Aye
Jeffrey Anagnos	Aye	John Mautone	Aye
Nathaniel Charny	Aye	Radford West	Absent
Kim Godfrey	Aye	Motion carried 6-0	

The next Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 1st at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Buechele, Clerk
Planning and Zoning

cc: Catherine Gill, Town Clerk
Town Board