

**Town of Strafford  
Development Review Board  
May 17, 2023 7 P.M.**

**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 7pm

**Attendance:** Terry Garrison, Martha Walke, Dan Ruml, Bonnie Bergeron & Sean Lewis

**Other Attendees:** Robert Fondren, Trudi Fondren, Chris Boyle, Erik Goodling, Rachel Kendall, Rob Townsend, Beverly Moses, Gardner Moses Jr., Brooke Wilkenson, & George Spaneas

**Approval of minutes:** From April 19, 2023 meeting, Martha moved to approve as written and Dan seconded. All approved.

**Report of Zoning Administrator:** N/A

**New business:**

1. Gardner and Beverly Moses Jr. have requested to subdivide 115.9 at 145 Kibbling Hill Road into 4 lots: Lot 1, 10.5 acres, Lot 2, 56.6 acres, Lot 3, 5 acres, and Lot 4, 13.9 acres.

Hearing opened at 7:02pm. Terry noted that the applicants were asked to bring to tonight's meeting a survey map of the entire parcel so that the board could see the entire parcel as a whole and how it will be divided. The Moses' submitted two new surveys showing some of the lots but still not the entire parcel owned. Their surveyor was present and noted that he could put the entire parcel on one map for the board to review but that he didn't not have this information prior to the meeting. The Moses thought they had requested this information. The two new maps submitted could show the entire lot if pieced together so the Board decided to review as submitted with the condition that the final mylar would show everything on one map. Each lot has the required road frontage, no ROW and the neighbor's well is noted on the map. Martha moved that the hearing close at 7:10pm and Terry seconded.

Terry made the motion that the survey be accepted with the condition that the lots are all on one map and the lots are identified as Lot 1 through 4. Martha seconded and all approved.

2. Rachel Kendall has submitted a Conditional Use Permit to use her barn and property, located at 20 Kendall Rd., as a wellness retreat and for events that would include weddings, theater and other outdoor activities. Hearing is continued from March 15, 2023 meeting.

Hearing re-opened at 7:15pm. Rachel noted that she will be serving alcohol and that she has a state permit so that people will not bring their own liquor. A bartender can regulate how much people are being served and follow regulations.

Act 250 has been submitted and their waste water permit has been approved for a 450-gallon system. This system is the same as a single-family home system. The water on the property has been tested but no results have been returned.

The WWP approved is for less than 12 events a year and a commercial kitchen. Martha noted that Rachel put into her application that up to 150 people per event could be in attendance and does the WWS support this amount of people. Rachel noted such events would require a porta potty.

Rachel said she has an outdoor area on which she would like to create her commercial kitchen. This kitchen would be piped into the septic system for any water used. A commercial kitchen is required to accommodate 100 gallons a day per State regulations.

Sean asked if Rachel expects for her events to get bigger with time and Rachel noted that she does not want that to happen and that she expects her gatherings to be smaller as her main focus would be yoga and wellness events. Act 250 will deal with parking and it would need to be in line with the town plan and conform to such plan.

Martha asked about the water source and there are two shallow wells on the property which will be the water source for her home and for guests.

A grease trap will be buried and need to be emptied when needed by pumping.

Comments from attendees:

Eric Goodling, a neighbor who does not abut Rachel's property has no concerns about daytime wellness or yoga retreat but has a lot of concerns about weddings and the noise they will create. He lives directly across the valley from Rachel and can hear everything and wants to enjoy his evenings on the weekends. He has concerns about alcohol being served and the traffic a wedding will create with 150 guests. Rachel said that she does want to keep things quiet but wants to give people in Strafford a place to have a wedding, offer employment and offer the service to people in town. She is open to having people park elsewhere and be bused in to help with traffic. Brooke Wilkenson has concerns about the noise as well and is it possible to have acoustic tests done to help determine how it will impact neighbors that do not border the property. She wondered if some sort of noise test could be conducted to see how it would affect neighbors. Rob Townsend noted that he believes Act 250 does have a test that can give a model on noise that cannot be more than 70 decibels at the border of the property.

Chris Boyle spoke for the Fondren's and noted the noise is also a concern, people coming onto their property at all hours. Chris said that 4 uses are being applied for and it will be difficult as a board to approve based on our town ordinance and the new Town Plan. The Town Plan talks about types of limited commercial enterprises that someone could have at their personal home in the RR II district and these 4 uses are not noted (weddings, theater venue, yoga/wellness and her personal home where she resides). The application also noted that Rachel should have submitted a map and site plan where all buildings, parking, other areas of activities are noted. There is too much information still missing from the application. The charter of the area will be changed and he doesn't see how the board could approve as submitted.

Rachel noted that she has a letter of support from Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission. Rachel wondered if attendees could offer what they would support. Bonnie asked Rachel about the number of people attending a wedding, could it be reduced and what number would she consider. Rachel said 75-100 but she would prefer the 150.

Bonnie asked about what the yoga sessions would look like and Rachel noted that they would be for men and women, 20-25 people per session, during daylight hours, once or twice a week.

Theater events would be once or twice a month and would have no more than 30 attendees. Chris asked if these events would be amplified and Rachel said no. Terry asked about the lighting and how bright it would be and Rachel said the theater would be located in the back of the house which is not visible to the road and it would be done between 6pm -8pm in the summer months so that minimum lighting would be needed.

Bonnie asked about the wellness aspect and Rachel noted that it could involve raku sessions for group therapy for wellness. These would occur once a week with no more than 25-30 people in attendance, beginning during the day and ending by 7:30pm – 8pm.

Rachel does intend to live in her home full time.

Chris read out loud from the new Town Plan, Chapter 9, RRII Goal Policies, number 4, which notes the policy concerning commercial development in that district.

Bonnie made the motion that we continue the hearing and do a site visit before next month and then have our meeting and Martha seconded. Terry noted that he wasn't ready to table the hearing. He does not feel the wedding component is acceptable within our town plan given the amount of people, alcohol being served, and other problems with this component.

Rachel thinks that other similar towns hosts weddings and that she will present a proposal to the board showing it can work. Terry noted that 6 weddings could be up to 600 people which is half the population of the town. He would like her to add to her proposal concerning other towns with similar private enterprises any private homes on 10 acres doing similar functions.

Motion was made again by Bonnie at 8:12pm that the hearing be continued until June 21 at 6pm for a site visit and then proceed to the meeting. Martha seconded, all approved. Bonnie asked Rachel and her surveyor to bring a plot map to next month's meeting that showed parking, buildings, outdoor kitchen, theater site, lighting and any other pertinent sites.

Martha made the motion we adjourn and Terry seconded. Adjourned at 8:16pm.