

Brooklyn Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 2, 2022
Clifford Green Building and Virtual Meeting 7:00 pm

Present: Diane Wimmer, Jeannine Noel, Dana Heilemann, Carolyn Teed-Ives (via Zoom), Richard Calarco, Victoria Fradette and Sara Deshaies, recording secretary (via Zoom)

Also Present: Jana Roberson via Zoom

1. Call to Order – Diane called the meeting to order at 7:03pm
2. Minutes Of April 4th Meeting – Jeannine made a motion to accept as presented. Dana seconded. Motion passed 6-0.
3. Minutes of Special Meeting April 30th – Richard made a motion to accepted as presented. Dana seconded. Motion passed 6-0.
4. Budget 2022-2023 – Diane stated nothing new at this time.
5. New Business -
 - a) subdivision reviews / review of information re: Little Dipper Farm – Diane forwarded the information that Jana sent on Little Dipper Farm, the Old Golden Lamb Buttery. Jana states it's not a natural sub-division. It's a planned development zone, authorized by zoning statues. Very different from our typical zones. More like if an idea is presented that isn't addressed in conventional planning and zoning. A proposal is presented to planning and zoning commission and ask for acceptance. If planning and zoning accepts it that becomes the zoning for that acreage of land. Does not apply town-wide. The land area is quite extensive. A lot of parcels without much development. Little Dipper Farm would operate much like the Golden Lamb did. Their proposal includes a long list of 'wants' that they would accomplish over the next 5-10 years or so. They were to present at the planning and zoning meeting on Wednesday night, but likely will postpone due to the public's interest and the capacity in the Green building. Diane asked what would happen if planned development is approved and development rights are gone. Jana clarified that this change would not effect development rights, those are intact. The land that was protected through the purchase development program with the Department of Agriculture are still in effect. Most of the fields cannot be built on. It is permanent. Their proposal shows which portions of parcels that cannot be built. Diane asked if any of their planned buildings can be put there. Jana said no. All agriculture is allowed to continue. Diane asked if there were portions that development rights are not protected. Jana stated that the entirety of the property is 500+ acres and only a portion is protected. They are proposing to building a camping area on the east side of the pond. Jana went on to share the full plan with the Commission. What they plan to build is the 50 site "glamping" area, a pavilion, and a bathhouse. There was explanation about what the glamping is and what's involved. Jana read their statement of use to the Commission. Dana asked if they are approved can they then build other things or does any new project need to go before Planning and Zoning.

Jana stated that anything changed or new would require a new application with the Planning and Zoning Commission. This first step is just to ask for the zoning be changed. The actual application to build would need to be reviewed and approved by Planning and Zoning and Inland Wetlands and Conservation, if necessary. Diane asked if the planned development zone would override the RA designation it now has. Jana stated that the planned development zone is in addition to RA and does not override. Little Dipper want to keep the RA zoning and the planned development zone would function as an overlay zone, much like Village Center District and Route 169 Scenic Overlay Zone. Richard asked if they have plans for restaurants and if they have presented their full vision for the next 5-10 years. Jana stated that the restaurant is already there and grandfathered. They are not proposing any new. They presented plans for things they want to do that are not grandfathered. Jimmy Booth put together a book on the history of the Golden Lamb. It details the uses and years those uses were active. It's helpful, but not legally binding. Jana further stated that just because the restaurant closed prior to change of ownership does not mean it can't be grandfathered. She clarified that the basic tenets of zoning is that any use that was occurring at the time a zoning regulation was adopted, even if the zoning regulations wouldn't allow it, is allowed to continue. Victoria asked if the zoning changes for similar properties. Jana stated that if a similar property wanted to, for instance, do glamping as well, they would need to go through the same process Little Dipper is going through. Diane asked how many acres they are using to build the 50 campsites and if the campsites are permanent and fitted with plumbing and electricity. Jana stated that approximately 25 acres will be dedicated to the campsites and almost positive the sites are permanent and will have electricity. There will be a bathhouse and will be subject to health codes. Jana showed the layout of the property and where the campground is going. She showed the white lined parcels that are protected by the PDR (protected development rights). Diane asked if greenhouses can put built on the protected land. Jana stated she has asked for, but not yet received a copy of the PDR but her understanding is that agriculture is permitted and a greenhouse is considered agriculture. Diane asked Jana to share the list of proposed projects. Victoria asked why they would need an office. Richard stated that none of these structures have sizes. He asked if they could just build whatever size they wanted. Jana said no. A Site Plan Review would have to be applied for. The purpose of this application is an overview of what the master plan is. Diane stated that there is nothing for this Commission to do at this time since there is no application submitted yet. Jana stated that the Commission could comment on whether or not they believe the plan is consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development, any concerns, etc. It's also ok to not comment. Jana added that she looked up the natural diversity database looking for areas special habitat value in the state-wide mapping and there is nothing like that on this property. It doesn't necessarily mean there is nothing of value there, it just means as of now nothing has been identified. Dana asked, regarding the tent sites, if they are planning to bring in a bunch of equipment or are they looking leave it as natural as possible. Jana said that she is sure that they want them as natural as possible. It's a high-end campground.

She stated it was logged a few years back. It's rebounding nicely. Little Dipper has a great interest in the aesthetic appeal but also natural appeal. Victoria asked what everyone thought of the plan. **Jeannine** thinks it's awesome. Richard commented that they seem to be ahead of the curve in creating a conservation piece for people to enjoy nature as well as educate. Diane's only concern is lack of detail on the size of the buildings they went to build. Jana stated that they would be held to whatever plan was agreed upon under the Site Plan Review. Richard asked if there was a certain look they needed to conform to. Jana stated that they are very dedicated to preservation. Richard asked what happens with this new zone created if Little Dipper decides to sell down the line? Jana will find out. Dana asked if stipulations can be drawn by the Town for certain uses if they sell. Jana stated that zone changes can have conditions added. Victoria asked if there is any tax impact. Jana stated she wouldn't make that assumption. She believes it would be net positive, but no impact on neighboring properties. Victoria then asked how the neighbors feel about this project. Jana stated there is concern and some opposition. Conversation took place regarding specific concerns townspeople brought up. Jeannine asked if the camping was anywhere near anyone's house. Jana showed that there is no immediate proximity to a house. She will get a specific number on the distance. Diane asked if the property across the street is their land as well. Jana shared the map showing the vastness of the property. Dana asked if the Town can say what parts can be in the planned development zone. Jana said that the Town has that authority to make those modifications. She suggested that the Commission could make that recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Discussion took place around the plan, clarifications, related questions, and concerns. The Conservation Commission will draft a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the building sizes and designs conforming to what is submitted, ask Planning & Zoning if this zoning will stay with the property if ownership changes, concerns about the parking areas and the environmental impact, that Little Dipper should be required to adhere environmental protocols of the highest standard during all construction activities, and planned development zone should only be considered for the master plan portion of the property. Victoria made a motion to submit recommendations on the PDZ to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Richard seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

- b) Election of officers – Jeannine nominated Richard for Chair. Diane seconded. No discussion. Motion passed 6-0. Jeannine nominated Diane as Vice Chair. Dana seconded. No discussion. Motion passed 6-0.
 - c) Other – Victoria asked how the Commission goes about finding property for the State to buy for Conservation purposes. Richard said the State doesn't necessarily buy property, they sometimes provide funds for the Town to buy land. This commission would have to work with Planning & Zoning proposed. Diane wrote to Austin Tanner and hasn't heard back yet. Victoria mentioned the property near the baseball field on Route 205 as a potential open space. Discussion took place. No decisions made.
6. Old Business
- a) Earth Day recap – Planting went well. Individuals also did their own thing.

- b) Family Fun Day – Diane will pick up seed starters, sunflower seeds, and potting soil. Anything left over usually goes to camp. She will also ask Bucky if he has any tents and tables for the to borrow.
- c) Other - None
- 7. Correspondence – Aquarium Water Company, stewards of the environment sent a letter asking for nominations for outstanding volunteers. Students 9-12 grades and adults eligible.
- 8. Public Comment - None
- 9. Adjournment – Dana made a motion to adjourn. Victoria seconded. Motion carried 5-0 as Carolyn had left by this time. Meeting adjourned at 9:03pm.

Next meeting Monday June 6, 2022

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Deshaies