

## **Zoning Board Site Visit – 99 River Road**

**Thursday August 25, 2022 at 6:00pm**

Attendees: Jane Ellis (homeowner), Bob Fasanella (representative), Ray Holmes (friend)

Also representing the Town, Walker Farrey, ZBA Vice-Chair; David Lage, ZBA member, arrived at around 7:00pm; Meredith Lund, Fire Chief; Jim Feldhusen, Building Inspector; Susan Mallett, Land Admin

A half dozen abutters were in attendance, including Chris Allen, Louise DelPapa, Marilyn Stowe, Stan Zabierek, Craig Smeeth and Bentti Hoiska.

Walker opened the site visit at around 6:10pm by explaining to the group gathered in the driveway that Jane is requesting a Variance to run a minimal impact home occupation. Jane notes that she averages 4 events per month, usually 1 time a week, but sometimes 2 times a week, generally weekends only, and very rarely on a Thursday or Friday. It is invite only, not a walk in situation. The events run from sometime in May, usually Mother's day through Christmas. She serves tea and scones. People come dressed up, stay for 2 to 3 hours, normally 20 to 40 people at each event. Events can be showers, birthdays, or just tea with friends.

As the tour started, Jane indicated that she would not allow the majority of the abutters on her property because they don't get along. She asked that they walk around the block, to the parking area and not through her yard. She did allow full access to Bentti along with Walker, Susan, Jim, and Meredith.

Jane said there are no speakers and lights are residential only, no spot lights or other lights that would adversely affect the neighbors. The events are usually in the daylight. She said there is parking in her driveway, and she planned on using that for handicap parking. Also parking on the street, she indicated the police told her that was okay. Walker noted that the driveway may not meet specifications for handicap parking as it is, and requested that she mark handicap parking on her map.

Walker discussed the septic capacity, and that Jane needs to have a plan because 40 people even if just once a week can put a strain on the system.

Once we reached the proposed parking area off Currier Road, we met up with the abutters again, and the Building Inspector and ZBA were given documents that showed the proposed layout, and the boundaries of the conservation land.

Abutters were then allowed to voice their concerns and ask questions. Many of the abutters noted the parking on street is difficult to navigate, another noted that these events occur on the weekend, and he works all week, and can't enjoy his yard on his time off.

The tour then went into the home where the Fire Chief noted that if this is approved, fire and smoke detectors and fire exits signs would need to be put up. The Chief noted that if she could find removable lighted exit signs and they were up for events that might be a possible option, she also noted that there is no smoking in the home during events.

Meredith will get the code for maximum capacity for the events. The home is 4800 sq. ft., and Jane indicates that only about 34% of the house is used for the tea parties.

Jim Feldhusen agreed with the Chiefs concern regarding lack of smoke detectors and fire exit signs. He only saw one alarm, he also noted the lack of bathrooms for the size of the larger groups. Jane indicated there is a storage closet she would like to convert into a bathroom if this is approved. She was informed that she will need to submit building, electrical and plumbing permits if she does that, and she can reach out to either Susan or Jim in the building department if she has questions.

David came in around 7:00pm, after tour had already started, so a shortened version of the tour was done for his benefit. David also had concern regarding the septic capacity and reiterated that a backup plan is suggested in the event of septic failure or inadequacy, discussed the parking layout, and also had concerns regarding the wet land boundaries and whether the parking would be encroaching on the setbacks. He asked that they get a licensed surveyor to delineate the wetlands on the map Jane provided the ZBA to ensure the parking didn't encroach on the setbacks and adversely affect the wetlands.