

**WHITEFISH PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 18, 2016**

- CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** Vice Chair Melissa Picoli Philips called the regular meeting of the Whitefish Planning Board to order at 6:00 pm. Board members present were Councilor Richard Hildner, John Ellis, Jim Laidlaw, Rebecca Norton and Ken Stein. Chairman Ken Meckel was absent. Planning Director David Taylor and Planner II Bailey Minnich represented the Whitefish Planning and Building Department.
- There were two people in the audience.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES** 6:00 pm Rebecca moved and Jim seconded to approve the January 21, 2016 minutes. The motion passed unanimously, with Ken abstaining since he was not in attendance.
- COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)** 6:02 pm None.
- OLD BUSINESS:** 6:03 pm None.
- PUBLIC HEARING 1: AVERILL FAMILY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT** 6:05 pm A request by Averill Family Limited Partnership for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a bar in conjunction with an established lodging facility. The property is developed with an existing commercial lodge as part of the Viking Creek facilities, and is zoned WRB-2/PUD (General Resort Business District with a Planned Unit Development). The proposed bar will be located near the pool area in the existing lodge building. The subject property is located at 1385 Wisconsin Avenue and can be legally described as COMMONAREA of Lodge at Whitefish Lake on L18 Viking Creek Subdivision in S24, T31N, R22W.
- STAFF REPORT WCUP 16-01 (Minnich)** Planner Minnich reviewed her staff report and findings. Staff recommended adoption of the findings of fact and conditions of approval within staff report WCUP 16-01, and for **approval** to the Whitefish City Council.
- BOARD QUESTIONS OF STAFF** Jim asked about the situation regarding licensing with the State of Montana and Minnich replied they are getting their own licensing through the state.

**APPLICANT /
AGENCIES**

Brian Averill, 1380 Wisconsin Avenue, Whitefish represented the Viking Creek facilities. Richard asked if this would be a full service liquor license or just a beer and wine license. Mr. Averill replied full service license. The Lodge has a full service liquor license and this would be a sub-license under that main license. Their property is all covered under one license but the State requires a sub-license for the proposed bar in the Viking Creek facilities since a road separates them from the main property. The State looks at the number of units The Lodge has to see if they are eligible, and they had enough.

Rebecca asked why the proposed bar was coming through now instead of when the rooms were built. Mr. Averill replied the original 36 rooms in the Viking Creek facilities were built in 2009 and 2010; they built 16 additional guest rooms, along with the pool and grill, in 2014. They did not finish the grill area at that time, but it is now fully constructed. They realized almost immediately that from a service side, there was a need for a bar and grill near the pool. The bar size is very limited, with little equipment. Occupancy in the winter months is a driver and the indoor pool was designed for that, with the need for services and amenities to go along with it. The food service has been open this winter and has been very popular with their guests, will be positive for the future, and a part of the 4-star rating for clients of The Lodge.

Melissa asked how the public would be prevented from entering. Mr. Averill replied to get into building, guests will have a key card for the front door, and to get into the pool, there is another key card access. The grill is open to inside the pool area. It would be possible to go around the building to get to the outside area, but to get inside the pool area you have to have a key card. They are not intending for the bar to be open to the public; it is for guests utilizing the pool area, not the public.

John asked if the whole area is inside the building. Mr. Averill replied there is a patio outside, so guests could actually leave the pool area. John asked whether it will be fenced so people from outside would not be able to see in the area and Mr. Averill replied there is criteria from the State to fence the area to control access.

Richard asked whether they envision the possibility of a guest inviting someone from town or using the facility for a wedding, etc., the bar then be open to the public, even though the proposed bar is primarily for hotel guests. Mr. Averill said that is a possibility as The Lodge has a catering endorsement and they do special events on the nearby grass and patio area, so that would probably continue. Richard asked how this Conditional Use would limit expansion of service beyond The Lodge. How do we follow

up and make sure the Conditional Use is being followed and not having a greater audience? Taylor said that would be complaint driven, but they do have to operate within what the State would allow.

PUBLIC COMMENT None.

MOTION / BOARD DISCUSSION Richard moved and Rebecca seconded to adopt the findings of fact within staff report WCUP 16-.01, with the seven (7) Conditions of Approval as proposed by City Staff.

Melissa asked if during the shoulder season, there be any type of day pass, etc., for using the pool/bar/grill without renting a room or in conjunction with receiving a spa treatment, and Mr. Averill replied not at the moment, but possibly in the future.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously. The matter is scheduled to go before the Council on March 7, 2016.

NEW BUSINESS None.
6:18 pm

GOOD AND WELFARE
6:18 pm

1. Matters from Board. Rebecca said she was discussing rezoning the downtown area to possibly expand commercial use beyond 4th Street down to the Kiddie Park with City Manager Chuck Stearns and former Mayor Mike Jenson at a social event, and she told them she would bring it up to the Planning Board. She was speaking to someone who owned property in that area about how it would affect their property value. She said expanding commercial use into the Railroad District was discussed, but some who rented there had moved to main streets, as they did not feel their volumes were as high. How can we give local businesses the advantage of the main street? She said the architects at Crandall Arambula were talking about zoning in the downtown area and possibly looking at parking as well. Can we initiate something like that to take a closer look at opening up more commercial space? Taylor replied last year's update to Downtown Master Plan looked at potential zoning in downtown including zoning overlay to incorporate those. The Planning Department will start that process in the next couple of months. Expanding retail in downtown is somewhat limited with the largest opportunity for that having been the block where the community decided to keep City Hall. There are some opportunities for expansion on Central Avenue. The Downtown Master Plan called for some of that to be commercial property.

Rebecca asked Taylor if they would contact citizens to see how they feel about it. We do not want to devalue properties, but we still want

to bring opportunities to go commercial. Taylor replied the Planning Board and City Council would look at neighborhoods and see if there is a possibility to rezone. The City Council has the power but is very limited and most communities do not pursue rezoning without property owners' agreement.

Rebecca asked whether the Planning Board could charge the Planning Department staff to proceed with that. Taylor replied the Downtown Master Plan calls for them to begin implementation within a one-year period so the Planning staff have it on their radar and will work on it as their workload allows. They currently have a rewrite of the PUD chapter of the Whitefish City Code and the Wisconsin Avenue Plan to work on, and will pursue it after that.

2. Matters from Staff. None.

3. Poll of Board members available for the next meeting on March 17, 2016. Melissa will not be here but all others indicated they thought they would be available.

ADJOURNMENT

6:26 pm

Rebecca made a motion and Ken seconded to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:26 p.m. The motion passed unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Whitefish Planning Board will be held on March 17, 2016, at 6:00 pm, at 1005 Baker Avenue.

/s/ Ken Meckel

Ken Meckel, Chair of the Board

/s/ Keni Hopkins

Keni Hopkins, Recording Secretary

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED / CORRECTED: 3-17-16