

1 BENNINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MEETING  
2 BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY  
3 130 RIVER STREET  
4 BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201

5  
6 TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2015

7  
8 MINUTES  
9

10 BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Copp-Chair; Barry Horst-Vice-Chair ; Bill Barney;  
11 Dan Malmborg; Milt Surdam; Ron Alderman; Charles Kokoras

12  
13 ABSENT: *None*  
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16 ALSO PRESENT: Dan Monks-Zoning Administrator; (6) citizen; Linda E. Bermudez,  
17 Recording Secretary  
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20 At 6:30 P.M., Charles Copp called the meeting to order.  
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23 **1. MINUTES OF MAY 05, 2015**  
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25 No corrections or comments regarding the May 05, 2015 minutes.  
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27 **Motion:** *Milt Surdam moved to approve the minutes of May 05, 2015 as submitted.*  
28 *Barry Horst seconds motion. The motion passed unanimously.*  
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31 **2. INTERESTED PERSONS – APPEAL RIGHTS – READING OF WITNESS’ OATH**  
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33 Dan Monks read this oath to all those present.  
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35 **3. DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFLICTS OF**  
36 **INTEREST**  
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38 None this evening  
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41 **4. ALDI, INC., 10 KOCHER DRIVE**  
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43 Dan Monks summarized this project. The applicant is seeking approval for a 2,250  
44 square foot addition to the existing building. This is the first of two hearings.

45 Chris Kamar stepped forward to present. He stated the original building was built in  
46 2002. They would like to expand this building with an additional 2,200 square feet on the front  
47 side of the existing building and change the “canopy”. Plans include keeping the existing  
48 sidewalk however moving some of the landscape trees. In the rearrangement of the landscape  
they plan to add additional trees to the area. Mr. Kamar noted that the maps/plans submitted

49 show where the proposed bike path (by the Town) would fit into these plans. He also noted that  
50 Aldi's is contributing to that proposed bike path.

51 Mr. Kamar continued by describing the changes to the canopy. Lighting will stay the  
52 same. Bruno Lourenco noted that since the store in Bennington has opened, they have built two  
53 more in Vermont. There are now Aldi's in Rutland and in Brattleboro. Mr. Lourenco continues  
54 by stating the interior renovations include a complete overhaul of the heating and cooling  
55 system, an additional aisle of shopping and all new refrigeration.

56 Charlie Copp asked if the store would need to close. Mr. Lourenco stated for the internal  
57 renovations the store would close for approximately 30 days. They understand this is an  
58 inconvenience to their customers. They hope many will seek out the alternate Vermont stores or  
59 perhaps the new Aldi's being built in Pittsfield. It will hurt us short term but the impact when  
60 renovations are complete are big.

61 Ron Alderman asked if there would be additional signage. Mr. Kamar stated there  
62 would not. Milt Surdam asked if the façade would be faux brick. Mr. Kamar stated this would  
63 be real brick. Bill Barney asked about if the current entrance or site distance would be affected.  
64 Mr. Kamar stated neither would change. The main change would be the loss of the first row of  
65 parking because the building will be "bumped out" there.

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67 The Board had no questions at this time.  
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69 ***Motion:*** Charles Kokoras motioned to grant Preliminary Approval and move in to  
70 ***Deliberative Session. Milt Surdam seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

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##### 75 **5. ROBERT KOBELIA, 3015 WEST ROAD**

76 Dan Monks summarized this project. The applicant is seeking approval for a portable  
77 sawmill and log yard. This is the first of two hearings.

78 Mr. Kobelia noted he handed the Board a packet of information just before stepping  
79 forward. He described the contents of the packet and the cover letter. He noted it included a  
80 survey of his property, maps and pictures of what a sawmill would look like. Mr. Kobelia feels  
81 this is needed, as there is not one sawmill in Bennington County. He expects to do (1) million  
82 board feet in the first year. He stated did not feel he needed to come before the Board for  
83 approval since his property is already zoned for this type of business but wanted to do so with the  
84 Board's blessing.

85 Mr. Kobelia stated he has already filed permits for and completed the necessary roadway  
86 upgrades to his property through the State of Vermont and to their approval. They would have  
87 come to the meeting to testify, however the State now has a "no overtime" policy. Anyone may  
88 contact them during regular business hours to discuss this work.

89 Charles Kokoras asked what the hours of operations would be. Mr. Kobelia stated he felt  
90 there would be no issues since his property is in the middle of nowhere. Mr. Kokoras explained  
91 he is concerned about traffic, noise etc after dark. Mr. Kobelia stated there would be no extra  
92 lighting.

93 Dan Malmborg asked about the type of fuel. Mr. Kobelia stated he was not sure at this  
94 point, maybe solar energy someday. He had no sound plan as of yet but hopes to employ  
95 approximately 20 people someday.

96 Barry Horst asked if Mr. Kobelia owned a sawmill now. He stated he did not but could.  
97 Mr. Horst asked if he planned to buy one in the near future. Mr. Kobelia stated he did not.

98 Milt Surdam asked if he had preliminary plans for a permanent sawmill. Mr. Kobelia  
99 stated he did not. He wanted to start small and make some money.

100 Bill Barney had questions about the access road to his property. Mr. Kobelia stated he  
101 only has a chain. He does not want a fence. No trucks will load or unload at anytime without his  
102 prior approval and knowledge.

103 Charlie Copp noted that first discussions were for a permanent sawmill but this  
104 application is for a portable one. He would like to know which is it? Mr. Kobelia stated  
105 softwood is popular now so it'll be portable. Hardwoods take high quality equipment but the  
106 demand is not high now.

107 Mr. Copp also noted that the drawings in the packet are over 12 years old. The Board  
108 needs new, up to date, drawn to scale engineered drawings.

109 Barry Horst asked if Mr. Kobelia didn't own a portable sawmill who does, would  
110 someone else do the work? Mr. Kobelia stated he knows a bunch of people who do, so he will  
111 contract out to different ones. Mr. Horst again asked who they were.

112 Charlie Copp asked what happened to Mr. Kobelia's former sawmill in Pownal and why  
113 he would open one in Bennington. Mr. Kobelia stated that the plant closed in 2007 because it  
114 was a bad year for lumber. He would like to open on his land so he no longer has to commute to  
115 work.

116 Dick Cutler (an abutter and neighbor) stated on map #3 there are no defined boundaries.  
117 It just states storage is (4) acres. He would like to know where/which (4) acres of Kobelia's  
118 approximately 55-acre property this would be. Mr. Kobelia stated it is all centered around the  
119 existing barn. It will be a couple of hundred feet in each direction around barn. Charlie Copp  
120 stated it must be specified on the maps.

121 Bill Wicks another neighbor asked about the noise levels and hours of operation. Dan  
122 Monks stated that this would be held to the Town's Noise Ordinance. During the day the limit is  
123 approximately 70 decibels and after 8:00 or 9:00pm it drops significantly. Mr. Wicks also noted  
124 that approximately (10) years ago he applied to open a business on his property (in this area) and  
125 was told the road was too dangerous. Mr. Monks stated he has asked Vermont Agency of  
126 Transportation (VT-AOT or also known as VTrans) to explain why this project would not be  
127 dangerous.

128 Jane Radocchia stated she is a neighbor but across the road. This would be in site view  
129 and wondered if she was considered an "abutter". If she is, she did not receive any of the  
130 information. Ms. Radocchia would like to see all of the information. The valley and lay of the  
131 land has acoustics that make it possible to hear her neighbor speaking at their mailbox from her  
132 house. The noise concerns her. She also stated this road is very dangerous.

133 Dan Monks stated Ms. Radocchia may come to the Town Office anytime for copies of  
134 any of this project.

135 Peter Radocchia stated he was a neighbor as well and asked for a comparison to a  
136 particular mill in New York State. Would it be the same size and or volume of work? Mr.  
137 Kobelia explained that they process different wood and have different machinery.

138 Dan Malmberg asked how many truck loads (1) million board feet would be in a year.  
139 Mr. Kobelia explained that it varies because the truckloads are governed by weight not items.  
140 The after extensive background the summary was hardwood weighs more than softwood;  
141 therefore a truckload of hardwood might be 3,200 board feet. Softwood weighs less so there  
142 could be approximately 6,500 board feet on a load but there are a lot of variables. Mr.  
143 Malmberg then translated that estimate to approximately 200 truckloads per year.

144 Mr. Kobelia wanted to address the sound concerns by stating that at his former sawmill  
145 there was no issue at the boundary lines. The sound of a saw is a whine and he had no problems  
146 there. He can often hear Ms. Radocchia's barn cleaner but it didn't bother him.

147 Dick Cutler asked how much waste would be produced and how often it would be  
148 removed. Mr. Kobelia stated much of the waste would be used to heat his own home. It will be  
149 removed approximately once a week.

150 Bill Wicks asked about the beetle infestations. Mr. Kobelia stated it has not reached  
151 Vermont yet. He will only take certain wood at certain times of the year when out of quarantine.  
152 He can however ship out all year round. Mr. Kobelia also showed an Arial map of his property  
153 showing that the roadway in front of his property is straight. The dangerous curve is down the  
154 road.

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156 The Board had no questions at this time.

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158 **Motion:** *Barry Horst motioned to close this hearing and move into Deliberative Session.*  
159 *Ron Alderman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

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162 Charlie Copp informed Mr. Kobelia that if the Board requires any additional information  
163 he would be contacted.

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166 **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

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168 There was no other business this evening.

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172 **Motion:** *Barry Horst motioned to close the meeting. Milt Surdam seconded the motion.*  
173 *The motion passed unanimously.*

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178 Respectfully submitted,

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181 Linda E. Bermudez  
182 Secretary