

SelectBoard Emergency Meeting October 6th 9:22 AM

Via Zoom

Attendance: John Ogden, Michael Jeffery, Steve Hall and Nancy Bennett of 35 Breeds Hill Road

Purpose: to decide on two Requests to Cater applications for wedding events at 35 Breeds Hill on 10/9 and 10/16 asap

Planning and Zoning Commission completed their deliberations on Monday night and decided not to approve the conditional use permit that Mrs Bennett applied for, to allow the conduct of business activities (a wedding venue) at the residentially-zoned property she owns. Zoning determined that an event space cannot be a home business, which is the only commercial option for that location.

Mrs Bennett asked for clarification- "I can have my own parties, but just can't offer it to other people?"

John Ogden responded that "commercial use" for a fee is the key. A Bylaw rewrite is due soon, and Mrs Bennett is encouraged to participate in that process, for her situation is not unique and a lot of Towns are struggling with this issue.

Mrs Bennett feels that her wedding business has created jobs in town, (though did not cite any. The catering RTCs for the events have been from businesses in Montpelier, WRJ, Grafton and Waitsfield)

Steve Hall pointed out that decisions regarding allowed commercial activity must pertain to all or none, that 35 Breed Hill is an attractive event site, where his own house is not, yet the SB must make a decision that applies to all, to be fair.

Nancy Bennett asks for clarification on how she should proceed going forward, when she wants to have parties. "We have a lot of family, nieces and nephews, and friends." Can they get catering or not? Do they apply to the Town or just bring their own alcohol, tend bar themselves and get insurance?

The SB state that they cannot condone breaking Town Bylaws.

Inconsistencies in claiming to only use the property for weddings of "family and friends" vs advertising commercial event hosting make it difficult for the Board to parse the veracity of intention here.

Discussion regarding the business nature of "Four Peaks Resort": A home website and advertising on wedding websites theknot.com and weddingwire.com, rate sheets and a business name were brought up. Mrs. Bennett says that "Four Peaks" is the name of their home (as many homes have a name), and that the website has been taken down and advertising on the wedding sites was cancelled. Mrs Bennett says she pays \$5500 a year to be weddingwire.com, but has cancelled and should not be there anymore, though a search during the meeting showed Four Peaks remains on the sites.

Nancy states "Dean and I will honor what we have booked and take the hit"

John Ogden again urges Nancy to take part in the process of Bylaw revision and weigh in for the future, that her property - while zoned residential- looks like an attractive site for the kind of business the Bennetts would like to operate, but that as *currently* written is not permitted.

Motion to approve the two remaining Requests to Cater: October 9 and October 16: in light of ZBA decision were unanimously denied by the Select Board.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:46am