

Minutes
Town of Waldoboro
Planning Board Meeting
January 9, 2019

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Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Scott Simpson at 6:03 p.m. in the meeting room at the Municipal Building. Other members present were Barbara Boardman, Sara Hotchkiss, Tara Pelotte, and Ted Wooster. Planning and Development Director Max Johnstone and planning consultant Bill Najpauer were present. Sara Rademaker and John Pavan were present representing American Unagi, along with engineer Will Gartley of Gartley & Dorsky and George Seaver, owner of Waldoboro Environmental Park, from whom American Unagi is leasing its building site. The audience included Sam Chapman, Glen Melvin, Brian Morris, Norman Whitehill, Sandra Whitehill, and reporter Alexander Violo from the Lincoln County News.

1. Minutes of November 14 and December 12, 2018

On motion of Boardman/Pelotte, Planning Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes of Nov. 14, 2018, as revised to include Simpson's changes. These are incorporated in the version of the Nov. 14 minutes marked "Review on January 9, 2019" at the top of p. 1.

On motion of Pelotte/Hotchkiss, Planning Board members voted 3 - 0 - 2, Boardman and Wooster abstaining, to approve the minutes of Dec. 12, 2018, with a change on p. 3 in the next-to-last line under 7. Next Planning Board Meeting, to change "this week" to "on Dec. 10".

2. Approval of American Unagi Site Plan Application for Aquaculture and Construction in Wellhead Protection District, One Pie Road (Tax Map U-14, parts of Lots 10-2 and 10-3)

Sara Rademaker, President of American Unagi, made a presentation about her business. She started American Unagi in 2014 to grow baby eels to market size in land-based tanks. She will buy young "glass" eels from local fishermen, raise them to market size, and ship them live to market. A smaller operation in the same building will handle processed product. She has 15 years of experience with land-based aquaculture. She started growing eels in her basement in Thomaston in 2012. She used an incubator at the Darling Marine Center in Walpole, ME, in 2105 to demonstrate that land-based eel aquaculture can succeed commercially in the U.S. Maine is one of only two states in the U.S. where commercial fishing for glass eels is allowed. Glass eels are currently exported from the U.S. to Europe and Asia and grown out to market size for re-shipment globally.

Rademaker plans a new 27,000 s.f. pre-manufactured steel building (see drawings from Gartley & Dorsky), in which to grow 240 metric tons of product per year in tanks, approximately half a million eels. Nine or ten employees are planned. There will be 13 parking spaces. Water for aquaculture (~95,000 gallons per day) will come from an existing well owned by the Environmental Park. Wastewater from the aquaculture operation will be filtered and treated to remove solids, including fecal material, fish food, phosphate, nitrogen, etc., and UV-sterilized to kill bacteria before being discharged to the Medomak River. Following the European model, Rademaker does not plan to use antibiotics or hormones in growing the eels. The

aquaculture wastewater treatment system will be designed and installed by an experienced Dutch firm. There will be a separate in-ground septic system for human waste. Rademaker expects to break ground this spring and be up and running by the end of 2019. She expects to receive a stormwater permit in two months.

Growing eels in tanks requires careful monitoring of their health, and regular system maintenance. There is a back-up generator. Water temperature, ammonia and oxygen levels in the water are continuously monitored. The eels are observed as they grow, for factors like weight gain, how fast they respond to feeding, and the smell of the ambient air. Sam Chapman, who has experience growing shad in tanks nearby, suggested thinking of a land-based aquaculture operation as analogous to an intensive-care unit in a hospital.

All systems are designed to prevent adverse impacts on the environment. A wastewater discharge permit application has been submitted to the Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection. Once the system is in operation, DEP has the right to inspect the discharge. Planning Board members asked many questions about treatment of the wastewater prior to discharge to the river. Seaver suggested that some of the material removed during treatment may have commercial value as fertilizer. In response to questioning by Simpson it was stated that the containment pallets used to hold drums of chemicals (such as hydrochloric acid) have sufficient capacity to hold any leakage. In addition, pallets of acids and bases would be kept apart from each other.

Hotchkiss asked whether there are any health restrictions on eating land-raised eels, as, for example, pregnant women are advised not to eat farm-raised salmon. Wild-caught eels from the Kennebec River have been found to have high levels of PCBs and mercury. Rademaker said that her tank-raised eels do not have dangerous concentrations of chemicals.

Rademaker concluded her presentation at 7:00 p.m. Chairman Simpson asked for comments from members of the audience.

Glen Melvin is vice chairman of the Waldoboro Shellfish Committee, and an elver fisherman, who has been involved with water quality testing in the Medomak River. He is strongly in favor of the American Unagi project, which he said is potentially a great step forward for Waldoboro, and is being watched with great interest both State-wide and nationally.

George Seaver said that American Unagi is a logical expansion of the Business Park and will be a good fit. There is commercial fertilizer potential in aquaculture byproducts. He would support the project even if he were not its landlord. Land-based aquaculture is much better than sea-based aquaculture from a fisherman's viewpoint.

On motion of Wooster/Pelotte, Planning Board members voted 5 - 0 to approve the American Unagi application, subject to permit approval by the Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection for wastewater discharge to the Medomak River.

3. Appointment of James Russo to Planning Board

Russo was appointed to the Planning Board at the January 8, 2019 Select Board meeting.

4. Revisions to Land Use Ordinance Articles 7 Shoreland Zoning and Article 10 Non-Conforming Uses - deferred

Discussion of revisions to shoreland zoning and non-conforming uses in the Land Use Ordinance was postponed to February, due to tonight's weather.

Simpson said that he is uncomfortable with changing the minimum required setback for manure storage. He has emailed Karl Wilson, Chris Sferra, and Bryant Lewis at the Dept. of Marine Resources. Karl Wilson replied that Bryant Lewis is the right person to respond and Simpson is waiting for him to reply.

Boardman read from LUO Article 5 Specific Performance Standards C. Agriculture and Related Businesses 1. c. on p. 5-2 of the 2014 edition: "No manure shall be stored within 300 feet of the normal high water line of any water body, watercourse, fresh water or coastal wetland, or wells used to supply water for human consumption, or within 150 feet from the nearest dwelling other than the applicant's, unless stored in a weather proof structure designed to agricultural standards." She reported that the romaine lettuce industry in California has recently had a problem with E. coli sickening consumers. The minimum setback distance between a cattle holding area and a water source, formerly 400', is being tripled to 1200'.

Johnstone cited water quality data from the Medomak Project. To date there has been no indication of livestock-related bacteria found in samples from the Medomak River. He has spoken with professors at University of New Hampshire and University of Maine at Orono. He will report further at next month's Planning Board meetings.

5. Next Planning Board Meetings: Wednesday, February 13 and 20, 6:00 p.m.

Johnstone said that he has received no new applications for site plan or subdivision review. Two Planning Board meetings were scheduled in February, in order to be able to complete revision in time for inclusion on the warrant for Town vote in June.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan S. R. Alexander

Action Items

Simpson

Get response(s) from Bryant Lewis at the DMR and summarize for the Board.

Johnstone

Report on water quality testing in the Medomak River at February PB meeting(s).