Minutes of a Regular Meeting held by the Planning Board of the Town of Shawangunk, County of Ulster, State of New York, at the Town Office Building, 14 Central Avenue, Wallkill, New York, on Tuesday, 6th day of March 2024.

Those present were: Todd Widmark
Rich Barnhart
John Szarowski
Patricia Turner
Mark Watkins, Chair
Vacancy

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Absent: Sal Patella

Also Present: Please see sign-in sheet for rest of attendees.

Meeting location: Town Hall, 14 Central Avenue, Wallkill, NY 12589

Open Regular Meeting: 7:00 pm

Emergency Exits Announcement

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes of February 6, 2024

A first motion was made by John Szarowski and seconded by Todd Widmark to approve the Meeting Minutes of February 6, 2024. Vote: All Ayes: 5, Vacancy: 1, Abstain: 0, Absent: 1

PUBLIC HEARING:

CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC HEARING:

APPEARANCES:
Mr. Peter Cirillo Architects, PC – Dharma Drum Buddhist Association Retreat Center – Building Addition. Applicant: 2024-02: SBL: 98.4-3-8.120, Acres: 87.1, Address: 184 Quannacut Road, Pine Bush, NY 12566. Property Class: Religious, R-AG2, Subsection 177-6E, Pine Bush School District, Walker Valley Fire Company. Removal of portion of existing building to construct a 2,224 square foot addition to be used as a meditation hall.

Entered into Record: Site Plan Application and map dated February 15, 2024 from Mr. Peter Cirillo, Architects, PC. Memo r review dated March 4, 2024 from Ms. Bonnie Franson, AICP CEP, Danielle Dreyer, Planning Analyst from Nelson Pope Voorhis.

Introduction and Application Review:
My name is Peter Cirillo and I am an architect for Dharma Drumm and I am here with members of Dharma Drumm and we are proposing to tear down approximately around 920 or 940 sq. ft. existing meditation hall which is actually disconnected from the existing building, and we are going to build a new meditation hall that is about 2,224 sq. ft. It has a main floor which will have the meditation hall and some bathrooms. There is a small second story which is a replacement of the existing exterior exit stair that we need to maintain as an exit of the

second floor of the building. There is an unfished basement with a laundry room, some mechanical, and utilized as storage.

Discussion with Building Department:
Mr. Cirillo stated, I explained to Mark that I had contacted the Building Department probably about a year ago, last Spring, to find out if we needed to present to the Planning Board and we were informed, by the Building Department, we do not. No name or number provided. We did submit for a Building Permit to the Building Department and when I spoke to the Building Inspector, he was the one that informed me I had to come before the Planning Board. We are here and we feel this is a minor project as far as its impact.

Land Description:
Larry Marshall did do a project description. It is R-Ag2 zoning and it is a permitted use. The water supply, septic system, and archeologically is not affected. There is a bald eagle in the area but we are not cutting down any trees. Very little impact on flood plans and wet lands. It is a Type II Action under SEQR and we should be in sync. We did not have a site survey of the 87.1 acres and we went onto the Ulster County website and developed an existing plan as much as we could. As you can see, the area where my site plan takes over, is a very minor part of the site, about a tenth of an acre were affected out the 87.1 acres. If you look at my site plan, SB1, that gives you an idea of everything. If you look over to the right, you can see the old building and where it is coming down. You can see the new addition attached. We are building a new deck. The grading is basically staying as is. We have to relocate a sidewalk. We are taking down/removing a couple of shrubs. There are a couple of maple trees that we are going to save. One is in the way and the owners are going to try and remove it before we start construction. Mr. Watkins stated it is a lace-leaf maple tree; a decorative tree. Mr. Cirillo stated it is. Mr. Cirillo stated, in full disclosure, I have the architectural plans for you to see and exterior alterations.

Old Building Structure and Concerns:
Mr. Barnhart questioned, is the building being taken down wood frame construction? Mr. Cirillo stated, yes. Mr. Barnhart questioned if there was any asbestos? Mr. Cirillo stated no. Mr. Szarowski asked when was it built? Mr. Watkins stated it was an old chicken coop that was on the farm. It has been there for years and is on piers; I know it very well. Mr. Cirillo stated it is on piers. Mr. Szarowski stated if it was built before Sthe mid-70's, just by a building code, it needs an asbestos and lead survey done. Mr. Cirillo stated I will look into that. I believe we looked into that but will have to verify it.

Grading:
Mr. Barnhart questioned, you would be tearing it down and carting the residue away? Mr. Cirillo stated yes. Mr. Barnhart then questioned about the grading and building the new building. Mr. Cirillo stated there really is no grading. We are taking the old building down, moving it over, and up against the existing building. There is really nothing. I called for a little bit of grading; if you look at the addition to the right (on the map) there is a little stone wall and I say contractor to reshape grade to below the window and other than that everything is staying the way it is. There might be a little grading at the bottom of the new ramp. We are not reshaping grade and sending water in a different direction onto the septic system or anything like that. Mr. Barnhart questioned, for clarification, where is the existing building that you see when you travel on 52? Is it behind this? Mr. Watkins stated it is not 52 it is Quannacut. Mr. Barnhart questioned does Quannacut also turn onto 52? Mr. Watkins stated yes at the light but it is not here; it is way up the road. Mr. Cirillo stated it is about 1.5 to 2 miles in from Route 52. Mr. Watkins questioned; you will not be doing grading but you will be doing excavation so that you can do the basement? Mr. Cirillo stated that is correct.

Mr. Barnhart stated existing building southeast elevation; is that building that I am looking at, have a foundation or is that just up on piers? Mr. Cirillo stated it is up on piers; if you could zoom in on the PDF copy, you could see the piers and the skirting in between the two.

Expansion and Occupancy:
Mr. Widmark questioned with the expansion, is there going to be more people there in reference to the septic system and are there going to be holding tanks? Mr. Cirillo stated we are increasing the capacity very minimally. I did speak to Larry Marshall about the septic; he wrote there is no increase in number of occupancies in the building. That is not really correct. Mr. Watkins questioned why is that? You are not putting in bedrooms. Mr. Cirillo stated I would have to look at the size of the meditation hall existing versus the new one. Mr. Widmark stated it is mentioned it is 900 sq. ft. and it is going up to 2,000 sq. ft. Mr. Cirillo stated out of that 2,000 sq. ft. the only occupied space is the meditation hall. You do not consider occupancy in the bathrooms. I believe the meditation hall is virtually going to have the same 20 people in the first version versus the new version. Mr. Watkins questioned, Guo Yuan, the monks and nuns use the old one and new will be for the public? Master Sheng Yen stated we are planning to have some more people when we have a community. Mr. Watkins questioned so for that meditation area will be open to the public? Master Sheng Yen stated yes. Mr. Watkins stated that is why I am asking, because before it was exclusively for the monks and nuns to do their practice. Mr. Szarowski stated they will need to accommodate those additional resources if they are spending the night? Mrs. Turner stated a narrative of how the building is going to be used will be helpful.

Mrs. Turner state you are going to have certain times of the year or certain number of activities and what the maximum occupancies of those activities would be. Master Sheng Yen stated actually there is nobody living there overnight. Mrs. Turner stated no but, if you were to have a service or an activity where people might be using the building for a certain period of time, even if they are not staying overnight; in addition to the people who live there, might impact the water and bathroom usage. You are also preparing meals in the building, and any other activities outside of your normal daily use.

Explanation on Layout of Buildings on Map:
Mr. Watkins stated so that everybody has a picture, can you all go to the first page? If you take a look where Mr. Cirillo has it circled (on the map), this is the building we are talking about. If I am standing here that circle is right in front of me. At 11:00 is the Chan Hall where most of the services are being done and it is a huge building. If you go to the total opposite of the page, you will see two buildings go like this, those are the dormitories, where the people will be staying. Mr. Watkins stated directly at 1:00 from the dormitories is the dining hall where they do all the food preparation. Mrs. Turner questioned if the building is serviced by its own separate septic? Mr. Watkins stated not only is it serviced by its own, there are three separate septics. Mrs. Turner questioned for this particular building? Mr. Watkins stated for that particular building and that was the Administration Building. When people came to the site you would park in the parking lot, which you could see right across from it, and then you walk up to the building where everybody checks-in, get their room assignments and everybody goes from there. Across the street, at 9:00, there is a building just for the monks to stay in. It might be someone else now, but that is where the monks stayed and the master quarters was behind that. Basically, yes there are rooms and quite a few showers in here, so the septic is a good size and does not really get used that often. Mr. Widmark questioned if the addition is just for meditation? Mr. Cirillo stated correct and the rest of the building is staying as it is; offices and residential rooms. We actually created a two-hour separation as well. Mr. Watkins stated in 2000 or 2001, was when it was originally approved here at the Town for all of this stuff.

Dharma Drumm Speaker:
Mr. Watkins asked if we have any paperwork stating that Master Sheng Yen can speak for Dharma Drumm Buddhist? Mr. Cirillo stated we can provide it. Mr. Watkins stated it needs to be provided.

Basement Usage:
Mr. Watkins stated I would like to discuss what possibly might be the future of the basement. It is a big area down there and are you planning on using it for storage? I do not want to have to show up there or the Building Inspector to show up there and three years from now have living space and other stuff going on in the basement. Mr. Cirillo stated, in full disclosure, they had talked about potentially putting bedrooms down there, but I explained to them the code implications and right now we intend to use for storage. Mr. Watkins stated what I am going to ask you to do is label that as storage. Mr. Cirillo stated on my code sheet it states basement but it is labeled as an S2. Mr. Cirillo stated he will change that. Mr. Watkins stated what happens is we do not want to find it to be something else down the road.

Stairwell:
Mr. Watkins stated the only part of this that is two stories is where the exterior stairs are right now and what you are doing is making them interior fire exits for the building. Mr. Cirillo stated yes.

Lighting:
Mr. Watkins questioned is there any additional lighting proposed? Mr. Cirillo questioned exterior? Mr. Watkins stated yes. Mr. Cirillo stated just some building lights. Mr. Watkins stated we will need to see them. Mr. Cirillo questioned the lighting metrics? Mr. Watkins stated if there is extra lighting because when I looked over the plans and saw you were adding to the deck, both sides to the front, is there lighting there? The lighting has to be shielded but are you proposing that? Mr. Cirillo stated, the only lights we actually have on the exterior of the building are at each doorway and I believe we put a flood light on the gable end to shine over the septic system outback that way. Mr. Cirillo stated that he will look at it again. Mr. Cirillo questioned if you asking for cut sheets? Mr. Watkins stated no, I am just asking for a note stating they are going to be shielded lights.

Landscaping:
Mr. Watkins questioned any landscaping that is being removed, is it going to be replaced? Mr. Cirillo stated we do not show that, but the deck takes up so much on the one side and comes right to the hill. I am not too good with plants but I will say pachysandras on that whole hill would be low ground coverage and just leaving it. On the east side we are taking out a couple but they are not the most beautiful landscaping. It sits where it is so hidden and we were not going to do anything. Mr. Watkins stated if you take a look at picture two, it says no plants alongside that building on the front (on the map). The pictures on SB1, you have eight plants. Are you putting them in there? Mr. Cirillo stated no, those eight are being removed; they are very low ground cover kind of plants. It is not like a rose bush type plant. Mr. Watkins stated that is why I cannot see them in the picture, because they are even with the ground. Mr. Cirillo stated yes, they are pretty low. Mr. Cirillo stated I see that we missed a couple others, but again, any landscaping that is there is really not beautiful and we would take out. Again, we were just fitting it in right to the site and up to the Planning Board if they want more. Mr. Watkins stated there is nothing to the exterior because you have the deck out in the front and the back side you still have the Japanese Maple Tree there by the walkway. Mr. Cirillo stated if we were facing Quannacut Road we would then we would put something. Mr. Watkins stated it is actually facing the dormitories.

Generator:
Mr. Watkins questioned if there is any generator going into that building. Mr. Cirillo stated there is an existing generator that you could see on the south side and it is staying. Those propane tanks that are there are actually running that generator. Mr. Watkins questioned do you need another generator? Mr. Cirillo stated this is an all-electric building. Is that what you meant about our fuel source? Mr. Watkins questioned is that generator not going to service that addition? Mr. Cirillo stated that generator is not going to service that addition. It is staying as is and too small to service that whole building and we talked about going with a buried propane tank. Mr. Watkins questioned so this addition is not going to have alternate power other than electric? Mr. Cirillo stated correct. Mr. Watkins stated I know the Fire Department really does not have to be contacted because of the last review.

Septic and Usage:
Mr. Szarowski stated if you have a residency and a place of worship, that is two separate uses. You need to account for that second use if you are expanded the place of worship where you are meditating. You are bringing guests in; that is additional use on the septic. Do have SPDES (State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit for the site; for the waste water disposal? Mr. Cirillo stated I do not know. Mr. Szarowski stated you are well over the thousands so you would need the SPDES permit if you do not already have one. It is an aggregate and it is the total for the site so if there are three beds and you only get 300 a piece, we need to step over a 1,000 and a permit up to 10,000. That would be something for Larry Marshall to find out. Larry talks about you are not increasing the occupancies but then you have additional people coming into the place of worship and they need to use the bathroom so that does increase the septic. Mrs. Turner stated I think a narrative would be helpful. Mr. Szarowski stated he counted 13 to 14 bedrooms and anything over ten bedrooms you needed a permit. Just verify if it exists because I have had many building permits and plans come in and they do not have a permit. Mr. Watkins questioned if you have 15 beds or bedrooms? Mr. Szarowski stated is it based on bedrooms. You could have four people in a bedroom and it does not matter. Mr. Cirillo stated, from his map, he has 15 bedrooms. Mr. Szarowski stated to have Larry Marshall verify and if there is going to be an increase, I do not know if it needs to be modified or not and if it meets the threshold. (There was a pause due to an inconsistency of bedrooms between Planning Board and applicant.). Mr. Cirillo questioned Guo Yuan, (with map in hand) if they were bedrooms on the main floor? Guo Yuan stated no they are offices. Mr. Watkins stated someone has to take a look at the plans and get them corrected. Mr. Cirillo stated ok and I have not spent that much time in that part of the building. Mr. Watkins stated you are going to see laundry room and bedroom is an office down there. The rest is storage. Mr. Szarowski restated again, it is based on bedroom count and not occupancy. Mr. Szarowski stated technically you run into commercial or business; place of worship is a residential so maybe it is by occupancy. Mrs. Turner stated no it is a place of assembly. Mr. Szarowski stated it is a place of assembly but that does not fall under residential and I do not know the residential numbers in my head. Mr. Cirillo stated depending on the use, it should be so many persons per day per for commercial and the bedrooms for residents. Mr. Szarowski stated my argument is it was not noted on the SEQR form. Mr. Watkins stated they are not doing anymore then what is there. I understand what they are saying. There are more people in there but when people came into the greeting center, they used the bathrooms that were there anyway because it is a big room when you walk-in. I do not think there is going to be an increase in people using the facilities in that building because they already do when they come in. That is the first building they come to and the first building they use for the bathrooms. Mrs. Turner asked if there is space for the 20 people in the current building? Mr. Watkins stated yes. If you take a look at the front vestibule when you come in and go to the front entrance where the three stairs are, you walk into that area and that whole conference

reception area is wide open. They have sitting areas for where people can sit, they have a tea counter, and that is where people come-in and sign-in, and get their room assignments. As you can see off the reception area, there are two other offices. The three that you have on the map for bedrooms on the first floor are offices, so there are no bedrooms. This is something that has to be addressed by Larry Marshall.

Mrs. Turner questioned if they have enough people in the current reception / conference area for 20, what is going to happen in the existing space? Mr. Watkins stated it will still be there and is not for meditation. This addition they are putting on, is the meditation hall. That is all it is used for. Mrs. Turner questioned is it going to be 20 plus 20? Mr. Watkins stated no, but if they had that many followers, it would be great. Would that be an issue in the future as it builds? Maybe. The people that are coming in are coming for meditation and they are going to go from that area are going to go into the medication area and do the meditation. People will not be coming to hang out. It will for a reason. Normally it is a class and most of the big classes are done in the big Chan Hall and this area (on the map), they renovated themselves and made it just for the monks and nuns to do their practice. Now they are opening that area up to the public and putting on the new addition. Rather than going all the way up to the hill, to the Chan Hall, when you have a small group, they are going to bring the small group next door and do their meditation there. Master Sheng Yen stated that is exactly what we plan to do, because we have a small group using it. Mr. Watkins stated you are not going to warm up the 6,000 sq. ft. building on the hill for 20 people. Instead, you will use the new addition for 20 people.

Review of Planning Comments and Discussions:
Mr. Watkins questioned everyone if there were ready to go over Ms. Franson's comments? Everyone agreed.

A first motion was made by Mr. Barnhart and seconded by Mr. Szarowski to waive the Public Hearing. Vote: All Ayes: 5, Vacancy: 1, Abstain: 0, Absent: 1.

Mr. Watkins questioned if Master Sheng Yen was the representative? Master Sheng Yen stated yes. Mr. Watkins stated we still need the paperwork regarding the speaker.

Mr. Watkins requested a new business narrative for what we just went over so it can be clearer for the Planning Board. Mr. Cirillo stated yes and we are not modifying any of the rooms. Mr. Watkins stated correct. The only thing we talked about as a modification is your stairwell and I would label that as a two-story stairwell and that way, it will be really clear what it is, rather than someone thinking it is a second story.

Mr. Watkins stated there is no disturbance to wetlands for the SWPPP.

Mr. Watkins questioned Mr. Szarowski, you do want the caption for the septic? Mr. Szarowski stated yes, to confirm. It should be noted and that it is already permitted and what it is permitted for. Some kind of verification.

Mr. Cirillo questioned Number 4, stating that is all existing. I can throw some dimensions on very easily. Mr. Watkins questioned the only thing I would say to you on that is you are extending the front deck both ways or am I reading it incorrectly? Mr. Cirillo stated I have those dimensions. Mr. Watkins questioned as far as the driveway and stairway, they are all going to remain the same, but you are putting in a different walkway in the back? Mr. Cirillo stated correct and I do recall it is 5 ft. but I can add it in. Mr. Watkins stated ok.

Mr. Watkins stated to be careful of the electric going to the back. It is buried alongside the building going all the way to the back. Mr. Cirillo questioned if that is going to the other buildings? Mr. Watkins stated before the dormitories. There is a transformer and the electric goes all the way down there to the transformer.

Mr. Watkins stated the materials for the outside of the building will be vinyl siding with wood construction on the inside with a concrete foundation. Mr. Cirillo stated the foundation will be poured.

Mr. Watkins questioned there is no new utilities, you are going to tap in from the house. Mr. Cirillo stated yes, water, sewer, and electric.

Parking:
Mr. Szarowski questioned is there anything about parking? With guests coming in, is there sufficient parking? Mr. Watkins stated if you take a look at the front page, you can have 68 cars just in that area. Mr. Widmark stated plus there is four more. Mr. Watkins stated the four more is usually for their vehicles and staff office that is there, and they only use the one parking lot. Mr. Szarowski questioned, per code, how many parking spots do they need? Mr. Watkins questioned if the 68 is for one lot or both lots? Mr. Cirillo stated that is for both lots total. There is 72 between everything. Mr. Watkins questioned did you check that with our zoning to make sure that is right? Mr. Cirillo stated I do not know because it is not on the table so I want to say we probably did not at this point, and I will have to look at that. Mrs. Turner questioned is that all parking for the site and all parking for all uses on the site, those 68? Mr. Watkins stated, that is the parking, yes. They do have roadways around to the dining hall, roadways for deliveries and to the dormitories so they drop-off their stuff. That is the only parking. Mrs. Turner stated, from previous approvals, there has to be enough parking for the site. Mr. Watkins stated yes, there was. Mr. Barnhart questioned if that is paved or gravel? Mr. Cirillo and Mr. Watkins both stated it is paved.

Ramps:
Mr. Watkins stated the ramps are going to be all ADA.

Mr. Cirillo stated there is no new electric. We are basically tapping in the basement and just bringing us a line over with the sublet. Mr. Watkins stated ok.

SEQR:

A first motion was made by Mr. Barnhart and seconded by Mr. Widmark to deem this Type II Action exempt from SEQR. Vote: All Ayes: 5, Vacancy: 1, Abstain: 0, Absent: 1.

Mr. Watkins stated to Mr. Cirillo at this time if you could address our concerns and we will see you next month unless there is something else.

Mr. Cirillo asked Master Sheng Yen and Guo Yuan if they had any more questions. Both stated no.

Mr. Cirillo questioned the one thing with the asbestos and lead regarding the existing building coming down, is that handled at this level or more when I get in front of the Building Department? Mr. Watkins stated more when you get in front of the Building Department. Mr. Cirillo questioned; I do not have to worry about having it for next month's meeting? Mr. Watkins stated no. We made mention of it so it is going to be in the minutes and the Building

Department will have to take care of it. Mr. Szarowski stated it should be under the demo plan in the notes so the drywall contractor sees it in the notes. Mr. Cirillo stated ok and thank you.

Mr. Watkins stated get this back to us and we will do our best to get this completed. Mrs. Longano, Planning Board Secretary, stated the deadline submission date is March 15, if you could get it back to us by then. Mrs. Longano handed Mr. Cirillo a hardcopy of the Planning Board schedule.

DISCUSSIONS:

Mr. Joseph Russek - Third Generation Homes (Applicant No. 2023-14):
SBL: 104.1-3-27, 2.3 acres, Address: Corner of Weed Road and NYS Route 52 in Walker Valley, Commercial Site Plan 4,800 sq. ft. with three businesses and two residential bungalows. Property Class: Vacant, SB (Small Business), Pine Bush School District, Walker Valley Fire Department

Mr. Watkins stated Mr. Russek is not back in front of us because the Building Department is trying to give him a letter to go for variances if he wants the living space. Mr. Russek keeps asking what we can do to get this moving forward? Mr. Watkins stated what we can do to get this moving forward is eliminate the living space altogether and then he would not have any variances and he could get moving. Mr. Russek prefers to have living space.

Superior Fuel – 3563 Route 52, Pine Bush, NY 12566:
Mr. Watkins stated Superior Fuels wants to put in propane tanks in one of their lots in Walker Valley right next to the old golf course. Mr. Szarowski questioned is it distribution? Mr. Watkins stated yes and because of our zoning, it is the only business zone in this Town that only is, from the road, in 150 ft. from the property. Mr. Szarowski stated it does not incorporate the entire property. Mr. Watkins stated it does not incorporate the entire property and am trying to discuss with Mr. Hoyt to get things rolling and to figure this out.

Final Dharma Drumm Buddhist Comments - Planning Board Only:
Mr. Watkins stated Mr. Hoyt wanted those two motions made for the Public Hearing and for the Type II Action. If we were in agreement, we could approve it tonight but there a few things they have to do. Mr. Watkins addressed the Planning Board stating you brought up good points. It will handle it and the volume of people they have is never more than 30 people. The dormitories are 18 units/apartments on each floor. Mr. Szarowski stated I look at it as a church with a directory. The directory is one use and the church is another use.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Next Regular Meeting to be held on **Tuesday, April 2nd, 2024 at 7:00 PM.**
Deadline for submission is **Friday, March 15** at noon.

ADJOURNMENT:

A first motion was made by Todd Widmark seconded by John Szarowski to Adjourn Meeting. Vote: All Ayes: 6, Vacancy: 1, Abstain: 0, Absent: 1

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Ann Longano, Secretary