

**FRANKLIN ZONING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING
Wednesday, August 2, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
Bessie Rowell Community Center – 12 Rowell Drive**

Minutes

Call to Order – 6:36 p.m.

Attendance: Chairman Glen Feener; Kathlene Fleckenstein; Gregory Thompson; Debbie Davis via phone.
Staff present: Planning Director Seth Creighton, Planning & Zoning Administrative Assistant Judy Bibbins.
Absent: Cecile Cormier

Approval of Minutes of the June 7, 2023 Public Meeting of the Board

Member Fleckenstein made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Thompson. **Motion carried 4-0-0.**

New Business

Z 23-13: Easter Seals NH, Inc., owner, is seeking a variance from 305-13 Permitted Uses, to convert one structure into a “retreat center” where the zoning ordinance does not permit this use. The property is located at 27 Holy Cross Rd. Map/Lot 104-406-02 in the C [Conservation] zoning district.

Member Fleckenstein recused herself from the hearing at this time.

Megan Carrier, attorney for the applicant, and Chris Miller from Easter Seals of NH spoke to the application. Ms. Carrier gave an overview of the proposed use at the subject property, the Creighton-Mack Building. She explained the concept of a retreat center including programming, overnight stays, and communal meals. She went through each of the five variance criteria outlined in the application.

Chairman Feener asked for a description of the project. Mr. Miller gave an overview of the proposed changes including the addition of an entryway/foyer with handicap accessibility, upper floors being individual rooms with private bathrooms, commercial kitchen/dining area are already in place.

Director Creighton shared his Staff Review with the applicant and the description of a ‘retreat center’ from the American Planners Association definition as the City does not currently have a definition for this use. Mr. Miller agreed that the wording in that definition fit the criteria that they are proposing. Member Davis asked about a typical length of stay. Mr. Miller said he expected it would not be more than a week. Director Creighton called out the description of a retreat center is intended for short-term stays but occasional longer term.

Chairman Feener opened the hearing to the public. Dan Fife, Katherine Fuller, and Councilor Leigh Webb all spoke in favor of the project but also expressed concerns that the property not be used for commercial development. Chairman Feener closed the hearing and brought it back to the Board.

Member Thompson made the following motion:

“I move that the Zoning Board of Adjustment approve the request for a variance from 305-13 Permitted Uses, to allow for the Creighton-Mack complex, 27 Holy Cross Rd, to be used as a ‘Retreat Center’.

The Board finds that the application request meets the tests and criteria necessary for granting a Variance per the written responses authored by the applicant/agent and in the Staff-memo dated 07-26-2023 which has been reviewed and approved, including any modifications, by the Board.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1) The overnight accommodations are intended for brief stays associated with programs occurring on campus and/or in the community. The use is not intended to open to the general public in such a manner comparable to a traditional hotel."

Motion was seconded by Member Davis. Role call vote was taken:

Gregory Thompson – Yea

Debbie Davis – Yea

Glen Feener – Yea

Motion carried 3-0-0.

Member Fleckenstein rejoined the table at this time.

Adjournment:

Member Thompson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Member Fleckenstein. **Motion carried 4-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.**

The next scheduled meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustments is Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.
The deadline date for submission of applications for this meeting is Wednesday, August 16, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Bibbins

Administrative Assistant for Planning & Zoning.