

Village of Skaneateles
Zoning Board of Appeals
June 26, 2012

Informational session regarding The Krebs.

Present: Lisa Banuski, Chairman
John Crompt, Member
Larry Pardee, Member
Craig Phinney, Member

Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the ZBA
Riccardo Galbato, Attorney for the ZBA

Robert Eggleston, Architect, representing the Applicant
Mike Tutor, representing the Applicant

Absent: Stephen Hartnett, Member

Chairman Banuski noted that this is a public meeting tonight and an informational session regarding Krebs, but not a Public Hearing.

Mr. Eggleston said, "This is two things. It's an informational session because, since approval in January 2011 the plans have gone through lots of different iterations. The original plan as it was submitted and approved, was a two-story restaurant where they had dining in the existing first floor. They had rebuilt the second floor with the bar larger than what it was originally. They tore off the old kitchen and built a new kitchen. They had space in the basement, in fact they were even going to have some tasting areas or wine cellars or things like that. The project proved to be coming in way over budget. It was redesigned as a one-story structure, keeping the appearance of the second floor, but not making any of that functional, except for storage. That was bid out three different ways; it still was not in budget. What finally happened was that it was bid out as a total 'tear-down and rebuild'. That was to the surprise of Adam Weitsman, who decided to change course of action, and I was hired to get us back on track."

Mr. Eggleston continued, "We are restoring the original front part of the building, as was originally approved, and the new kitchen will be added on the back. It will be a one floor restaurant, where we have, on the east side, three dining rooms. On the west side will be the bar and lounge area, divided by a circulation core where toilet rooms and the kitchen to the back. The basement, under the new portion, is strictly storage, mechanicals and a baking/prep kitchen. The original basement is pretty much just mechanicals and just left as a cellar. It has no active restaurant activities in that area. In looking at the structure, we have proceeded to investigate a little bit further, because we are retaining the original building. We have determined that the side wings, the porches that were enclosed and made part of the original dining room – because they were built as porches they had very undersized structure just sitting on posts, on stones, on the

dirt. It didn't have a real foundation. We have come to the realization that we will remove these two porches and build them back exactly as they were. The roof structure was very anemic; it's a good thing we had a light winter this last year, it was very light and undersized. What's left in white; the two-story portion of the original house remaining, will be kept intact. We will rebuild these two side porches, exactly to match what they look like today. On the front porch, we are keeping the roof, the columns, the railings; we are replacing the floor structure on that because that's pretty beat, and we want to have it adequate and strong enough."

Mr. Eggleston continues, "The original proposal was to create a new grade level entrance here with a three-level elevator and stairs going down to the public basement and up to the first and second floors. Seeing how we are no longer doing that, since that is now part of the bar. We have a very simple solution for putting a porch lift underneath the existing porch. At one point, when I first took over the project, it was proposed to add an additional six foot porch in front of the enclosed porch to have that, but then you're coming up to a different door. This is much easier, because people from the handicapped parking – which is the only parking left on-site – will come along and they will come into the side entrance and will be able to enter the lift, come up the lift and come onto the porch and then they enter in with everyone else. So you have one common waiting area that you are greeted at instead of coming in a different, special door. On the front elevation..."

Chairman Banuski said, "This is the part that lost me. I don't see how this can be a lift, if you can see the decorative things here. And from the front I don't see how it can be a lift." Mr. Eggleston replied, "What happens is the enclosure around the lift only has to be 42 inches high above the porch itself. There is still 4 to 5 feet of porch in front of this lift. This will be finished in bead board, with a cap on top. You can still put chairs in front of it. This is the bead board at 42 inches high above this floor, the railing is still in front, and there's two rockers in front of it. These windows we shortened so that the sill comes down to that 42 inch ledge. We thought it was the least intrusive to have these windows shortened a little bit. People looking out the window are looking right out over the lift, even if it's in the Up position." Member Phinney asked, "And this is all macadam in here?" Mr. Eggleston, "It's a sidewalk with plantings around. We'll be putting back bushes around the front of the building, just like it has. This is not depicted as clear as it could be. There will be a gate door that has lattice on the bottom and bead board on the top. So it basically blends in. It swings over; this is like a 6 foot high door that swings out. One comes in and they close the door that has lattice on the bottom and the bead board on the top. So at a quick look, it just kind of disappears."

Chairman Banuski said, "So behind this door is an elevator shaft." Mr. Eggleston said, "It's a lift, not an elevator shaft. The lift is just a floor and two sides. There are no ends and no doors on the inside. What we didn't do was to draw the light line on here. It basically disappears because it has the bead board and the lattice on it. And that's one of the ways we knock a million dollars out of this is to not buy a \$50,000 elevator; let's get a \$10,000 lift that does the same job. So we can keep the front of the building with just shortening up these two windows and keeping the lift behind the railings."

Mr. Eggleston continued, "On the previous architect's working drawings, he did not show it here, he went to 3 foot high railings. With 3 foot high railings, you feel like you are in a

playpen. That's the New York state code, if you're more than 30 inches high. What we're going to do is to bring the grade up in front; slope it to less than 30 inches, so we can keep the railings at 28 inches high, so we can keep the authentic look of the front of the building, rather than a higher railing that looks totally out of character with the Village. You won't notice any of that because it will be planted with bushes. The site plan will work exactly as it was promised back a year and a half ago. We have simplified this back portion and taken out this two-story section here and here, and it's just a very simple gabled roof connecting the kitchen element which is the same as originally proposed. This bar area, that was to be the entrance, we have taken from the design the windows on each side of the masonry fireplace on the east side, and we are doing the same treatment, so that's above the back of the bar, that fills in this area. I think that we have kept more of the original elements. We are actually keeping these masonry fireplaces, which I think are some of the interior iconic elements of The Krebs. Rather than new gas fireplaces, we'll put gas logs in the perfectly fine masonry fireplaces. When you come into the restaurant, this area here will look just like it did before, with that Arts & Crafts fireplace, the windows, the cabinetry on the side. So I think we're doing a better job at keeping more of the original elements of the building."

Mr. Eggleston continued, "Adam D'Amico [CEO] has determined that based on what we have shown here, that there are no changes to the Variances, we are not enlarging anything as was earlier proposed. There is no change to the Site Plan or Critical Impact; it's actually smaller than what was approved. The approval was to be completed January of 2013. There is an outside possibility that we could finish by January 2013. Ted Kinder is going to be the contractor; that selection has been made. We will be starting foundations within the next couple of weeks. That gives us just six months to complete it. The landscaping and exterior can't be completed until May or so, and that's why we are asking for a six-month extension that would put us to July 2013."

Chairman Banuski observed, "And you have every motivation to have it done as soon as you can. This is not subject to the Historic board, correct. So this Board, with this extension, is what we have for an historic board and historic accuracy. Because of the sensitivity of that issue, with the recent project involving the same builder, I think that we owe a level of scrutiny here in discussion. A couple of things come to mind. I think that we should have pictures; if you're going to make it look like the original, I want it to look like the pictures when it's done. This will be a sensitive project. The only reason it was approved as a restaurant was because of the historic nature of The Krebs in Skaneateles. Otherwise, we would never have approved a restaurant in a residential district. It was only because of its historic nature. We are already changing the windows on one side of the porch to accommodate the lift; I think you have done that tastefully. I am a little concerned about what that lift is going to look like. I knew that the drawings were not correct, if that was going to be a lift. So now there's going to be an actual door there, with lines and hinges, a lock probably. So it's going to look similar to this, but not like this. I don't have a problem with the extension. Everybody here wants to see this project going."

Mr. Eggleston said, "I think by honestly and earnestly keeping the building, you don't have the situation like at the Lakeview House, where there's an honest technical mistake and the cupola is offset by 16 inches – which no one could tell unless they were looking for it. There is no

question that the contractor has been sensitized to this previous experience. There is absolute building in kind, and the nice thing about keeping the original building is that the details are right there. So there is no question that this is your existing cornice detail and that is exactly what it is going to look like. The other thing that I am going to say is that I'm appalled by the direction The Krebs project went, especially at the same time that the Lakeview House was being reviewed with such scrutiny, and the direction was just to change things without coming back to this board. Adam Weitsman honestly wants to restore and keep this building. These are real drawings – this will be a real restoration.”

Chairman Banuski said, “I am worried, now that I see some of the siding down and the shape of the building, it wouldn't surprise me to have the reality be ‘we can't do this. It's going to come down. We can't make this work.’ It doesn't look good.” Mr. Eggleston said, “I have been through it with Ted Kinder. There is no question that from an economic standpoint, tear it down – build it again. But we chose not to do that. It will probably cost more money to fix up what we have there. But we actually have structural plans for how we reinforce the floor. The advantage of not having the second floor functional is that we don't have to have a 100 pound live load up there. And we can raise the first floor ceiling from 8 feet to 9 feet. So we can get all the elements that they are looking for in the new restaurant with keeping that shell intact. It will stay intact; it will not come down. We are through the structural drawings right now. The dormers will stay exactly where they are.”

Mr. Tutor said, “As a side note, Kihm Winship has gone out of his way, and the Historical Society, to provide me with all kinds of history about The Krebs restaurant which is very, very interesting. I have been giving talks to Rotary and groups like that, because they are all concerned with what's happening up there. He gave me a series of postcards, and the physical appearance of The Krebs over 100 years has changed probably about a dozen times. We only know it as we know it in our lifetime of living here, but at one point it was just a little teeny house. Bob has been great to work with and Adam is an artist, he has visions, and he wants this to be accepted; he wants people to be happy with what he's doing there and he's going out of his way to do that.”

Chairman Banuski said, “We all want to see it going [expressions of agreement from the other members] and the extension is, from my point of view, not a problem at all.” Mr. Tutor said, “I think we're ahead of schedule, he told me to fast-track it; if all goes well we can start July 2 with the concrete foundation, and that would put us a month ahead.” Mr. Eggleston said, “We want to get the exterior sealed up by September – October at the latest. Obviously there will be a lot of work to be done inside; so that it would be under wraps and able to be finished off. He'd love to be open for Dickens, but that's not realistic. So we will hit the spring season.” Chairman Banuski observed, “We have been in a hurry for this project for a long time; it sat completely abandoned for months and months after the Boards expedited it through.”

Mr. Tutor explained, “The kitchen design is something unique. It's a design I saw in France 30 years ago. It's called an island suite; there's nothing like it around – maybe at CIA at Hyde Park, but other than that, you won't see it anywhere. And we will do tours of the kitchen. Rather than having a huge line against the back wall with all the cooks, we have an island in the center. They look at each other and it's a flat top with no open flame. Very European.”

Chairman Banuski asked, “So how many seats are here now; I didn’t count them up?” Member Crompt said, “In your narrative, Bob, you said you had reduced it to 110 seats. What was the original plan for the seating?” Mr. Eggleston said, “224 altogether, bar and dining room. And we’re down to 150. And the 110 is not the absolute final. The kitchen supply people are looking at the seating, and looking at whether it’s a little too tight. If anything, a couple may come out.” Mr. Tutor said, “Gearhart Equipment is doing a professional approach to it and I also have Jean McGlynn looking at it, who did the Aurora Inn.”

Member Crompt said, “To reiterate what Lisa has said, I think everybody learned a lot from what happened at Lakeview House. Everybody learned a lot-- the Boards, the architects, the builders, everybody. And Lisa put it eloquently, everybody is going to be looking at this – not just the Boards and you guys and us – the community is going to be looking at this, from what was written in the paper – let’s be sure we get it right because this is going to be a great project – so let’s get it right so we don’t have the negative out there.” Chairman Banuski added, “But there is no other Board looking at this and it’s only the extension that permits us to be asking these questions.” Mr. Eggleston said, “But Lisa, I told Mike and I told Adam Weitsman that because I was coming in and taking over this project that I wanted to come to you, even if we didn’t have to come for the extension, to let you know where it was. There were so many changes that happened and this thing went so far off course, that I felt it was important to say ‘here it is and this is what we’re doing’.” Mr. Eggleston offered to supply the CEO with existing pictures so that he can look at is this what it is. The Board accepted the offer.

Chairman Banuski asked about building materials. Mr. Eggleston said that “the siding where it had to be replaced and on the new part would be cement board. The porch floor will be wood.” Chairman Banuski said, “I would like to stipulate; since all we have left of The Krebs is essentially the front porch and the sign, I would like to stipulate that the front porch be reconstructed of wood. Some of the synthetic stuff looks great, and I could do without the indoor-outdoor carpeting.” Mr. Tutor said, “Adam Weitsman’s biggest concern is the front porch.” Mr. Eggleston said, “By regrading the front, we get to save the 24 inch railings that are four inches off the floor.”

Chairman Banuski said, “I am going to move that we approve a 6 month extension with the stipulation that the front porch be reconstructed completely of wood.” Member Pardee seconded the motion.

Upon unanimous vote of the members present in favor of the motion, the Chairman declared “The motion is passed.”

Mr. Eggleston thanked the Board. The Chairman closed this proceeding at 8:15 pm.