

Village of Skaneateles
Planning Board Meeting
January 4, 2024
Skaneateles Village Hall

Consideration of possible recommendations in connection with the Board of Trustees' draft Local Law covering Bed and Breakfast Homestays.

Present: Stephen Hartnett, Chairman
Connie Brace, Member
Albert Giannino, Member
Melissa Komanecky, Member
Jeff Liccione, Member

Riccardo Galbato, Attorney for the Planning Board
John Crompton, Code Enforcement Officer
Ian Carroll, Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards

Tyde Richards, Village Trustee
Clark Maher, 2 W Lake St
Katie Hess, 34 State St
Bob Eggleston, 1391 E Genesee St
Nate Patterson, student

At 7:22 pm, Chairman Hartnett called for discussion of Draft Local Law #1 of 2024 regarding the expansion for the number of rentable rooms for Bed & Breakfast Homestays.

Mr. Carroll stated that it appears that only one B&B has enough parking space to immediately offer a third room for guests. That is the Benjamin Porter House at 10 State Street. CEO Crompton corrected the record, saying that he had not factored the supplemental apartment into his calculations for that property. Therefore, none of the B&Bs, 10 State Street, 34 State Street have enough spaces for the parking required for three bedrooms.

Chairman Hartnett said that he had been on the Board when it was developing an appropriate policy on short-term rentals. B&Bs were a part of that response and it was a hot-button issue, since it was viewed as permitting the operation of a business in residential neighborhoods. The additional required parking could introduce problems with minimum open area. Atty. Galbato noted that the operating parameters in Section 225-40 are not proposed to be amended.

Chairman Hartnett noted that this is a self-created issue. These operations are not theoretically business enterprises. He said he would be cautious about encouraging variances.

Attorney Galbato said that the local law, as proposed, would not provide any expansion for 2 West Lake Street. Expansion is only proposed for the A-2 and C Districts.

Member Brace expressed concern with the concept of rooms rather than suites. She offered that sleeping rooms could be defined consistent with state code. Ambiguity in A-1 and A-2 should have language addressed.

Attorney Galbato recapped that he notes that the Board has referenced changes that makes paragraph A into two parts, cleans up other language, defines sleeping rooms, and should consider impacts on adjacent residential properties . He notes that no current operation could be expanded without a variance for required parking; is it moot to expand if all require variances? The Board would suggest to the Trustees that the code change would require variances from each of the operating B&Bs.

Chairman Hartnett added that the Board should recommend that if the Trustees go ahead, that the process should require Site Plan Approval as well as a revised Special Use Permit – and limit occupancy to 2 persons per room.

Member Komanecy said that the approach has historically been more hobby than business.

Mr. Maher noted that he and Ms. Hess are present and would appreciate the opportunity to speak. Chairman Hartnett agreed.

Mr. Maher introduced himself as the operator of 2 West Lake Street B&B and appreciates what the Board is doing to protect the Village. He expressed frustration at not being part of this decision or discussion because of his location in the A-1 District. He stated that he lives in the house and frequently has to walk away from business even though he has more than one other room. He is not classed as a business use by the Village, yet the Town will not permit him to use the Transfer Station. Expansion would be a welcome change.

Ms. Hess introduced herself as the operator of 34 State B&B. She agrees with Mr. Maher. She stated she welcomes the additional revenue opportunity. She asserted that she does, in fact, have the required amount of parking.

Mr. Maher and Ms. Hess both disagree with the hobby characterization.

Chairman Hartnett, “I move that the Board recommend to the Trustees that they not go forward with this change to the code, as it necessitates variances for each of the operating B&Bs. If the Trustees wish to enact this anyway, the application for room expansion should require Site Plan Review and approval, as well as an amendment to the Special Use Permit. Further, the Trustees should define sleeping room, limit occupancy to 2 adult persons per room, and clean up language in paragraph A as discussed tonight.” Member

Brace seconded the motion. Upon the unanimous vote of the members present in favor, the motion was carried 5 – 0.

The Board discussed Mr. Maher's situation that is limited by the A-1 District prohibition and the difficulty of expanding available parking spaces. Mr. Galbato noted that the Trustee liaison is present and appreciates the sense of the Planning Board that the Village Board find a way to accommodate Mr. Maher's property in this room expansion.

This matter was concluded at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards