

March 14, 2013

A special meeting of the Ligonier Borough Council was held Thursday, March 14, 2013 at 6:30 PM in the Ligonier Town Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to hold a Conditional Use Hearing for Adam and Michelle Gardner / Scout, LLC.

Members present: Robert Helterbran, Kim Shaffer, James McDonnell, Robert Bell, Tom Freeman and Sam St. Clair. Absent was Judy Hoffer.

Others present: Secretary-Treasurer Paul Fry, Mayor Ormond "Butch" Bellas, Solicitor George Welty.

Council will consider and take action on the application for Conditional Use filed by the following:

Scout, LLC to occupy the building located at 221 West Main Street – Tax Map # 16-01-15-00-0091 in Ligonier Borough to use as a hotel in the Commercial 2 District.

Solicitor Welty asked that all those testifying to please stand and be sworn in. Secretary-Treasurer Paul Fry stated that the hearing has been properly advertised and is in receipt of the proof of publication from the Ligonier Echo.

Solicitor Welty informed all that the applicants wish to convert the former Excelsa Building into a hotel with a small retail component. The applicant is Scout LLC.

Paul Fry stated that the planning commission has recommended proceeding with approval.

Adam Gardner testified that he and his wife Michelle are the owners (Scout LLC) who have purchased the property and wish to convert the facility into a hotel with a small retail component. Primarily interior renovation with minor exterior revisions.

Mr. Gardner stated that the plan was to move his wife's Bo Beep – Yarn Store to the first floor at the former Excelsa Building on the Left hand side of the building and the majority of the rest of the building would be for the hotel with a café area/restaurant/lounge area. There will be eight rooms currently planned with four on each floor, each with own bath.

The Gardners wish to restore the building to its original beauty and look which will require some TLC. Gardner stated that they would eventually like to consider the carriage house but at this point budget may not allow improvements to the back building.

Mr. Loren Wright, with Pieper O'Brien Herr Architects passed out copies of the basic floor plans.

Mr. Wright explained that the ground level is primarily geared towards 1,000 sq. feet of small retail with the remainder geared towards a café. The intent is to redefine the entrance off the back to make it a more prominent component and tie directly into the parking behind which will also be modified to meet ADA standards. Minor interior renovations will be completed within the existing walls. No major structural issues planned.

The second level represents the conversion of what would have been originally a variety of bedrooms. The rooms will be converted into four of the eight units of the hotel. Some reconfiguration of location of bathrooms will be done. The intent is to not be too invasive of the existing systems in place.

The third level represents the remaining four units.

James McDonnell, member of the Planning Commission stated that he was present at the meeting when Mr. Gardner presented the plans and commented that he would like to see it approved and feels it would be a nice addition to town.

Councilman Tom Freeman questioned the existing sprinkler system. Mr. Wright answered that it would all be redone.

Mr. Wright hoped to have the first floor of the building ready to open by July 1, 2013.

Solicitor Welty noted that the applicant has complied by completing the application and presented the plans. The plans meet with all criteria and requirements in the zoning district where the use is proposed. It is in general conformity with the Borough comprehensive plan and is attractive and in harmony with the area in which it is proposed.

After speaking with Land Use Administrator, Mr., Cicconi, Solicitor Welty stated that the application does fall within "hotel" designation and not bed and breakfast.

Solicitor Welty concluded that the application is ready for action by Council.

MOTION TO APPROVE

A motion was made by Kim Shaffer and seconded by James McDonnell to approve the application. All were in favor.

The motion concluded the hearing.