

Tuesday, February 6, 2007
Special Permit Hearing of COG Brewing Company
for the Proposed Use of Light Manufacturing at 534 S. Main Street

Meeting was called to order at 8:00 PM

Members present were: Rene Wood (Chair), Bart Elsbach, Anthony Gulotta, and Christopher Tomich.

R. Wood stated that the hearing notice had been duly posted and that the hearing would be recorded for the absent Board member, Bill Gillooly.

Attorney Susan Smith presented the application for COG Brewing Company (COG), which she represented. Smith said COG is a micro-brewery which has a lease to rent 700 square feet in the front of the building located at 534 S. Main Street. The founders of the brewery are Cord Kenyon, originally of Sheffield and Colin Cohen of Canaan. The business intends to produce less than 600 barrels of beer per year. No retail sales or consumption of alcohol will occur on the premises. Smith described the organization of the manufacturing process which is very similar to the process used at the Barrington Brewery.

Colin Cohen described the brewing process, explaining that it is environmentally friendly and low impact. COG will recycle and re-use products. Garbage generated will immediately be removed. The brewery will conduct 3-4 brewing sessions per week. With respect to bylaw 7.2, there will be no detectable smell, no smoke, noise, vibration or electrical interference. Grain will be delivered 4 times per year. There will be 2 full-time employees and up to 3 part-time employees.

Smith listed beneficial effects of the proposed micro-brewery including making use of a pre-existing structure. She stated there will be no negative impact on public services, the local water company has been consulted and can accommodate the water usage. There will be no additional signage and no external storage.

Questions and Concerns from the Board and COG's responses:

C. Tomich asked whether a 500 gallon propane tank was located there now and whether it would be buried.

Kenyon responded there were two tanks, 100 gallons each. Four tanks will be added for COG's use. The tanks will not be visible from the road.

R. Wood cautioned the applicant to make sure the tanks are beyond the side set-backs. She sought specifications on how the cooler would be secured so it will not pose a danger to children or anyone getting trapped inside. She requested COG respond in writing regarding these concerns. R. Wood asked whether the applicant would have a problem with conditions on the Special Permit to address these concerns.

Kenyon responded COG would have no problem with these conditions.

C. Tomich asked the applicant to make sure the additional four tanks don't spill over into viewable space.

B. Elsbach asked Smith about required state permits. Smith responded that for this use a Manufacturing License is required. B. Elsbach asked what the potential production would be in this facility. Cohen stated that they could not produce more than 1000 barrels in this space. Cohen further stated that brewing could start at 5 a.m. and potentially last until 10 or 11 at night. Brewing would occur 2-3 times a week. Some days, when they clean, COG would be in operation just 4 hours. They will work Saturday and maybe a half day Sunday.

A. Gulotta asked whether employees were present during the brewing process. Mr. Cohen responded affirmatively, and stated that deliveries would be scheduled during business hours. Kenyon said the facility will not be open to the public for insurance purposes.

R. Wood asked whether the facility would be vented, whether odors would be emitted, and how cleaning products are treated. Cohen responded affirmatively, stating the facility will be vented to the Berkshire Fence side. There will be no odor. The cleaners are innocuous and go through the septic system.

R. Wood called for public comments and questions:

Betsy Garcia asked where the grain will be stored. COG responded that the grain will be primarily stored in the outside cooler.

Winthrop Barrett, owner of Barrett Tree Service, urged the Planning Board to approve COG'S special permit.

C.J. Fuchs asked how big the barrels are and where they are stored. The seven barrel system was explained by COG.

R. Wood reminded the public that the micro-brewery will be subject to the Board of Health.

Smith stated that the Alcohol Beverage and Control Commission will also inspect the facility.

C.J. Fuchs asked more questions about impact of the brewery and entry to the building. Smith and Cohen addressed Fuchs' questions.

Kerry Douglas asked whether this was a franchise. Smith and Cohen responded that COG is an independent business.

C.J. Fuchs asked more questions about storage of beer and the cooler which were answered by Cohen.

R. Wood called again for public comment. None present had more comments.

R. Wood restated that the Planning Board will need specifications on the cooler and a schematic showing the likely layout of equipment. She reminded COG that the propane tanks must be within the setback. Attorney Smith said she would provide this information prior to the next meeting.

At 8:50 PM B. Elsbach moved to close the Special Permit Hearing. His motion was seconded and approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nadia Milleron
Secretary to the Planning Board