

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
TOWN OF CANAAN
COLUMBIA COUNTY, NEW YORK

June 30,2020

Present: David Cooper, Pat Liddle, Jack Steffek, Craig Dillon,
Alternate: Brian Lossow

Board Chair David Cooper opened the meeting at 7:00 with 4 people in the audience. There is one item on the agenda which is a public hearing for File # 2020-1. (Application for a Special Permit by Paul Naamon, Karuna Tendai Dharma Center, for a Columbarium.

David Cooper proposed a motion to accept the May minutes as submitted with a so moved by Board Member Craig Dillon, and a second from Board Member Pat Liddle. All in favor.

7:01 Public Hearing for file 2020-1-David read the public notice and told the board that he had completed the SEQR parts 2 and 3. He noted that this project was a listed type 2, which means no further review is required. He also noted in part 3, that the project is of modest scale and as presented is a community resource.

The Appellant, Rev. Paul Naamon turned in his receipts for his notice to Abutters, and noted he had nothing else to add to the file other than a document requested by Pat Liddle, which is the agreement that will need to be signed by those who purchase a niche to store cremains.

Chairman Cooper asked how many cremains could be stored in the Columbarium and the answer was 144. The Columbarium is an aluminum cabinet which is waterproof, frost proof, etc. (weather proof.) That cabinet is put on a frost proof slab and then the outside of the cabinet will be applied fieldstone. and capped with granite.

David asked Pat if she wanted to explain to the board what document she had asked Mr. Naamon for, and she explained that she had a vague idea of what this project was, but now it would be reality, and looking at the history of cemeteries and them not being able to keep up with the cost of maintenance. She said even from the document she wasn't sure how it worked. Paul explained that this project will be right at the Temple location and so they have to maintain the Temple grounds and this will be maintained the same. They had thought about having a maintenance fee, but most places just say it is a one-time fee. In terms of maintenance the structure itself is zero maintenance. It gets cleaned by rain water. It is equivalent to a cemetery memorial stone. The maintenance around it would be cutting the grass and weeding.

David said he thought the question was more along the lines of, what happens if something happens to the Temple and you have all of these cremains. Is there any kind of provision? Paul said that as a 501 (c)(3) religious organization, we can only sell to another religious organization. This structure is part of the Dharma center and there is a separate Board just for the Columbarium, so we are not mixing monies.

Board member Brian Lossow asked if there was a lock on each area so it was vandal proof. Paul said that it was as vandal proof as a cemetery would be. The Columbarium is located on the same property as the house and someone is usually around. Brian's second question was what is the life of the Columbarium, and Paul said It will last hundreds of years, as it is made of aluminum.

David asked if there were any other questions from either the audience or the Board. He asked the Board if they understood the project and felt comfortable. Board member Craig Dillon said his father is in a similar one of these things, so he understands.

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Chairman Cooper asked where the project was in terms of the Site Plan Review and Paul stated that all looks good, but it had to go to the Columbia County Planning Board.

David entertained a motion to close the Public Hearing. Pat with a 2nd. All in favor.

David suggested that in the interest of the health of the Appellants and the Board that even though technically the Board could not make a decision without a Site Plan in place, I do believe we can make our decision effective when the Site Plan is in place, and I think that is rational.

Deliberation: 7:21

David said this was well documented and the scale fits within the community and is a natural extension of the site. I am especially intrigued that it is open to the whole community. Pat and Craig were in agreement with David and Craig said it is undoubtedly important to the members of the congregation to have this. Heather agreed.

David made a motion to approve this as submitted with the condition that the Special Permit will not go into effect until the Site Plan is complete and approved by the Planning Board. 2nd from Heather.

The clerk polled the board:

David: Aye

Heather: Aye

Pat: Aye

Jack: Aye

Craig: Aye

Approved unanimously.

David made a motion to adjourn with a so moved from Pat and 2nd from Heather.

All in favor.

Meeting Adjourned 7:29.

For the Board,

Heather

Acting Clerk