

Resort Review Reaches Local Planning Boards

Site plan review begins for proposed resort complex

Shandaken, NY -- November 6, 2013 -- The Town of Shandaken Planning board members will get their first formal look at the plans for the Belleayre Resort proposed by Crossroads Ventures this week. At a Thursday evening, November 7, workshop meeting, planners will begin site plan review and special permit deliberations for the construction of two hotels and a golf course adjacent to Belleayre Mt. Ski Center. The proposal, which spans two towns in two counties, will go to Town of Middletown planners at their next meeting on November 14. Both boards are expected to take several months to review the data before rendering any decisions.

The resort project, which has been under review by federal and state officials for 13 years, will require site plan approval and special use permits from each of the two towns in which the property is located. Resort officials said that the planning board reviews will run concurrently with the completion of reviews by other permitting agencies including the Army Corps of Engineers at the Federal level, the New York State DEC, DOT, and DOH, the New York City DEP and officials from various agencies in both Ulster and Delaware Counties.

“Because the project spans two towns in two counties, it is important for each town to know what the other town is looking at and considering,” said Project Coordinator Gary Gales. “We gave it to both towns the same day and look forward to having each town coordinate their review process wherever it makes sense to do so.” He added that “as the process moves forward the two respective towns will be kept abreast of everything happening in a way that maintains maximum transparency.”

Neither town can take any formal action on the project until the State has issued an FEIS for the project. But developers submitted their applications to the town to get the local process going and give planners ample time to study the work that has been done to date. “The public will have more opportunity to weigh in at public hearings the planning boards will schedule prior to any decisions,” said Gales.

Developers are hopeful that the state’s review can conclude sometime in early 2014 and that the planning board decisions will follow shortly thereafter. “We hope that by spring we can move the project forward,” said Gales.

Environmental Concerns Addressed

During its 13 year review, the project has been scaled back and re-designed a number of times to meet the requirements of federal and state agencies as well as several environmental watch dog groups weighing in with concerns. “The greatest area of concern was storm water runoff,” said Gales. The law says that whatever you do, you cannot create more runoff than what currently exists before you start construction.” Agencies and engineers all take that very seriously and design the project and the process of building the project, to meet that objective. He added that before the state will issue storm water permits, they want to be very confident that the engineering is right.

Developers have reached agreement with the City of New York to have sewage treated by the underutilized waste treatment plant in Pine Hill, a service the developer will have to pay for throughout the life of the project. Other areas of great concern for many are noise, potential traffic and visual impact. Gales indicated that all of those concerns have been addressed. “We believe that people will

be comforted in knowing that the Belleayre resort project has conformed with the stringent review process of the most rigorous environmental regulatory laws in the country and has lived up to its promise to be a model for a smart, sensitive environmentally friendly project.”

Community Benefits Expected

Developers anticipate that when the resort is completed, employment of 540 full time and 230 part time and seasonal staff members will generate a \$25 million payroll which will be spent mostly locally each year. “We have met with school officials on the Delaware County side and will meet with those on the Ulster County side, to support classroom training for students seeking careers in hotel, restaurant and golf course and spa management,” said Gales. “Both Ulster BOCES and Northern Catskills Occupational Center in Grand Gorge have had classes in culinary arts for years, and of course SUNY Delhi offers both two and four year programs in various hospitality and recreation disciplines. “

Gales said benefits should begin accruing to local communities as soon as construction begins. Up to 10% of the \$364 million project would be reserved for local labor, and other local businesses will benefit from the hundreds of construction workers employed on the project."

Both Shandaken and Middletown will benefit from increased property values. “The Margaretville Central School district will see the lion’s share of the school tax revenue and the Town of Shandaken will see a larger proportion of property tax revenue “, said Gales. “In the end, the tax benefits are pretty well balanced between the two towns.”

Gales concluded noting that “the guiding principle that made Ken, Dean and Emily start this effort was to create jobs and economic benefit for the region. The goal was to support the community economically and improve the quality of life for everyone here. We are close now, to making that a reality.”

One of the principal focuses mentioned by developers is to take advantage of recreational opportunities throughout the region including hiking, biking, skiing, kayaking and boating on the recently opened New York City reservoirs. “We are not building a cruise ship in the middle of the ocean that will keep guests bound to our property,” said Gales. “There is no doubt that the people who visit our facilities will be eager to get out into the communities and experience everything this region has to offer. This project will be a major economic catalyst in both Ulster and Delaware Counties and we’re excited to be moving forward”. More information on the proposal is available at www.belleayreresort.com and on Facebook at Support the Resort.

For more information on resort plans, contact

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