

TOWN OF GIBRALTAR PLAN COMMISSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2010
7:00 P.M.
GIBRALTAR TOWN CENTER

Call to order: The special meeting of the Gibraltar Plan Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Linda Merline, chairman.

Members present: Linda Merline, Brian Hackbarth, Britt Unkefer and Tom Blackwood
Members absent: Andy Coulson

Approve minutes of last meeting: *It was moved by Hackbarth and seconded by Unkefer to approve the minutes of October 26, 2010 as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.*

Public Comment: None

Petition for Grant of Variance: Town of Gibraltar, Parcel# 014-39-1308 Section 7.02(1) requires the minimum number of off-street automobile parking shall be one per three (3) seats.

Linda Merline outlined the format of the hearing. Merline stated that petition submitted by the Town of Gibraltar as the land owner but the dock is currently under lease to the Catholic dioceses and there are approximately 20 years remaining on the lease. The variance being requested is for zero on premise parking.

Testimony was given in favor of the petition: Tom Lardinois, Executive Committee member of the Retreat House stated the Retreat House is seeking to leverage their assets in such a way to increase revenues and usage of the assets to alleviate the current financial shortfall. He stated the Quo Vadis is currently and will remain property of the Retreat House. Eric Lundquist will manage the operation of the Quo Vadis as a sub contractor to the Holy Name Retreat. The Retreat parking lot is being used for ferry service parking and will continue. Eric Lundquist stated he will continue the ferry service as well as tours. Excursions are a conditional use and require on-site parking; the Retreat lot is 325' off premise. Permission for additional overflow parking has been granted by the Diocese at St. Paul's Catholic Church .6 miles from the dock. Parking at the Retreat lot will be policed in whichever manner the town deems fit.

Testimony was given in opposition to the petition. Brian Merkel, Gibraltar Town Chairman expressed concern about setting precedent.

No correspondence was received in support.

No correspondence was received in opposition to the petition.

Discussion by the Commission noted that 3 requirements must be met for a variance to be granted.

1. Application of the zoning ordinance creates an unnecessary hardship;
2. Unique physical characteristics of the property prevent the applicant from developing in compliance with the zoning ordinance;
3. Granting of variance does not harm the public interest.

The Commission's discussion yielded issues that included:

- Parking lot use is by excursion and ferry customers only.
- Parking lot policing and signage

- Number of excursions per day (potential of 4)
- Public use of parking lot
- Tying the lot to the variance request
- Leasing off premise parking
- Who holds the variance property owner?
- Issue is complicated, why say yes to zero spaces, what is right for the town and the spirit of the ordinance.
- Other businesses asking for the zero parking exemption

It was moved by Blackwood and seconded by Merline to recommend that the town board support the request for variance. Motion carried with Unkefer opposed.

Adjourn: *It was moved by Blackwood and seconded by Merline to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Hagen
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer