

## AGENDA

### TOWN OF PLYMOUTH PLANNING COMMISSION AND ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

June 6, 2023 @ 7:00 P.M.  
Plymouth Municipal Building

1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes from April 4, 2023 meeting.
3. Planned Unit Development hearing for Farm & Wilderness Conservation, Farm & Wilderness Road, Plymouth, Vermont

Topic: **Planning Commission and Zoning Board**

Time: **June 6, 2023 07:00 PM** Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82271085638?pwd=NIJNMWFxYVVkY0p3OTJINXF0ZHIydz09>

Meeting ID: **822 7108 5638**

Passcode: **910284**

One tap mobile

+16469313860,,82271085638#,,, \*910284# US

+19294362866,,82271085638#,,, \*910284# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 646 931 3860 US

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

TOWN OF PLYMOUTH PLANNING COMMISSION  
AND ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

APRIL 4, 2023  
MINUTES

Chairman Mike Coleman called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Board members in attendance were Mike Coleman, Jay Kullman, Anne Brown, Frank Vetere, Rick Martin, and Bruce Pauley.

Mike stated the March 7, 2023 minutes regarding the Christopher Sculti Conditional Use hearing for a 4-lot sub division should be amended to read 'the 4 lot sub-division was approved with conditions.'

Anne Brown motioned to approve the amended minutes. Rick Martin seconded the motion.

Mike then opened the floor to Jay Kullman, representing Farm & Wilderness Foundation. The foundation plans to seek approval from the Plymouth Zoning Board for a Planned Unit Development on 3 parcels along Farm and Wilderness Road sharing the span # 486-153-10350, totaling 588 acres, of which 440 are conserved lands, leaving the potential for 153 acres of development. He explained that the conserved area is located primarily in the RD10 district and the rest is located in the RD2 and RD5 districts. The buildable acres are sandwiched between Woodward Reservoir along Route 100 and the steep slopes east of Farm and Wilderness Road, yielding a potential of 153 acres of development.

A sub-division of the un-conserved land to 5 acre lots would yield a total 150,000 square feet of building space. The Farm and Wilderness Foundation seeks to have the lightest footprint possible in its structures and design them to fit well into the landscape. Rather than a sub-division, they would like to pursue a Planned Unit Development, or PUD. They would like to have permission granted to construct up to a maximum of 22,000 square feet of building space over the next 10 years. The planned structures may include up to 5,000 square feet of office space, a 10,000 square foot dormitory, single and 2 family dwellings, camper cabins, and structures that support camp activities only in the RD2 and RD5 zoning districts. No development would occur in the RD10 district where Farm and Wilderness conducts primarily forest management activities. Farm and Wilderness believes this is a creative approach that continues the low impact development of its land in order to meet it's business needs.

Mike explained the function of a PUD allows for clustering and flexibility in the design and placement of buildings and open spaces. A PUD does not circumvent zoning regulations. The Standards and Conditions for a PUD were addressed in the presentation.

Board members suggested a list of goals for the PUD development and to explain its benefits to our town. They asked how long the project will take and suggested the board include in their decision to include a statement to extend this to a longer time frame, if needed.

Mike stated we need a definition of a primitive camp in our ordinance.

Mike asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bruce made the motion and Rick Martin seconded the motion

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Elaine Pauley



FARM & WILDERNESS  
**CONSERVATION**  
Born from the Ninevah Foundation



FARM & WILDERNESS

**To: Planning Commission and Zoning Board, Plymouth Vermont**

**From: Jay Kullman, Farm & Wilderness Conservation**

**Date: April 28, 2023**

**Subject: Farm & Wilderness Planned unit Development Application 2023**

### **Introduction:**

Farm & Wilderness Foundation, established in 1937 and operating summer camps and year-round programs on Woodward Reservoir, manages approximately 4800 Acres of Land with 3200 acres permanently conserved in Plymouth and Mount Holly under the Federal Forest Legacy Program. This conservation effort was undertaken to protect the development of higher elevation land, much of which the Foundation arguably considered unsuitable for development and worthy of protection. Farm & Wilderness merged with the Ninevah Foundation in 2018 and in 2022 transferred all its land holdings to the Ninevah Foundation, DBA Farm & Wilderness Conservation.

### **Current uses:**

Farm & Wilderness, or F&W, has operated seven summer camps, five of which are in Plymouth, for the past 83 years. During the shoulder seasons F&W rents out its somewhat rustic facilities to large groups, generally involved in education or religious worship, as well as weddings and short-term rentals. F&W is a licensed lodging establishment and registered with the Vermont Department of health.

Additionally, F&W runs farming operations year-round, as well as an after-school program for several Towns including Mount Holly. F&W's conservation arm, known as FWC, also conducts intermittent forestry operations and special educational events.

### **FWC goals with the creation of the PUD:**

**Camping Business:** Farm & Wilderness would like to make moderate expansions based on present and future business needs. Increased enrollment opportunities have been identified at all its Plymouth camps. An increase in camper and staff cabin capacity would allow for greater enrollment and revenue. These Increases would also require modest increases in dining hall capacity in most cases to accommodate this.



F&W camper activity/program buildings are often too small and lack the necessary infrastructure to deliver quality programming. F&W seeks to expand covered spaces and provide electricity for lighting and fans, and to connect to our septic systems so that camping and trip gear can be washed as well as cleanup from art projects.

**Conservation Business:** Additionally, F&W seeks to expand its conservation work and sees an opportunity in year-round programming. The limitation at present is the lack of overnight dormitory style accommodation to accommodate this business component.

**Housing:** F&W recognizes the need to do its part with the current housing shortage in Vermont. At Present, Vermont has the lowest rental vacancy rate in the country, and we view this as a business threat causing as it is difficult to attract employees to an area without sufficient housing stock. F&W presently operates four year-round staff cottages and a duplex with 5 bedrooms. F&W would like to increase its stock of both single and multi-family housing to attract year-round and seasonal employees.

**Environment and Aesthetics:** Ultimately, F&W does not want to alter the bucolic nature of its campus. It is the open fields, forest, along with the proper sighting of buildings that are constructed in a traditional rural Vermont architecture are what our constituents and customers highly desire.

**Compliance:** F&W is presently and has likely been out of compliance with the zoning regulations since they were created, as additional square footage has been added over time. F&W seeks approval from the Plymouth Zoning Board for a Planned unit development on 3 parcels sharing span # 486-153-10350 comprising a total of 588 Acres of which 440 are conserved, leaving the potential for 153 acres of development. The conserved area is located primarily in the RD10 district, and the areas requested for expansion are located in the RD2, RD5, with each providing for 5000 square feet of building footprint as a dimensional standard. F&W has approximately 87,819 feet of built space on the 3 parcels associate with this SPAN number, exceeding the 15,000 square foot dimensional standard by 72,819 Square feet.

### **PUD Request:**

F&W seeks permission to construct up to a maximum of 20,000 square feet of building footprint over the next 10 years. The possible structures include footprint for an office, dormitory, single and two-family dwellings, camper cabins, and structures that support camp activities, and would only be constructed in the RD2 and RD5 zoning districts. No development would occur in the RD10 district which F&W has dedicated primarily to conservation and forest management activities. A proposed inventory of structures included in **Appendix A**, and locations in **Appendix B**. While it is unlikely that F&W would have the funding for a complete expansion, we are making a request for flexible expansion of up to 20,000 of the noted 21,620 square foot inventory on Appendix A.

### **Comparative conceptual analysis for a subdivision:**

A theoretical subdivision of the un-conserved land into 5 acre lots would yield a total 150,000 square feet of building space. Additionally, although protected, the 440 acres of conserved land would yield another 440,000 square feet of building space if divided into 10 acre lots. F&W has historically taken a holistic approach over the long term with development, ensuring that buildings have the lightest footprint possible and fit well into the landscape, and therefore seeks to pursue a PUD rather than seeking subdivision.

### **Utilities:**

Farm & Wilderness operates water systems that are licensed by the state of Vermont in order to operate its camps. Almost all Farm & Wilderness facilities have septic systems that meet the State's requirements, with the one exception under design and to be soon constructed. In general, F&W's cabins require no electricity or combustible fuels. The exceptions are year-round structures, commercial kitchens, and program buildings. F&W has on-site solar generation which was carefully concealed from the view from rt 100. Any further development would follow a similar pattern.

### **Traffic:**

Traffic on Farm & Wilderness Road could be generalized as light during most of the year. During the period of October to May it is primarily the organizations' staff that commute to the campus. During the busy season it is still rare to see more than 75 cars a day travel the road except for opening and closing day, and changeover, which sees about 150 cars in addition to the commuting staff. The addition of new building footprint, in particular a dormitory, would bring additional traffic and possibly require parking, and most likely to the north end of the campus, which is presently under Act 250 stormwater jurisdiction. This area is also where the majority of F&W's staff and guest parking occurs at present, near the main entrance in an area known as the gravel pit.

### **Siting and setbacks:**

F&W has typically taken the lightest approach to disturbing the land as possible. Ecologically sensitive areas are well known and documented, and development is not allowed to occur in those areas. F&W has challenges with meeting setbacks in a couple of areas where the road comes close to the lake, and if that distance is under 120 feet, it is nearly impossible to maintain the 75-foot setback from the shoreline and 25 feet rear setback from the Town road.



## **ZONING PUD PROVISIONS**

### **5.1**

F&W believes this is a creative approach that continues the low impact development of its land in order to meet it's business needs.

### **5.2.1**

F&W would like to request a formal hearing with a warning after input from the planning and Zoning Board.

### **5.2.2**

F&W Would like clarity from the Planning commission about how we are classified.

### **5.2.3**

F&W believes that it meets this standard as demonstrated in the conceptual analysis for a subdivision.

### **5.2.4**

F&W requests no exemption and intends to meet all setback requirements of this ordinance.

### **5.2.5**

We believe we addressed this in the conceptual analysis for subdivision.

### **5.2.6.1 and 5.2.6.2**

Could F&W submit its current building standards to meet these criteria which are reflected in the photos including siting against the tree line versus open fields when possible, using wooden siding and colors that add to the rusticity and roofing that blends with the natural environment? Additionally, F&W buildings have been traditionally clustered by camp and age group, and we intend to continue this practice.

F&W has maintained a largely forested shoreline and will continue to be compelled to do so under the Shoreline protection act. F&W's Conservation Director is Certified by the State of Vermont in Sustainable Shoreline Erosion Control Practices. The forested shoreline also provides a significant amount of screening.

### **5.2.7**

Projects are designed to meet setbacks and we try to encourage natural vegetative screening.

### **5.2.8**

Farm & Wilderness does not have many significant historical Resources, other than some older buildings. Protections have been added to the historic lime kiln at the Rockefeller Dam site, which we anticipate removal in the fall of 2023.

### **5.2.9**

F&W is considered commercial by the division of fire safety, and public buildings are required to have potable and wastewater permits.

### **5.2.10**

F&W is concerned about adverse impact on neighbors, although it has few direct abutters, F&W strives to preserve the view from the rt 100 Scenic Byway. Additionally, it has enough acreage as to not encroach on abutting properties with "presumptive shields" with water and wastewater development.

### **5.2.11**

We anticipate no additional strain on or the development of Town infrastructure to support this work. In the past F&W paid to relocate the Town Road with the approval of the Selectboard and removed over 100 stems within the right-of-way on another section of road in anticipation of the Emerald Ash Borer, potentially relieving the Town of this burden.

### **5.2.12**

This will be single ownership by Farm & Wilderness.

### **5.2.13**

Should we consider the Conserved land as a basis for the PUD or as already existing? This Land is also open to the public for recreation such as hiking, hunting, and other non-motorized recreation that is compatible with the Federal Forest Legacy Program Conservation Easement.

### **5.2.14**

As discussed earlier, we feel that there will be little additional traffic burden with development as F&W parking is already designated.

### **5.2.15**

This PUD will not require any expansion of public infrastructure.

### **5.2.16**

This is currently in Place on F&W property with 440 conserved acres.

## Appendix A

Zone	Campus	Foot-Print Size	Description
1	Admin	1600	Upgrade to commercial Kitchen
1	Admin	3800	Staff housing
1/3	Admin/ Tamarack	4000	Dormitory
1	Admin	5000	Office – Welcome center
1	Admin	600	Seasonal 3-sided staff cabins
1	Timberlake	900	Camper cabins, generally 450 SF +/- accommodating 20 more campers
1	Timberlake	2000	Expansion of current dining hall/lodge to meet present and future occupancy needs
1	Timberlake	120	Staff showers
2	Tamarack	1000	Kitchen expansion
3	Tamarack	900	2 more camper cabins to accommodate up to 16 more campers
4	Firefly Song	700	Trip pack out replacement building including <b>the removal of 240 SF</b> from the previous structure
4	Firefly Song	400	One camper cabin and the <b>removal of 340 SF</b> of old cabin
4	Firefly Song	600	Staff lounge with elect/wifi
See Appendix B	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,620</b>	



Appendix B

