



TOWN OF FREEPORT, MAINE
Planning Department
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Freeport, ME04032
Phone: 207-865-4743
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TO: FREEPORT PROJECT REVIEW BOARD
FROM: CAROLINE PELLETIER, TOWN PLANNER
RE: STAFF REPORT
DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024

Cedar Haven Family Campground – Site Plan Review	
Property Location:	Tax Assessor Map 17, Lots 18A, 18B, 19, 20A, & 20D (37, 39, 43, 51 & 45 Baker Road)
Zoning Information:	Rural Residential I (RR-I)
Review Type(s):	Site Plan Review
Waivers Requested:	None

Background: The applicant is presenting conceptual plans for Site Plan Review for alterations for the Cedar Haven Family Campground Expansion. Approximately twenty-five (25) new campsites are proposed, along with an additional 550 feet access drive and a new 1,300 square foot bath house. Two existing residential parcels are proposed to now be part of the campground property.

The new sites will be served by underground utilities (water, sewer, electrical) with an engineered septic system for waste and a new well. The campground is already considered a public water system by the State of Maine and information about any required approvals for the existing and proposed well will be required.

The applicant will need to work with the Town Engineer with regards compliance with requirements for stormwater management which is proposed to be treated with grassed under drained soil filters. The applicant will need to clarify what additional permits from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection will be required for stormwater, wetland impacts etc.

A conceptual plan has been included in the submission to give an overview of the layout of the proposed expansion. More information will be needed on the existing structures on the property (one shown to be replaced with a storage building); the proposed site types which appear to all have gravel pads; details on the interior driveway; information on any required clearing and/or proposed buffers; information on the proposed solar panel; and, more detailed information on the overall parcel boundaries. The applicant will also need to demonstrate compliance with Section 505. Campgrounds of the Town of Freeport Zoning Ordinance.

The applicant is looking for general feedback so they may proceed with the development of final plans. Does the Board want to schedule a sitewalk?

Desert of Maine –Site Plan Amendment	
Property Location:	Tax Assessor Map 22, Lot 8 (95 Desert Road)
Zoning Information:	Rural Residential I (RRI), Nature Based and Art Overlay District (NBAOD)
Review Type(s):	Site Plan Amendment
Waivers Requested:	None

Background: The applicant is seeking approval for a Site Plan Amendment at the Desert of Maine. Proposed changes include adding nine geodesic domes and one additional cabin all for camping and in locations previously approved for tent and/or RV sites. One of the new cabins (site 5) will be designed to be accessible. Conceptual photos of domes have been included in the submission. The change will not be an increase in the overall number of camping sites on the property and there will still be 28 in total.

The new structures will be located in the areas that are already cleared and between existing vegetation. The domes will be on raised decks; minimal earth work will be required and grading will remain unchanged. Some areas of gravel at the sites that was previously needed for the RV’s will now be revegetated with loam and seed, mulch and plantings; resulting in a decrease of about 888 sf of impervious area on the site (and as presented in the last submission). No changes to the stormwater management system on site are proposed. Review comments from the Town Engineer are included in an email dated 01/10/24. In the email he did raise the question about the proximity of one of the dome tents to a possible stream. This is something that will need to be resolved before a building permit can be issued.

Access to the sites will be from the existing campground road and for which no changes are proposed. Each site will still have room for parking (200 s.f), a fire pit, and a sign with site number. There will be an LED solar powered light for illumination; all lighting fixtures are required to be full cut-off.

Septic systems for the site were previously designed and installed. No changes are proposed. One of the domes (site 26) will not have water and/or sewer connections. Most of the sites are already connected to water service and already have electricity.

The wellness area will be located in the grass area, to the north of the existing bath house. Graphics of the general layout and appearance of this area are included in the submission. This area will include amenities such as a sauna, hot tub and two plunge baths. There will be water servicing this area via a connection from the existing bath house. The overall square footage of this area should be clarified and the applicant will need to confirm that there will be minimal grading changes in this area as well.

No changes to traffic, parking, circulation, landscaping and/or signage are proposed.

Proposed Findings of Fact: (Section 602.F. of the Freeport Zoning Ordinance)

- a. Preservation of Landscape: The landscape shall be developed in such a manner as to be in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhoods and in accordance with good development practice by minimizing tree and soil removal, retaining existing vegetation where desirable, and keeping any grade changes in character with the general appearance of neighboring areas. If a site includes a ridge or ridges above the surrounding areas and provides scenic vistas for surrounding areas, special attempts shall be made to preserve the natural environment of the skyline of the ridge. Existing vegetation and buffering landscaping are potential methods of preserving the scenic

vista.

The parcel is in the Rural Residential I Zoning District and the new Nature-Based and Art Overlay District (Section 428 of the Freeport Zoning Ordinance). Proposed changes include adding nine geodesic domes and one additional cabin all for camping and in locations previously approved for tent and/or RV sites. One of the new cabins (site 5) will be designed to be accessible. The change will not be an increase in the overall number of camping sites on the property and there will still be 28 in total. The new structures will be located in the areas that are already cleared and between existing vegetation. The domes will be on raised decks; minimal earth work will be required and grading will remain unchanged. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- b. Relation of Proposed Buildings to the Environment:** The design and layout of the buildings and/or other development areas shall encourage safety, including fire protection. Proposed structures shall be related harmoniously to the terrain and to existing buildings and land uses in the vicinity which have a visual relationship to the proposed buildings. Visual compatibility, not uniformity with the surrounding area, shall be emphasized. Special attention shall be paid to the scale (mass), height and bulk, proportions of the proposed buildings, the nature of the open spaces (setbacks, landscaping) around the buildings, the design of the - 234 - buildings (including roof style, facade openings, architectural style and details), building materials and signs. If the structure is in the Design Review District, the Project Review Board shall incorporate the findings of the standards of Chapter 22 - Design Review Ordinance in its Site Plan Review findings. If the structure is located in a Commercial District (Commercial I, Commercial III and/or Commercial IV), the Staff Review and/or Project Review Board shall incorporate the findings of the standards of Section 527. Performance Standards for Commercial Districts in its Site Plan Review findings.

The parcel is not within the Design Review District. All new or replacement structures will comply with the setback requirements of the applicable zoning districts. The site is currently used as a campground and nature-based commercial enterprise. All cabins will be located in previously approved sites. The new structures will be located in the areas that are already cleared and between existing vegetation. The domes will be on raised decks; minimal earth work will be required and grading will remain unchanged. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- c. Vehicular Access:** The proposed layout of access points shall be designed so as to avoid unnecessary adverse impacts on existing vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns. Special consideration shall be given to the location, number, and control of access points, adequacy of adjacent streets, traffic flow, sight distances, turning lanes, and existing or proposed traffic signalization and pedestrian-vehicular contacts. The entrance to the site shall meet the minimum sight distance according to any applicable State or municipal standards.

Vehicular traffic to the site will not be altered. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- d. Parking and Circulation:** The layout and design of all means of vehicular and pedestrian circulation,

including walkways, interior drives, and parking areas shall be safe and convenient and, insofar as practical, shall not detract from the proposed buildings and neighboring properties. General interior circulation, separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, service traffic, drive-up facilities, loading areas, and the arrangement and use of parking areas shall be considered.

No changes to parking are proposed. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- e. Surface Water Drainage: Adequate provisions shall be made for surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties, down-stream conditions, or the public storm drainage system. The increase in rate of runoff in the post development condition shall be held to a zero or less percent of the predevelopment condition unless an engineering study has been performed as described in Section 529.2 of this Ordinance. On-site absorption shall be utilized to minimize discharges whenever possible. All drainage calculations shall be based on a two year, ten year and twenty-five year storm frequency. Emphasis shall be placed on the protection of floodplains; reservation of stream corridors; establishment of drainage rights-of-way and the adequacy of the existing system; and the need for improvements, both on-site and off-site, to adequately control the rate, volume and velocity of storm drainage and the quality of the stormwater leaving the site. Maintenance responsibilities shall be reviewed to determine their adequacy.

The new structures will be located in the areas that are already cleared and between existing vegetation. The domes will be on raised decks; minimal earth work will be required and grading will remain unchanged. Some areas of gravel at the sites that was previously needed for the RV's will now be revegetated with loam and seed, mulch and plantings; resulting in a decrease of about 888 sf of impervious area on the site (and as presented in the last submission). No changes to the stormwater management system on site are proposed. Review comments from the Town Engineer are included in an email dated 01/10/24. In the email he did raise the question about the proximity of one of the dome tents to a possible stream. This is something that will need to be resolved before a building permit can be issued. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- f. Utilities: All utilities included in the site plan shall be reviewed as to their adequacy, safety, and impact on the property under review and surrounding properties. The site plan shall show what provisions are being proposed for water supply, wastewater, solid waste disposal and storm drainage. Whenever feasible, - 235 - as determined by the Project Review Board, all electric, telephone and other utility lines shall be installed underground. Any utility installations above ground shall be located so as to have a harmonious relationship with neighboring properties and the site.

No changes to utilities are proposed. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- g. Advertising Features: The size, location, texture and lighting of all exterior signs and outdoor

advertising structures or features shall not detract from the layout of the property and the design of proposed buildings and structures and the surrounding properties and shall not constitute hazards to vehicles and pedestrians.

Other than site numbers, no new signs are proposed. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- h. Special Features:** Exposed storage areas, exposed machinery installations, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures, similar accessory areas and structures, shall be subject to such setbacks, screen plantings or other screening methods as shall reasonably be required to prevent their being incongruous with the existing or contemplated environment and the surrounding properties.

There are no special features associated with this project. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- i. Exterior Lighting:** All exterior lighting shall be designed to encourage energy efficiency, to ensure safe movement of people and vehicles, and to minimize adverse impact on neighboring properties and public ways. Adverse impact is to be judged in terms of hazards to people and vehicular traffic and potential damage to the value of adjacent properties. Lighting shall be arranged to minimize glare and reflection on adjacent properties and the traveling public. For all proposed lighting, the source of the light shall be shielded and the light should be directed to the ground, except in the case of ground sign lighting. In the Village Commercial 1 and 2 Districts, lighting for pedestrian walkways and adjacent public sidewalks shall also be provided.

New solar ground lighting is proposed for the cabins and all lighting will be required to be full cut-off fixtures compliant with Section 521.A of the Freeport Zoning Ordinance. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- j. Emergency Vehicle Access:** Provisions shall be made for providing and maintaining convenient and safe emergency vehicle access to all buildings and structures at all times.

All public safety department heads have reviewed the plans. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- k. Landscaping:** Landscaping shall be designed and installed to define, soften, or screen the appearance of off-street parking areas from the public right(s)-of-way and abutting properties, to enhance the physical design of the building(s) and site, and to minimize the encroachment of the proposed use on neighboring land uses. Particular attention should be paid to the use of planting to break up parking areas. The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practical, by minimizing tree and soil removal, retaining existing vegetation where desirable, and keeping any grade changes in character with the general appearance of neighboring areas. Landscaping shall be provided as part of the overall site plan design and integrated into building arrangements, topography, parking and buffering requirements. Landscaping may include trees, bushes, shrubs, ground cover, perennials, annuals, plants, grading and the use of building and paving materials in

an imaginative manner.

No changes to the previously approved landscaping plan are proposed. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- I. Environmental Considerations: A site plan shall not be approved unless it meets the following criteria: (1) Will maintain safe and healthful conditions; (2) Will not result in water pollution, erosion, or sedimentation to surface waters; (3) Will adequately provide for the disposal of all wastewater; (4) Will not have an adverse impact on spawning grounds, fish, aquatic life, bird or other wildlife habitat; (5) Will conserve shore cover and visual, as well as actual, points of access to inland and coastal waters; (6) Will protect archaeological and historic resources as designated in the comprehensive plan; (7) Will not adversely affect existing commercial fishing or maritime activities in the Marine Waterfront District; (8) Will avoid problems associated with floodplain development and use; and (9) Is in conformance with the standards of Section 306, Land Use Standards, of the Town of Freeport Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

This parcel is not within the Marine Waterfront District or the Shoreland Zone. The Desert of Maine is a public water supplier licensed through the State of Maine. Wastewater disposal will be through private systems. No changes are proposed to the wells or septic systems at this time. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

- m. Erosion and Sedimentation. The proposed site shall be constructed in accordance with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's Best Management Practices and shall not cause unreasonable soil erosion or a reduction in the land's capacity to hold water so that a dangerous or unhealthy situation results.

The applicant previously submitted an erosion and sedimentation control plan and no changes are proposed. Based upon this information, the Board finds that this standard has been met.

Conclusion: Based on these facts the Board finds that this project meets the criteria and standards of the Freeport Zoning Ordinance.

Proposed Motion: Be it ordered that the Freeport Project Review Board approve the printed Findings of Fact and a Site Plan Amendment for Heestand Family Holding, LLC for a Site Plan Amendment with changes to include the approval nine geodesic domes and one additional cabin at previously approved camp sites (for a total of 28 campsites on the property), a wellness area and other associated site improvements, to be used seasonally, at the Desert of Maine (Tax Assessor Map 22, Lot 8), to be built substantially as proposed, application dated 12/26/23, finding that it meets the standards of the Freeport Zoning Ordinance, with the following Conditions of Approval:

- 1) This approval incorporates by reference all supporting plans that amend the previously approved plans submitted by the applicant and their representatives at Project Review Board meetings and hearings on the subject application to the extent that they are not in conflict with other stated conditions.
- 2) Prior to construction, the applicant obtain any applicable permits from the Freeport

Codes Enforcement Department.

- 3) The conditions of approval from the past approvals as still applicable.

From: [Adam Bliss](#)
To: [Caroline Pelletier](#)
Cc: [Jeffrey Read](#); [Adam Bliss](#); [Earl Gibson](#)
Subject: Cedar Haven Campground: Site Plan Application Review
Date: Thursday, January 11, 2024 11:25:57 AM

Hi Caroline,

I have reviewed the Cedar Haven Campground Site Plan application and offer the following comments for Concept Plan discussion.

1. Access to Property, Section 512. The Zoning Ordinance requires a 22-foot-wide driveway for two-way driveways and 15-foot-wide for one-way driveways.
2. Has the second driveway entrance been approved by Public Works?
3. Please add a note to the plans regarding the date and source of the wetland delineation.
4. Is the outlined triangular area in the southeast corner of the property of any relevance to the project?
5. Buffering may be required, especially around the wood processing area.
6. Please document the existing and proposed impervious areas and the number of campground sites for record-keeping purposes. The source of the existing areas and sites should be derived from any plans previously approved by the Project Review Board to the greatest extent possible.

Thank you,

Adam

Adam S. Bliss, P.E.
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207.865.4743 x106

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From: [Adam Bliss](#)
To: [Caroline Pelletier](#)
Cc: [Doug Heestand](#); [Adam Bliss](#); [Nick Adams](#)
Subject: Desert of Maine: Site Plan Application
Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2024 2:35:44 PM

Hi Caroline,

I have reviewed the Desert of Maine Site Plan application for the Domes and Wellness Area. I only have one review comment: the applicant should reach out to the Maine DEP to verify if they need a permit to construct a dome within 75 feet of the stream.

Thank you,

Adam

Adam S. Bliss, P.E.
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