

Town of Sandisfield  
Board of Selectmen  
June 22, 2021

**Special Permit Hearing for SAMA Productions, LLC**

Called to order at 6:00pm

Members Present: George Riley, Alex Bowman, Mark Newman

Remote participation information provided for the public.

- John Heck of SAMA briefly described the process of receiving the original special permit for SAMA Productions LLC at the Abby Rd location. He mentioned his sensitivity towards those against the facility, which led to a decision to attempt to buy and move to property on Route 8. If a special permit is approved for this location, the facility will be moved to Rt. 8.
- SAMA has filed an amendment to the Abby Road deed. Their counsel has stated SAMA is completely eligible to begin the process on Abby Rd. SAMA is unusual among taxpayers because they do not use any educational services.
- Jim Scalise, design engineer, prepared the presentation to describe the facility in detail.
  - Facility will sit on a 14 acre lot, previously owned by Ralph Morrison. Project itself will be just under 5 acres, the clearing required will reach 10.7 acres. The lot is surrounded by 65 acres of federally owned land. Much of the surrounding forest has already been cleared that Scalise's map of the property may not reflect. Project looks to construct 22 greenhouses, each 4,500sq. ft. in size. This would be a total of 99,000 sq. ft. Greenhouses will be a 14-16 ft high tubular steel frame with an opaque fabric to let in light, but not allow contents to be seen. Security cameras will be installed as well. A 5,000 sq. ft. pre-engineered metal processing building will also be present on the site.
  - Perimeters around greenhouses will be fenced in, and some of the buildings themselves help to create part of that perimeter. Parking and access driveway will be established at existing curb-cut. The facility will exclusively be used to grow, process and dry marijuana for wholesale distribution. No retail will be involved. Army Corps of Engineers was notified as part of Abutter requirements, Abuts Farmington River and Rt. 8, which carries over 2,200 cars daily per 2020 traffic count.
  - Project's fence line is approximately 250 ft from nearest building or residence across the street. No wetlands on or in vicinity of the project, nor endangered species.
  - Expected to have 10 employees at one time, 9 parking spaces, including an accessible parking space, as well as gravel access drives all around the greenhouses.
  - Traffic analysis based on the employment of 15 people is estimated to generate about 10 trips a day, or 16 trips during peak hour, 7am-9am. An estimated 0-2 deliveries a day. DOT will have to weigh in, but typically facilities with under 200 deliveries a day do not need to file a permit with them. Studies

show this project will create less traffic than if five houses were built. Plans to plant 37 trees throughout existing tree line to help offset any environmental impact.

- Three types of lights will primarily be utilized: Park lights to prevent light spillage, egress lights, motion-sensor fence lighting. All lights point downward as to avoid illuminating the night sky. All lights will be on a timer. Lighting is zoned to help with security. 15 ft poles with 1 foot candle for lights, which provides a safe egress. Lights around perimeter may have higher foot candle for security purposes. Lighting can be programmed accordingly depending on the season.
- No public signage besides a small sign for directional purposes and deliveries. However, it will not have any reference to cannabis growing on it. Stormwater has been thoroughly studied, complete with an erosion control plan, plan to mitigate stormwater (water will drained into ponds, and drained out slowly), groundwater recharge, etc.
- Odor control: a fan system will be put in place that blows in predominant wind direction and sprays mist into flow of air to mitigate smell. Wind direction is "our friend in this particular location" wind blows towards Farmington River, which should be enough dispersion.
- Estimated 375 gallons a day into the 1500 gallon septic. Drinking water well has also been proposed. Plans to use drip irrigation system, using 500 gallons daily. This number will vary depending on season (could reach 1000 gallons in summer or get down to 200 gallons in fall)
- While the project may not be specifically essential or desirable to public, it will generate commercial real estate tax and jobs. Sprinkler system is not necessary for a facility of this size. Plans to bring in about 7500 cu yd of gravel/soil to put a pad down to build. No material should need to be moved off of property.
- Alex: How would you describe the current noise conditions of the neighborhood today? How much noise will be generated from fans?
  - Did not conduct a noise study. However, there is significant distance from fans to the abutting residences, as well as landscape walls and building walls. The fans are below rumble strip noise calculations.
- Alex: Is there a number of decibels SAMA is willing to commit to being under?
  - GR: Typical decibel level of fans was acceptable for the previous special permit.
- Alex: What happens if there is odor?
  - Building inspector cannot be able to smell any odor on other adjoining properties. SAMA currently has a contract with odor control to maintain odor. Any complaints would be taken up with odor control. Odor expert, Steve McGaffy, has high confidence there won't be any issues regarding smell. However, if there is it most likely will not be a permanent condition. Failure of anti-odor devices would likely only occur if there was a loss of power. There is a 2 year warranty on these devices.

- Alex: Will there be any hazardous materials on the premises?
  - Prefabricated laboratory will have all the hazardous materials in it.
- Alex: Can you push the project back any further on the lot?
  - SAMA strives to protect the forest as best as they can. Much of the lot is already cleared, to go back further would mean more clearing which seems unnecessary at this time.
- For the fence perimeter on the property, SAMA may be willing to use black vinyl chain link fence for a more aesthetically pleasing look, while still keeping noise pollution to a minimum.
- Alex: Would SAMA be willing to share water data?
  - Jared, grow expert, explains staggering water to occur every three days. Says they could share water data. Will use drip irrigation, making sure to not over-saturate.
- Dana Curtis, who has lived across from site for 20 years worries about the noise pollution because of the mountain behind her site. Also worries about traffic accidents and lights going off due to the active wildlife in the area.
  - Lights will not use heat sensor to avoid vegetation and small wildlife setting off the lights. Lights will only be on so long as to capture a picture.
- Bill Taylor: Detention basins in set back requirements?
  - Basins will remain where they are unless there is an additional requirement added to the permit. Current set back requirements are for buildings only.
- Bill: Where will the compost pits be and how will they be in odor mitigated locations?
  - Jared: Compost will be as far from the road as possible, but not in a greenhouse. Does not plan to feed compost back to marijuana plants, but rather around the property.
- Bill: How will odor mitigation be affected should the power go out? Are there back-up generators?
  - Dave: Back-up generators that can be hooked up to put services back online will be available.
- Bill: Are there any clients who can prove this odor mitigation is effective?
  - McGaffy: Clients do not want to reveal names about using the odor devices. However, he did provide some grower feedback: "Upon use of the system the odor in the cultivation rooms was noticeably reduced almost to the point of being undetectable unless we were standing immediately within the room next to the plants and grow racks"
  - Hydroponic grower: "Our use of the system was greatly appreciated by all those in our facility. The odors were immediately eliminated and we had no complaints from anyone regarding the odor whether within or out of our facility."

- Dispensary: "All odors were eliminated and no complaints were raised by the neighbors after using the Pyureco system"
- McGaffy would also like to note that their company has tackled more significant odors in comparison to cannabis.
- Dominic Konstam Jr concerns about icy roads? Stopping truck noises?
  - DOT will look at the location and decide if driveways need to be adjusted. Ralph Morrison states there is already a DOT state permit.
- Brian O'Rourke commends SAMA for finding a new location since they are approved for Abby Rd. Proved they want to be a friendly neighbor.
- Bill Taylor supports decision, but wants to make sure all the requirements are met. Solar panels/renewable energy could help with power use economically and environmentally. Suggests to look into regenerative agriculture.
- Jay Greenwell echoes Brian's comments about moving locations.
- Dominic agrees that it's a more appropriate site.
- Motion by George Riley to grant a special permit for SAMA Productions LLC conditional on host community agreement, special permit conditions submitted by the Select Board and by Town Counsel, specifying that no light trespass will occur outside the property line and distinct decibel levels for the fans, to be established at a later date.
- Second by Alex Bowman, passed unanimously to grant SAMA Productions LLC a conditional special permit.
  - Roll call vote: George Riley, yes. Alex Bowman, yes. Mark Newman, yes.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

George Riley \_\_\_\_\_

Alex Bowman \_\_\_\_\_