

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

APRIL 24, 2019

MEMORIAL BUILDING

1:00 P.M.

The following are to be considered draft minutes until approved by the Board.

The meeting called to order at 1:00 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selectmen present: Dick Hendl, Chairman; Tamara Butcher, and George McCusker.

Others present: Whit Smith, Jill Hastings, Olivia Weathers, Ryan Peterson, Paul Seyfreid, Mike Lawlor, from Kennebec Lumber Dennis Carrier, Owner and George Evarts, former owner of GH Evarts (now Kennebec).

George Evarts reported he is still working at the mill with Dennis Carrier, the owner. George stated when he was operating the mill, larger quantities of mixed species of lumber went in and out of the mill and more equipment was being operated daily. George sold green lumber and kiln dried lumber of various thicknesses requiring more people to handle lumber and more materials in and out of the kilns. George had 36 employees at one time. The primary operation now is kiln drying. Dennis is a large flooring producer and most of his lumber is red oak, and of the same thickness. His lumber requires drying over a longer period, turned over about every 21 days. Dennis has been able to streamline the process with less equipment and less employees; currently 11 or 12. In regard to lumber handling, the noise is less now with Kennebec than it was when George operated the plant. The backup alarms have been changed out on all the equipment to the "puffs of air" OSHA approved alarms. George noted his concern with safety of employees and people on site with the alarm noises being reduced. He encouraged the Select Board to come out and observe them in action.

Dennis Carrier reported he purchased the mill in August. When he first took over, he was finishing the processing the lumber that George had. He replaced an old bucket loader with a new. No other new equipment was purchased, and he operated with the same equipment with the same exact back up alarms that were there when George owned the business. There are six kilns. An experiment was done on the pitch and speed on the fans on two of the kilns. They measured and tested the noise and there was only a change of 2 decibels. They changed those two kilns back to what they were previously about a month ago. There have been no other changes from an operation standpoint.

Dick Hendl noted the first indication of an issue was right around August so from what he is hearing the only change made at that time was in the ownership.

Dennis stated they have made a change in operations since the complaints of noise began. They are trying to be a good neighbor. A fan to the wood boiler has been changed to a quieter type of fan. The mill has two kilns with external drive shafts that have been in operation since George began running the plant. The pulleys and bearings on those two kilns have been changed which lowered decibel readings by about 2 to 5 decibels overall. The decibel levels for traffic on Route 4A is about 90 decibels, 78 decibels right directly at the kilns, and 79 decibels behind the kilns,

as of when they changed things back a month ago. The service life of kilns is 30 to 40 years and some of the kilns are nearing the end of their life and will be replaced.

Olivia stated she can still hear puffs of air from the backup beepers, but it was horrible to hear the back-up beepers before. Since August she began noticing the beepers 7 days a week but did not prior to then. She was not aware there had been a change in ownership in August. Previously, she reached out to George about the noise.

George stated the facility had been running with stock safety equipment for years, including Saturday and Sundays to take care of the lumber drying needs. Dennis stated he is not doing anything different since August and is not doing more than what was being done when George owned the operation.

Andy D'Amico questioned noise from the boiler exhaust pipe and wondered if there was some sort of sleeve that could be put over it to reduce the noise. Dennis stated there is no measurable number of decibels coming out of that pipe.

George McCusker asked Ryan Peterson to comment on the noise from his property. Ryan stated the noise from his yard seems to be a variable pitch, which he believed to be a difference in programming. He did notice a change in the noise in the summertime but doesn't now.

George stated kilns vary because of conditions inside of them. The variable speed setting is now back to what it was when George was in operation. In 1989 the variable speed drive fan was the first one, with 4 to 6 frequency drives. The roofs on the kilns are insulated with tires to deal with previous noise concerns. The boiler does modulate but is no different than when he was operating. The boiler fan has been changed and has brought the decibels down. The line shaft and bearings have been changed all to address the noise.

Olivia stated the high-pitched squeal went away after Scott Piper was at these meetings. She questioned what it would take to make sure that doesn't happen again. Dennis stated the improvement took a redesign of the pulleys, taking some months to design, receive the equipment and take care of the installation.

Mike Lawlor stated he lives on Route 4A before the mill, and he doesn't hear anything from the mill. He used to hear the beepers but not as much now.

George Evarts noted the Weathers' had done some harvesting of trees around their house, and asked Olivia if that might be a reason, she is hearing more noise. Olivia stated the tree cutting was done quite some time ago and the noise started before the end of August. They are planning on putting up a high fence and planting some evergreens up behind their house.

Whit stated a 2 to 5 reduction in decibels is quite a significant decrease in terms of perceived noise. He has been to the Weathers' home. At their property at about 150' feet off Route 4A the noise from the road is about 65 db. for a school bus, 58-60 db. for a truck, and 65-

72 for a ten-wheeler, which is at about 10 db. more than the noise from the mill. However, the perception of the constant noise and very distinctly the fan noise appears to be the issue. He is aware of a lot of technology in the industry to feasibly muffle and reduce the noise. Dennis stated he is aware there are fans that make less noise. The fans at the kilns are internal fans that push out moisture as well as air. Dennis stated his point is he is doing less then George was back before he bought in August. The noise is less than it was back when George owned the mill.

Dick stated he has been to the area several times, and when he was out there yesterday, he noticed it was quieter. He extended his appreciation to Dennis and George and the residents for working together to be good neighbors. This is a legitimate business and should be tolerable for both sides. Dick stated he will be the key contact in this matter from now on.

Zoning Compliance/Education: Whit stated a more general approach seems to be the way to proceed. Based on discussions multiple people are aware of the need for compliance and are engaged. Conversations are going to multiply as the process continues. He supports education and awareness and continuing with the brochure. The Board of Selectmen has the responsibility to address these issues in an orderly fashion, on a case by case basis at this point. Whit noted the location of some properties that fit the definition of a junk yard stated in the Zoning Ordinance and a few others that might have a business use. Dick has drafted form letters to address certain situations.

Zoning Permit Application: Several revisions have been made to the Zoning Permit Application to capture as much information as possible at the time of application. The form has improved dramatically. Application fees will be going up. The form, as revised, is ready to use. More changes can be made if the need arises. Before the fees increase, notice to the town will be given.

Whit will continue working on the tri-fold brochure, starting with an outline as discussed. The form will be vetted by the Planning Board and other interested parties before it is finalized.

George noted his concern that previous attempts with zoning non-compliance was not successful. In his opinion, he feels anyone that works for the town or sits on a board should be the first ones to come in and set examples for the public.

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

Submitted by,

Janet Roberts