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FREE

THURSDAY

Westward Shores expansion OK'd

By DAYMOND STEER
THE CONWAY DAILY SUN

OSSIPEE — The planning board has approved, with conditions, a controversial

plan to massively expand the Westward Shores Cottages & RV Resort.

Located at 110 Nichols Road in West Ossipee, Westward Shores was seeking

approval to add 246 new RV sites to 258 existing campsites.

The parcel totals 308 acres; however, 45 see **CAMPGROUND** page 10

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Superheroes in our midst



Conway Elementary School pupils dance to the "Superhero" song at a school assembly last Friday. Fifth-grade teacher Steven Bamsey encouraged the kids to use their superpowers of "kindness, honesty and mindfulness" throughout the school and throughout the day. For story, turn to page 8. (JAMIE GEMMITI PHOTO)

Tamworth minutes: Chief Colby fired

By DAYMOND STEER
THE CONWAY DAILY SUN

TAMWORTH — Nonpublic selectmen's minutes, released Wednesday afternoon, confirm that former Tamworth Police Chief Penny Colby was fired from a post she had

held for mere months. Meanwhile, her predecessor said he's willing to come back.

Colby, who had served with the Tamworth Police Department since 2008, was selected to replace Dan Poirier, who retired as chief on Feb. 1, by an indepen-

dent committee.

Since being hired, however, she had faced criticisms that she wasn't responding to enough calls, lived too far from town and was not a presence in town.

see **COLBY** page 12

OSSIPEE

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CAMPGROUND from page one

acres will be placed in conservation.

The peninsula area would contain 15 campsites. Westward Shores is owned by Grand Rapids, Mich.-based Northgate Resorts through Northgate Ossipee LLC. Northgate is owned and operated by the Bossenbroek family.

Dan Flores of SFC Engineering of Windham came before the board Sept. 20 to ask for a special use permit and conditional site plan approval — the two OKs that the project needed from the planning board.

At that meeting, planning board conditionally approved the site plan dated Sept. 20 with the conditions that Westward Shores get water supply, subdivision and septic approval from the state and be in compliance with local, state and federal regulations. The motion passed 5-2 with alternate Rick St. Jean and Bruce Parsons in the minority. Bob Gillette was absent.

The planning board then unanimously approved the special use permit needed for improvements to the septic and run off systems. The permit came with the same conditions as the site plan approval.

The concept was first discussed with the planning board in December 2015. Since then, Westward Shores scaled back its original plans and agreed to set aside 25 acres in a conservation easement. Westward Shores has been reviewed by over 20 agencies including the planning board and zoning board.

“We are now before you after having responded to everything asked of us by this board,” said Flores.

Flores said site plan approval would allow Westward Shores to begin work on constructing three wells. They could build the wells without the approval; however, it would be risky to do so because building expensive infrastructure without the town’s permission wouldn’t make much sense, he said. After the wells are built, they would need subdivision approval by the state. After that, Westward Shores would get septic approval.

“If we do not obtain those permits, the conditional approval goes away,” said Flores.

Later in the meeting, Flores said Westward Shores hopes to get going on well construction within a month. At previous meetings, area residents and environmental groups raised concerns that it would be difficult to evacuate the sites in a flood. They were particularly concerned about flooding on the peninsula.

Planning board members raised these concerns at the Sept. 20 meeting, with board member Roy Barron saying he’s seen the water come up quickly on Ossipee Lake. He questioned the peninsula sites and the emergency evacuation plan.

“Priorities are protecting the public and the lake,” said Barron.

Flores said the emergency action plan was submitted July 19.

“On that plan, I didn’t see anything specific about where you are going to store these structures, residences or trailers,” said Chairman Chester “Ski” Kwiatkowski. “If you are moving upward of 200 of these, you need a significant amount of space.”

Flores said the RVs at the campground are the responsibility of their owners.

In an email to the Sun, one of Westward Shores managing partners, Zachary Bossenbroek, said there are two emergency access roads from the



A map of the Westward Shores expansion shows the current campground and the proposed additional sites. (DAYMOND STEER PHOTO)

campground that feed into Nichols Road, which is off Route 16.

Planning board member Roger ter Kuile made a number of points in favor of Westward Shores. He said the RV owners are responsible for moving their RVs and they should be aware of the flooding issue because they are putting the property so close to a water body. He added that Westward Shores is spending a lot of money to improve the site.

“They know at some point they are going to get their feet wet,” he said of lakeside residents. “We are making mountains out of molehills ... They (Westward Shores) are not going to spend the money it’s going to take to put this thing together and let it go to hell.”

Bossenbroek then said his company owns nine campground around the country.

He said five have portions that are in 100-year flood zones so he has plenty of experience dealing with such issues.

“When a flood comes, the RVs are either pulled out or many times, like we see at Westward Shores, they are elevated, they are on blocks, they are tied down,” said Bossenbroek, who praised ter Kuile and confirmed that Westward Shores was investing a significant amount into the site.

Bossenbroek said the RVs at the campground would be built to FEMA code to deal with flooding. He said that Westward Shores would not be elevating the campsites. Instead, the RVs themselves would be raised.

In an email, Bossenbroek confirmed that Westward Shores would have self-closing caps on campsites’ sewer system connections to prevent floodwaters from mixing with sewage.

Anne Cunningham, chair of the Freedom Planning Board, said she wanted time to review the proposal because a lot of complicated material had recently become available. She said Freedom was given abetter status, which means it has rights to review the project.

“We haven’t had the material (until that night), and we need time to review it,” said Cunningham.

But Ossipee Planning Board members felt like the project had dragged on long enough and denied the request.

Resident Sam Martin, who has served two terms on the board of selectmen and nine years on the zoning board, said she was embarrassed by the rudeness of the planning board.

“You have held these people up for absolute nonsense many instances,” said Martin. “I’m mortified to day this board is my town’s board.”

In response, planning board member Condict Billings said that Westward Shores asked for several continuances during the process.

“We are not holding them up; they are holding us up,” said Billings.

Kwiatkowski said the board and Westward Shores were working together, and Billings agreed.

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