

**FAYSTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**  
**MINUTES**  
**TUESDAY MAY 30, 2017**  
**Unapproved**

Attending: DRB Members: Jon Shea (Chair), Mike Quenneville, Jim Halavonich, Kevin Wry, Shane Mullen. ZA: John Weir. Public: Margo Wade, Amy Kretz, Kevin Babic, Warner Babic

The meeting opened at 6:05 pm.

Jon Shea opened the hearing for applications #3421-3422 (parcel ID #11-055.001, located at 626 Mount Ellen Road, Fayston). Applicant Summit Ventures NE, LLC seeks conditional use approval under Article 3, Section 3.4 (D) (Standard 2) of the Fayston Land Use Regulations for development on slopes in excess of 15% in grade. Conditional use approval is also required pursuant to Article 2, Table 2.3 (C) (28) (ski lift/area operations).

Margo Wade introduced the application. Summit Ventures seeks to replace the Sunshine Double chair lift at Mount Ellen. Project components include removal of the existing fixed-grip double chair lift, towers, top and bottom terminals and associated infrastructure; and installation of a new fixed-grip quad chair lift, towers, top and bottom terminals and associated infrastructure. Also included is limited tree removal in order to re-establish ski trail edges and improve skier circulation at the unload station and along with associated site grading.

Kevin Babic added that there is a need for a bigger and better lift chair. The Mount Ellen terrain park has been growing in popularity. The majority of skiers who utilize the Sunshine lift are beginners. Summit Ventures seeks a lift that would be easier to access for beginning skiers and riders. The need for the proposed lift replacement is to upgrade existing and older equipment, improve skier experience and improve safety for beginner and skiers and group lessons. No new ski terrain is proposed and lift will continue to service the same beginner trails that it currently serves.

Margo continued with the details of the plans. The proposed new chair lift will take the same path as the existing lift. However, the new lift will include eight towers; whereas the existing lift has six towers. Skiers and riders will be able to travel right or left at the unload station (top terminal). Approximately 15 trees will need to be removed in this project, as well as additional brush.

Shane inquired as to the removal of tree stumps. Margo responded that most will be tucked into the side of the trails for purposes of decomposition and soil stabilization. The branches will be used for firewood.

Shane then asked about the total area of disturbance. Margo responded that it was about 0.86 acres of disturbance. Mulch will be used for temporary stabilization. For permanent stabilization, mulch and seed will be used for slopes less than 15% in grade and seed and matting for slopes in excess of 15% in grade. ECS-2 matting will be used. Margo stated that a Low Risk Construction General Permit was required and has been obtained.

Margo then proceeded to discuss what is termed Comfortable Carrying Capacity (CCC). CCC is defined as the optimal level of utilization for the ski area (the number of visitors that can be accommodated at any given time) that guarantees a pleasant recreational experience, without overburdening the resort infrastructure. Sugarbush's current CCC is 8,330. The current CCC for the Sunshine lift is 500. The proposed replacement of the Sunshine lift (as well as the Village lift) with fixed-griped quads will increase Sugarbush's CCC to 8,690. This includes a new CCC for the Sunshine lift of 710. Even after completion of replacement of both the Sunshine and Village lifts, Sugarbush's CCC will remain below the 8,730 threshold approved by the U.S. Forest Service in 1998.

Visits to Sugarbush have grown over the last five years, approximately 400,000 visits per year. The majority of peak days the resort is at or close to CCC.

Kevin moved to find the application complete, and Mike seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Chair Shea then reviewed the application pursuant to Section 3.4 (D) (Standard 2) for steep slope development. Jon asked Margo about the overall grade of the land over which the Sunshine lift traverses. Margo stated that it was approximately 22% in grade along the lift line. Chair Shea asked about the tower footprints. Margo stated that these cylinder lift towers will be slightly smaller in diameter, approximately 3 foot bases.

Kevin moved to close the hearing and Mike seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

The Board went into deliberative session.

The Board came out of deliberative session. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.