

Proposed inn, riding center awaits permit

■ Village Diner owners Sam and Arleen Harkins are seeking town approval for a restaurant, inn and equestrian center in Red Hook.

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RED HOOK — The town Planning Board is expected to approve a proposed plan for a new inn and equestrian center at its April 1 meeting.

Sam and Arleen Harkins, who own the Village Diner in the village of Red Hook, are proposing to open the Sunset Crest Manor Inn & Equestrian Center at state Route 199 and Crestwood Road in the town of Red Hook, about 2 miles east of the village. Sam Harkins and a partner purchased the land, which is the former Irving Fraleigh Farm.

The couple plans to use about 80 acres for the complex, turning a house overlooking Route 199 into an inn and building the equestrian center. With Glen Brent, the engineer for the proposed project, they presented their plans to the town Planning Board Monday.

"They are here for a special use permit and site plan (approval) for an inn, a public dining room in the inn, and an equestrian center," said Planning Board Chairwoman Marcy Appell. "They eventually are going to board horses and the people who will stay at the inn will ride the horses there."

Brent said the inn would have four guest rooms and a

small restaurant added to the house's lower level would be open to the public. He said that there will be no access to the site from Route 199; the entrance and exit ways will be on Crestwood Road.

There are also plans to construct an outdoor riding ring and a parking area behind the proposed inn.

"There are two existing entrances on Crestwood Road," Brent said. "The one on 199 will be banned, because it's tough to get in and out of. (The proposed site plan) has a good mix of uses. A lot of people like horses and they can stay there."

Sam Harkins would not say how much it will cost them to open the facility.

"If it is approved on April 1 and we begin (work) on April 2, we could probably have it open by the July 4 weekend," he said. "Eventually we will want to put up a barn and an indoor riding ring."

The Planning Board adjourned a public hearing on the plan until April 1. Appell said the board requires certain information before it votes, but she said approval is likely after the hearing.

"We are looking for typical restaurant information, parking and lighting information, and other information dealing with the grounds," said Appell. "We want to know what hours the restaurant and the equestrian center will be open and what kind of shows will be held at the equestrian center. That's the type of information we will need."