

Planners OK equestrian center, inn

■ The proposed Sunset Crest Manor Inn & Equestrian Center in the town of Red Hook will include a restaurant when it is completed.

By **DARRELL F. KUHN**
Correspondent

RED HOOK — A plan to open a new inn, restaurant, and equestrian center has cleared its final hurdle with the town.

The town Planning Board gave special use permit and site plan approval for the project at a meeting on Monday.

Sam and Arleen Harkins, who own the Village Diner in the village of Red Hook, plan to open the Sunset Crest Manor Inn & Equestrian Center at state Route 199 and Crestwood Road in the town. 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 state Route 199 into an inn and building the equestrian center.

"THEY WERE given special use permit and site plan approval for the inn (and restaurant), the equestrian center, and for two homes for farm workers," town Planning Board Chairwoman Marcy Appell said on Tuesday. "They have to get approval from the (Dutchess County) Health Department (for the inn and restaurant), but they are generally home free."

Attorney Robert Trotta, the lawyer for one of the site's neighbors, Stephen Frost, said earlier this month that his client was concerned about some visual impacts the center

could have on neighboring properties, such as car headlights shining onto other properties at night.

Trotta said another of his client's concerns was noise coming from the site, such as the use of a megaphone or loudspeaker during some events and activities that would be held there. Trotta also said his client is concerned about a bar or tavern being in the restaurant. The Harkinses plan on serving alcoholic beverages in the restaurant, and Trotta said his client does not want the restaurant to become a regular bar or "gin mill."

THE HARKINSES have said that they have no intentions of turning the restaurant into a regular bar.

Appell said on Tuesday that she has seen the area where the restaurant will be, which is the inn's basement. She said the future restaurant area is rather small and really has no room for big parties or gatherings that could generate loud noise from people drinking.

Mrs. Harkins said on Tuesday that she and her husband hope to have the bed and breakfast, or inn, opened by the end of August. She said that it would probably be another year before they open the equestrian center, and have not yet decided when they will open the restaurant.

"We are going to take the steps to do the project the right way," said Mrs. Harkins. "We have to renovate and update the house with bathrooms, and we have to do landscaping and clean out the barns. We want to take the time to do it right. I think the town made the right decision. Sam and I appreciate it."

Inn plan stirs some concerns

■ Neighbors are worried about some impacts of a proposed inn, restaurant and equestrian center in the town of Red Hook.

By **DARRELL F. KUHN**
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RED HOOK — A plan to open a new inn, restaurant and equestrian center has been delayed because some neighbors of the proposed site have concerns about the proposal they want addressed.

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. 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.

The Harkinses are applying for a special use permit and site plan approval for the inn, a public dining room or restaurant in the inn, and an equestrian center with the town Planning Board.

Town Planning Board Chairwoman Marcy Appell said the board did not vote to accept or reject the proposal after a public hearing on the matter on Monday because two residents who live adjacent to the proposed site had some questions they want answered. One of the residents, Stephen Frost, hired an attorney to help get his concerns addressed.

"They had some questions about some of the activities that

would be held there and had some about the SEQRA (State Environmental Review Act) review," said Appell. "We asked the attorney to forward the concerns in writing and we will address them. Some questions still need to be answered."

Robert Trotta, the attorney representing Frost, said on Wednesday that his client is not against the proposal, because it could do many things to help the neighborhood, like protect open space, preserve the land's agricultural use, and keep the property's rural character. However, Trotta said his client is concerned about some visual impacts the proposed center could have on neighboring properties, such as car headlights shining onto other properties at night. Trotta said that there is also a concern about noise coming from the site, such as the use of a megaphone or loudspeaker during some events and activities that could be held there.

Trotta said his client is also concerned about a bar or tavern being in the restaurant.

"A bar or tavern is not permitted in this zone under the town of Red Hook's zoning ordinance," said Trotta. "My client has no objection with someone having a drink with dinner, but we've seen over the years many places evolve into something different."

Mrs. Harkins said on Wednesday that she and her husband do not plan on having the restaurant become a "gin mill." She said that they are and will be trying very hard to preserve the quality of the land and will try to clear up some of the issues raised, but if they cannot be cleared up, they will try to have the land subdivided.

The public hearing will be continued on April 15.