

Portsmouth's Smuttynose wants brewery in Hampton

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HAMPTON — The Smuttynose Brewing Company is considering the possibility of relocating its brewery to town.

The Portsmouth-based company went before the town's Planning Board last week with preliminary plans to relocate the brewery to 105 Towle Farm Road.

The proposal was to subdivide the existing 17-acre property into two lots.

A three-acre lot would be retained by the owner and a 14-acre lot would be used to develop a brewery, restaurant and tasting room.

The existing orchard and historic barn on the property would be incorporated into the development, according to the proposal.

Planning Board member Fran McMahon said the project is an allowed use in an industrial park and it would not need any variances from the town's Zoning Board of Adjustment.

It would be constructed directly across from QA Technology.

"I would say, generally, the feedback from the board on the project was really positive," McMahon said. "There will need to be a discussion about the details, but there was no real opposition."

McMahon said the next step for the company would be to make a formal presentation and request to the Planning Board.

This is the third location the company has looked to relocate its brewery.

Originally, the brewery was planning to relocate to Newmarket, but negotiations with the Newmarket Community Development Corp. fell apart at the end of 2005.

The company then proposed to construct the facility at 1900 Lafayette Road in Portsmouth, but that, too, fell apart after strong objections from neighbors.

Portsmouth residents who spoke against the proposal listed concerns including traffic, lights, odor, noise and public safety.

Smuttynose Brewing Company is owned by Peter Egelston.

He started the company in 1994, and the company says demand for the product has grown more than 20 percent in each of the past three years. In 2006, the company produced 15,000 barrels — the most it's ever done, upgrading the company from the "micro brewery" category to "regional independent brewery" status.

In June 2007, Smuttynose Brewing ranked No. 48 on Ratebeer.com's World's Top 100 Breweries list.

Smuttynose Big A IPA was listed as one of the 25 Best Beers in America in a recent issue of Men's Journal Magazine.