

Planning Board Accepts Application For Traditional Catholic Church

By CHRIS DORNIN
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GILFORD — The Planning Board accepted an application last night from Traditional Catholics of New Hampshire for a 225-seat church off Morrill Street.

Afterward, the Rev. Hector Bolduc, pastor for the proposed church, said he has authority to open a Catholic church without blessing from the local bishop.

State and local Roman Catholic officials have accused Bolduc of misusing the name Catholic, but he said he is operating within "the larger authority of the Roman Catholic

Church."

According to the Rev. Robert Boisvert, pastor of Our Lady of the Lakes Church in Laconia, Bolduc was ordained as a member of the Priestly Fraternity of Pius X, a dissident movement. "These ordinations are considered illegal by the Roman Catholic Church," he said.

The Rev. Monsignor Francis Christian, chancellor for the Roman Catholic Diocese of New Hampshire, said Bishop Odore Gendron has not given Bolduc the required permission to serve as a priest, nor has the bishop approved the new church.

Bolduc said, "I welcome these objections from the bish-

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op. I'll pray for him. I think he needs prayer."

Bolduc may have problems with religious powers, but his cause is doing well thus far with state and local government.

Architect Steven Stokes told the planners that 60 parking lots and the building will cover less than 20 percent of the parcel; the zone allows up to 25 percent coverage with impervious material.

He said his plan incorporates a state official's suggestion to direct the extra runoff water through a catch basin, instead of letting it flow directly onto Morrill Street.

A board member recommended securing a drainage easement from the Bolduc family farm property across the road as a precaution, and Bolduc agreed to do so.

The local priest said recent criticism from Roman Catholic authorities has helped him get his message to potential members.

Bolduc said he has legitimate standing as a Catholic under provisions of Canon Law 209, which he said gives all priests jurisdiction to act in their best conscience when bishops defy the Pope.

The local priest has charged that many American bishops are "bucking the Pope" on birth control, that some have allowed professed homosexuals to remain priests. But he has predicted the Pope will have his way in the long run.

The Latin Mass is central to Bolduc's ministry, but he opposes much of the alleged permissiveness in the mother church since Vatican II.

According to Bolduc, he has spoken to cardinals who share his own conservative views, and has heard from Traditional Catholics who say the Pope is sympathetic.

In a recent statement, Monsignor Christian said Rev. Bolduc is giving a mistaken impression he is "somehow in concord with the mind of the Holy Father, when it is Rome that has condemned the very views that Father Bolduc espouses."

Bolduc said he has the legal and moral right and the duty to save souls, with or without the blessing of the bishop. He said some 30 churches function in the Laconia area, and the bishop has not approved any of them.

"Fortunately we live in the United States where one is free to practice religion without fear. The Civil Rights Amendment and the Constitution protect against discrimination," he said.

"The bishop's opinion doesn't necessarily affect me," he said. "I am not obedient to the bishop. One's obedience is to the Roman Catholic Church and to God."