

**Town of Northfield, Vermont  
Development Review Board  
Minutes of October 24, 2019**

**ROLL CALL:** Development Review Board Chair William Smith, Board members Colin Bright, Paul Brown, Steve Davis, and Timothy Donahue III. Also present were DRB Clerk Mitch Osiecki and several members of the public: Paul Kelsey, Thomas Goodrich, Robert Tucker, David Black, Jan Carstens, John Carstens, Karen Halstead, Stephanie Maass, Dennis Miles, Jason Miles, Joe Morvan, Jonathan Spencer, and Jeremy Whalen.

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** Motion by Board member Donahue, seconded by Board member Brown to approve minutes of July 25, 2019 DRB Meeting. **Motion passed 4-0** (Bright not yet present).

**APPLICATION:** Paul Kelsey seeks a waiver of setback standards to build a carport at his residence on Chandler Road. Application lacked detail of site – amended to show proposed location and constraints due to a steep slope. Setback standards in applicants' district is 45' from road center; applicant seeks waiver to allow a 36' setback. Motion by Board member Donahue, seconded by Board member Brown, to approve the waiver and allow a 36' setback. **Motion passed 5-0.**

For remaining two applications, Chair Smith recused himself and turned the remainder of the meeting over to Board member Donahue.

**APPLICATION:** Thomas Goodrich seeks approval for a 1-lot subdivision of a parcel on VT Route 64. Upon reviewing the application, it became apparent that there was some confusion as to the origins of this particular lot. After further discussion, Smith suggested that the subdivision request be tabled in order to gather additional information about this parcel. Motion by Board member Bright, seconded by Board member Donahue, to table this subdivision application until next meeting. **Motion passed 4-0 (Smith abstained).**

**APPLICATION:** Robert Tucker Casey seeks approval for a 4-lot subdivision of an undeveloped parcel of approximately 3 acres in the area roughly bounded by Byam Hill Road, Highland Avenue and Spring Street. ZA Osiecki advised that an application for this subdivision had been originally submitted in 1991. The original subdivision was denied for a lack of a site plan review. The applicant subsequently received approval for this subdivision from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, but it's unclear now why that application was submitted and approved. Applicant wishes to correct what may be an administrative error/oversight and seeks subdivision approval from the DRB.

Residents in the neighborhood wish to voice some concerns.

David Black:

- The proposed lots vary in size from about 0.4 to 0.9 acres. Minimum lot size in this neighborhood is 0.25 acres, and doesn't want to see the lots further subdivided to that degree.
- He's also concerned about the possibility of a mobile home being sited on one or more of these lots, which would not fit with the types of homes characteristic in this neighborhood. (Applicant is not proposing any such development.)

Dennis Miles:

- Concerned about future of a repossessed home adjacent to his property. Asks if a deed could include a covenant to restrict the type of dwelling that could be developed.
- Also notes that one lot is directly across a T-intersection formed by Byam Hill Road and Hill Street, which could prove hazardous.

Board member Brown asks if any of the long-time residents of this neighborhood have any recollection of the subdivision proposed in 1991. None of those present do. The observation was made that the subdivision proposal was never presented to the Planning Commission, who had oversight of subdivisions at the time.

Jonathan Spencer:

- Comments that while he respects owner's property right, he does have concerns about how the site might be developed. Hopes that the historic character of the neighborhood can be preserved.

(Overtalk): some residents wonder whether a site visit might be appropriate.

Jan Carstens:

- Reiterates concerns about how the site might be developed.

Anne Halstead:

- Shares reservation about the possibility of mobile homes being sited on these properties.

Stephanie Maass:

- New owner in neighborhood, but did not receive notice of hearing.
- Also concerned about possibility of mobile homes being sited in this neighborhood.
- Notes that she already gets a significant amount of stormwater runoff onto her property. Is concerned that increased development in the neighborhood could worsen the problem.

David Black (again):

- Also raises concerns about several potential Conditional Uses that can be allowed in this district. Observation was made that none of those CU's are being proposed at present.

Jeremy Whalen:

Expresses concern about a potential lot line adjustment. Board member Donahue comments that this is not within the scope of what is being considered at this hearing.

Board member Davis sympathetic to residents who spoke in favor of including restrictions on future development into any deed for this land. There are concerns as to whether a deed restriction would be enforceable.

Board member Brown echoes previous comments about possible usefulness of a site visit. An observation was also raised about potential for development restrictions on one or more lots. Lots in this district are required to have 75' of road frontage (or a driveway easement). One of the lots has road frontage only on Byam Hill Road, and may have a steep slope off that road.

Dennis Miles:

- Reiterates concerns about the possibility of mobile homes being introduced in this neighborhood.

Applicant Tucker responds that in general he agrees with the sentiments expressed and says he believes mobile homes belong in mobile home parks. However, he's reluctant to impose restrictions on potential owners that are more restrictive than zoning regulations.

Board member Bright notes that the subdivision has been approved by the state. He adds that signs offering lots for sale have been displayed for some time, so potential for development in the area shouldn't come as a great surprise. Bright also expresses support for property owner rights and adds that it could be difficult to impose restrictions on development that is allowed under current zoning regulations.

Motion by Board member Bright, seconded by Board member Brown to table this subdivision application until next meeting.

**Motion passed 4-0 (Smith abstained).**

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Board member Davis, seconded by Board member Brown to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Mitch Osiecki**

Mitch Osiecki, DRB Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Zoning Administrator's Office. These minutes are subject to approval at the next regular DRB meeting.