

**Town of Northfield, Vermont
Development Review Board
Minutes of January 23, 2020**

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: Michele Braun (Friends of the Winooski River), Jessica Louisos (Milone & MacBroom), Ann Svori, Dan Sivori, Deanna Russell, and Jessica Amell.

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Motion by Board member Donahue, seconded by Board member Bright to approve minutes of December 5, 2019 DRB Meeting. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

APPLICATION: Jonathan & Lisa Burr have applied for a conditional use permit to remove a deteriorating structure from their property. The Burrs are being assisted on this project by Friends of the Winooski River and engineering consultants Milone & MacBroom, both of whom were represented at this hearing. Michele Braun and Jessica Louisos addressed the DRB to discuss fundraising and the technical aspects of this project.

Chief among the concerns with the dam is that it is a deteriorating structure and has already been partially breached. Failure of the dam is described as imminent. Since the dam will fail at some point in the not-too-distant future, the preference is to be proactive and remove the dam safely before it fails.

Among the benefits of dam removal are improved resilience of the stream to future flooding, removal of several feet of sediment that has built up behind the dam over the past several decades (some 22,000 cubic yards), eradication of an infestation of Japanese knotweed, and finally restoration of some 20 miles of trout habitat.

In response to a question posed by clerk/ZA Osiecki, it was confirmed that the Burrs are the legal owners of the dam.

Jessica Louisos discussed ongoing efforts to secure several permits, including overweight permits to allow fill to be carried across town's bridges. She stated that the bridge on Bull Run Road has received a favorable report. The observation was made that the town will have concerns about other bridges that may be impacted, depending on where fill is hauled.

Project engineers are exploring proposals for disposing of fill. A modest amount of material will be used elsewhere on site, with the rest being hauled off-site. The Sivori's (nearby on Winch Hill Road) will likely be interested in some of the fill.

The Japanese knotweed will also be removed and destroyed. Given the amount of vegetation to be disposed of, the preferred method is to find a suitable location where the knotweed can be buried to a depth of at least five feet.

Further discussion of the particulars of this project were discussed. Additional questions were posed and answered. Motion by Brown, seconded by Donahue, to approve the application as submitted. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

APPLICATION: Ann & Dan Sivori seek conditional use approval to host seasonal events on their property on Winch Hill Road. D. Sivori updated the DRB on the initial concept plan he had shared with the DRB in December. Based on conversations with wedding and event planners he's spoken to, he's no longer anticipating erecting a large tent for the season. He's been advised that one particular tent is unlikely serve the needs of all potential clients adequately. Rather, a customized set-up will be determined for each event.

Smith asked about parking. D. Sivori responded that sites have been identified on site plan maps where parking will be established.

Bright raised concern about potential for traffic concerns where the site to host large events. Smith responded that the DRB can revisit conditions should traffic problems materialize. D. Sivori offered that he will be happy to supply parking staff or security staff as circumstances dictate.

Motion by Brown, seconded by Davis to approve application as presented. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

OTHER BUSINESS:

Deana Russell presented the DRB with a concept for a “Salon Truck,” a mobile salon service she is contemplating. She explained that cosmetologists must be licensed by the state and that under current state law, that license specifies a specific site where the cosmetologist is allowed to practice. Some states have relaxed licensing regulation, allowing cosmetologists some latitude in where they work. Vermont legislature is currently considering updating its statutes to allow for a mobile cosmetology practice.

Possible opportunities cited include: going to a client’s home (sick or elderly), serving clients at a hospital, nursing home or hospice facility, or perhaps even at the site of an outdoor wedding venue.

Current zoning regulations define a “home occupation” as occurring within a minor portion of the home or within an accessory structure on the property. This proposed use would use a customized vehicle as the location, so this would strictly meet the definition of a home occupation as currently defined.

Members of the DRB expressed support for the concept of such a proposal and would be happy to entertain an application should state law be updated to permit a business model such as the concept presented.

Clerk/ZA Osiecki presents a quick summary of items in the pipeline. A rundown:

- In reviewing files, found that Donald Smith had come to the DRB in 2018 with a request for a variance/waiver of setback request for the temporary siting on his property of a shipping container. The request was tabled and not presented again. Wondering about status? Will have to be presented anew if still desired.
- As mentioned previously, South Village Mobil anticipates replacing underground storage tanks in 2020. They are considering reconfiguring the islands at the same time. Should they proceed with plans, a site plan review and conditional use hearing will be required. Regulations state that alterations that anticipate an expansion of a current business requires DRB review. At issue is the proper fee that should be charged. Northfield charges per square foot of structures proposed. In this case, owner will be razing a canopy over islands and replacing with a larger one. It’s not clear whether fee should be based on the size of the new canopy, or on the incremental increase over the existing structure. Not sure such an issue comes up often enough for the town to have set a precedent.
- Resident in the high-density residential district is interested in adding a chicken coop. The structure would be small, likely small enough to be exempt from zoning regulations. However, they already have one exempt structure, which is the maximum permitted in this district under current regulations. Question is whether a second structure could be allowed with a zoning permit? DRB doesn’t want to set a precedent by allowing a second small structure in that district and indicated they would be unlikely to look favorably on such a request.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Bright, seconded by Davis to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 8:08 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.