

Town of Sharon, Vermont
Planning Commission and Development Review Board Minutes
June 11, 2024
(As approved 7/23/2024)

The meeting was publicly warned in conformance with the January 2022 amendments to the Vermont Open Meeting law requirements for remote and/or telephonic meetings.

Attending: John Roe, Sue Sellew, Dee Gish, Paul Kristensen, Dana Colson, Lucy Gibson & Andrea Morgan (SPC/DRB Clerk, taking notes) in person.

Visitors: John and Janine Putnam, Christian Schlerf, Will Davis (Schoolboard), Kevin Gish & Scott Henkels (Selectboard) in person. Caleb Putnam, Lynn Rothemich, Veronica Schlerf, Josh Benson, Marc Okrant & Heather Devine via Zoom.

Future Meeting Dates – Mark Your Calendar

- Tuesday July 23 7PM SPB/DRB proposed date for regular meeting- to be confirmed.

John Roe convened the Development Review Board meeting at 7:06 PM and opened the final public hearing for the **Putnam subdivision**. A site visit to 2579 Howe Hill Road preceded the hearing and was attended by the applicants John and Janine Putnam, abutting land owner Christian Schlerf and DRB members John Roe, Sue Sellew, Dana Colson, Dee Gish, Lucy Gibson and Paul Kristensen. John Putnam gave an overview of the proposed subdivision. The property is located off Howe Hill Road. The total area is 37.2 acres and the Putnams intend to divide it into two 18.6 acre lots, one for each of their sons Ian and Caleb who each intend to construct a residence on their parcel. The Selectboard approved the driveway/access permit connecting to Town Highway 24, and driveway construction will start this summer. Eric Chase will be doing the excavation work for the gravel driveway. The timeline for the construction of the residences has not been determined but the house sites have been identified and the State Wastewater Permit has been received.

Caleb noted that they plan to improve Town Highway 24 so that it can be plowed using the same material as the driveway. The Putnams will present their plans to improve T.H. 24 to the SB and receive approval prior to making any changes. Christian wondered about the drainage from T.H. 24 and expressed a concern that it could be directed toward his family's land. Veronica asked whether the connection between Howe Hill Road and T.H. 24 would be changed. Caleb said that Road Foreman Frank Rogers and Eric Chase discussed how to direct the drainage and that because of site line and grade considerations, the connection to Howe Hill Road will remain in about the same place. Sue recommended that the Schlerf family contact Selectboard Assistant Nicola Shipman regarding the SB's review of the plans to improve T.H. 24.

John Roe reviewed the final plan for this subdivision which had been updated to include a 50-foot right-of-way through the two parcels and included a note giving the public foot

access to the Howe Hill Cemetery located on Parcel 2 and giving the Town vehicular access to the cemetery for maintenance purposes. At the site visit, participants discussed that the Putnams will create a pull-off parking spot for cemetery visitors just after the box culvert.

There were no further questions or comments from meeting participants about this subdivision. Dee moved to close the final public hearing, Lucy seconded and all approved.

Paul moved to accept the Putnam subdivision as presented in the final plan dated 6-6-2024 with the conditions that the Selectboard approve the proposed improvements to Town Highway 24 and that both Parcel 1 and 2 allow public foot access and Town vehicular access to the Howe Hill Cemetery. Lucy seconded the motion and all approved. At 7:40 John, Janine, Caleb, Christian, Veronica and Lynn left the meeting.

Sue moved to adjourn the DRB meeting and convene the SPC meeting. Lucy seconded the motion and all approved.

Sharon School Board: School Board member Will Davis asked for feedback and ideas from the SPC regarding the recent bond vote. The discussion included suggestions about providing clearer information about interest rates and payments, documenting needed facility upgrades with tours, photos or videos, and explanations about how deferring maintenance and upgrades ends up being more expensive in the long term.

Paul moved to adjourn the SPC meeting and reconvene the DRB meeting. Lucy seconded and all approved.

Rt. 14 Gravel Pit: Josh Benson gave an update on his work on the gravel pit. VTRANS cut the trees on the bank along Rt 14 and had plans to grade the bank. Josh is in discussions with the State regarding their plans and they are responsible for the stability of the bank along that section of Rt 14. Josh is working on making the pit safer and has raised the grade of the staging area by 30 feet. He wants to return the upper portion to a hayfield and to use the lower portion as a staging area for his business.

Saddleback Bar Services, LLC: Marc Okrant came before the DRB to discuss a mobile bar service business that his daughter Julia is starting. Marc and his wife Jodi own a property located at 1428 Rt 14 which is the location for their property management service. Julia has started Saddleback Bar Services, a mobile bar run out of a remodeled horse trailer that will travel to events such as weddings. In order to obtain an outdoor liquor license, the mobile business must also have a physical location. The Okrants would like Julia to base her business at 1428 Rt 14. Saddleback has an approved liquor license from the Town.

John commented that while the property management business is considered commercial, Julia's bar service is closer to a "retail" use which Sharon's Town Plan and the Regional Plan discourage in that area which is considered "mixed use". He also shared an

experience from another town where a similar business outgrew its location and caused difficulties with traffic and parking. Marc said that they can park 20 cars in total on site. They use 5 spaces and therefore have 15 spots for customers. He added that they were open to restrictions in hours and days of operation as well as limits on the number of parked cars. Paul inquired about the State access permit for Rt 14 - is the State aware that this is a commercial location. Marc said that the access permit was granted approximately 20 years ago and has not been amended but it has been submitted to both the SB and the State as part of the process of applying for a liquor license. Dee noted that traffic travels fast along that section of Rt 14.

Dee asked about the original subdivision permit. DRB members looked at the 2005 permit and application. The permit did not specify a use for the property, but the application mentions a single-family residence. Marc said that the previous owners constructed a slab and parked an RV but never built a home.

The DRB members recommended that the Okrants submit a subdivision application to amend the existing permit for commercial use and to put conditions on the use of the site for the bar service. Andrea will reach out to them to help with the application and the DRB will plan to hold a warned public hearing on the matter at the July meeting.

Legal Counsel: Town counsel Heather Devine joined the meeting. Members discussed that premature public knowledge of pending Town legal cases would clearly place the municipality at a substantial disadvantage.

Sue made a motion to enter executive session at 8:55 PM to discuss confidential attorney-client communications made for the purposes of providing professional legal services to the body per 1 V.S.A. section 313(a)(1) with participants to include Development Review Board Members, Kevin Gish and Andrea Morgan. Paul seconded the motion and all approved.

Dee made a motion to exit the executive session at 9:25 PM. Sue seconded and all approved.

Sue moved to adjourn the DRB meeting and reconvene the SPC meeting. Paul seconded and all approved.

Meeting Minutes: Dee moved to accept the May meeting minutes. Paul seconded and all approved.

Summer Schedule: John will be away on July 9. Tuesday July 23 was proposed as an alternative. Andrea will check to make sure the room will be available.

At 9:35 PM John moved to adjourn the meeting. Dee seconded and all approved.

