

**TOWN OF WESTFORD**  
**DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES**  
**Minutes for January 23, 2023.**  
**Site Plan Review**  
**Approved on February 13, 2023**

**Board Members Present:** Matthew Wamsganz (Chair), Francois Ross (Vice-Chair), Dennis Angiono, Bill Cleary, Andrew Collier (via zoom)

**Board Members Absent:** Dave Baczewski, Jesse Labrecque

**Also Present:** Harmony Cism (Zoning Administrator & Planning Assistant), Melissa Manka (Town Planner), Callie Hamdy (Minute Clerk), Wendy Doane, Greg Dixon, Rick Eschholz, Eva Paquin, Deborah Harris, Bernhard Wunder, Richard Staab, Grace and Steve Cothalis, John Doane, Katie Gough, Brent Carpenter

The meeting began at 7:00pm

**Amendments to Agenda**

Added acceptance of resignation from Dave Baczewski.

**Citizens to be Heard, Announcements & Other Business**

There were no citizens to be heard.

**Site Plan Public Hearing** – Eva Paquin Property (approx. 10.1 acres) located on Huntley Road in the Rural 10 Zoning District. The applicant is requesting site plan approval for the conversion of an existing accessory structure into an accessory dwelling unit and home occupation office.

Katie presented the project. She and Rick are looking to convert the barn to a chiropractic office with the top half being an accessory dwelling unit. This would ensure Eva and Rich the ability to age in place while receiving support from family.

The board began by going over the staff report.

Parking is not allowed on the front yard near the road, but the current parking lot has been in place for quite some time so Melissa thinks that the parking would fall under a ‘non-conforming structure’ as it was in place prior to the current regulations. If that parking needed to be used for the new use it would be one thing, however, these are extra parking spaces that are not needed for the office or dwelling unit.

Ultimately the parking spaces were associated with the main house which is a six bedroom home. Bill saw in the regulations it says we can modify that. Bill doesn’t have a problem with it but is there an area where the parking could be put that would make it more in conformance? John Doane was present and said they could swap the area of impermeable surface for parking that was within the regulations. However, John does not think this configuration would be more convenient to the properties in this instance since the entrances are on the road side of the building and the lawn space and unpaved space

around the other side of the building is more valuable in his opinion for the processing of surface water. He feels keeping it on the road side is most effective for surface water mitigation and control.

Matt asked if we had parking calculation we have to go by? There was. The total maximum for the home, accessory structure, and home occupation would be 11 spaces. The proposed narrative had 13 spaces total. There was excess parking, and the amount of pavement may be able to be reduced. It seems to Matt that if they are not asking for home occupation spaces within the setback they could be okay.

Melissa was hesitant to remove any additional spaces that serve the home seeing as it is 6 bedrooms. At some point in the future, if that house were to be fully utilized, she imagines we'd want more than 2 or 3 spaces. A majority of the lot is of agricultural significance. This project does not create any additional disturbance and utilizes existing development. Since they aren't making a non-conforming use more non-conforming the use was agreeable. The consensus is that the parking lot will not be full of cars. Francois asked if neighbors knew there was the potential for more cars to be there during business hours? They did and historically there have been other home occupations there.

The site should include one offloading and service space. Melissa confirmed this was due to the Home Occupation part of the application. Rick was confused because he will not be loading anything of significant size into such as a Chiropractic office. Bill agreed. John Doane suggested the offloading would be consistent with a normal residential use. John asked if there was any requirement this be beyond the setback. Matt thinks yes, that would be the case. There was a turnaround space that could be indicated as such.

The size of the parking lot meant the applicant needed to provide further landscaping to screen the parking from public view and shade parking spaces. This was a separate issues from the existence of the parking itself. Matt asked Melissa what the difference from landscaping being required vs parking not being required to be removed. Melissa explained that the trigger is that all land development that goes to the DRB must meet screening requirements. There was a lot of existing landscaping, John thought the existing landscaping could be pointed out further in the plan. Matt asked if they already have the existing landscaping how does this play into the requirement? Harmony thought the existing landscaping could be further labeled and counted. Francois suggested a couple pictures from street level. Bill would like to add conditions that the tree and shrubs must remain once the application is approved.

The applicant should explain what mechanical equipment/utility/dumpster etc. will be on the site. John thought the extent would be heat pump compressors. They could provide the screening as part of the development of any mechanical equipment. Matt thought a condition would be good, fencing or year round green bushes.

Any proposed lighting should be depicted on the site plan as conforming or a condition. A plan with the lighting plan and description had been provided.

The proposed increase in impervious surface is greater than the 10,000 square foot threshold. They will need to provide an erosion plan. Melissa explained there is not a need for this plan as there is no new development, but they were adding porches with roofs and that counts as impervious surface, but not enough to trigger a state permit. The creation of new impervious surface will put the property over

10,000 limit for impervious surface. Greg suggested showing stormwater flowing off the roof into the grass. There were several other solutions, but Matt thought that losing the additional square footage of impervious surface would be ideal. Greg asked if the 10,000 included the existing house. It included existing pavement, gravel, roofs etc. If they are over 10,000 and they don't conform to the regulations they'd have to bring it into conformance. Existing stone walkways would also have to be counted; Greg thought the 10,000 is an overstatement of what's there currently. Greg could do a small stormwater plan or survey everything that's out there. Bill would like clarification from the Planning Commission on how the DRB is supposed to look at these calculations from a situation of an existing use.

John wanted to reinforce that this is a good project for Westford because it makes use of existing infrastructure and brings somebody who grew up in town back to town. It's aligned with a lot of objectives that various planning documents have stated.

Matt opened the floor up for public comment. Bernhard Wunder was responsible for the solar array that sits in the back of the barn. He'd like to understand if that has any impact on the shading of the solar array in regard to the roofline. Rick explained that the changes would not affect any sun that would strike the solar panels and he does not see there being any change to the ability to maintain the solar array.

Grace and Steve Cothalis were part of the Coyote Ridge Homeowner's Association, and they were talking with Eva about the hookup to their septic. The homeowner's association is in the process of revoking the permit for Eva to hook up to the septic. Matt explained that the DRB has no authority over septic, it's a state issue and the board cannot discuss it. Grace wanted to board to know because it will impact the project. Matt explained that the state has been in charge of wastewater in 2007, so again, they cannot discuss it.

The impervious surface issue had been resolved due to the applicant miscalculating slatted porches into the equation. The board will add a condition that the application provide evidence it's under 10,000 and if not they need a stormwater plan.

Melissa added they can add a condition to label the variety of vegetation. Once they understand what's there it'll be very cut and dry to see what may or may not need to be added. Looking at the overhead photo she'd be surprised if they don't meet it. She feels the rest can be done by condition.

Francois motioned to close the hearing. Dennis seconded. Motion approved 5-0.

#### **DRB Resignation**

Dave Baczewski had submitted his resignation from the DRB. Melissa had put an add into the newsletter and Front Porch Forum and the Selectboard will discuss the resignation on Thursday.

#### **Minutes of October 24, 2022 Meeting**

Bill motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Francois seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Adjourned 8:30 pm

Submitted by,  
Melissa Manka, Town Planner

Callie Hamdy, Minute Clerk