

**TOWN OF WESTFORD  
DEVELOPMENTAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES  
May 22, 2023 Site Visit  
Approved on October 9, 2023.**

**Board Members Present:** Matt Wamsganz (Chair), Francois Ross (Vice Chair), Bill Cleary, Dennis Angiono, Peter Armata,

**Board Members Absent:** Andrew Collier and Jesse Labrecque.

**Also Present:** Harmony Cism (DRB Assistant, Zoning Administrator), Melissa Manka (Town Planner), Callie Hamdy (Minute Clerk), Jacque Larose, Michael Blair, and Jay Morgan.

The site visit began at 5:30 pm.

The site visit ended at 6:15 pm.

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**Board Members Absent:** Andrew Collier

**Also Present:** Harmony Cism (DRB Assistant, Zoning Administrator), Melissa Manka (Town Planner), Callie Hamdy (Minute Clerk), Jacque Larose, Michael Blair, Lee Hendler, and Jay Morgan.

The meeting began at 7:00pm

**Amendments to Agenda**

There were no amendments.

**Sketch Plan Review for 9 Lot, 8 Unit Subdivision & Planned Unit Development – Swansong Take Two, LLC Property Applicant:** Lee Hendler (approx. 83.2 acres) located on Route 128 in the Rural 5, Rural 10, Water Resource Overlay, and Flood Hazard Overlay Zoning Districts. This is a proposal to subdivide the subject parcel into 8 single-family dwelling lots and a 57.7-acre open space lot.

Jesse recused himself from the discussion as he had done a lot of work for the property owner. Matt disclosed that he has worked with the company Jacque works for years ago but does not feel it would color his opinion.

The PUD would conserve 69% of the lot. The property owner’s goal is to build Lot 5 for herself and one house for her daughter. In the next 5-10 years this will be the only development for the property. The challenge with the property from a planning standpoint is that it has a lot of agricultural fields the town would like to preserve, and the developable area is quite far from the road. They have undergone

wetland review which was flagged on the site visit. They anticipate the barn in the center of the property would stay and be potentially reused as an accessory structure.

The survey should depict building setbacks, omit steep slopes, and site outcroppings. The current plan does not take into account the WRO buffer. Jacques predicted that Lot 7 and 8 would be the most impacted. They are trying to make use of the existing manmade pond on the property.

R5 planning and design objectives and need to receive a minimum of 27 points on that metric. Jacques had reviewed this, he felt comfortable he had a score within that. Bill asked if we were going to review those criteria that are within the R5 and not the ones within R10? Melissa thought that would be correct. This would be Lots 1,2, 7, and 8. Matt went through the R5 metrics for the project with the board. Melissa thought we should take into consideration once the delineated wetland is put on the map with the 100' buffer that things will be impacted by that.

Building envelopes and roadways would have to be revised to omit the WRO. Melissa noted that if there were significant changes after the wetland is put on the map, they could potentially come back with another sketch plan review if the change were significant. Lot 2 would be the most affected by these potential changes.

If the intent of the designated open space lot is to preserve agriculture or significant state soils this needs to be depicted on the plan. The applicant's intent was to maintain as much agriculture use on the property as possible.

It is staff's understanding that Indigenous campsites are located along the river's edge. This, as well as other items such as historical trees, and stone walls should be depicted. They are developing away from the river so no construction would touch that site.

Lots 4, 6, 7 should be revised so side and rear lot lines are parallel to each other. The applicant should consider using the ROW as property boundaries and yard space and avoid fragmenting parcels. Jacques saw no issues with that.

The entire usable and developable portions are categorized as state significant agricultural soils. The lots should be clustered to preserve this. The applicant's main goal when laying out the current design was to not fracture the current agricultural field near the road. Melissa noted that the agricultural land continues to come up, if needed lot sizes could be reduced, but it is mostly about maintaining as much agriculture land as possible.

If recreation will be allowed on open land, which is agriculture, that should be noted, and a management plan written. The applicant also intends to have an HOA. Bill and Francois thought that current use was a sufficient plan for the open space.

Landscaping should be used to screen and soften views from the road and within the lots. A landscaping plan should be submitted. Francois personally would not want to see trees in the area, he feels they would be out of place in the open field. Melissa explained that the landscaping was more to blend the building into the landscape, but is a guideline, not mandatory.

This project will require two road names, one for the main private road and one for the lot 3, 4 spur. There was a concern a truck could go the incorrect direction down the spur, and it would take a lot of time and effort to get back up.

Peter asked how they know about the Native American campsites on the Browns River. Is that something that has been found in the past? Yes, that has been found in the past, UVM had done a survey of Indigenous sites in the 1980s.

Bill asked what the maximum development of the site was. This is the maximum development of the lot, and the open space would not ever be developed.

Matt opened up the hearing to the public. Michael Blair was present; he owns the property North of the development. He thinks it is a great proposal and they have done a fine job. The placements are good, he has no issues. Something has to be done with the land. Jay Morgan was present, he also thought it looked good and it is in good hands.

Lee Hendler, the applicant, was present. She appreciates the thoughtfulness of the board. It is part of why they want to have a property in Westford.

Michael and Shelly Blair's property was subdivided in 2005 by Gisela Wolfe, an easement was granted to Michael to meet wastewater setbacks and then Michael had an easement to Gisela. What is not depicted on the sketch plans are the easements, those would need to be depicted and factored into the open space.

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

There were no citizens to be heard.

#### **Minutes of March 27, 2023 Meeting**

Francois motioned to accept the minutes as amended. Jesse seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

#### **Reorganization**

Matt was nominated for Chair and Francois was nominated for Vice Chair. Andrew was nominated to the clerk position, Bill seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

The board will continue to meet on Mondays at 7:00pm.

The rules of procedure were the same, but Melissa had added additional procedure to help get the relevant information on participants due to the newer hybrid model in meetings. Francois made a motion to accept, Dennis seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

#### **Executive Session**

Bill motioned to go into executive session. Francois seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

The board exited executive session at: 9:40pm

Submitted by,  
Melissa Manka, Town Planner

Callie Hamdy, Minute Clerk