

TOWN OF WESTFORD
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
Minutes for September 23, 2024.
Approved on October 28, 2024.

Board Members Present: Matt Wamsganz (Chair), Francois Ross (Vice Chair), Bill Cleary, Peter Armata, Jesse Labreque,

Board Members Absent: Andrew Collier, Dennis Angiono,

Also Present: Harmony Cism (DRB Coordinator, Zoning Administrator), Callie Hamdy (Minute Clerk), Jeff Olesky, Keith White, Danelle Bunney, Kati Anderson, Jim Anderson, Heather Armata, Peter Girr, David Girr, Scott Baker, Kimberly Catella, Scott Catella, Shelly White, Rachel Caltagirone, Sharon Von Bruns, Olga Derevyashkina

The meeting began at 7:00 pm

Sketch Plan Review for 2 Lot Minor Subdivision – Girr Property. Applicant: Peter Girr (approx. 50.3 acres) located in the Rural 10 and Water Resource Overlay Zoning Districts. This is a proposal to subdivide the subject parcel into 2 single-unit dwelling lots.

Scott Baker was present for the Girrs and gave an overview of the property. The slope and habitat on the property provided significant restrictions to potential building sites. The applicants proposed using a portion of the Goodrich Trail to access Lot 2 as it is already used to access the Lot 1, however permission to use the trail will need Selectboard approval.

Matt went through the staff report. The applicants are requesting a waiver for the slopes of the driveway, which required not only DRB approval, but Selectboard and Fire Department approval. The idea of the proposed house site was to keep it clustered and prevent as much clearing as possible by placing it in an existing pasture. Francois asked if they plan on blasting or bringing in rock. Scott did not know if any blasting would be required, the road has been in use for a long time. It is their hope to not blast. Fully loaded logging trucks go up and down that trail for A. Johnson Company who made some improvements on the trail for their use, and they manage fine. The applicants do not anticipate any issues.

There are ancient foundations and stone walls along the Goodrich Trail that needed to be noted on the plans. Scott Baker requested if they could contain the survey area to the development area and not do the entire 50+ acre parcel. Matt confirmed we are just looking for the area of development.

Building Envelopes were discussed. The existing barn near Machia Hill Road will be part of Parcel 2 and have its own building envelope separate from the house. Matt opened the floor for discussion from the public. There were no comments.

Sketch Plan Review for 5-Lot, 4-Unit Subdivision and PUD – White Property. Applicant: Keith & Shelly White (approx. 12.96 acres) located in the Rural 3 and Water Resource Overlay Zoning Districts. This is a proposal to subdivide the subject parcel into 4 single-unit dwelling lots and a 7.83-acre open space lot.

Peter Armata disclosed that his wife, Heather, is the White's real estate agent so he recused himself from any voting. Matt disclosed that he is friends with Keith White, and worked for many years with Jeff Olesky, but did not feel he needed to recuse himself.

Jeff Olesky was present for the Whites as their Civil Engineer. Jeff described the property. The existing 3-bedroom house is adjacent to Plains Road and wooded. Proposed Lot 1 would maintain the existing house and be 2 acres more or less in size. Lots 2, 3, and 4 would be south of Lot 1 in the existing field and be accessed via a shared driveway off Plains Road. The Whites are also interested in doing a boundary line adjustment with an adjoining landowner. There is a Class 2 Wetland on the east side of the property.

Matt went through the Staff Report. The board discussed whether the shared driveway also needed to serve the existing Lot 1. Most of the time it was not desirable to have more than 1 access on a single property. The board thought it was okay in this instance because of the structure of Plains Road.

Jeff asked if we would need to file and request the new curb cut prior to submitting to the DRB. Harmony thought it could be a condition of approval. The DRB also suggested due to the structuring of the lots that road names be submitted to the Selectboard even though they were not required by the number of lots served.

Matt opened the floor for discussion from the public. Scott Catella was present. He had questions about the location of a tree on the plan. This was due to the potential boundary line adjustment. Scott also asked how far back the residence on Lot 4 would move. It could move anywhere within its building envelope. Sharon Von Bruns wanted clarification on building envelopes and the shift necessary for the wetland buffer. Scott Catella asked if there was a need for a fire pond could it go into the wetland. That was not the case because the wetland is protected. A pond creates a reservoir which can upset the wetland balance. Shelly White commented that they have had the property for 25 years and would like the woods around it to be maintained. Their goal would be to maintain all the wooded structure and to maintain the natural resources there.

Citizens to Be Heard, Announcements & Other Business

Harmony announced that the Planning Commission drafted some new language for Figure 2-3. Matt approved it, the Selectboard will be having a public hearing for it to become an interim bylaw.

Minutes

Bill motioned to approve the minutes of June 10, 2024. Jesse seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Draft Fy'26 DRB Budget (Review & Approve)

Harmony had drafted the budget as level funded. Francois did not want to knock the budget down anymore. We have had a few quiet years, but that might not always be the case. He motioned to keep the budget level funded. Jesse seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Deliberative Session

The board entered deliberative session at 8:39 p.m.

Adjourned 8:51 p.m.

Submitted by,
Harmony Cism, DRB Coordinator

Callie Hamdy, Minute Clerk