

TOWN OF WESTFORD
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
Minutes for October 13th, 2025
Approved on January 26, 2026

The meeting began at 7:00pm.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Matt Wamsganz (Chair), Francois Ross (Vice-Chair), Bill Cleary, Jesse Labreque, Max Tyler, Peter Armata

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Andrew Collier

ALSO PRESENT: Harmony Cism (DRB Coordinator, Zoning Administrator), Maria Barden (Minute Clerk), John Roberts, Sharon VonBruns, Jeff Olesky (Catamount Consulting Engineers - representing W. Paden), Will Paden (Applicant), Diane Orfant, Lee Hendler (Applicant)

INTERESTED PARTIES: Will Paden, Diane Orfant, Jeff Olesky, John Roberts, Sharon VonBruns, Lee Hendler

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no amendments to the agenda.

FINAL PLAT REVIEW PUBLIC HEARING

Applicant: William Paden

Property Location: Paden Property – Plains Road (approx. 124.5 acres)

Zoning Districts: Rural 3, Rural 10, and Water Resource Overlay

This proposal is a request for final plat approval of a 3-lot minor subdivision.

M. Wamsganz administers the interested parties oath to W. Paden, D. Orfant, J. Roberts, S. VonBruns, and J. Olesky.

B. Cleary disclosed that he couldn't find the driveway when going to look and J. Roberts showed him where to go.

M. Wamsganz says when asked by John what the application was about, he disclosed to J. Roberts that the application was a 3 lot instead of 2 lot but that everything was included online.

M. Wamsganz stated that he is friends with Jeff Olesky if anyone wants him to recuse himself, he did not think it would be a problem; Everyone felt fine with that.

B. Cleary, P. Armata, and M. Wamsganz all did a site visit.

M. Wamsganz goes over the staff report and what should be added or omitted.

M. Wamsganz asks H. Cism about the building envelope and whether they would be able to clear outside of the building envelope.

H. Cism says typically there should be no building or clearing outside of the building envelope. The DRB can approve areas to be cut which would be a condition of approval.

F. Ross asks if this would include dead or diseased trees.

J. Olesky mentions that there are areas where they can't clear cut anyway because of WRO and steep slopes per the Town's regulations. The proposed site plans do have proposed clearing limits in addition to the building envelope. He would like to incorporate the ability to do so if

possible. They are requesting a conservation area designated on the eastern portion of both the lots as well for a no clear zone so they can conserve vegetation.

H. Cism says you can include deed restrictions for further protection on a no cut zone.

J. Olesky feels the building envelopes for Lots 2 and 3 could potentially be expanded but there is a lot they're trying to fit in (driveway, pumpstation, wells, electric, septic, etc.) and not many level/flat areas, on top of that you have the conserved area so there isn't a whole lot of space where expansion could happen. They assumed the only area they could not clear would be the conserved area and if that is not true, they would like to figure out what to do moving forward so buyers could clear certain areas if needed.

The DRB feels that it would be good to have a provision or condition where plans can be revised if there is clearing later. They feel it would be wise to include something stating that they can cut diseased or dead trees as well.

H. Cism could then review the revisions in the future.

The DRB continued the discussion of the staff report.

W. Paden adds that the acreage they have written is based on a number they corrected later and it's closer to 119 for the size of lot 1.

J. Olesky says they would like to remove the setback limits from the site plan, keep the two building envelopes and add a maximum clear zone, he feels this will remove any confusion and make the plan easier to read and interpret.

H. Cism wonders if it would make more sense to expand the building envelope to the lines that now show the district setbacks. The building envelope is the only place that construction can take place and it's very tight to the house sites, if someone wants to put in a pool or shed in the future there will be nowhere to put it unless the building envelope is expanded.

J. Olesky says they made the building envelope small because there isn't a whole lot of space for building regardless with the steep slopes and setbacks. If the board is comfortable with the setbacks being the defining building envelopes, he doesn't think it will change the development at all because of the other restrictions.

J. Olesky says they would then like to remove the setback lines in the plans but expand the building envelopes for both lots to include every feasible area that a shed could be put on.

The Board discussed class 4 road and the owner's responsibilities on that.

J. Olesky says it's his understanding that **J. Roberts** could confirm whether the road was constructed to Town Road Standards.

J. Roberts confirmed yes, it was.

H. Cism reminds **J. Olesky** that a letter from a certified engineer is required to confirm this as well.

J. Olesky discussed where the property owners will be getting their electricity from per **B. Cleary's** question.

J. Roberts says part of the expense for power was significant, he paid for that first vault and that he will have to get the breakdown from Vermont Electric Co-op.

S. VonBruns wonders why the private road went back to a Class 4 town road.

H. Cism says it was never a private road, the VT Supreme Court had referred to it as a Class 4 road, Westford had not labeled it as anything, it was a road back in 1800 when it was laid out. Recently the SB affirmed it is a Class 4 Town Road that the town would not maintain.

J. Olesky wonders what the Class 4 name was?

H. Cism says it is Hemlock Ridge Road; the SB approved that as well.

J. Roberts says the acreage totals don't add up on page 3.

W. Paden had just mentioned this, and it should say 119 acres for Lot 1 instead.

F. Ross motioned to close the hearing, J. Labreque seconded; Motion passed 6-0.

FINAL PLAT REAFFIRMATION PUBLIC HEARING

Applicant: Lee Hendler

Property Location: Swansong Take Two, LLC Property – Route 128 (approx. 82.8 acres)

Zoning Districts: Rural 5, Rural 10, Water Resource Overlay, Flood Hazard Overlay

This proposal is a request to reaffirm a previously approved 8-unit, 9-lot major subdivision and PUD.

M. Wamsganz and **H. Cism** discussed this, the applicant and engineers do not legally need to be present for this meeting.

L. Hendler was able to join.

M. Wamsganz administers the interested parties oath to **L. Hendler**.

Nothing is changing for this application. The DRB has already approved the subdivision, but the applicant had missed the plat recording deadline and therefore needs to go through Final Plat approval again.

M. Tyler abstains from this process because he was not on the board during the first proposal.

J. Labreque continues to recuse himself from this conversation.

B. Cleary motioned to close the hearing, F. Ross seconded; Motion passed 4-0.

Public Comment, Announcements, and Other Business

- FY '27 DRB Budget Proposal – review of corrected budget data

Some of the DRB legal and professional fees were added to the Planning Commission budget line when coded and therefore it is higher than originally thought.

The Board discussed and decided to bring new budget numbers for legal and professional fees of \$2,000 to the SB.

This is due October 16th, 2025 and will be on the next SB meeting of October 23rd, 2025.

J. Labreque motioned to approve the new budget numbers, F. Ross seconded; Motion passed 6-0.

Approval of Minutes (Action Item)

- Review and approval of the minutes of September 8, 2025

B. Cleary motioned to approve the September 8th, 2025 minutes as presented, F. Ross seconded; Motion passed 5-0 with P. Armata abstaining due to absence from that meeting.

Potential Deliberative Session

Entered deliberative session at 7:58pm

Adjournment

F. Ross motioned to adjourn, B. Cleary seconded; Motion passed 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:06pm.