

Town of Northfield, Vermont

Development Review Board

Minutes of August 27, 2020

ROLL CALL: Board members William Smith, Timothy Donahue III, Paul Brown and Steve Davis were present. Colin Bright was absent. Also present were DRB Clerk Mitch Osiecki along with several members of the public: Mary Langevin, Tyler Sabin, Travis Larkin, Matt Miles, Bill Smith, Chris Mureta, and Chris Crain.

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS: Members of the DRB introduced themselves. Clerk/ZA Osiecki did likewise, as did the members of the public who joined the meeting

MINUTES: Motion by Davis, seconded by Donahue to approve minutes of July 23. **Motion passed 3-0-1. (Brown absent in July).**

APPLICATION: Mary Langevin presented a proposal to operate a massage therapy practice as a home occupation from her home on Vine Street. Mary explained that she's had a practice in Waterbury for several years, but sees an opportunity to establish a practice in Northfield. In response to a question, replied that she is licensed by the State of Vermont.

Also requested a permit for a small sign to identify her practice.

No further questions from the DRB or interested parties.

Brown moved to approve as presented; Davis seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**

APPLICATION: Travis Larkin presented a proposal to operate an auto glass replacement business with Tyler Sabin, which would be based at Larkin's home on West Hill Road. They have been installing auto glass for several years and, having developed good reputations, see an opportunity start an independent operation.

A detached two-car garage would be used to serve customers. They also plan to offer a mobile service and have already begun conversations with most of the garages in Northfield about offering mobile service at those locations.

In response to a question from Paul Brown, they indicated a likely split of 50/50 between vehicles dropped off at the home and mobile service. Likely no more than three or four clients on-site per day, with a typical appointment taking perhaps an hour.

No further questions from the DRB or interested parties.

Davis moved to approve as presented; Brown seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**

APPLICATION: Matt Miles presented a proposal to replace an old addition on his single-family residence on Hill Street. Correcting an error in the warning, Matt clarified that the proposed development is an addition, not a deck. (The home currently has both). He proposes to replace an old 9' x 12' addition on the home, which has deteriorated; he plans to replace the current addition with a one-story, 20' x 21' addition.

The proposed addition would slightly encroach into the ten-foot setback required in this district, so he is seeking a waiver of the setbacks of three feet. A seven-foot setback would allow for the proposed addition.

A neighbor, Chris Crain, weighed in with a couple of concerns. First, his family was not notified of the hearing in a timely fashion and have not had time to fully digest the proposed addition. He also questioned whether the proposed addition meets the criteria established for a waiver of setbacks under zoning regulations.

Chair Smith expressed reluctance to make a final decision until the neighboring property owners have had a chance to look over the proposal more carefully.

ZA Osiecki explained that due to a recent passing, the abutting property is in an estate settlement. Because it and an adjoining property are in common ownership, an owner for this home was not listed on the current grand list. Osiecki had made a good-faith effort to identify the owners of the abutting property, but acknowledged that he had not succeeded in making contact with them until a just few days before the hearing.

Chris Crain agreed that the proposed waiver of the setback would likely allow for the proposed addition. But he'd also like to get a clearer picture of the proposed development of the property. The sketch plan included in the application has a couple of deficiencies. Sketch plan is mirror image (flipped 180 degrees) and is only two-dimensional, so there's no indication whether the proposed addition is to be one-story or two.

Member Brown expressed support for tabling a decision for one month. He would like a clearer sketch of boundary in question and a more complete sketch of the proposed project, so that it's clear that the waiver requested will provide enough of a setback to ensure that the proposed development will conform to regulations.

Mitch will work with Mat to get an accurate sketch plan added to the permit application. Mitch will also serve as a liaison between Matt and the Crain family to ensure everyone is on the same page as to the proposed addition, as well as relief from setback regulations that the DRB may afford Matt under the town's zoning regulations.

Motion from Donahue to table a decision on this permit until the September meeting. Seconded by Brown. Motion carried, 4-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chris Mureta is considering purchasing a home in Northfield. If he relocates to Northfield, he would like to establish a home occupation which would involve seasonal processing of wild game.

Select Board members asked several questions about the nature of such an operation, including operating season and hours, infrastructure requirements, and disposal of by-products (particularly hides and animal waste). Chris indicated that a formal application is likely to be presented at the September meeting.

Bill Smith, a resident on Bean Road, currently operates an auto repair business in Berlin. His lease ends within the next year, at which time he'd like to explore the possibility of relocating the operation to his home on Bean Road.

In response to questions, Bill explained that he would be the sole employee. He also acknowledged that there may be a wetland in the vicinity of his property and that he may have to consult with someone from the Department of Environmental Conservation to determine whether steps need to be taken to protect any nearby wetlands. Bill indicated that a formal application is likely to be presented at the September meeting.

Mitch briefly advised the DRB that the State of Vermont is proceeding with plans to replace the current Park and Ride facility on VT Route 64 with a new, larger facility. The current facility is located entirely in the town of Williamstown. The new facility will be located on the grounds of the VTrans garage just south of the current Park & Ride. The VTrans garage is located almost entirely in Williamstown, but a small sliver of the land extends into Northfield. Project reps have shared details of the proposed facility with Mitch. Anyone wanting more information is welcome to be in touch.

ADJOURNMENT: Davis moved to adjourn; Brown seconded. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitch Osiecki

Mitch Osiecki, DRB Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Zoning Administrator's Office. These minutes are subject to approval at the next regular DRB meeting.