

Chelsea, Vermont, Development Review Board
Draft Meeting Minutes June 22, 2022

Members Present: Johanna Welch (Chair), Ed Kuban, Jr (Vice Chair), Phillip Mulligan

Members Absent: Larry Allen recused himself

Others Present: David Savidge (applicant), Judy Libby, Judy Tucker (Chelsea Health Center Board Members), Brian Sanborn (abutter), Laurel LaFramboise (citizen), Timothy McCormick (AO, Clerk)

The Public Hearing on an application #ZP22-03 by David Savidge on behalf of the Chelsea Health Center for: A Conditional Use Determination to construct a memorial Park within a floodplain. The project is within the Village District and located at 356 VT RT 110, Chelsea Vt. (Parcel #110-092.000)

Johanna opened the meeting at 6:32 pm. The hearing began with a reading of the notice as posted and published. No conflicts of interest or ex-parte conversations were disclosed. The applicant was sworn in.

Johanna asked the applicant to explain to the proposed project. David stated that the Chelsea Health Center would like to build a memorial Park. The idea came about when the Chelsea Health Center Board (Board) was approached by an associate who recently lost a family member and asked if a tree could be planted in the family member's name. The Board not only supported the idea but expanded the concept to use the large field northwest of the Health Center for a full-sized park.

The Board set aside some funds for a landscape architect to prepare a sketch of the park, which consisted of a gravel-packed walkway, benches and tree plantings. After the Development Review Board (DRB) application was filed, David explained that a site visit was arranged with Ned Swanberg, the State of Vermont Central Floodplain Manager to review the project site. Mr. Swanberg said that he did not see any issues with the project as long as the finished grade of the path was not above the current original grade.

Mr. Swanberg mentioned that there were wetlands in the project area and advised David that he should contact the State of Vermont Wetlands Ecologist to review any potential impacts to wetlands. Julie Follensbee was contacted to make a visit to the site. Before her arrival, Tim McCormick (who is also a wetland consultant) screened the property and, although he did not formally delineate the wetlands, placed flags around Class III and Class II wetlands. Ms. Follensbee then visited the site and concurred with Tim's wetland identification and classification areas.

After the wetland areas were identified, the applicant reconfigured the proposed trail alignment so that it would be at least 50 feet from the Class II wetlands on the site. Otherwise, the trail would be impacting the Class II wetland buffer, and a permit would be required from the State Wetlands Program. Maintaining the buffer from the Class II wetland meant that the path would have to be closer than 50 to the river. Because the path would be closer than 50 feet to the river, a zoning permit could not be issued administratively.

Brian Sanborn added to the “wetlands discussion” saying that he did not have any complaints, only comments. He said that he noticed water in the field in the springtime each year but that it all seems to dry up in the summer months. He wondered why they would call such areas “wetlands”. Tim gave a brief explanation of what constitutes a “wetland” according to the Federal definition. After discussion of the appearance of the trail and plantings for the trail, David stated that the Health Center is concerned for people’s physical and mental health and the memorial park could benefit people’s spiritual health as well.

Phillip made a motion to close the hearing, ED seconded the motion and the hearing was closed at 7:00pm.

Organizational Meeting

After the hearing closed, David Savidge, Judy Libby and Judy Tucker left the room. Laurel LaFramboise stayed to informally discuss a potential application that she intends to file with the DRB. The DRB gave her some procedural information and she said that she would be filing an application soon.

Deliberation:

At 7:20 the Board went into deliberation. Based on the application and information as presented, the DRB unanimously voted to approve application ZP22-03.

The DRB meeting ended at 7:30pm.

Submitted by,
Timothy McCormick, Administrative Officer and DRB Clerk