



**Stowe Selectboard, Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting
Wednesday, March 27, 2024**

Present:

Selectboard Members: Billy Adams, Paco Aumand, Nick Donza, Jo Sabel Courtney

Ethan Carlson joined via Zoom

Attendees:

Town Manager Charles Safford, Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke, Assistant Public Works Director Chris Jolly, Adam Catherine, Matthew Arancio, Mila Lonetto, Heather Snyder, Martin Green, Shannon Buhler, Alison Karosos, Cindy Stafford, Peter Schmeckle, Mary Skelton, Lynn Altadonna, Alison Beckwith, Blake Blundell, Becca Blundell, Shap Smith, Haley Davis, Beth Gabois, Patricia Gabel, Peggy Smith

33 joined via Zoom

Call to Order

Selectboard Chair Adams called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Chair Adams opened the meeting with a prepared statement:

The Selectboard of the Town of Stowe is required by law to conduct its meetings in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law: 1 VSA subchapter 310-314. Meetings of the Board must be open to the public at all times, except as provided in - 1 VSA subchapter 313.

The Board welcomes valuable input from the public at appropriate times during the meeting with recognition from the Chair at his/her sole discretion. Such public comment is subject to the rules established by the Chair of the Selectboard: reference 1 VSA subchapter 312 (h).

The agenda for each of our regular Selectboard meetings includes a "Public to be Heard" item (listed at the end of the meeting, immediately following the Manager's Report.)

This time is reserved for members of the public to address the Board on matters that are not related to any other Agenda item.

If a member of the public wishes to address the Board on a matter that is related to an Agenda item, the Chair will accept public comment and questions when that Agenda item is reached during the meeting.

All members of the public are encouraged to present their comments and questions in an orderly and civil manner without disruption to other speakers. All comments and questions will be addressed through the Selectboard Chair.

The procedure for members of the public wishing to speak is as follows:

Raise your hand if you are in the room, or if you are participating on Zoom, by using the raise hand function. Please wait to be recognized and called upon by the Chair.

For members of the public attending in person: Once you have been recognized and called upon by the Chair you will be asked to come to the podium, once at the podium, please state your first and last name for the record before asking your questions or making comment.

For those attending via Zoom: Please wait until you are recognized and called upon by the Chair, then again, please state your first and last name for the record before you make any comment or ask your questions.

The rule for approaching and speaking from the podium may be waived at the discretion of the Chair.

Time Limit for Speakers: The Chair will indicate if there is a time limit for speakers – this will be at the sole discretion of the Chair and may vary from meeting to meeting depending on the specifics of the agenda item.

The Chair will call upon those wishing to speak in an orderly manner. The total length of time allocated for public comment and questions will be at the sole discretion of the Chair, and again may vary from meeting to meeting depending on the specifics of the agenda item.

Board members, Town Manager & Staff:

For members of the Board and Town Staff, including our Town Manager: Please signal to me or raise your hand if you wish to speak – please wait to be recognized and called upon by the Chair before speaking. I respectfully ask each of you to refrain from interrupting the person speaking, as they have been recognized and called upon by the Chair and therefore have the floor.

Again, all questions and comments or remarks shall be directed through the Chair. This rule applies equally to the Board, Town Manager, and staff.

Interruptions and Disruptions:

At no time may a member of the public interrupt any other speaker. The same rule applies to Board members and the Town Manger & staff.

The Chair may interrupt a speaker if a time limit has been set, or, if a need arises due to any unforeseen circumstance that warrants interruption. For example, if we have technical difficulties with Zoom or the microphone at the podium.

The meeting will be conducted in an orderly manner as determined by the Chair. Disruptions will not be tolerated. The Chair asks everyone to respect the speaker who has the floor.

There will be no cross talk nor debate between members of the public, nor cross talk and debate among Board members and the Town Manager & staff if they have not been formally recognized by the Chair. The Chair will issue a warning to anyone who interrupts the speaker. If the interruptions continue, the Chair may issue further warnings, or, if necessary, ask the person to leave the meeting.

Noise Disruptions/Distractions:

For those in the room, please silence your phones, to avoid disrupting the meeting.

For those on Zoom, we may need to ask you to mute yourselves if you have background noise that interrupts or disrupts the meeting. If those interruptions continue, we may have to mute you.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation - it will be appreciated by all.

Approval of the Agenda

On a motion by Ms. Sabel Courtney, seconded by Mr. Donza, the Selectboard approved the agenda. All were in favor.

Consent Agenda

1. March 13, 2024 Selectboard Minutes
2. Special Event Application – Vermont 10 Miler
3. Arts and Culture Council Charge Amendment
4. Liquor Items

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Sabel Courtney, the Selectboard approved the consent agenda as presented.

Highway Capacity and Congestion Study Project Update: Summer and Fall Seasons and Data

Adam Catherine of Stantec presented the Highway Capacity and Congestion Study update. To view the full traffic study presentation and accompanying PowerPoint on March 27, 2024, visit: <https://www.townofstowevt.org/selectboardrecordings>.

During the summer and fall seasons, the traffic congestion challenges are more focused in the Village and Mountain Road Village area with periods of Moderate to High congestion with fewer visitors creating a Levels of Service (LOS) F for intersections between 4 and 8 hours a day. This varies from the winter season where the congestion is created by more visitors accessing Stowe Mountain Resort/Spruce Peak, which are more severe during peak volume periods. See slide pages 8, 13 and 16 for winter, summer and fall data and a graphic depiction of the congestion analysis results.

Mr. Aumand and Mr. Carlson noted that the study utilized 2019, 2022, and 2023 data, and asked why 2021 was excluded. Mr. Catherine said it was excluded as the pandemic was still affecting economic activity at that time. Mr. Carlson said that he recalled traffic being bad during that time despite the

pandemic, to which Mr. Catherine replied that they would look at the data and see how it compared to the data presented.

As requested, prioritization of the intersection improvements required related to levels of growth in equivalent residential housing units is enhanced. See slide page 25. Not surprisingly, the Luce Hill Road at Mountain Road intersection is the highest priority as it has already reached critical levels of congestion, with a LOS F during more frequent peak periods of volume during all three seasons. Intersection improvements at this location are in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Stantec was recently awarded the contract for the design of this project by VTrans. We have been unsuccessful in getting any sense for schedule from VTrans for this project. The recently completed West Hill Road intersection project took 5 years from the start of design to completion of construction. The Moscow Road and Rte. 100 intersection is the next highest priority. It is estimated that it will reach a LOS F regularly with 200 – 350 additional housing units. This project had a Scoping Study completed in 2016 but is not currently in the STIP, nor are we able to determine from VTrans when it will be. In addition, with this level of growth, 7 other intersections will reach a LOS E or F more frequently. With more than 350 additional housing units, 8 intersections will reach a LOS E or F with congestion occurring more regularly. Localized improvements alone will not address the resulting levels of congestion. It is noteworthy that currently, we have 188 housing units either under construction or permitted and an additional 118 housing units recently proposed. We also have approximately 50 additional lodging units under construction and others larger projects in planning for near future permit applications.

Martin Green of Morrisville asked about pedestrian crossing signals on main street through Stowe Village. Mr. Catherine replied that if a traffic signal was to be added on the 100/108 intersection, pedestrian signals would be a part of it. He said it would be more challenging to add a pedestrian-only signal on other intersections. Beth Gabois asked about the cost of installing pedestrian signals. Mr. Catherine replied that he did not know the cost of a pedestrian-only signal, but the cost of a full traffic signal is 400,000-500,000, and the cost of the pedestrian signals are incorporated into that estimate.

Mr. Donza noted that peaks and valleys of Stowe traffic are more extreme due to the number of second homeowners, and asked how Stantec took that into consideration. Mr. Catherine said that winter and summer tend to have different peak areas, and their model incorporates both seasons. Mr. Donza also noted that if housing trends change and more homes become owner-occupied, traffic patterns may worsen. Mr. Adams asked if Stantec has a standard measure of traffic caused by a house that is occupied full time vs one that is rented out or is occupied part time. Mr. Catherine said that there is not a lot of modeling on trips generated by rental units, and that they use the ITE Trip Generation Manual for estimates on trips generated by certain land uses such as residential, shopping, offices, etc., but it does not have the sophistication to look at a rental versus a residence.

Mr. Catherine described options for digital wayfinding signs, and the Board discussed and inquired about ownership and operation of the signs, for example, who would be responsible for updating them. Mr. Adams asked Matthew Arancio of VTrans, in attendance, if he had any knowledge of other towns in Vermont that have installed digital wayfinding signs. He said he wasn't sure and would look into it.

The recent experience of the private culvert failure in Rte. 108 immediately south of Stowe Mountain Resort/Spruce Peak has highlighted significant public safety vulnerabilities associated with having a large population center at the end of a seasonal dead end in Rte. 108, without any secondary means of access. A short-term goal of wider shoulders above Luce Hill Road that would serve as functional bike lanes for 3 seasons and reduce risks associated with maintaining emergency access to the Stowe

Mountain Resort/Spruce Peak, is recommended. Fully dedicated transit lanes for some of Mountain Road, which would provide enhance multi model function and further reduce emergency assess risks remains as a mid to long term recommendation.

Village-specific findings regarding parking and potential improvements at the School Street and Mountain Road intersections to enhance pedestrian safety, bus loading and truck turning movements are included.

Finally, some long-term planning concepts to evolve a northern bypass route and a possible route to create a second means of emergency access to the Stowe Mountain Resort/Spruce Peak are also suggested.

Mr. Catherine said he will send the full report to the Town in a week or two.

Paving Program

Mr. Safford said that in FY24 and FY25, Public Works proposes to perform both the FY 24 and FY 25 paving programs at the following locations.

FY24

- Stowe Hollow Rd (between Upper Hollow Rd and Waterworks Rd): Reclaim and pave within existing pavement limits.
- Sunset St and Pleasant St: Overlay with total removal of failed pavement in certain sections. This is intended to be mid-term maintenance until an in-depth redesign can be further considered.
- River Rd Bridge: Replace failed pavement and bridge deck waterproofing on Bridge #4 near Tubbs mill.
- Moscow Rd and Lower Barrows Rd: Shim and overlay of the western portion of Moscow Rd and continuing onto lower Barrows Rd. This will be a continuation of what was completed in 2022 between River Rd and Grace Bible Church.

FY25

- Sylvan Park Rd: Reclaim and pave the Sylvan Park Rd loop.
- Lintilhac Park (Rec Path parking lot): Repave Lintilhac Park in coordination with the forthcoming sewer project and associated impacts behind the Community Church. Highway Dept to complete subbase repairs / improvements in advance of paving. The entire parking lot will be paved.

Mr. Donza asked about the paved section of Stowe Hollow Road, noting that it is generally a gravel road and inquiring why that section is paved. Chris Jolly, Stowe Assistant Public Works Director, said that he suspects the road is paved there for maintenance and/or drainage issues due to the grade of the road making it more likely to wash out.

Mr. Adams noted a request from residents on Sunset Street and Pleasant Street expressing their concerns on their potholes, and it is nice to see that we will address that. Mr. Safford said that there is a lot of work to do there, and this project is just to cut out the worst of it and apply an overlay to hold the road until more substantial work can be done. He noted that there are issues with the retaining wall, the sidewalk, and drainage that need to be addressed as well. Peggy Smith asked how permanent the Sunset

Street and Pleasant Street paving would be, saying that the potholes have been being filled for years and asking for a permanent solution. Mr. Safford indicated that Public Works Department hoped to do the engineering and survey work internally but is overrun with work demands. A capital project for the outside engineering and survey work will be provided to the Selectboard as part of the FY'26 capital projects proposed for their consideration. .

Mr. Aumand moved to approve the FY24 and FY25 paving program and recommend that public works advertises the bids. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. The motion passed 4-0 (Mr. Carlson absent).

April Meeting Schedule

Chair Adams noted it was determined that the regularly scheduled Selectboard Meetings on April 10 and April 24 will both have a quorum, with three members attending each meeting. The Selectboard agreed to keep the regular schedule. Mr. Aumand asked that both meetings be regular business with nothing controversial on the agenda.

Manager's Report

Mr. Safford presented a memo from Stowe Police Chief Don Hull detailing the Town's preparation for the Solar Eclipse on Monday, April 8. He says there will be many people coming to Vermont, including Stowe, to view the Solar Eclipse. While it is unknown what the number will be, we are planning on it to be comparable to Indigenous Peoples Day weekend. The primary areas of concern are going to be parking, traffic, and public safety emergency response. Police officers will be positioned around town at locations that will probably have the most impact as far as parking and traffic. He said the Town is also asking people to dress appropriately, as the weather can be unpredictable, and it may be colder than many visitors are expecting. Stowe Mountain Rescue cautions people about going into high elevation / remote areas that may stress their resources. Also, the State and Green Mountain Club ask that people stay off trails during mud season to help prevent them from damaging them.

Mr. Safford said that most Town staff at the Akeley Memorial Building are planning to take July 5th off, as July 4th falls on a Thursday this year. Unless the Selectboard decides otherwise, they will close the building to the public, as they will not be able to serve the public effectively. Staff not taking the day off will still be free to come in to work.

Mr. Safford presented four Act 250 notices, included one issuing the permit that authorizes the construction of the final building of the previously approved Stowe Mountain Resort Master Plan buildout. The redesigned, 156,231 square feet, 4 story, 56-unit residential building (with a small retail component) is to be constructed on Parcel C, adjacent to the Mountain Lodge and the Spa in the Spruce Peak Village development area, located at 7320 Mountain Road. If approved, the project will be constructed on an existing paved parking area. Parking for the building is proposed to be underground, with 8 additional exterior parking spaces. The project if advanced is proposed to be served by municipal water and septic systems. Mr. Donza expressed his concern about capacity to serve with regards to traffic, and if the Town can ask for help from permittees to work with the Town on traffic measures. Mr. Safford said that part of the Luce Hill/Route 100 intersection traffic signal will be paid for by state impact fees, so every time a new development feeds into that intersection the state assesses a fee. He also said that the Development Review Board has the ability to require developers to complete on and off-site improvements to mitigate impacts caused by a development to help prevent future cost to the municipality.

Public Comment Non-Binding

Courtney Percy was recognized by the Chair. She presented a petition to hold a Special Town Meeting for the voters to consider the rescission of the Stowe Short-Term Rental Ordinance. Chair Adams asked Ms. Percy if she was confident that enough signatures were collected to satisfy the Charter requirement, noting that 226 are required. She said they were, and that they had collected 297. She said that they will submit the petition to the Town Clerk tomorrow, March 28. Mr. Safford said that after the Town Clerk has verified that the petition has met the signature requirement, the Selectboard needs to warn the Special Town Meeting between 30 and 40 days prior to its occurrence. The Selectboard discussed whether the Special Town Meeting needed to be held within 60 days of the petition being filed. Mr. Safford read an opinion from the Town Attorney that the Special Town Meeting needed to be warned within 60 days and held between 30 to 40 days of the warning being posted.

Chair Adams then called for a Special Selectboard Meeting on Friday, March 29, to determine a date for the Special Town Meeting. Mr. Safford verified that 24 hours of notice is required to hold a Special Selectboard Meeting.

Chair Adams acknowledged that Mr. Carlson would not be able to attend on March 29. The rest of the Selectboard determined that they were all available at 1:00pm on March 29. Mr. Donza requested that legal counsel be available for the meeting as well. Mr. Safford noted that the Special Town Meeting is an up or down vote, and the ordinance cannot be amended on the floor. He added that the High School and the Town Moderator also need to be available.

Executive Session

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to find that premature public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved, at a substantial disadvantage. Mr. Aumand seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to enter executive session to receive legal advice. Mr. Aumand seconded the motion. All were in favor. The Selectboard entered executive session at 9:00pm.

On a motion by Ms. Sabel Courtney, seconded by Mr. Aumand, the Selectboard left executive session at 9:25pm.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 9:25pm.