

Town of Starksboro
Development Review Board
Minutes (DRAFT)
June 11, 2026

Members Present: Ben Campbell (Chair) Evelyn Boardman (Vice Chair), Tom Perry, Luke McCarthy, Rob Liotard (second hearing only).

Members Not Present: Arnell Paquette, Rich Warren, Rob Liotard (1st hearing only).

Others Present: Stephen Rooney, Zoning Administrator (See hearing details for other participants).

Minutes prepared by S.Rooney on 6/12/26.

Meeting called to order: by Chair Ben Campbell at 6:35 pm

Changes to the Agenda: None

Public Comment on non-agenda items: None

Minutes Review:

The minutes from 5/28/2026 were reviewed and accepted without comment.

Hearing #26-DRB-03CU/01SP-Mendell Conditional Use / Site Plan Review Hearing.

Applicants Present: Taylor and Jake Mendell

Visitors Present: Dwyer Haney

B.Campbell opened the hearing at 6:41 pm.

Introductions were made and the Interested Parties and Visitors Sign-in Sheet was distributed.

B.Campbell read the warning.

B.Campbell swore in applicants and visitors.

B.Campbell asked if there were any conflicts of interest or Ex parte communications. None were reported.

B.Campbell read the exhibit list. There were no additions or comments.

Hearing Testimony:

T.Mendell reviewed the project narrative for both the conditional use review and the site plan review provided in the exhibits. The conditional use review was necessary to amend a wetlands buffer condition required in the original conditional use approval to build an addition onto their processing space, and the site plan review was necessary as they were distributing their farm products and had begun adding on the products of other parties through their CSA, which falls outside of the basic farming definition into the On-Farm Business use category.

S.Rooney asked how long they had been conducting the business. T.Mendell noted the CSA had been running since around 2014, and J. Mendell noted that the add-on products did not start until 2020 during the pandemic.

T.Mendell then read the Site Plan review and Conditional use criteria responses to Sections 424.D and 425.D in Exhibit I.

S.Rooney asked about how product reached customers if only a few were coming to the site. T.Mendell stated they bring most of their CSA product to Bristol and Hinesburg and set up distribution locations there.

S.Rooney noted that the primary reason for the conditional use review was for the DRB to review the 100ft wetlands setback required by a condition in the previous approval. He asked if the applicants had any further insight as to where the 100ft dimension originated. T.Mendell said that they had asked others involved and did they could not recall. J.Mendell recalled that there may have been a neighbor concerned about bird habitat, and that perhaps the dimension was offered to address their concern. J.Mendell said he thought at the time of the original decision that the 100ft was from the Starksboro regulations, as he knew the state regulation was a 50ft buffer. B.Campbell recalled from his time on the board then that the primary concern was more for the wetland area to the west, not so much the wetlands to the south.

S.Rooney discussed the State wetlands office's opinion stated by Zapata Courage in Exhibit J that the state would not require a wetlands permit if 60ft is maintained from a noted birch tree that was determined to be outside the wetlands.

S.Rooney noted his recent discussion with the State Agriculture Dept.'s representatives regarding current state statute that govern agricultural and accessory on-farm business exemptions from municipal permitting. He discussed what determinations the town needed to make to qualify a project for those exemptions, and what further project review and restrictions the town could exercise under Section 342.B (ZA note: the correct section is noted from a misquote in the recording) once this exempt status was confirmed.

E.Boardman asked if the DRB was required to address each of the criteria in 342.B. S.Rooney noted that the DRB was free to conduct their review and place restrictions similar to other business uses, but could not outright deny the on-farm business permit.

L.McCarthy asked how the DRB could be certain the applicant qualified as a farm. D.Haney noted the DRB could ask if the applicant was following the state's RAP (required agricultural practices) program, which was required by the state to be considered an accessory-on-farm business.

T.Mendell noted that they had obtained a Farm Determination letter from the Dept. of Agriculture. S.Rooney noted that the state is able to provide guidance to municipalities through these letters, but the permit exemption is noted in VSA Title 24, which requires the town to make the final determination of whether the operation is a farm and/or an accessory on-farm business.

B.Campbell asked for a motion to determine if the conditional use and site plan review application was complete for the purpose of conducting the hearing.

Motion: E.Boardman moved to accept the application as complete for the purpose of conducting the hearing. L.McCarthy seconded.

Vote: All in favor

Motion: L.McCarthy moved to close the hearing at 7:13pm. B.Campbell seconded.

Vote: All in favor.

Motion: L.McCarthy moved to deliberate on the application decision in open session.

E.Boardman seconded.

Vote: All in favor

Open Deliberative Session for 26-DRB-03CU/01SP

The group discussed the history of the 100ft wetlands setback and if they considered this condition a critical condition. T.Perry asked if the town had come up with this dimension; S.Rooney replied that the 100ft was a proposal by the applicant, and the DRB codified this into the decision.

Motion: L.McCarthy moved to approve the conditional use amendment and the site plan application. E.Boardman seconded.

Vote: All in favor.

S.Rooney noted that a draft of the decision would be prepared and it would be included in an open deliberative session at the 6/25/2026 meeting for review and signing.

The board left the open deliberative session.

S.Rooney noted the appeal period would start today due to the board action and run for 30 days. The Zoning permit would be issued 15 days from this meeting, as today was the date of approval, so that its 15 day appeal period would expire concurrently with the DRB decision.

Hearing #26-DRB-02SP Haney-Fisher Site Plan Review Hearing

Applicants Present: Dwyer Haney

Visitors Present:

Carin McCarthy (zoom), Robert Turner (zoom)

Alice and Dan Dubenetsky

Susan Smiley

Carin and Dale Hoffman

David and Bonita Bedard

Corine Jennings

Kirsten St. Louis

Taylor and Jake Mendell

To determine if the Board still had a quorum, board members L.McCarthy and T.Perry discussed their relationship to abutting property owners with D.Haney. D.Haney did not have an issue with their continued participation.

B.Campbell opened the hearing at 7:41pm.

Introductions were made and the Interested Parties and Visitors Sign-in Sheet was distributed.

B.Campbell read the warning.

B.Campbell swore in applicants and visitors.

B.Campbell asked if there were any conflicts of interest or Ex parte communications. None were reported.

B.Campbell read the exhibit list. S.Rooney noted the following additions that were distributed at the beginning of the hearing:

- Exhibit J: Letter and photograph from Carin and Dale Hoffman to the DRB dated June 11, 2026.
- Exhibit K: Email letter to S.Rooney, Zoning Administrator from Joanne Swierz dated 11, 2026.

(ZA Note: These exhibits are attached at the end of these minutes).

Hearing Testimony:

D.Haney described the application request to add an on-farm business designation to their farm and add two business signs. They are growing trees, mainly mulberries and chestnuts, with

approx. 120 different species planted. The business would allow them to share their knowledge and the land with others and teach classes.

D.Haney noted neighbor's concern over parking discussed in the added Exhibits, and clarified that the two proposed parking spaces on the site plan are not sized for any particular event, they were areas available for parking that are as large as possible on land that was not agriculturally useful to them, while impacting the land as little as possible. He did not intend to have 29 car events frequently.

D.Haney reviewed the applicant's responses to Site Plan Review Criteria Section 424.D, provided in Exhibit I. He noted the parking areas would be just mowed pasture, with no gravel or pavement planned. He noted there will be no winter parking or plowing. He is willing to limit Dan Sargent Road traffic, and encourage car-pooling, etc. Pedestrian traffic and vehicle traffic would be separate as the vehicle parking would be adjacent to Dan Sargent Road and pedestrians would use existing farm paths interior to the site. He did not anticipate needing to address stormwater as the pasture would naturally handle stormwater, and he planned on providing an unmown buffer around the parking to further address stormwater. He discussed how the application fit in with the town plan, and would help to enhance the community and the local economy.

T.Perry asked for clarification on how the public would interact with the farm, what types of activities were proposed.

D.Haney noted classes on the type of agriculture being farmed, skills lessons, and potentially hosting lunches/brunches/dinners and sharing cooking techniques.

R.Liotard asked if the events would be advertised and scheduled, versus individuals requesting to visit and learn independently.

D.Haney noted he intended to advertise on social media. R.Liotard asked if that meant the size of the event would then depend on how many responses were received. D.Haney agreed.

R.Liotard asked if a limit on attendees would be considered. D.Haney said he is open to that, he wants to share the farm and the experience with as many people as possible but understood the need to respect the capacity of the road and the character of the neighborhood.

L.McCarthy asked about the distance from the northern parking lot to the neighboring property.

D.Haney thought it was between 35-50 feet, and noted that the property boundary pin is difficult to locate there, but they and the abutter agree on an approximate location.

B.Bedard read a prepared statement, which included reading Chapter 250, Agricultural, Scenic and Rural Residential Section 250. Purpose. (ZA note: A written version of this verbal testimony is attached to the end of these minutes and will be included as Exhibit L in the application materials. It should be noted that the subject parcel is in the LDRC District).

C.Hoffman noted that she and her husband are long time residents that abut the proposed parking near the barn, and noted that the proposed parking area is a wet area that they could not walk across, and that salamanders had been found there, and questioned if there were any vernal pools there. She was curious about septic, outhouses, will it be visible, how often changed out. parking

justification – 116 people could come (4 per 29 cars) is too much. She described how dangerous the intersection of Robert Young and Dan Sargent is. She wondered why bring the education classes to the farm, instead bring to a location in the village. She was concerned about oil runoff from the parking near a drinking water source, and if the runoff would affect downstream water sources. She questioned if the applicant had a septic system. She questioned the noise that might be generated, and noted a past school trip to the site that was hosted that was noisy. She suggested the cars could be parked up at the house on the driveway versus out by the road, or plant evergreens around the proposed locations to screen the neighbor's view. She pointed to the Exhibit J photo to indicate that the proposed parking area by the barn was not well maintained now. She reported that the neighbor to her north has to back out of their driveway and that it would be more dangerous with added traffic.

D.Haney responded that they do have a permitted septic system. They do not plan on having events that require sanitation and water facilities, and if they did, they would rent facilities for the event itself. He felt parking on his single lane driveway would not provide room for cars to pass. The events and the view of the cars would happen infrequently. The proposed southern parking area is sometimes wet, and is currently being used for woodchip storage.

K. St.Louis read a prepared statement: (ZA note: A written version of this verbal testimony is attached to the end of these minutes and will be included as Exhibit M in the application materials.)

C.Hoffman asked why aren't the cars parked up by the house where the applicant can see them, versus out by the road where they can't be seen by the applicant?

D.Haney noted that the grade around his house and drive are pretty steep and the goal in putting the parking by the road was to avoid having to do a lot of earthmoving and construction that would cause actual erosion versus mowing an existing pasture and wasn't the best use of the land.

D.Haney responded to K.St.Louis's statement by saying he wouldn't have people pooping on the ground, he wasn't going to break any state wastewater rules. Most classes might last an hour that would not require sanitary facilities, and if events lasted longer he would provide a compliant sanitation solution. He was willing to provide more parking buffer plantings. He pointed out that he would not be mowing the parking areas regularly, just before events, and this would have less impact on flooding than if the field was mowed regularly.

D.Dubenetsky noted that traffic on Dan Sargent is light, but can be heavy during morning/evening peak periods, and that he was not interested in more traffic. He noted that if there was no control over attendance at an advertised event it could be a problem. He questioned these controls, is there a charge for the event, is there a specified time and duration for events. He questioned if the health department would need to be involved in inspecting for cooking classes. He was also concerned about noise. He is not anti-farming, and encouraged farming.

L.McCarthy asked about how the southern lot would be accessed. D.Haney said it would be through the existing curb cut at the barn, the lot was sized for one row of cars facing the road.

T.Perry questioned if the extent of the activities needed better definition and control to be able to address what conditions might be applied to make the proposal acceptable to the neighbors.

E.Boardman questioned and it was confirmed that Dan Sargent is a Class 3 road.

A.Dubenetsky asked if the board had seen a comprehensive business plan. B.Campell responded that one had not been submitted. D.Dubenetsky noted that this was a problem, that there was a discussion of intent, but nothing defined.

K.St.Louis noted that she did not see on the site plan where the stream ran through the property, and that she was concerned about the parking affect on the stream if it was close to the parking.

D.Haney responded that the application requirements did not ask for a comprehensive business plan, so one was not provided, and that his neighbors could have asked him in advance of the meeting and he would have been willing to discuss his plans with them. He noted his neighbors were free to contact him if they ever had concerns over what was happening on the farm. He noted that the closet point of the stream to the parking is 74 feet.

C.Hoffman said she had noticed D.Haney's instagram postings advertising the barns for rent or animal housing, and questioned what is really proposed for the future.

R.Liotard noted that it did not appear that any state review had been conducted on the proposal and questioned if it was the applicant's intent to have the state review the project. D.Haney stated it was not their intent to have any event that would require any water or waste water facilities beyond a port-a-let.

Motion: L.McCarthy moved that DRB accept the application and testimony provided as meeting the requirements to conduct the Haney-Fisher On-farm business site plan review as set forth in the bylaws. E. Boardman seconded.

T.Perry asked if the application is complete, as the business detail seems to vague. L.McCarthy noted that the bylaws do not require much. S.Rooney confirmed.

C.Jennings asked if it had been determined if this was a farm.'

E.Boardman read 342.B On Farm Business, and discussed what type of criteria under 342.B could be reviewed. L.McCarthy read the definition of farm, and questioned if that was enough definition.

S.Rooney asked T.Perry if it would help if the application could be considered complete if it met the criteria for materials to be provided in 424.B, and then debate during deliberation if the application can be approved based upon the submittals.

T.Perry felt the applicant's chances of gaining approval would be better with a more complete application, but was ok with moving forward.

Vote: All in favor.

Motion: E.Boardman moved to close the hearing at 8:43pm. B.Campbell seconded.

Vote: All in favor.

Motion: E.Boardman moved hold the deliberative session for this hearing in closed session.

L.McCarthy seconded.

Vote: All in favor

The Board came out of closed deliberative session at 9:48pm.

Motion: L.McCarthy moved to adjourn the meeting. E.Boardman seconded.

Vote: All in favor.

DRAFT

To the Starksboro Development Review Board
Re: Application 26-DRB-02SP — Dwyer Haney and Emily Fisher, On-Farm Business Site Plan Review
685 Dan Sargent Road, Parcel #10615, LDRC District
Hearing Date: June 11, 2026

Dear Chair Campbell and Members of the Development Review Board,

We are residents of the Starksboro community and submit this comment for the record in connection with the above-referenced application for an On-Farm Business Site Plan Review. I ask the Board to carefully examine four areas of concern before approving this application as submitted.

Having lived next to this parcel and been prior owners, we have direct knowledge of the site and have concerns about the proposed changes and the impacts they would have on the surrounding land and community.

1. PARKING - JUSTIFICATION FOR 29 SPACES

The proposed site plan identifies 29 parking spaces. This number appears disproportionate for a rural on-farm business on a 26-acre parcel in the LDRC district and raises significant questions the applicant should be required to answer:

- What is the maximum number of visitors, customers, or employees expected on-site at any one time, and what specific calculation under the Starksboro Land Use and Development Regulations (SLUDR) produces a requirement of 29 spaces?
- Does this parking count reflect anticipated event use — such as farm dinners, workshops, or agritourism gatherings — that would draw larger crowds than typical farm retail operations? If so, the scope and frequency of such events should be fully disclosed and regulated as conditions of approval.
- Providing 29 spaces for what is described as a farm business conversion suggests the operation may function at times more like an event venue than a working farm. The Board should require the applicant to justify each space with specific use projections and confirm compliance with SLUDR parking standards.

2. WATER QUALITY - NO ON-SITE SEPTIC OR WATER SUPPLY

We are deeply concerned that the application identifies no on-site septic system and no on-site water supply to support the proposed business operations and the volume of visitors implied by 29 parking spaces.

- Vermont requires any commercial or public-use operation that generates wastewater to have an approved wastewater system permitted through the Agency of Natural Resources. The

Board should confirm whether the applicant has obtained or applied for a Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Permit (Act 250 / ANR) sufficient for the scale of operations proposed.

- Without adequate wastewater infrastructure, public use of this property poses a direct risk of surface and groundwater contamination, particularly given that Dan Sargent Road is a rural area where neighboring properties may rely on private wells.
- We ask the Board to condition any approval on submission of proof of an approved, permitted wastewater and water supply system scaled to the maximum expected occupancy before any public-facing business operations commence.

3. 3. PARKING LOCATION - WET AREA NEAR THE BARN, VERNAL POOLS, AND OIL RUNOFF INTO THE DRINKING WATER SOURCE

The parking spaces identified adjacent to the barn appear to be located in a seasonally or permanently wet area. Compounding this concern, there are vernal pools present in the field below the proposed parking area, and the drainage from this area flows toward a drinking water source serving neighboring properties. Together, these conditions raise serious environmental, public health, and regulatory concerns:

- Vernal pools are among Vermont's most ecologically sensitive habitats. They provide essential breeding habitat for wood frogs, spotted salamanders, and other amphibian and invertebrate species. Vermont Agency of Natural Resources guidance recognizes vernal pools and their upland buffers as critical natural communities warranting protection, and disturbance to vernal pool habitat — including through altered hydrology and stormwater runoff from upslope impervious surfaces — can significantly harm these ecosystems.
- Grading, compaction, or surfacing of the wet area near the barn to accommodate vehicle parking would likely increase the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff draining downslope toward the vernal pools and, critically, toward the drinking water source below. Even if the parking area itself is not within a regulated wetland, the hydrological connection between the proposed parking area and the sensitive areas below it means that impacts to one directly affect the others.
- A parking area accommodating 29 vehicles presents a meaningful and ongoing risk of petroleum contamination. Vehicles regularly deposit motor oil, transmission fluid, brake fluid, gasoline, and other hydrocarbons onto parking surfaces through leaks, drips, and exhaust condensate. In a wet, poorly drained area with direct surface flow toward a drinking water source, these contaminants have no meaningful filtration barrier before reaching the water supply. A single significant oil leak or fuel spill in this location could contaminate the drinking water source for neighboring households with no practical means of remediation.
- The Board should require the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed parking area does not drain — directly or indirectly — toward any drinking water source, including springs, dug

wells, drilled wells, or surface water intakes used by neighboring properties. If such a hydrological connection exists, the parking area should be relocated, or a certified stormwater engineer should design an appropriate containment and filtration system capable of capturing petroleum and other vehicle-related pollutants before they reach the watershed.

- The Board should require a site-specific wetland and vernal pool assessment by a qualified wetland scientist or natural resource professional before approving any parking or surface improvements in or near the wet area adjacent to the barn. This assessment should map the vernal pools, identify applicable buffers, and evaluate whether the proposed parking location would affect vernal pool hydrology, upland buffer habitat, or the drinking water source below.
- If any portion of the proposed parking area falls within a regulated wetland or wetland buffer under Vermont Act 250 or the Vermont Wetland Rules, additional state permits may be required before site work begins.

4. NOISE AND TRAFFIC - IMPACT ON THE SURROUNDING RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

Dan Sargent Road is a quiet residential road, and the surrounding community has a reasonable expectation that land use changes will not fundamentally alter its character. We have concerns about the proposed change of use and its impact on the community surrounding.

- Traffic: 29 parking spaces, if regularly filled, would generate significant vehicle trips on a road not designed for commercial traffic volumes. The Board should require a traffic impact assessment or, at minimum, a clear description of expected peak traffic days and hours, and should consider conditions limiting the frequency and size of public events.
- Noise: Farm business operations that include events, amplified music, tours, or other gatherings can generate noise that travels substantially in a rural, quiet environment. The Board should require the applicant to identify all activities that may produce elevated noise levels and to commit to specific mitigation measures — such as hours of operation, decibel limits, or buffer plantings — as conditions of approval.
- Lighting: If evening events are anticipated, outdoor lighting associated with the parking area and event spaces should be reviewed to prevent light pollution affecting neighboring residences.
- The Board should impose enforceable conditions on hours of operation, maximum attendance at any single event, and annual event frequency to protect the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood.

We do not oppose agricultural operations or the reasonable development of farm businesses in Starksboro. However, the concerns outlined above - an unexplained parking count, the absence of sanitary infrastructure, potential parking in a wet area, and impacts to a residential road and neighborhood - require clear, documented answers before this application is approved.

We respectfully request that the Board:

- (a) Require the applicant to provide a detailed parking justification consistent with Starksboro Land Use and Development Regulation (SLUDR) standards;
- (b) Condition approval on a permitted wastewater and water supply system adequate for the proposed use;
- (c) Require a stormwater and drainage assessment for the parking area near the barn;
- (d) Impose conditions on hours of operation, event frequency, maximum attendance, and noise to protect neighboring residents.

Thank you for your consideration. We ask that this comment be entered into the record.

Respectfully submitted,

Carin & Dale Hoffman

548 Dan Sargent rd, Starksboro, VT

June 11, 2026

Amy McCormick

From: Carin L. Hoffman <carinlhoffman@me.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2026 1:31 PM
To: Amy McCormick
Subject: Screenshot 2026-06-11 at 1.30.04 PM

1:30 60 86
From: Carin Hoffman
<23> in LaughlinHoffma
Today at 12:03 PM

No Subject



Starksboro Zoning Administrator

From: joanne swierz <anamcarajs@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2026 5:48 PM
To: Starksboro Zoning Administrator
Subject: Zoning for Bending Birch Farm

Steve Rooney
Starksboro Zoning Administrator

From
Joanne and Greg Swierz
496 Dan Sargent Road

Hello Steve

We are currently in Burlington at UVM Medical Center due to a medical emergency in the emergency department

So we are writing to you now about tonight's meeting at 7:30
Regarding the zoning application for Bending Birch Farm into a business

It was our intention to be there tonight however we will not be there

If at all possible, we may be able to enter into the Zoom meeting at 7:30 PM

We want you to know that as
Property owners who would adjoin this property

That we would like our voices be counted into the meeting tonight

We also want to continue if there will be any meetings following tonight's presentation

Being longtime residents in Starksboro, it is our desire not to have a farm business operating across the street

We love the peace and quiet we love, listening to nature, and we love that the town of Starksboro wishes to be conservative to maintain this environment
That's why we moved here

As I read through all the documents, my main concern is the word "event"
There have been other events on their property that have disturbed the peacefulness of the valley

We are comfortable with that for special occasions

However, we are not comfortable with 29 cars plus 2-4 people per car or more

This will disturb the peacefulness of the valley

We do recognize it would be part of the year however, we do not wish to have a business

We are a residential neighborhood and wish to maintain our neighborhood in line with the Town of Starksboro vision for the future of Starksboro

Thank you for entering our concerns into tonight's meeting

We look forward to continuing conversations if there will be any following tonights meeting.

Sincerely
Joanne and Greg Swierz

Joanne Swierz RN EOLD
496 Dan Sargent Road
Bristol, Vermont
anamcarajs@gmail.com
908-347-3561

Bonita and David Bedard
Northern property line

I grew up on the farm that is the subject of tonight's hearing. Then known as the Norris farm and owned by my parents and my father's parents before them.

When my parents divorced, each of us kids got 5 acres of land in recognition of working on the farm during our growing up years. I have seen this farm nearly every day for my entire 74 years, picked stones on it, pitched hay on it, picked up potatoes on it, raised calves, all the things required to farm in the hill country in Starksboro.

The hill that is being proposed to be a 22 car parking lot was always rich agricultural land. Not pastureland. It has only been pastureland since it was sold to the Hoffmans. It also is one of the most stunning views of the farm at large and has been for hundreds of years without any business or commercial interruption of open farmland to the treeline.

In reading the zoning regulations Section 250 ASRR Purpose 250A (read here) it seems clear that a parking lot about 110' by 50 or 60' that would serve the same size as the 3 rows of cars directly in front of the Shaws store in Bristol or indeed any parking lot at all will not prove the test that "all feasible steps were taken to protect the agricultural and scenic qualities of the district". In fact, in the project narrative it is stated that "The mown parking areas will not be aesthetically distinguishable from any of the surrounding mown pasture". Clearly that doesn't include when cars are parked in it.

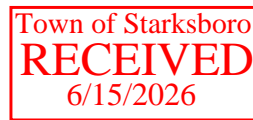
*neighbours
could
easily* be affected by a ~~commercial~~ parking lot ~~as well as the~~ ~~will also~~ ~~could easily~~ ~~be~~ ~~interrupting the rural view~~ ~~visible from~~ ~~all directions.~~

In going through the project narrative, its not clear what else is being grown besides chestnuts or what the actual revenue for the On Farm Business will be generated from. Where will the people gather? Will there be pig roasts etc next to the driveway? Will people come for overnight with campers?

I notice the mention that the proposed parking lots will minimize vehicular usage on the property even though the Haney driveway is actually hidden by the treeline and could be a better fit for a parking area.

“No equipment or utilities are planned, but if we were to add them in the future we would certainly include buffer plantings” feels too open ended.

In closing my husband and I feel that a parking lot on that scenic location would be counter to what both the town plan and the Land Use and Development Regs intend and we ask that it be denied.



26-DRB-02SP Haney-Fisher AOFB Site Plan Review

Notes St. Louis Abutters

General Comments:

As property abutters and strong supporters of Starksboro and stronger supporters of the wonderful community of neighbors on Dan Sargent road we welcome new neighbors and investment in the community.

While the entire St. Louis family hope for nothing but success for Dwyer and Emily and Bending Birch Homestead and we have a deep respect for the rights afforded to private property owners we do have some questions regarding the scope, intended use and environmental impact of the Accessory On-Farm Business (AOFB) plan and subsequent development.

Signage:

Size and locations we have no concern.

Accessory On-Farm Business (AOFB):

The project narrative discusses farm tours, events, courses, etc, used to educate and inform on alternate methods of agriculture. The parking area of up to 29 vehicles would give us an idea of the operation on scale if the success we all hope for is realized.

At max capacity 29 vehicles would mean a minimum of 29 people and a possible maximum occupancy of around 29 x 4 or 116 individuals. Where is everyone going to pee / poop?

Our property experiences significant run off in wet years from the North / abutting side so human wastewater at a commercial scale is a concern.

At what point would size and type of events, customer traffic brought by AOFB be further evaluated? Is this the only time and if so, has the maximum possible occupancy been reviewed by the State?

Notes for follow up:

Have appropriate toilet, bathroom, and handwashing facilities been accounted for or provided for this human bio load on the property? Our I believe in Vermont, operating an Accessory On-Farm Business (AOFB) with no added structures requires compliance with state wastewater and local land use regulations. Because you are hosting people on the land, the state evaluates wastewater capacity based on business type and expected customer traffic. Has this been reviewed by the state?

NOTES for reference:

State Wastewater and Water Supply Requirements

Even without new structures, Vermont's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) dictates sanitation rules for business gatherings. [1]

- **Licensed Designer Needed:** You must work with a Vermont Licensed Designer to evaluate existing systems.
- **Portable Toilets:** Permitting allows for self-contained, portable toilets (portapotties) for temporary AOFB events.
- **Discharge Rules:** Untreated gray water (from washing stations) cannot be dumped freely. You require an [Alternative Toilet Practice Approval](#) for non-flush or mobile units. [1, 2, 3, 4]

Parking areas Concerns:

Although not paved, compacted surface parking lots cause significant environmental damage by increasing sediment runoff, degrading water quality in local watersheds, and introducing legacy pollutants. Compacted soil from repeated parking soil is partially permeable compared to asphalt, compacted surfaces still act as semi-impervious areas that accelerate erosion, disrupt natural hydrology, and leach chemical contaminants from vehicles, oil, fuel residue and heavy metals from brake pads.

As "Down Stream" abutters, there is a sizable water flow from north to south the runs about 40 yards to the west of Dan Sarget Road from the Bedard property south through the Haney / Fisher property across the St. Louis Property and on to the Trombley Property. Very close to the added 60X100 parking.

In this time of unprecedented climate crisis as mentioned in the project narrative uncharacteristically strong storms have seen the 48" plus culvert that crosses our driveway topped over and washed out from this water flow. Has adequate thought been given to the management of run-off from the added parking areas and associated natural hydrology.