

Starksboro Development Review Board
Minutes of December 14, 2023
Unapproved

Board members present: Ben Campbell, Rob Liotard, Arnell Paquette, Rich Warren, Luke McCarthy, Dan Nugent

Others present: Jason Barnard, Rebecca Elder (TA), Peggy Zeno

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Ben Campbell at 7:00 p.m. Introductions were made.

Peggy Zeno – Application 23-401 - Final Plat Subdivision Review

Ben performed the swearing in of participants (see sign in sheet). The public warning was read for the record and the hearing opened. Jason Barnard was present to represent the application from Peggy Zeno for subdivision review. It was noted that during the August sketch plan meeting, the project was incorrectly classified as a major subdivision. The application and hearing is for a MINOR subdivision.

Jason presented the final plat application, reading the narrative regarding review criteria aloud. He also presented site plan maps showing the proposed subdivision of 3 lots, where driveways and buildings would be sited, and wastewater system plan.

Applicant presented criteria responses as follows:

Siting and Suitability – The proposed subdivision will situate the proposed residential structures relatively close to Varney Hill Road with adequate distance between the residential structures. The property is not subject to periodic flooding or poor drainage. The proposed subdivision was designed in accordance with the density and dimensional standards (Sec 211). Building envelopes will be delineated as required in Sections 243.B and 263.C following the Sketch Plan review and the Board’s evaluation of the proposal’s general conformance to the Land Use and Development Regulations.

- **Natural Features** – The proposed subdivision boundaries are based on existing natural features, site improvements and historic use. The existing residence will have more logical boundaries that take into consideration the existing topographic features and contours, field/forest edges, access, waterways, and infrastructure (i.e. wastewater systems and water supply wells). This layout is designed to minimize natural feature disturbance, including the continued use of the existing means of access to minimize clearing and impervious surface area. Overall, the project area does not include any flood hazard areas and will not have undue adverse impact on any significant wildlife habitat. There are wetlands associated with the parcel. The proposed design keeps the residential structures and associated infrastructure isolated from the wetlands. There are prime and statewide agricultural soils associated with the subject property. Jason Barnard stated his professional opinion that the subdivision was designed to minimize impacts to the prime agricultural soils.

- **Character of the Area and Privacy** – The general character of the area associated with Varney Hill Road is single-family rural residential homes, businesses, and agriculture. The proposed subdivision will continue to provide single-family homes on parcels that are larger than the minimum density requirements for the agricultural and scenic rural residential zoning district. Adequate privacy is presently provided among the proposed residential structures, and the proposed lot layout offers ample opportunity for privacy among any future structures.

Energy Conservation and Access to Renewable Energy – Most of the land within the subdivision is westerly-facing and is a mixture of small fields and wooded area. The open fields have westerly exposure and therefore the property is well-suited to take advantage of solar gain for both passive & active solar heat as well as photovoltaics. Any new residential structures will be constructed to meet the most recent energy conservation standards, including the VT Residential Building Energy Standards. It is expected that LED lighting will be utilized along with energy-efficient heating system(s) and appliances.

- Access and Circulation – The new parcel will be accessed via individual drives off Varney Hill Road. The proposed subdivision is located within ½ to ¾ of a mile of VT Route 116. The addition of the three (3) new parcels are not expected to have an undue adverse impact on the condition, capacity, safety, or function of Varney Hill Road. Given the large lot size and rural character of the property, pedestrian access within the proposed subdivision is not applicable to this project.
- Infrastructure, Utilities, Facilities and Services – Varney Hill Road is currently a Class III road and will continue to be maintained by the Town of Starksboro. Starksboro provides fire service to this area and will continue to provide access for this service. Utilities are currently located on Varney Hill Road and are easily accessible to the proposed subdivision. All utilities will be constructed subsurface interior to the subdivision.
- Lighting – New lighting will be typical of rural residential homes and will be designed and constructed so that exterior lighting is down-shielded to mitigate light trespass off the proposed parcels and therefore all new exterior lighting will be compliant with Section 314. Lighting will utilize the most up-to-date and energy-efficient fixtures.
- Recreation – The proposed lot and remaining lands are large enough in size to provide adequate area for recreation (i.e. walking trails, hunting, etc.) on each individual parcel. Therefore, no shared or common lands is proposed.

The exhibits were entered as follows:

- A – Application
- B – Review criteria
- C – Public notices
- D – Survey plats PL1/2
- E – Site plan maps
- F – Fire Chief statement re: emergency access

Motion: The hearing was closed at 7:30 p.m. Rob Liotard moved, Arnell Paquette seconded.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Results of deliberations:

Motion: Dan Nugent moved to approve the Zeno 3-lot minor subdivision application 23-401 as presented. Rob Liotard seconded. **Motion approved** BC, RL, RW, AP, LM, DN

Motion to approve minutes of 8/10/23: Luke moved, Rob seconded. **Motion approved** BC, RL, RW, AP, LM, DN

Motion to adjourn: Rob moved, Ben seconded. 8:50 p.m. **Motion approved** BC, RL, RW, AP, LM, DN

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Town Administrator

DRAFT