

## **Stowe Selectboard Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting**

**Wednesday, August 27, 2025**

**5:00pm**

**Akeley Memorial Building**

**67 Main Street**

**Stowe, Vermont**



**Selectboard Members:** Paco Aumand, Ethan Carlson, Jo Sabel Courtney, Nick Donza, Beth Gadbois

**In-Person Attendees:** Town Manager Charles Safford, Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke, Planning & Zoning Director Sarah McShane, Public Works Director Harry Shepard, Town Attorney David Rugh, Paul Sakash, Barbara Puddicombe, Mike Giorgio, Mike Martin (9)

**Zoom Attendees:** Richard Litchfield, Catherine Gott, Jason [unk.], Fay [unk.] (4)

### **Call to Order**

Selectboard Chair Aumand called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to approve the agenda. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

### **Executive Session**

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to find that premature public knowledge of advice and counsel from the Town Attorney concerning pending civil litigation to which the Town is a party would place the Town and Selectboard at a substantial disadvantage, and to enter into executive session to receive advice and counsel from the Town Attorney concerning pending civil litigation to which the Town is a party and invite the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Planning & Zoning Director to join in the executive session. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

The Selectboard entered executive session at 5:01pm and left at 5:40pm.

### **Consent Agenda (Items A-1 through A-6)**

1. August 13, 2025 Selectboard Minutes
2. Stowe Electric Bond Certificate of Project Completion
3. Aerial Ladder Truck Closeout
4. Collection of Current & Delinquent Taxes Policy Amendment
5. Errors & Omissions
6. Capital Project Closeouts
7. Sewer Allocation – Hob Knob Lot 3
8. Sewer Allocation – Hob Knob Lot 4
9. Water & Sewer Allocation – 340 Summit View Drive
10. Student Representative Appointments
11. Liquor Licenses

Mr. Carlson moved to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

### **Impact Fee Discussion (Item B-1)**

Mr. Safford provided a summary of impact fees. He noted that impact fees may be imposed to pay for new capital capacity improvements that benefit or will be used by those in a new development. It is not to pay for existing infrastructure repair, replacement, or operating cost. If the capital capacity improvement is implemented and the impact fees don't cover the cost, then municipal taxpayers must absorb the excess cost. He also said that impact fees must be spent on the capital project for which the fee was intended within six years or refunded. Finally, Mr. Safford

emphasized that Stowe does not have any current projects that would be appropriate for impact fees but may in the foreseeable future.

Mr. Carlson asked what past projects would have been appropriate for impact fees. Mr. Safford said project which extended water and sewer up to the Mountain would have been, but the Town at that time chose to fund it with allocation fees rather than impact fees. Ms. Gadbois asked about paving a gravel road. Mr. Safford said a developer can pay for it directly or the DRB can require it through their findings, if appropriate. It may also be appropriate for impact fees if the paving is due to additional traffic load caused by the development(s).

Mr. Aumand said that when people talk about wanting impact fees it is often because they don't understand the legal side of it, and the Town does have de facto impact fees through allocation fees with water/sewer. Mr. Safford said there is greater flexibility through utility fee assessments, and it is fair to say there are de facto impact fees.

Mr. Donza said a lot of the discussion is about big projects, but there are lots of small developments or single houses going up causing impacts as a whole. He provided the rec path bridges needing to be wider as an example. He doesn't see this as targeting one developer. Mr. Safford said it is tough to apply to small projects because it needs to be spent within six years; there may be enough units to justify it but over a longer period of time than allowed. You may not get the whole cost back through impact fees and need to decide the cost/benefit.

Ms. Gadbois said the impact fee discussion goes back to cost of living, and people wanting things fixed or improved without increasing the tax burden. She said the majority of wear and tear comes from visitors. Mr. Carlson said people feel the impact of all the building going on. He asked if there are avenues like utility fees that can be used. For example, increasing zoning permit fees. Mr. Safford said they can charge fees to cover administrative costs; they could reexamine zoning fees to see if they need to be updated. Mr. Donza asked at what point are facilities like the public safety building, highway garage, bike path, etc. not big enough, and noted there are impacts to town infrastructure outside of utilities. Mr. Aumand asked if an impact fee ordinance could be developed without having the reasons in hand. Mr. Safford said the projects need to be planned and outlined in a capital program or tied to existing debt.

No action was taken at this time.

### **Upper Mountain Road Request to Lower Speed Limit (Item B-2)**

Mr. Aumand noted that the request to lower the speed limit came from Mike Martin. Mike Martin said he has lived in this location since 1990, and drivers regularly reach dangerous speeds past the Toll House. He noted that there is significantly more traffic and activity in this section of Mountain Road than when the 50mph speed limit was adopted, such as new homes and more people entering the road, the addition of the Mountain Road Shuttle, more construction vehicles, Bingham Falls parking, the state campground, and Spruce Peak. He detailed four recent accidents, including one where a car hit a propane tank and causing the Toll House to evacuate, and another which caused a car to flip. Mr. Carlson said the parking along the stretch of highway and people crossing the road is reason enough on its own to lower the speed limit.

Mike Giorgio of Stowe Mountain Resort said the Resort wholly supports lowering the speed limit, and added that there should be a section of 30mph past the Spruce Peak entrance until the Chicanes. Ms. Gadbois suggested there should be a no-passing sign due to challenging sightlines. The Board and the public discussed whether the chicanes would be permanent and noted their effectiveness.

Mr. Carlson moved to approve and sign the enclosed speed limit reduction request, with the inclusion of a request for no passing signs, to the Vermont Traffic Committee on Upper Mountain Road between Harlow Hill and Barns Camp from 50mph to 40mph to the Vermont Traffic Committee. Ms. Gadbois seconded the motion. Motion carried (5-0).

### **Manager's Report (Item C-1)**

Mr. Safford said Bridge 5 on the rec path is closed today to replace the planks. He also provided statistics on users from the Library and Parks and Rec Programs.

Mr. Safford provided a letter from the Planning Commission requesting the Selectboard implement an STR cap via ordinance, expand staff capacity for housing, and advance interim inclusionary zoning with professional support. The Selectboard discussed the timing of a potential STR cap and inclusionary zoning. Mr. Donza noted that many in the community are speculating about where the STR issue is going, and that the Board should make it clear to people sooner rather than later and make it a clear process. He added that there are lots of rumors and speculation that aren't even necessarily realistic. Mr. Carlson said he wants a substantive deep dive into STR data as part of that discussion. Mr. Aumand said the request on staffing is a budgeting issue. The timing on hiring a consultant can be more flexible if the Board chooses.

Mr. Donza asked if anything can be done about traffic jams around Cold Hollow Cider Mill in Waterbury. Mr. Safford said he would inquire about it with the Waterbury Town Manager.

Mr. Carlson noted the trash along the rec path. The Board discussed bear proof dumpsters and potentially amending the health and sanitation ordinance.

### **Public to be Heard - Non-Binding (Item C-2)**

No public comment.

### **Executive Session**

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to find that premature public knowledge would place the Town and Selectboard at a substantial disadvantage, and to enter into executive session to receive advice and counsel from the Town Attorney invite the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Public Works Director to join in the executive session. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

The Selectboard entered executive session at 6:57pm and left at 8:14pm.

### **Adjournment**

Chair Aumand adjourned the meeting at 8:14pm.

### **Notes**

Minutes submitted by Will Fricke.

The Selectboard of the Town of Stowe meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:30pm.

A recording of this public meeting is available at: <https://www.stowevt.gov/Government/Selectboard>