

Stowe Selectboard Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting

**Wednesday, February 11, 2026
5:00pm**

**Akeley Memorial Building
67 Main Street
Stowe, Vermont**



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

Staff: Town Manager Charles Safford, Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke

Public: Leighton Detora, Josi Kytle, David Lockard, Heather Snyder, Mila Lonetto, Scott Snyder, Barb Puddicombe, Lynn Altadonna, Mary Skelton, Deb Drinkwater, Aundry Brook, Van Harrissis, Charlie Lusk, Jeff Hermann, Alison Beckwith, Barb Getty, Carl Bailin, Sheri Baraw Smith, Mark Vandenberg, Leslie Gauff, Duncan Blaine, Francesca Hildreth, Peter Livaditis, McKee Macdonald, Steven Malfitano, AJ Shinnars, Dan Griffin, Alison Karosas, Leigh Mallory, Travis Spalding, Dylan Whitaker, Cole Whitaker, Amy Thompson, and 24 others (57)

Zoom: Cheryl Vince, Kim Legalis, Ann Foley, Geordy Hutchison, Hugh Ehrenburg, John Shallman, Susan Barrett, Leslie Adams, Maryellen Auger, Jeremy Morris, Katy Lanpher, Paul Montney, Ashley Getty, Teresa Opalacz, and 187 others (201)

Call to Order

Chair Paco Aumand called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

Executive Session

Mr. Carlson moved to enter executive session to receive legal advice and to include the Town Attorney, Town Manager, and Assistant Town Manager. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

The Selectboard entered executive session at 5:06pm and left at 5:41pm.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Mr. Aumand read aloud the dedication to the Annual Town Report, to Leighton Detora, former Town moderator.

Consent Agenda (Items A-1 through A-2)

1. January 28, 2026 Selectboard Minutes
2. Water Allocation – 450 Cape Cod Rd
3. Special Event Application – Stowe Derby
4. Special Event Application – Bailey Soccer Jamboree
5. 2026 Certificate of Highway Milage
6. Liquor Items

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

Short-term Rental Ordinance Amendment Discussion (Item B-1)

Mr. Aumand noted the definition of a short-term rental and reviewed the proposal from December. He said it had the best of intentions but had some unintended consequences, so it will be a subject of discussion, but the Board wanted to recognize that those who live in Stowe should have some flexibility. He noted the carveouts came from an attempt at administrative ease and were intended as a starting point to identify some areas that may be exempted from certain provisions. Mr. Aumand said they viewed this as language they could talk about, in the form of an

ordinance, but could see the confusion where people thought it was on a fast track. He said they are not at fourth and goal with that language. Ms. Gadbois agreed, saying people should slow the roll.

Mr. Aumand noted that this is a meeting in the public, not a public hearing, but the Board enjoys hearing feedback from the community, and they will open it up the public when they are done with their discussion.

Mr. Aumand asked how the Board wishes to proceed on moving the renewal date to April 30.

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to instruct the Town Manager to warn a first reading of the proposed STR Registration Ordinance amendment at the March 11th meeting and a public hearing for the March 25th meeting, to hear input regarding moving the registration renewal deadline from December 31st to April 30th. Ms. Gadbois seconded.

Mr. Carlson reiterated that this only changes the date.

Motion passed (5-0).

Mr. Aumand said the housing needs assessment is a guiding document and has lots of housing strategies, but STRs are just one component. Ms. Gadbois said she finds some of the frustration and polarization coming from the thought that action on STRs is all that will happen. They will pick away at the strategies and in no way does this Board think this will solve the housing crisis in Stowe. It is just one piece of the puzzle to create more affordability in the community.

Mr. Carlson said they have received a ton of community outreach, and lots of community members have donated a lot of time to work on this multi-year process. STR regulations were recommended by the Planning Commission a few years ago. He noted that the housing reserve fund is another key part of a housing strategy. Mr. Carlson also said that data that is misconstrued doesn't help, and people should remain focused and be careful of perception. What we do matters, and the community has a bearing in that perception. He said that if we raise alarms that aren't correct, that affects that perception.

Ms. Sabel Courtney said future boards can amend the ordinance, and that the Selectboard cannot bind future boards. They can always come back and change it and people always have a voice.

Mr. Aumand asked what the Selectboard wants to do regarding the carveouts.

Mr. Carlson said that exempting the Ski and Resort PUD from provisions opened up the definition of what should qualify, and basically every condo association in town asked for an exemption, which was not the intention. A unit affiliated with a hotel is different than unit that is not. Mr. Aumand said they can just change the definition, which would not be an "exemption" per say, and clarify which units are subject to the ordinance. Ms. Gadbois said it wouldn't make sense to include units in a hotel if the goal is long-term housing. She said the ski/resort PUD isn't the right language because it doesn't include, for example, the Stoweflake, which has units associated with the hotel where people have to go through the front desk.

Mr. Carlson asked what would happen if a hotel expanded its reach to include neighboring properties. Mr. Safford said when they put it to form they can air it out and see if they missed anything.

Mr. Carlson asked why the hotel-affiliated units were included previously. Mr. Aumand said a previous board decided to include units if the ownership was unaffiliated with the hotel but they are taking another look.

Mr. Aumand asked what the Board wanted to do regarding local ownership.

Mr. Carlson said he feels strongly to include some sort of local exemption but it wasn't the intent to let residents have many STRs; the goal was to encourage people to live here and STRs can provide supplemental income. He said he would think residents should be able to have an additional STR from their primary residence. Mr. Donza said his approach is different; he was thinking just the primary residence or an ADU at the primary residence. Ms. Gadbois said she wants to give an avenue for income for locals and that there are less than 100 residents with STRs right now.

Mr. Carlson said his goal is limiting outside speculative investment, and a person in town renting one property they own in town is not a big deal. It would alleviate some concerns they had heard. Ms. Sabel Courtney said she would encourage those people to rent those long-term. Mr. Aumand said he agrees with Ms. Sabel Courtney but it is important to recognize that may take a financial incentive at some point and could be a use of the housing reserve fund. Mr. Carlson said they should come up with some market incentives to discuss at a future date.

Mr. Carlson summarized that there should be some sort of resident exemption and some reasonable amount beyond the primary residence that they can register beyond a cap. Mr. Donza said that as they discuss a cap there should be a mechanism to replace units that drop off once the total number dips below the cap. There could be a way for locals to get on the waiting list.

Ms. Gadbois said she wants to look into situations where people sublet apartments as STRs since it removes long-term housing from the community.

Mr. Carlson asked if private equity ownership could be looked at.

Mr. Aumand asked what the Board wanted to do regarding conveyance or transfers.

Mr. Carlson noted the previous draft says the STR registration would not follow a property transfer, though people often bequeath property to a child, transfer it to a trust, etc. Ms. Gadbois said her children would get her property which has value in itself; if they don't live here they should not get special treatment but there is a point that they grew up here.

Mr. Aumand asked what the Board wanted to do regarding a cap.

Mr. Aumand said if they had a "simple cap" many issues would be moot points; for example if the Board said of a certain date there would be no additional STRs above a certain number and those currently registered would continue being STRs. He said if they lotteried off all slots every year it would not matter who inherited it. The Selectboard did not agree with this approach.

Mr. Donza said units should have to keep registering every year, but not lodging, and they need to pick a number, and as those owners sell the number of units would reduce to that number. Once below that number they can have a waiting list for people to register in the future. He said that if the Board felt there were not enough in town and the LOT numbers were faltering, they could increase that number; the Selectboard can always tweak ordinances and policies.

Mr. Carlson said he agreed with the concept and that he was uncomfortable with the notion that the Board had set a moratorium on STRs, which is not what they are doing. He said that if they set a number, there could be market for registrations as they fall below the number.

Ms. Sabel Courtney asked for clarification on the number currently registered. Mr. Fricke said about 1,300 including the lodging units.

The Selectboard discussed models of caps in other municipalities. They agreed to advance language on a cap with a specific number.

Mr. Aumand asked what the Board wanted to do on the economic impact study.

Mr. Carlson said it should proceed in parallel with the ordinance amendments. Mr. Aumand said they don't have to solve all issues at once and as they see language they could agree to move something forward and tweak it. Mr. Carlson said he hopes they could get something that would assist them in either validating or adjusting the cap.

Mr. Donza asked what kind of data they would be looking for and how it would be absorbed into the existing data they have. Mr. Aumand said he likes the idea of a fiscal impact study of what impact certain regulations would have. For example they know visitors staying at STRs spend money in the community, and if the number of STRs was reduced what the impact would be. He also said he wants to know the impact rules may have on the total

number of taxable properties and how it would impact grand list growth. Mr. Donza said he wants to know the impact on infrastructure. He added that an economist would be looking at things in a certain point in time, and impacts like COVID are not projectable.

Mr. Donza said he thinks they can come up with a number based on data they already have. Mr. Aumand said he isn't intending the study to impede any other amendments to the ordinance. Mr. Carlson said he thinks they can come up with an initial number without the study but it would behoove them to have it the study. He said that if STRs are not occupied, that is not driving economic vitality. Mr. Donza said part of it should be so they can evaluate that number and if they adjust it based on economic indicators. Mr. Carlson said the further the starting number for the cap is from the number of registrations as of the start date, the more they would need a study to inform that decision. He said there are different ways to approach it, such as a percentage of total housing units. Mr. Donza said he also wants to study impacts on infrastructure, public safety services, and traffic. Ms. Gadbois said she wants impacts on the hotels industry included.

Mr. Carlson moved to allocate \$20,000 from the General Fund Capital Fund and instruct the Town Manager to hire an economist to independently assess the STR data in accordance with the enclosed scope of work, plus the additional modifications as discussed. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Mr. Aumand asked if there was any additional discussion regarding conveyance. Mr. Donza said someone who inherits a property could still get on a waiting list. Ms. Gadbois suggested that they could potentially get a preferential spot.

Mr. Aumand asked Mr. Safford to summarize the discussion. Mr. Safford said they will be looking at treating commercial lodging similarly to hotels, see if they have the ability to treat corporate ownership differently, allow people to keep renewing the registration annually, and look at a cap number with the potential of a soft cap that might permit homeowners to exceed it with a primary residence and perhaps one other unit.

Mr. Aumand opened the meeting to public comment. Those with public comment included Mila Lonetto, Cheryl Vince, Barb Getty, Kim Legalis, Charlie Lusk, Ann Foley, Jeff Hermann, Geordy Hutchison, Mark Vandenburg, Hugh Ehrenberg, Rebecca Spalding, John Shallman, Alison Beckwith, Susan Barrett, Marina Meerburg, Leslie Adams, Van Hareses, Maryellen Auger, Steven Malfitano, Jeremy Morris, Paul Montney, Josi Kytley, Katy Lanpher, Aaron Fastman, Mckee Macdonald, Ashley Getty, Sherry Baraw Smith, and Teresa Opalacz.

Manager's Report (Item C-1)

Mr. Safford noted the next meeting is on Tuesday, February 24 for the Annual Meeting informational meeting.

Mr. Fricke said the Town received faulty data on the last quarter's local option tax remittance and they will have updated figures at the next meeting or when they receive them.

Mr. Fricke provided charts showing historic local option tax receipts with labels of when local option taxes were put into place.

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

No public comment.

Adjournment

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to adjourn. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

The Selectboard adjourned at 8:02pm.

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>