

Stowe Selectboard Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting

Wednesday, June 10, 2026

5:00pm

**Stowe Town Hall – Akeley Soldiers Memorial Building
67 Main Street
Stowe, Vermont**



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

Staff: Town Manager Charles Safford, Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke, Public Works Director Harry Shepard, Finance Director Cindy Fuller, Town Attorney David Rugh

Public: Leigh Pelletier, Barb Puddicombe, Kevin Murphy, Amelia Murphy, Scott Snyder, Pauline Lambert, Terrie Wehse, Lisa Hagerty, Michelle Kessler, Betsy Sherman, Lyn Goldsmith, Alison Leschen, McKee Macdonald, Lynn Aldadonna, Gary Markham, Alison Karosas, Brian Warner, Elizabeth Soper, Kate Smith, Barbara Baraw, Jim Englehart, AJ Shinner IV, Jill Boardman, Melissa Merrell Burgess, Bruce Gauff, Leslie Gauff, Jack Levine, Max Levine, Julie Marks, Peter Riley (30)

Zoom: Alan Kovacs, Alex Eiser, Andie Schott, Andrew Mollohan, Ann Foley, Arnie Ziegel, Ashley Correia, Beverly Bishop, Bizzy Burlinson, Blake Blundell, Charlie Smith, Cindy Morin, Cole Whitaker, Deb Drinkwater, Edmond Loiselle, Erica Bryan, Erica Cassidy, Gim Lay, Jamie, Jim DiPiazza, Ken Blundell, Ken Landy, Kim Legelis, Kristen Sharpless, Lea Van Winkle, Leslie Adams, Liz Fariello, Matt T Somweber, Mila Lonetto, Missy Merrell Burgess, Pete Kelly, Rich Scott, Rob Levy, Sam Gaines, Sean Kearney, Sydney Makris, Tif Donza, Tim Bryan, Vicki Garfinkle, Walter Frame, and 17 others (57)

Call to Order

Chair Ethan Carlson called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Aumand moved to switch items B-1 and B-2 and approve the agenda. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Executive Session

Ms. Gadbois moved to enter executive session to discuss contracts and legal issues. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

The Selectboard entered executive session at 5:00pm and left at 5:34pm.

Consent Agenda (Items A-1 through A-9)

1. May 27, 2026 Selectboard Minutes
2. 3 Acre Stormwater Management Agreement: Ampersand Village Center Development (Depot St and Thomas Ln – Phase 1)
3. Special Event Application – Art on Park
4. Special Event Application – Fourth of July
5. Special Event Application – British Invasion Block Party
6. Special Event Application – Traditional Christmas in Stowe
7. Special Event Application – Spruce Peak Concert Series

8. Bid Award – Highway Loader
9. Liquor Licenses

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

FY'27 Draft Water/Sewer Budget Work Session (Item B-2)

Mr. Safford thanks Ms. Fuller and Mr. Shepard for their work on the budgets and noted there is a large water supply/quality project that is progressing well. Water Rates and Sewer Rates are proposed to increase by 4% with other increases proposed in Allocation fees and other miscellaneous fees as outlined in the Memo and shown in the redline version of the Rate Schedule. He noted that inflation is 5% so this is an increase sensitive to the rate of inflation. Mr. Safford added that a large driver is a projected 14% increase to electricity rates, and the water/sewer utilities are large electricity users. Mr. Shepard this is an unusual budget with large capital projects on the horizon. He detailed the changes in the rate structure, new fees in recognition of changing water environment, the fund balance reduction due to the waterworks project, and other smaller capital projects including utility relocation for the Luce Hill intersection improvements.

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to warn a public hearing for the FY27 Water and Sewer Budgets and Rate Schedule for June 24, 2026. Mr. Donza seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

STR Ordinance Work Session (Item B-1)

Mr. Rugh detailed the changes made based on the previous meeting on May 13. Ms. Gadbois thanked people who made constructive comments and said it helped the Board make a better document. Mr. Carlson said there were four or five changed made based on public input at that meeting.

Mr. Aumand said he has concerns about the 850 license cap and asked how many there would be at the start. Mr. Fricke said there would be approximately 1,200 licenses based on the amendments and today's data. Mr. Aumand said the reality of there ever being licenses in a lottery is small or nonexistent and it begs the question of how they deal with that. He said he can't support it if the path for new licenses is articulated but there is a practical roadblock to it. He suggested there should be a pool of licenses by lottery based on the sales of STRs sold in the last year. Mr. Donza said that would effectively be the same as raising the cap. Mr. Carlson said there were a lot fewer registrations when the document was initially put together and the recent panic drove a lot of people to register for STRs because either they might in the future, or they mistakenly thought it would be transferrable to a buyer upon sale. Mr. Carlson suggested that a certain percentage of licenses of properties sold over the first few years go to the lottery, but not all of them.

Mr. Donza said the question is how many STRs are right for the community, and even if everyone registered isn't doing it now they might in the future, or they might drop out. Ms. Gadbois said she thinks a lot of people registered without an intention to rent in the future, but did so because they were told they needed to. Mr. Aumand said if that is the case, then someone is holding a license whereas someone else who wants to rent can't, and his idea is that licenses go into a pool that allows competition. Mr. Carlson suggested there actually may be less attrition if people don't or can't sell properties because there isn't a path for a buyer to get a license. Mr. Donza said there will be more STRs among homesteads, in the Ski PUDs, etc. Mr. Carlson said if they didn't have the panic registrations, 850 might do the job, but they have to work with what they have.

Ms. Gadbois reviewed the ordinance purpose statement and noted the vast majority of it is in regards to protecting community and neighborhoods. Mr. Aumand said he believes they are doing that, but the fact is they are operating with over 1,500 registrations, even if they are not renting. He said his goal was to

establish a cap to curb the loss of long term housing units. Ms. Gadbois said she is sick of bargaining at every meeting and picking away at it, and that they have a good ordinance. She said some people want no STRs and some people want no regulations, and this is a middle ground. Mr. Aumand said it's not a middle ground without a path to get a license in the short term, but if they created a path it would be sending a message. He added he is not opposed to a sunset on the provision.

Mr. Carlson proposed a provision where 50% of licenses for properties that sold in the past year, up to 50 total, would go to the lottery. Mr. Donza said it's a free for all right now, and they have amassed a lot of STR registrations and a year or two pause is fine. Mr. Carlson said there isn't a problem with pumping the brakes instead of slamming them. Mr. Aumand said he is worried about harm to properties that don't sell. Mr. Carlson asked if Mr. Aumand would support partial attrition as proposed. He indicated he would. Mr. Carlson asked if the Board would prefer to be unanimous on the ordinance. Mr. Donza said the community is not unanimous.

Mr. Carlson asked what is included in the Ski PUD. Mr. Rugh said they have maps to work from which are included as exhibits in the ordinance.

Mr. Aumand said he would vote to advance the ordinance in the process with the understanding he would be unlikely to vote to approve it. Mr. Donza said the ordinance can be changed, and if he saw economic harm he would be the first to want to change it. Mr. Aumand said instead of waiting for economic harm he would want to ease into it.

Ms. Gadbois said the idea is about losing community, and noted she was at a garage sale this weekend for an old woman selling her house, and the buyer wanted it closed quickly so they could get into the STR registry. Mr. Aumand said it might stop the loss of long term housing but it alone won't create new housing, and Stowe will always be a vacation community.

Chair Carlson called for public comment. Members of the public making comment included Lisa Hagerty, Amelia Murphy, Brian Warner, Alison Leschen, Julie Marks, Kim Legelis (Zoom), Michelle Kessler, Leslie Adams (Zoom), Barbara Baraw, Jim Engelhart, Betsy Sherman, Blake Blundell (Zoom), Lyn Goldsmith, AJ Shinnars, Arnie Ziegel (Zoom), Gary Markham, Vicki Garfinkle (Zoom), McKee Macdonald, Andrew Mollohan (Zoom), Peter Riley, Mola Lonetto (Zoom), Barb Puddicombe, Alan Kovacs (Zoom), and Missy Merrell Burgess.

The Selectboard recessed at 7:47pm and returned at 7:52pm.

Mr. Donza said he heard discussion regarding a lottery vs. a waiting list. He said there is something to a waiting list to give people structure. Ms. Gadbois said the problem with a waiting list is it allows people to be speculative where a lottery does not. Mr. Safford added that a waiting list can be administratively cumbersome as people come and go. Mr. Carlson and Mr. Aumand indicated no preference. Mr. Donza said it could be disheartening if someone is applying for the lottery for years and loses to someone who just moved here.

Mr. Donza spoke to the concept of the town going dark. From his perspective there are lots of STR registrations, they are only at capacity in peak weeks, and he can't see a situation where people won't find a place to stay with their family. Ms. Sabel Courtney said that neighborhoods with lots of STRs are "dark" during slow times in April and May.

Ms. Sabel Courtney said he was concerned by the comments regarding water issues, saying people are cramming lots of people into small STRs; they already need more water capacity.

Mr. Aumand said in the early 2000's the big issue was that Stowe had lost the vacation week stays market and shorter stays were becoming more common. He added that the Town helped create the issue is STRs by removing the ban of stays of less than a week from zoning in 2018. He said they are a victim of their own success. Mr. Donza said they are not a victim of anything, and that Stowe is a great town and people want to come here. He added it is a question of how vibrant they want to be.

Mr. Aumand said the economic impact study should be looked at before moving forward.

Ms. Sabel Courtney said when she worked at SAA they put on a lot of events in the 2000's there were some stores not open but she doesn't remember a dark time per say.

Mr. Donza said the mountain put a ton of money into a beautiful facility which is more attractive than the base lodges we had back in the day, and passes are a lot cheaper than they used to be. There are lots of factors that contributed to an increase of activity.

Mr. Donza said regarding incentivizing transferring to long term rentals per the housing needs assessment, that cannot be done without a cap because everyone would just get an STR license.

Mr. Carlson asked if properties contained entirely within the Ski PUD but not in the Ski PUD should be included. Mr. Rugh said part of it is the fundamental purpose of the regulation is in regulating residential dwelling units, and the Ski PUD purposely does not include residential dwelling units. That said the Selectboard has the ability to designate its own "exempt" areas so to speak, but it is a good fit purpose-wise to use the zoning designation.

Mr. Carlson asked if there were thoughts on the concept of placeholdering an STR license. Mr. Donza said he is not opposed to not allowing that, which would solve Mr. Aumand's concern, but the challenge with it is enforceability and staffing. However he would support the idea if there is a reasonable way to enforce it. Mr. Aumand said that gets to property rights and he wouldn't support requiring someone to short-term rent to have an STR license.

Mr. Carlson asked about his proposal to create a mechanism that would allow people who want to be part of the community and where renting is part of that equation. He said he is an economist by background and having no market gives him pause. He reiterated his proposal for 50% of transfers, up to 50 total, to go back to the lottery. Mr. Fricke noted that there were about 70 sales of STR registered properties last year. Mr. Donza said he doesn't hate the idea but it keeps getting eroded and the challenge with STRs is that people hold the properties longer whereas if someone is not using their vacation home themselves they are more likely to put it on the market. Mr. Carlson said he doesn't view the proposal as deluding the ordinance and it could potentially get to the goal faster if the assume sales would slow down. Mr. Carlson proposed sunseting it for two years. The Selectboard agreed on a two year sunset and 20 licenses in the lottery in 2027 and 2028.

The Selectboard discussed the adoption schedule.

Mr. Donza moved to advance the ordinance to a first reading on June 24, 2026 with the language of adding 20 lottery spots in the first two years. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Manager's Report (Item C-1)

Mr. Safford said Public Works attended the Historic Preservation Committee Meeting on 6/3/26 to discuss the Parker Barn Project. The project was presented with a dark brown roof to match the existing predominantly rust-stained preformed galvanized metal roofing. HPC made a motion accept the project as presented but with a recommendation to install a galvanized metal roof vs a brown color roof. They

also expressed a preference for standing seam vs preformed metal if the budget allows. Based on this recommendation, staff will change the roof color to galvanized, and will solicit pricing for the change to standing seam for consideration.

Mr. Safford said the Vermont Covered Bridge Society ordered a 3x5 American Flag for all covered bridges in VT and asked that we place it on Emily's Bridge on Covered Bridge Rd for the 4th of July.

Mr. Safford said the Conservation Commission will be holding three listening sessions regarding the Mayo Farm conservation easement renewal process, on June 22, July 13, and July 27, at 5:30pm at Town Hall, with a Zoom option.

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

No public comment.

Adjournment

The Selectboard adjourned at 8:34pm.

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>