

Stowe Selectboard Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
5:00pm

Akeley Memorial Building
67 Main Street
Stowe, Vermont



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

Absent: Nick Donza

In-Person Attendees: Town Manager Charles Safford, Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke, Public Works Director Harry Shepard, Catherine Gott, Ryan Krukar, Kenzie Brunner, Paul Sakash, Mila Lonetto, Heather Snyder, Jed Lipsky, Tasha Wallace, Alec Jones, Missy Merrell Burgess, Alison Karosas, Carolina Klosowski, Alison Beckwith (16)

Zoom Attendees: Mary Skelton Altadonna, Barbara Puddicombe, Blake Blundell, Leigh Pelletier, and four others (8)

Call to Order

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

Approval of the Agenda

Chair Aumand asked that the Cady Hill Management Plan be removed and added to the October 22 meeting agenda. He said that he received a call from Billy Adams referencing a prior Selectboard discussion on motorized groomers and asked staff to retrieve the related minutes for review.

Ms. Carlson moved to approve the agenda as amended. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (4-0).

Executive Session

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (4-0).

The Selectboard entered Executive Session at 5:03pm and exited at 5:25pm. The meeting recessed briefly and reconvened at 5:30pm.

Consent Agenda (Items A-1 through A-4, A-6 through A-7)

1. September 24, 2025 Selectboard Minutes
2. Stowe Electric Line of Credit
3. Stowe Electric Buck Truck Loan Approval
4. Cady Hill Forest Proposed Trail – Baby Bears
5. ~~Cady Hill Management Plan Amendments (Tabled)~~
6. Special Event Application – Harvest Festival
7. Liquor Licenses

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to approve the consent agenda as amended. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (4-0).

Health, Sanitation & Sewage Ordinance Amendments Public Hearing (Item B-1)

Chair Aumand opened the public hearing on proposed amendments to the Town's Health & Safety Ordinance and read aloud the sections with proposed amendments.

Mila Lonetto asked about the proposed correction changing “not more than 24 hours” to “more than 24 hours.” Mr. Safford clarified that this was an administrative change that does not require a new hearing.

Catherine Gott asked whether dumpsters are required to be shielded from view. Mr. Safford said the existing ordinance requires screening “to the greatest extent possible,” with no change proposed. She also asked if the rule applies to recycling and composting bins. Mr. Safford said it applies only to garbage stored for no future purposes other than eventual disposal.

Paul Sakash asked who collects fines and clarification on the amounts. Mr. Safford said it is within the discretion of police officers or the health officer to issue a ticket or not which is addressed by the ordinance, and fines are collected by the state judicial bureau and remitted to the Town minus administrative fees.

Hearing no further comments, Chair. Aumand closed the public hearing.

Ms. Gadbois moved to approve the Health, Sanitation & Sewage Ordinance amendments with the administrative correction changing “not more than 24 hours” to “more than 24 hours.” Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried (4-0).

LCPC Discussion on Future Land Use Map & Growth Centers (Item B-2)

Mr. Safford explained that the Selectboard should indicate whether or not they support the draft Land Use Map so that the Lamoille County Planning Commission can proceed with their process before January 1. He also asked for the Selectboard to give input on whether to move forward with the Tier 1B designation.

The Selectboard held a brief discussion regarding map definitions. Jed Lopsky expressed concerns about Tier 2 and Tier 3 rulemaking, and Tasha Wallace discussed the implications of the new “road rule.” Mr. Carlson noted that public education would be important if future state rulemaking affects Stowe.

Mr. Carlson moved to indicate alignment with the proposed Lamoille County Regional Plan Future Land Use Map pertaining to Stowe and direct the Planning & Zoning Director to collaborate with the Planning Commission and LCPC to develop proposed boundaries for the Tier 1B areas to be presented to the Selectboard for future consideration. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (4-0).

Short-Term Rental Registry Ordinance Discussion (Item B-3)

Mr. Aumand asked what the overall goal of the Selectboard is. Mr. Carlson said his goal is to grow or at least stop the decline of homesteads. Ms. Gadbois said they are losing ground and need to make it so families can afford to live here, or else they will need to close the schools. Mr. Aumand said he wants a vision from the Board they can all agree on. Ms. Gadbois said the goal should be to grow the community with full-time residents and children who go to the schools. Ms. Sabel Courtney said she wants to see more affordable long-term rentals, whether its senior housing, multi-generational, etc. and that at least some STRs could be long-term rentals. She added she wants to see a diverse community and to fill the schools. She also said that more affordable housing construction is needed.

Mr. Aumand said they won’t solve the problem on the back of STRs. Ms. Gadbois said it can be part of it. Mr. Aumand agreed with Ms. Sabel Courtney that more affordable housing construction is needed and that could put a dent into the need for housing. Ms. Gadbois said that neighborhood character is negatively impacted by STRs.

Mr. Carlson noted there is a mandate to do something on STRs but they need to be cautious and nuanced. He said he doesn’t think they are being overrun today with homes being purchased as STRs and that for the most part it has already happened. He added there seems to be a lot of inventory, and that even a 10% reduction in home prices won’t make a difference and it may not ever happen regardless. He said he is on board that something has to be done but wondered if it would be effective without the other pieces of a housing strategy. Ms. Gadbois said no one believes only doing something with regard to STRs will solve the problem but the pieces hopefully add up to the overall goal.

Mr. Aumand wondered about framing the problem with regards to looking to grow or stop the decline of long-term housing units, and how to focus on STRs. He said he doesn’t think regulating STRs at resorts will have an impact on housing. He asked if they have hit the peak of registrations. Mr. Fricke said it is hard to know as some people are likely waiting for the winter to register.

Alison Beckwith said the STR numbers are an overstatement as many people register but don’t rent, and they advise people buying houses to register it as an STR immediately. Heather Snyder said the STR market and revenue

potential makes \$300k houses worth \$500k. Also, families will often move to condos to keep kids in the schools but with STR revenue potential pushing up the price of condos it is becoming hard to do that. Jed Lipsky said he is glad to hear concern about the loss of homesteaders and reiterated that many homesteaders depend on STR revenue to sustain the cost of living.

Mila Lonetto said STR regulation is at the center of everything because if they want to make it easier to develop properties, many new developments will be purpose-built STRs and not housing.

Paul Sakash asked if STR is taken into account when a property is appraised by the Town. Mr. Safford said they look at sales data, market forces and conditions. He noted that appraisers are licensed, and it is a science with specific formulas. Mr. Aumand asked to hear from the Town Appraiser at a future meeting about appraisals.

Ms. Gadbois said that Stowe is an attractive investment property location and if STRs didn't exist property values would not be this high. Mr. Carlson said they need incentives for people to rent properties long-term and asked for examples of what other municipalities around the country do.

Blake Blundell said the Town needs a multi-pronged approach to fix affordability. He said the concept of STRs increasing property values misses the fact that a large portion of second home buyers don't rent the house. He said that as property values decrease, people will still buy the homes as second homes, but won't rent them. He also asked if an economic impact study was planned. He said that capping STRs will cause a loss of local option taxes.

Mr. Aumand said had suggested studying the impact of specific policies, but there are no policies proposed at this point. Ms. Sabel Courtney said self-catering lodging units are more popular than they were a while ago and it is unclear what economic impacts of certain policies would be.

Mr. Carlson asked if people feel differently about new construction vs existing properties. Ms. Gadbois noted that there are more taxable parcels than there were a decade ago but fewer homesteads. She said if they don't figure out a way to cap STRs they can't address the problem but she understands the point that some second home buyers don't care about short-term renting the property.

Alison Karosas said she wants more information on what a cap would look like to understand the impacts. She noted that it costs a lot of money to get properties up to rental code and long-term rentals give less of a return on investment. She added that occupancy is coming down and they are talking to lots of homeowners about long-term renting their properties if they don't plan to use them for a while.

Mr. Carlson asked about the economic differences of an LTR and an STR. Alison Karosas said an STR makes \$500 to \$1000 more per month. Heather Snyder said she used to make \$85,000 per year on her 2 bedroom STR, and more recently made close to \$65,000, but they chose to long-term rent it which makes \$24,000.

Paul Sakash said the state is playing itself against itself with the goal to conserve 50% of land by 2050 under Act 59, but also wanting to create more housing.

Mr. Carlson said he wants a deep dive on what other communities have done. Mr. Aumand said they should invite the Town Appraiser to discuss how appeals are done. In November there should be time to provide research on what other communities are doing and have done. The Selectboard agreed to focus on resort communities.

Mr. Aumand noted the housing task force strategic plan should be insightful. Also, he wants a full year of STR data and to-date they have six months.

Mila Lonetto said it is difficult to compare western communities with Vermont. Missy Merrell Burgess asked if the goal is to increase long-term residents or homesteads, as they are different things. She also said they should track voter registration over time.

Ms. Gadbois asked the Board to review the housing needs assessment before the next meeting. Mr. Carlson said they should propose a timeline to their goal at a future meeting.

Motion

Mr. Carlson moved to appoint Ryan Krukar to the Conservation Commission. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (4-0).

Manager's Report (Item C-1)

Mr. Safford said the Town received \$30,000 from the state for local economic impact payments related to 2024 flooding, which was put towards reimbursement for work done on Class 4 roads.

Mr. Safford provided a report on FEMA reimbursements and noted they have only received \$60,000 so far of about \$3 million outstanding.

Mr. Safford provided Act 250 notices and minutes.

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

No public comment.

Adjournment

Chair Aumand adjourned the meeting at 7:41pm.

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>