

South Hero New Town Hall Building Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, January 7, 2025

Time: 8:30 AM

Location: 38 Community Lane, South Hero, VT

OR Zoom Meeting ID: 814 1959 0978, Passcode: 660440

Committee Members Present:

- Kathleen Swanson, Chair
- Phil Scott, Vice Chair (via Zoom)
- Nate Hayward, Secretary
- Jill Lowrey
- Matt Reed
- Anne Zolotas

Committee Members Absent:

- None

Members of the Public Present:

- David Carter
- Skip Brown
- Naomi King
- Kim Julow

I. Introductions

- Members introduced themselves.

II. Review and Approval of Agenda

- The agenda was reviewed and approved.

III. Review and Approval of December 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes

- The minutes from the December 3, 2024 meeting were reviewed and approved.

IV. Discussion about Pharmacy property

- Anne shared that the owner of the former pharmacy property across the street from the Town Hall has expressed an interest in selling the building to the town. The tenant recently vacated the building and the owner now wants to sell it. He is asking \$795,000. Naomi shared a possible floorplan layout. The committee discussed some of the pros and cons of the property as a town office. The committee will get a proposal from VIS to provide a preliminary budget cost for the fit up and renovations that would be required. Matt will try to get that estimate for selectboard consideration at their next meeting. Matt felt like it may be in the \$300 per square foot range. A few other items discussed:
 - There is NOT sufficient wastewater for a town office.
 - This property was previously considered by the committee. This property does not have sufficient onsite wastewater capacity to serve a town office.

The site plan and permits can be found at:

<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/MWDocs/DirectoryDisplay.aspx?P=67095>

- The wastewater and water supply permit was approved as a best-fix system in 2005 with the capacity limited to that of the former use. The **total permitted wastewater design flow is 243 gallons per day** (less than a 2-bedroom house). This is very likely why when the property was listed for sale it sat for a long time, and ultimately sold for a deeply discounted price. For a lot of potential commercial uses this capacity is insufficient. The civil engineer that designed this system was Jay Buermann. Jay confirmed that the existing leach field could not be expanded to increase the design flows. This is due to both the onsite soils, and the required disposal field isolation distances from structures, property boundaries, and parking.
- The capacity required for a Town office is driven by maximum estimated daily use rather than the number of bathrooms or plumbing fixtures. Required design flows can be found here in table 8-3 on page 69:
 - [https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/dwgwp/rorules/pdf/Wastewater%20System%20and%20Potabl\[...\]pdf](https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/dwgwp/rorules/pdf/Wastewater%20System%20and%20Potabl[...]pdf)
- Here is what the required Town Office wastewater capacity may look like based on staff interviews and discussions with Jay Buermann:
 - Maximum employees at any given time: Town clerk, 2 assist clerks, Town Administrator, Treasurer, Zoning Administrator, 3 assessors. Total of 9 staff at 15 gallons per day each = 135 gallons per day.
 - Conference room seats: Audience 40, Board 7. Total of 47 at 4 gallons per day each = 188 gallons per day.
 - Visitors to review land records, zoning files, and meetings with staff, etc.: 15 (guess) at 4 gallons per day each = 60 gallons per day.
 - **Total potential wastewater capacity required 383 gallons per day.**
- Steve Robinson owns the parcel west, and north, of the pharmacy and may be willing to sell the town an easement for the additional wastewater required. We don't know how much money he would want, or whether the soils would support a new septic system.
 - The Robinson parcel has been previously subject to Act 250 Jurisdiction (from the permitting of the storage units). Locating additional septic on the Robinson parcel would likely pull the project into Act 250 jurisdiction. The committee might want to seek a jurisdictional opinion from the district coordinator.
- The building is about 20 years old.
- There are reported leaks in the basement and roof.
- The committee discussed adding a section to the website FAQ about this parcel.

V. Public Outreach and Presentations

● Public Outreach Meetings:

- There was discussion about the tax implications. Nate shared updated costs based on the

revised bond amount and payment schedules provided by the bond bank for 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 year schedules.

- The committee discussed and confirmed there will be one public presentation meeting in addition to the town meeting informational meeting.
 - Meeting #1: Tuesday, February 4, 2025
 - Meeting #2: Saturday, March 1, 2025 -*Town meeting informational meeting*
- The committee confirmed the public meeting venue as the Town Office.

- **One-page "case for support" document:**
 - The committee reviewed the existing "case for support" document.
 - A working group, consisting of Kathleen, Anne, and Jill, will work on a one page letter to include on the back of the flyer. Matt already has a draft with graphics for the front.
 - This can also serve as the project description that will go out in the town report. Naomi needs this no later than 2/4/25. The goal date for mailing is still TBD.
 - Matt will connect with Staples to get a better understanding of the costs, process, and timing.
 - **The final document will be presented for committee review at the next meeting on January 14, 2025.**

- **Website:**
 - The committee reviewed the website, specifically discussing:
 - Property tax implications
 - FAQs
 - Key persons to share support on the website:
 - Dave Carter has already.
 - Emails were sent to Naomi, Kim, and Sue.
 - Maybe Steve Robinson
 - A working group was formed to handle final website edits: Matt, Nate, and Phil.
 - **The final website content will be presented for committee review at the next meeting on January 14, 2025.**

VI. Public Comment

- All public comment is captured above.

VII. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:55AM.