

**TOWN OF SOUTH HERO, VERMONT
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
DECISION DATED June 24, 2026**

APPLICANT

Name: Town of South Hero
Address: 333 US RT 2/PO Box 175, South Hero, VT 05486

LANDOWNER

Name: Same

APPLICATION

Type: Conditional Use and Site Plan review for use of the first floor of the Meeting House as a Public Facility

Number: 26-44-RT320

PROPERTY

Location: 320 US RT 2

Hearing Dates: February 25, 2026 and May 13, 2026

The Town of South Hero submitted an application on January 21, 2026, requesting a conditional use and site plan review for use of the first floor of the Old White Meeting House a public facility. Per Section 805 of the South Hero Development Regulations, a warning for the public hearing appeared in the February 5, 2026 issue of the Islander and was posted in the Town Office, the Post Office, and the Town Library, and abutters to the property were notified. David Carter and Sandy Gregg presented to the Board. The hearing opened on February 25, 2026, was continued to May 13, 2026, and concluded that evening. A list of those attending and participating in the hearings is included in the minutes of each meeting.

During the course of the hearing, the following exhibits were submitted:

1. Town of South Hero Development Regulations, effective January 1, 2024.
2. South Hero Application for Conditional Use/Final Site Plan Review, rec'd January 21, 2026.

3. Project Narrative by Sandy Gregg, rec'd January 21, 2026.
4. Proposed seating and table orientation for first floor; rec'd January 5, 2026.
5. Email from Terry Robinson regarding the future location of the Historical Society's 'Honeymoon Cottage', dated and rec'd February 19, 2026.
6. Site Plan showing two options for placement of the Honeymoon Cottage; rec'd February 18, 2026.
7. Table 2.2 from the South Hero Development Regulations – Dimensional Standards for Non-Village Districts
8. Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Permit #WW-6-0326-5
9. Meeting House and Vicinity Site Plan, by Buermann Engineering; Sheet 1 of 1, dated April 27, 2026; rec'd April 30, 2026.
10. "Development Review Board Considerations" by Buermann Engineering, dated April 27, 2026; rec'd April 30, 2026.
11. Email from Ed Pierce of VTrans to Jay Buermann, dated March 20, 2026; rec'd April 30, 2026,
12. Email from Denise Johnson-Terk to Jay Buermann, dated March 23, 2026, with attached "exemption 1-304(29); rec'd April 30, 2026.
13. Staff reports for the February 25 and May 13, 2026 DRB hearings.
14. Draft minutes for the February 25 and May 13, 2026 DRB meetings.

Based on the application, supporting documents, and testimony of Phelan O'Connor, **the Development Review Board makes the following Findings and enters the following decision:**

Findings:

1. The Old White Meeting House, circa 1816, is owned by the Town of South Hero and is currently under renovation. The Town, represented by Meeting House Committee members David Carter and Sandy Gregg, is proposing to use the first floor as a public facility, available for holding public events. The property is in the South Hero Village Zoning District.
2. The structure originally sat on a 0.5-acre lot but was combined with adjoining property to the north and the small town-owned "red fire station", via a boundary adjustment in 2025, creating a 2.44-acre lot. The recently permitted Town Park will now share the parcel with the Meeting House.
3. In addition to originally serving as a church, and later a school and library, recent uses of the structure include serving as the home of the South Hero Fire Department, when two large garage doors were cut into the east wall, and the front foyer and second floor retail was used by Grannies' Attic.

4. The renovation of the Meeting House will be in 3 phases. The first phase includes a new foundation, restoration of windows and timber frames, stabilizing the east wall, a new slate roof, weatherization and HVAC for the first floor, and an ADA ramp on the back (north) of the building. Future uses proposed for the second and third phases will need further review by the DRB, if required. While the renovation does not need Board review, the proposed use of the first floor does.
5. There will be 2 entrance/exits – a rear door at the northwest corner of the building, and the existing front door.
6. Proposed uses for the restored first floor include an indoor winter Farmers' Market, programs sponsored by other organizations, exercise classes, and rental for private functions such as weddings and family reunions.
7. The Applicants stated the meeting space on the restored first floor will accommodate large gatherings of up to 150 people.
8. Parking, shared with the park, is located north of the building, along the west side of the park. 2 ADA spaces are shown on the site plan, adjacent to an ADA ramp to the rear entrance. A sidewalk leads from the parking lot to this entrance. There are 72 parking spaces shown on the site plan, including 35 overflow spaces on grass.
9. There will be no parking in front of the building. The Applicants stated there will be a walkway from the sidewalk to the front door.
10. An existing VTrans access permit, approved for the park, will also serve the Meeting House. There will be designated entrance and exit lanes.
11. Outdoor lighting will be building mounted over each door. Three-foot tall bollard-style lighting will be installed along the walkway from the north end of the Meeting House along the easterly side of the parking area. This lighting will be spaced 10 feet apart. A total of 33 lights is shown on the project plan.
12. Landscaping will include removing the existing asphalt from the immediate perimeter of the Meeting House, replaced by a grass curtain. Two existing maple trees along RT 2 will remain.
13. An underground power line from a pole on RT 2 will run along the east side of the Meeting House to the park, from which UG conduit will distribute power to the lighting along the parking area.
14. The Applicants have received a wastewater exemption from VT DEC, allowing them to use port-o-lets until later phases of the renovation. The exemption allows no more than 28 events per year.
15. Plans for trash removal will be “trash in/trash out”. There is no plan to have a dumpster at this point in the renovation process.

16. On an “average day”, estimated average daily traffic flow is 60 trip-ends, and a peak hour flow of 15 trip-ends. Traffic flow for special events will depend on the event and number of attendees.

Conclusions of Law:

- A. The application meets the definition of a public facility, per Article 10. Per Table 2.1 (Allowed Uses), this use requires conditional use and site plan review in the South Hero Village zoning district.
- B. The application does not create an undue adverse effect (per Figure 3.2).
- C. The Application meets the requirements of Sec 302.D.2 – Character of the Neighborhood.
- D. The Application meets the requirements of Table 5.1 (Minimum Parking Ratios – Public Facilities for Mass Assembly).
- E. The Application relies on a shared-use parking arrangement, utilizing the parking spaces previously permitted for the adjacent Town Park. Following a 2025 boundary line adjustment, both the Meeting House and the Town Park are now situated on the same 2.44-acre parcel. Because these parking spaces are simultaneously available to the general public, neighboring businesses, and users of the Town Park, a coordinated regulatory framework is necessary to ensure the parking facility satisfies the off-street parking, loading, and traffic requirements of Section 707.
- F. For community owned and operated facilities, Section 707 (public Facilities) limits the review only with respect to location, size, height, building bulk, yards, courts, setbacks, density of buildings, off-street parking and loading, traffic, noise, lighting, and landscaping requirements.
- G. With additional information requested by the Development Review Board, the application will meet the requirements of Table 3.2 (Final Site Plan Requirements).

On June 24, 2026, J. Brightwell moved to approve the application, with the findings of fact listed; T. Mullen second. Whereas final approval was granted to the application with Conditions: D. Patterson; N. Hayward; J. Brightwell; L. Kilcoyne; and T. Mullen.

Conditions:

1. Applicants shall comply with all evidence as presented at the hearing.
2. An updated site plan must be submitted to the Zoning Administrator, including the following:
 - a. Proposed site plan with Phase 1 information only.
 - b. Add the walkway from the sidewalk to the front door.
 - c. Port-o-let quantity and locations.
 - d. Provide cut sheets for the proposed lighting fixtures.

3. Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) , the South Hero Selectboard shall adopt and present to the Zoning Administrator a formal ordinance or binding policy regulating how events at the Meeting House will be coordinated with regard to parking. This ordinance/policy must explicitly address how parking will be managed and allocated during concurrent uses, given that the parking lot is shared with the general public, neighboring businesses, and users of the Town Park, a coordinated regulatory framework is necessary to ensure the parking facility satisfies the off-street parking, loading, and traffic requirements of Section 707.
4. Before a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is issued for Phase 1, the South Hero Selectboard, the Meeting House Committee, and the Recreation Commission will team up to create and adopt a shared-use ordinance or policy manual. To keep things running smoothly, safely, and fairly for all neighbors and visitors, this joint policy will clearly outline:
 - a. **Event Coordination & Scheduling:** A simple permit system for organized gatherings (for example, groups of 10 or more) so that large events at the park and the Meeting House don't accidentally get booked at the same time and overload the venue.
 - b. **Clear Communication & Contact Points:** Who is in charge of managing bookings, who the go-to contact person is for the public, and how scheduling conflicts or shared decisions will be resolved in a friendly manner.
 - c. **Parking & Traffic:** Clear rules on how the shared parking spaces will be monitored, seasonal hours of operation, straightforward protocols for overflow parking during big turnouts, and guidelines for when traffic control might be needed to keep the area safe.
 - d. **Expectations & Keeping It Clean:** Standard rules of conduct for guests, a clear "carry-in/carry-out" trash policy to keep the property pristine, and a fair system for resolving issues or handling parking/property violations if they arise.
5. The Town of South Hero's responsibilities are limited to compliance with the approvals and permits issued by the Town of South Hero. The Town accepts no responsibility for compliance with the conditions of any permits or approvals issued by any other entity. The Town of South Hero will not be liable for the failure of the applicants to carry out their duties and responsibilities.

Dated: June 24, 2026



For the Development Review Board

APPEAL RIGHTS

Any appeal of this decision must be filed with the Superior Court, Environmental Division (located at 2418 Airport Road, Suite 1, Barre, VT 05641-8701) within 30 days of the date the decision was issued, pursuant to 10 V.S.A. Chapter 220. The Notice of Appeal must comply with the Vermont Rules for Environmental Court Proceedings (VRECP). The appellant must file with the Notice of Appeal the entry fee required by 32 V.S.A. §1431 and the 5% surcharge required by 32 V.S.A. §1434a(a). A copy of this appeal must be filed with the Zoning Administrator or the Town Clerk within thirty (30) days of the date of issuance.