

**Stowe Selectboard, Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting**  
**Monday August 22, 2022**

Present:

Selectboard Members: William Adams, Lisa Hagerty, Jo Sabel Courtney, Nick Donza, Paco Aumand

In Person attendees: Paul Sakash, Rob Moore, Drew Clymer

There were 5 participant on Zoom

**Call to Order**

Chair Billy Adams called the meeting to order at 5:03pm.

**Approve the Agenda**

On a motion by Ms. Jo Sabel Courtney, seconded by Ms. Lisa Hagerty, the Board approved the agenda, with the removal of Business Item B-4 and addition of six permits in the Liquor Consent Items.

Executive Session

On a motion by Ms. Hagerty, seconded by Mr. Nick Donza, the Board went into Executive Session at 5:04pm to discuss personnel. They invited Mr. Drew Clymer to join them.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 5:32pm.

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Ms. Hagerty, the Board appointed Mr. William Ardolino as an Alternate to the Development Review Board to fill a vacant seat which will expire April 30, 2025.

**Consent Agenda**

1. 8/8/22 Selectboard Minutes
2. Special Event Applications – British Invasion Block Party & Pumpkin Chuckin’
3. Sewer Pump Bid Award
4. Water/Sewer Allocation: 1651 Mountain Road
5. Cemetery Fees Update
6. Liquor Consent Items

On a motion by Ms. Hagerty, seconded by Mr. Donza, the Board approved the Consent Agenda with the six additional permits in the Liquor Consent Items.

**Motor Vehicle Ordinance Amendments: Tour Bus Parking**

Police Chief Donald Hull has proposed making some of the parking spaces on Depot Street designated tour bus drop off/pick up area and potentially signage to direct the tour buses to park in alternative locations such as the lower parking lot by Stowe Arena or Mayo Events Field while waiting. He has also been working with Stowe Area Association to get the word out to tour bus companies. The Selectboard discussed the need to add structure to the tour bus drop off and pick up process but were concerned about the loss of three parking spaces so close to the village. The Board suggested moving the designated drop off/pick up area to further down on Depot Street just past the stop sign at the intersection with Pond Street and Slab Alley.

The Board also discussed alternative locations for directing tour busses to park, as the lower Stowe Area parking area can get busy and might be difficult to get in and out of, particularly during school pick up times. Town Manager Charles Safford noted that the Town is not regulating where the buses park, just where to restrict parking for a tour bus drop-off. It was discussed that buses could park in any public parking lot or space provided they adhered to parking regulations. The Mayo Events Field parking lot,

spaces further down on Depot Street and Moscow bus garage we other locations discussed that could potentially accommodate bus parking while waiting to pick up their passengers.

On a motion by Mr. Paco Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board warned a public hearing for the September 6, 2022 meeting to amend the Traffic and Vehicle Ordinance to designate tour bus drop off/pick up area on Depot Street after the intersection with Pond Street and Slab Alley.

### **Household Income Sensitivity Caps**

In accordance with State law, a municipality must do a reappraisal if the education Grand List has a common level of appraisal below 85% or has a coefficient of dispersion greater than 20. The Director of Property Valuation and Review indicates that the Stowe municipality CLA was 78.35% and COD of 17.08%, requiring a reappraisal. The Town of Stowe is planning a reappraisal to begin 9/1/22 and anticipated completion in June of 2024. Due to the demand and associated increase in housing sale values, it is likely that appraised values will significantly increase during the reappraisal process. This may also increase Stowe's Grand List proportionally to other Grand Lists in Vermont, leading to increased education property taxes for Stowe property owners.

Currently, the State has an Income Sensitivity Program for homeowners who live in Vermont and have a household income of less than \$136,900 and a home value of up to \$400,000 can qualify for up to \$8,000 in property tax credits from the State. According to Tim Morrissey, Stowe Town Appraiser, the average homestead residential property in Stowe is currently \$468,083 and is anticipated to increase significantly with the reappraisal. He noted that currently about 700 residents in Stowe receive some credit through the Income Sensitivity Program, and any increase in their home values over the maximum \$400,000 value will not be considered for Income Sensitivity.

Unless the State increases the income and/or house site value caps and the maximum adjustment allowed, it is likely to have a significant impact on these homeowners. While there is value in the home when they sell, the cost of carrying that property in the interim period may increase without a corresponding increase in their household income. This could push some homeowners out of Stowe as they will not be able to afford the increase in property taxes, which could change the fabric of the community and reduce economic diversity.

It was discussed that while this is a big concern for Stowe and is likely to be an issue across the state due to a number of municipalities needing to do reappraisals as a result of rising property values.

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board approved the letter to the Governor and candidates for Statewide office potentially serving Stowe requesting that they increase the income sensitivity caps this legislative session.

### **LCPC Transportation Mitigation Grant**

Rob Moore, representing Lamoille County Planning Commission, attended the meeting to discuss a grant from Vermont MTI (VTrans) that they would like to apply for. The grant will provide funding to hire a consultant to perform a congestion mitigation needs and solution assessment for the State and Town road networks between I-89 in Waterbury and Smugglers' Notch State Park. Mr. Moore explained that the study would focus on three key areas: Transportation options (public and non-public transit), Parking inventory and potential opportunities, and marketing. This study will not include any road infrastructure changes, as it rather focuses on public transportation options and how best to get the public to utilize them. Mr. Moore noted that there have been several working groups looking at traffic congestion in Stowe, and that many of the ideas from those groups will be used in this study. The consultant will work with the Stowe Energy Committee, Working Communities Challenge Town of Stowe Staff and other groups such as Stowe Area Association. He also noted that part of the study will include cost analysis for different ideas, along with a "menu" of options for Town, State, and businesses to help alleviate traffic

congestion through the use of transportation options. There will also be public engagement opportunities to allow for community input. The study would have a completion date of December 2023.

The requested grant amount is \$50,000 with a \$10,00 match which can include in-kind services. LCPC is seeking \$5,000 from the Town in advance in attrition to any staff time that could go towards the in-kind match.

On a motion by Ms. Courtney, seconded by Ms. Hagerty, the Board supported the project and authorized the Town Manager to ear mark \$5,000 from the administrative contingency to support the project if the Vermont MTI Grant is awarded by VTrans.

### **Manager's Report**

Mr. Safford noted that the Lamoille Housing Partnership and Lamoille Working Communities Challenge summit on housing has been postponed until late October with the exact date to be determined.

Mr. Safford also noted that Green Mountain Transit will be holding a public meeting to discuss increases to the Mountain Road Shuttle hours, it will be held at the Akeley Memorial Building on August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30pm.

Cindy Fuller, Stowe Finance Director, has provided the final FY'22 Local Option Taxes total of \$1,508,410, which is \$508,410 above the projected \$1 million dollars. This is an increase of 50% over the 2019 (pre-pandemic) LOT receipts, an indicator of economic growth. It was discussed that for FY24 budgeting purposes, the Town will likely estimate LOT receipts somewhere between \$1-\$1.5M erring on the side of being conservative. Any funds received above the estimate are put into the capital reserve fund for future capital projects.

Ms. Fuller also provided a total account of FY'22 Grants to the Town of Stowe which equaled \$3,169,474. This includes ARPA funding.

Mr. Safford reported that beaver dams between Pond and School Street are currently causing water to back up onto the tennis courts on Memorial Park. The dams are located on private property, but the property owners are working with Vermont Fish & Wildlife to install beaver deceiver to try to lower the water elevation. The Town will be providing the materials for the deceiver. With the negative impacts to Memorial Park and nearby Stowe Elementary School, if the deceiver is unsuccessful in lowering the water elevation by at least 2', other lawful means of managing the beaver activity may be required. The Board discussed the increase in beaver activity in Town, including multiple dams on the recreation path. Mr. Safford noted that many dams wash out naturally and if Town infrastructure is threatened by a dam and associated water backups, there is a Beaver Management Guidelines that the Town has in place to follow.

Mr. Paul Sakash asked about the status of the Welcome signs for the entrances into Town. Public Works Director Harry Shepard replied that they are in the permitting and development stage but are anticipated to come in on budget. He also asked about if Stowe Theater sign is in accordance with Stowe's zoning regulations and noted there are a number of other sandwich board signs around Town that appear to be in violation. Mr. Safford indicated he would discuss with the Zoning Administrator and have someone follow up.

Mr. Bobby Murphy, Vice President and General Manager of Stowe Mountain Resort, updated the Board on new policies that Vail Corporation has recently put into place, including limiting the number of day-use passes each day. There will be no limit on the Epic pass. They are hopeful this will encourage user to

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make advance purchases of tickets which will allow for management of volumes. He also indicated that opening day is tentatively set for November 18<sup>th</sup> with the safety protocols used for the summer season in place, which includes employee health screenings, but no mask or vaccine requirement. Mr. Murphy also indicated that they are finalizing a contract with the parking vendor for the new paid parking program, and more details will be available once that contract is completed, likely by the end of September.

Mr. Safford reminded the Board of the shift in meeting schedule for September, with meetings scheduled for Tuesday September 6<sup>th</sup> (following Labor Day) and Monday September 19<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Courtney raised concern about motorized bikes on the recreation path and around town. Mr. Safford noted that motorized vehicles are technically not allowed on the Recreation Path, however the State Law allows pedal-assisted e-bikes on all paths, and other exceptions such as motorized wheelchairs are allowed. He will ask the Police Chief to assess, education, and enforce motorized vehicles which fall outside of this such as electric motorcycles that do not require peddle assistance to operate. The Board discussed the overall congestion and use of the Recreation Path understanding that it may eventually require more thought as it grows in popularity and diversity of use.

There being no further business, Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 7:38pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Sweetser.

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