

TOWN OF NORWICH  
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD  
DRAFT MINUTES  
Thursday, February 18, 2021

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Act 92 OML compliant meeting conducted via Town of Norwich Zoom account. These proceedings were recorded.

**Members Present:** Arline Rotman (Chair), Sue Pitiger, John Lawe, Richard Stucker, John Carroll, Don McCabe,  
**Alternates Present:** Matt Stuart  
**Staff:** Francis (Clerk)  
**Public:** Barbara Tolman, Elissa Close, Brooke Harrington, Curt Barthel, Eleanor Huke, Emily Myers, Ethan Myers, Jay Van Arman, Jane Sobel, Ronal Sobel, Martha Nelson, Christopher Brady, Paul Horak, Marcia Cassidy, Tim Pangburn, Kate White, Curt Barthel, Marianne Bartel, Russell Schleipman, Corina Bell-Isle, Doug Hewitt, Stewart Richards, Miriam Richards, Pamela Thompson Smith, Linda Cook, Omer Trajman, Lily Trajman, Emily Blumsack. Jon Felde, Brie Swenson

- 1) **Call to Order:** Roll Call 7:08pm
- 2) **Agenda:**  
Carroll moved and Pitiger seconded a motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried 6 – 0.
- 3) **Minutes of 02-04-21**  
Carroll moved and Pitiger seconded a motion to approve the minutes of January 21, 2020 as amended (to state Carroll was absent). Motion carried 6 – 0.
- 4) **Public Comments and Announcements:** None
- 5) **Administrative Issues and Updates:** None
- 6) **Public Hearing 7:14pm**
  - a) **#58BSUB20 Continued from January 21, 2021: Preliminary Plan Review** of a subdivision Application by Russell F. Schleipman, Applicant and Landowner, to divide Lot #10-207.100 to create 2 lots at Union Village RD. Proposed Lot 1 to be ±4.28 acres, undeveloped. Proposed Lot 2 to be ±10.8 acres undeveloped.

Francis, as Clerk of the DRB reported on the questions posed at the site visit conducted on the subject lands at 4:00pm earlier the same day. Doug Hewitt PE, the applicant and Corina Belle-Isle led the board and ten abutters and neighbors on a site visit. The path of the proposed private road was shown to the point where two private driveways would commence servicing each of the two proposed lots. The proposed development envelope for Lot 1 was shown and the boundary between Lot 1 and Lot 2 was explained.

Questions raised at the site visit are summarized below with answers provided by Doug Hewitt, PE.

- What is the path of the proposed private road in relation to the existing power pole location at 66 Partridge Hill RD?
  - The precise path has yet to be confirmed and is subject to change on the basis of feedback from the board with regard to the grade permitted for the private road and other considerations
- What is the grade of the proposed private road?

- At no point will the grade exceed 17.5 percent
- How will this be achieved given the existing terrain?
  - A substantial amount of cut and fill will be needed to achieve this result
- Will tree removal be needed, and does this vary with the final width of the private road (the width being the subject of a waiver)?
  - Several trees will need to be removed; a wider road requirement will necessitate more trees being removed
- Is the soil depth of the area identified as the road-bed known?
  - No, but blasting may be necessary
- Is access to Lot 1 and 2 possible from Union Village RD?
  - There is a steep gully, additional permits from the state would be required, which would involve delineation of the stream, site assessment for any wetland impacts and substantial extra road length, because a series of switchbacks would be needed to traverse the steep slope present on proposed Lot 1. The conclusion has been that impacts using access from Partridge Hill are less.

Doug Hewitt PE, made a presentation on behalf of the applicants describing the path of the proposed private road, the dimensions of the proposed parcels (including a boundary line adjustment between Lot #10-201.000 (66 Partridge Hill RD) and Lot #10-207.100 which would reduce the remaining Lot# #10-201.000 from 5.9 acres to 4.0 acres with the 1.63 acres being added to the proposed Lot 2 (total area 4.75 acres).

Board members asked questions based on the applicable criteria laid out in Article III of the Norwich Subdivision Regulations (NSR) including the following:

- What is the width of the ROW for the private road servicing proposed Lots 1 and 2?
  - The requirement of the *Norwich Private Road Specifications* is a 50-foot ROW with a minimum width of 14 feet and two one-foot shoulders for the travelled portion of the ROW. The application includes a waiver request from 14 feet to 10 feet with two one-foot shoulders for the travelled portion and an increase in maximum grade from 12 percent to 17.5 percent intended to reduce project cost and impact on steep terrain
- What section of the private road exceeds 17.5 percent?
  - The maximum proposed grade is 17.5 percent. The section of private road exceeding 12 percent is approximately 180 feet in length and commences where the proposed road would connect with an existing roadbed (which would be improved) and continues past the parcel boundary between 66 Partridge Hill RD and proposed Lot 2.
- Why is access to Lot 1 and Lot 2 from Union Village Rd not possible? What is the total elevation gain from Union Village Rd to the boundary between proposed Lot 1 and Lot 2 compared to the elevation gain from the end of the cul-de-sac at 66 Partridge Hill to the point at which the private road becomes driveway access for Lot and Lot 2?
  - The approximate elevation gain from Union Village Rd to the point where the proposed private road ends for accessing proposed Lot and Lot 2 is 132 feet. The approximate elevation gain from the beginning of the proposed private road at 66 Partridge Hill RD to the same point is 82 feet.
- What is the reason to prefer the Partridge Hill access to Lot 1 and Lot 2 over Union Village?
  - There are less natural resource impacts, less visual impact (no switchbacks through the meadow) and cost
- Why does the private road take the path it does with regard to the property boundary

between 66 and 64 Partridge Hill?

- This path already requires cutting into the up-slope side of the proposed private road on 66 Partridge Hill RD. The path was determined by balancing out this impact with the distance the proposed ROW is from the property boundary. Pushing the road up-slope increases the size of the cut in the slope.
- The proposed private road is heavily shaded by trees, will that be safe in winter? Would the 14-foot width be safer?
  - The reduction in width will not significantly increase the extent of shading from evergreen trees. It will mostly be a surface (snowplowing) maintenance issue
- What is the status of existing 'lane' identified during the site visit?
  - The lane is a pre-existing access the proposal to use this alignment reduces impact, and works with the given topography
- Has thought been given to shifting the private road?
  - All other alignments involved substantially more impact
- Assuming the private road takes the proposed path, a lot of clearing will be needed how do you propose to mitigate that?
  - The plans show a ditch on the uphill side of the private road to transport stormwater downslope to Partridge Hill RD and the existing drainage structures

Chair Rotman opened the hearing to comments from the Public.

Elissa Close commented that Exhibit A-7 appears to exaggerate the grade of the existing driveway to 66 Partridge Hill RD. and sought to have a pdf of a slope map generated by the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Natural Resources Atlas admitted as an exhibit along with written comments submitted via email to the Clerk of the DRB in the past week. By common assent the DRB agreed to have the slope map and written comments admitted into evidence.

- IP-2 Close: Slope Map (ANR Natural Resource Atlas)
- IP-3 Close: Partridge Hill cul-de-sac safety issues
- IP-4 Close: Driveway. Steep slopes

Tim Pangburn referenced their written comments (see IP-1 in the packet). Exhibits A9 and A-10 show tree cover which has been recently removed (east of the existing driveway for 66 Partridge Hill). The removal of the trees has exacerbated existing problems with runoff leading to erosion of the road-bed and other stormwater issues.

Kate White asked that no waiver to road standards be granted without a detailed erosion control and stormwater plan being submitted. She further commented that the watercourse on Union Village Rd is not listed, there are no wetlands mapped and there are several examples of culverts connecting parcels to Union Village RD. Lastly, the buffering of the private road is on the side of 66 Partridge Hill (the applicants) not 64 Partridge Hill (the abutters).

Ronald Sobel was introduced by his wife Jane and spoke of the longstanding drainage problem experienced on their property as a consequence of run-off from 66 Partridge Hill, and feared that the proposed private road would cause similar issues.

Eleanor Huke submitted written testimony on February 15 and asked to have it entered into evidence. By common assent the board agreed to have her comments admitted into evidence.

IP-5 Huke: Schleipman Prop.

Huke commented that the ditching for Partridge Hill RD had filled in over time from silt, pebbles and new vegetation and that they no longer function.

Barbara Tolman commented that during the site visit the engineer (Doug Hewitt) had suggested that blasting may be needed. How does this meet the description in the application of 'practical design'?

Christopher Brady commented that the cul-de-sac is the perimeter of the Village Residential district, but that the Schleipman parcels are wholly in Rural Residential and asked that the DRB be sensitive to this breach of the Rural Residential district.

Marcia Cassidy asked would the proposed private road become a town road?

Brooke Harrington commented that she would like to echo the neighbors' concerns regarding safety, increased traffic and was distressed by the idea of blasting.

Christopher Brady remarked that the application was full of errors and omissions.

Elissa Close pointed the board to the need to address Section 3.7 Roads, Driveways and Pedestrian Access (D) Coordination with Adjoining Properties in the Norwich Subdivision Regulations.

Russell Schleipman replied to the comments by saying that he had lived on Partridge Hill for 60 years and that he hoped one day to build a home in the woods on Lot 2. And, that traffic impact would be negligible given that the development proposed only two new houses.

After a brief discussion the board agreed to continue the hearing to March 18, 2021.

**b) Appeal of 1-6-21 Zoning Administrator Decision** concerning an alleged violation caused by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) sign at 236 Main Street by Appellant, Stuart Richards, of 82 Elm Street. Application to be reviewed under the Norwich Zoning Regulations.

Mr. Richards noted the late hour and requested that the hearing on the appeal of the Zoning Administrator's decision be continued to March 18.

Mr. Richards sought to have comments provided via email and subsequent comments include for discussion by the board on March 18. The board gave a deadline for submitting further materials by March 10, 2021.

Stucker moved and Carroll to continue the hearing to March 18, 2021. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Meeting closed at 9:22pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Rod Francis

**Future Meetings:**

Thursday, March 18 at 7:00PM

DRB Minutes available at:

<http://Norwich.vt.us/development-review-board-minutes/>

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