

Shaftsbury Development Review Board

July 5, 2023

In person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

1) Call to Order – Recognition of Quorum

The meeting came to order at 6:04 p.m. Present were board members Mike Day (chair), Sarah Costin, Tedd Habberfield, and Denny Browe. Zoning administrator Shelly Stiles was also present.

2) Conflict of Interest

No one reported a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

3) Sign in sheets

Sign in sheets were completed by the permit #23-003 applicant.

4) Approval of Minutes – June 21, 2023

Mr. Habberfield moved to approve the June 21 minutes. Mr. Browe seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

5) Application 23-0053, parcel 17 22 05, address 972 VT Route 7, owners Williams & Company LLC: conditional use permit for retail store.

Lilli Williams explained that when she bought the property in December 2022, she knew parking was an issue. For this reason she negotiated with the owner of the garage on the southwest side of the intersection of Church Street and Route 7A to use up to about half his parking lot for parking for her new store. She said she and the garage owner had talked about putting up a fence and otherwise prettying up the lot. She also said her next door neighbor said he didn't mind people parking in the space in front of their house. She also noted that there may be a possibility of using the proposed Cole Hall "green" for parking and that there has been talk of putting in a sidewalk on Buck Hill Rd.

She said she has received enormous support from Shaftsbury residents for her new store.

She said the seller told her that contrary to rumor and an article in the Bennington Banner, the septic system had not backed up. Rather, a grease drain had not been maintained by the former tenant and the drain backed up. Ms. Williams hired All Out Septic to inspect the septic system – a 1500 gallon tank and a 2001 leach field – and they pronounced "everything in perfect condition." The leach field occupies the entire back yard. She plans to service the tank annually, or as recommended by All Out.

She said the existing refrigeration system will be replaced with new stand alone units.

She has talked with Neighborworks about efficiency updates. The old furnace heats the store. The tenants have their own propane tanks.

She and her husband recently moved into his family's old home on Horton Hill Road, less than a mile away. She has found a head cook (a caterer). She hopes to cook a "meal of the day," a good meal, and will package leftovers to go. She would like to work one day a week in the kitchen herself. She has a culinary background. She has person in mind to be her business manager. Her husband will be in charge of repairs and maintenance.

Among the other things she has lined up: trees will be pruned and one tree will be taken down; outside painters have been secured; the floor needs repair; an updated inspection of the fire safety unit over the stove will be done.

She hopes to have a kids section, sell Vermont products including maybe apparel, maybe fishing products, specialty dog foods, and quick drinks. She will occasionally highlight southern meals (her mother in law, a cook, is from Tennessee).

Dave Mance, whose family owns the garage lot, has indicated he is very supportive of her project but has not signed an official agreement to use the garage lot.

Mr. Day noted that the northwest corner of the intersection of Church and Route 7A will soon become a no parking zone.

In response to questions, Ms. Williams said

- The upstairs apartments are both rented.
- The building has an updated C of O.
- The electrical system has been upgraded throughout.
- The former maintained her state food service license until May 2023 so it should be simply to get a renewal.
- She explained how the inside space will be reconfigured.
- The compressor in the basement will be removed.
- She may purchase and use a smoker.

Mr. Day asked that the site plan she submitted be revised to include inside and outside dimensions, abutters, property lines, and other relevant items as required by bylaw section 3.5.2. Ms. Stiles will send Ms. Williams whatever she can find in the file for the parcel.

Mr. Day asked Ms. Williams to submit various state approvals including fire safety, the All Out Septic report, letters from the police and fire departments regarding the project's impact on their ability to provide service, and a letter from the Mance family acknowledging their intention to rent or permit the garage owner to sublet space for parking.

She said as far as she knows she doesn't need to provide an ADA-compliant ramp but that if necessary she could build one to provide access to the rear of the store.

She will bring in a statement that she notified the abutters about the hearing.

Mr. Habberfield moved to recess the hearing. Ms. Costin seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

6) Other business

Ms. Stiles described issues with the Landview subdivision/variance mylar. In future all communications from David Spurr will go directly to the DRB.

The July 19 meeting was cancelled for lack of business to conduct.

Mr. Habberfield moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Ms. Costin seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.