

05-07-2025 DRB Meeting

Meeting minutes

Meeting Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM by Chair Panos Lekkas, who apologized for the delay due to technical issues.

Roll Call

Chair Panos Lekkas conducted the roll call. Present were Stephanie Kilburn, Brett Sylvester, Jake St. Pierre, Lucas Campbell, Panos Lekkas, and Clerk Adam Lavigne.

Amend Agenda For Items Not Listed

Chair Lekkas asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Derek Reed suggested swearing in Brett as an alternate. Adam Lavigne clarified that Brett hadn't been confirmed by the selectboard yet, and that the board wouldn't be reviewing minutes at this meeting to focus on the hearing.

Motion To Accept Agenda With Any Amendments (Vote)

Chair Panos Lekkas made a motion to accept the agenda with the amendment of swearing in Mr. Sebastian as an alternate. The motion was seconded by Lucas. All were in favor.

Chair Lekkas noted that they had not yet heard back from the select board regarding Brett's approval. Derek Reed clarified that they couldn't swear him in until they received approval. Chair Lekkas instructed Brett to go to Melissa in the town clerk's office to fill out paperwork once he received approval.

Hearing On Application 03-25 CU Round Barn – Applicant: Round Barn Housing Limited Partnership

Presentation by Applicant

Jess Neubilt, senior developer at EverNorth, introduced the project team and provided background on the Round Barn property. She explained that the current buildings, which were converted and constructed in 1981, were facing significant challenges including aging infrastructure, financial constraints, and accessibility issues.

The proposed project aims to:

- Restructure financing to improve operating revenue
- Enhance accessibility
- Reduce energy consumption
- Create elevator-served units
- Improve spaces for resident services and management

The plan involves:

- Deep retrofit of the existing 8-unit annex building
- Construction of 16 new units to replace those in the Round Barn
- Partnership with Cathedral Square for senior housing expertise

Jess addressed the potential demolition of the Round Barn, stating that renovation was not feasible due to costs and ongoing maintenance. She mentioned exploring options for relocation or alternative uses but emphasized that demolition was being considered.

Derek Reed presented the site plan, detailing:

- Location of new building and existing structures

- Water and sewer infrastructure
- Site circulation and amenities
- Fire department access and safety measures
- Electrical and sprinkler systems

Questions and Discussions

Chair Lekkas and board members asked questions about:

- Energy savings plans
- Light pollution mitigation
- Wastewater management
- Parking lot usage during construction
- Impact on mature trees and neighborhood character
- Relocation plans for current residents

The applicants addressed these concerns, providing details on their plans for energy efficiency, minimal lighting impact, and careful management of resident relocation.

Public Comments

Lucille Campbell, representing the Grand Isle Historical Society and 35+ residents, presented concerns about the potential loss of the historic Round Barn. She requested:

- A professional structural assessment of the barn
- Exploration of restoration options
- Documentation of the barn if demolition occurs
- Commemoration of the barn's history on-site

Bob, a neighboring property owner, discussed the history of the septic system and recent maintenance issues.

Emily Clark, a nearby property owner and Planning Commission chair, questioned the location choice for senior housing and suggested exploring alternative sites closer to town amenities.

Geoff Gordon, an immediate neighbor, asked about the new building's setback from property lines and tree removal plans. He also requested ongoing communication during construction due to concerns about noise affecting his young child.

Several attendees discussed the historical significance of the Round Barn and the possibility of preserving it or finding alternative uses.

Applicant Responses

The applicants addressed public comments, explaining:

- Previous structural assessments and renovation cost estimates
- Willingness to document the barn's history and commemorate it on-site
- Challenges with alternative uses due to wastewater limitations
- Reasons for the chosen location and building design
- Ongoing efforts to explore relocation options

Chair Lekkas clarified that the DRB's role is to ensure the proposal meets town bylaws and cannot mandate preservation of the barn if the application meets requirements.

Updates Of ZAO – N/A

Clerk – N/A

Adjourn – Motion To Close Meeting (Vote)

Chair Lekkas announced that the hearing would remain open and the DRB would adjourn to June 4th to allow time for review of the evidence presented.

Chair Panos Lekkas made a motion to adjourn the DRB meeting on May 7, 2025, at 7:39 PM. The motion was seconded by Lucas. All were in favor.

Chair Lekkas thanked everyone for attending and participating in the discussion.