

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

The Waitsfield [Development Review Board](#) (DRB) is comprised of seven members appointed by the [Selectboard](#). The Board's function is to administer the Town's [zoning bylaws](#) and [subdivision regulations](#) in conjunction with the [Zoning Administrator](#). Specifically, the Board reviews applications for conditional use approval, requests for the subdivision of land, and hears appeals of Zoning Administrator decisions and requests for variances.

The DRB was formed in March of 2007 when the [Waitsfield Board of Adjustment](#) was disbanded and all of the regulatory responsibilities of that board and the [Planning Commission](#) were consolidated under the DRB. This change was intended to streamline the local regulatory review process and to give the Planning Commission more time to focus on the Town's long-range planning needs. I am pleased to report that the shift to a DRB has been a success.

Last year was relatively busy with respect to permit activity in Waitsfield. Eight subdivisions involving 19 lots were approved (most of which were reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission because the applications were submitted prior to the creation of the DRB), in addition to four boundary adjustments. An 8-unit housing complex in Irasville was also approved as a Planned Residential Development.

Complicating our work was the adoption, and subsequent rejection, of new subdivision regulations. The new regulations greatly improved the review process for landowners and the DRB and put in place needed environmental standards. The Planning Commission should be commended for reaching out to concerned landowners after the regulations were rejected at a special Town Meeting in October, making key changes to the document to address public concerns, and bringing revised regulations back to the [Selectboard](#) for adoption.

In addition to subdivision reviews, the DRB issued 14 conditional use approvals, mostly involving new structures, expansions and changes of use in Irasville and Waitsfield Village. The Board also denied two requests for variances. It should be noted that meeting the statutory variance standards is very difficult for landowners, and the DRB has discussed alternatives for allowing minor modifications to setback requirements with the Planning Commission. We are hopeful that a workable alternative will be put in place in the near future.

The Zoning Administrator issued a total of 93 zoning permits in 2007, including 11 permits for new single-family homes. A permit is required for most development activity in the town and landowners are encouraged to consult with the Zoning Administrator before commencing construction or site development.

Several noteworthy personnel changes occurred last year. David Jescavage resigned as Zoning Administrator in June to take another position in Highgate. Town Administrator Valerie Capels stepped in as interim Zoning Administrator until a replacement could be found, which was greatly appreciated. To the Town's good fortune, Blaine Laskowski accepted the position in late

August. Blaine has served as interim Zoning Administrator on several occasions and brings tremendous experience, intelligence, and interpersonal skills to the job.

The DRB is presently comprised of Eleanor D'Aponte, Jamey Fidel, Gib Geiger, Mike Kingsbury, Mark Sinclair, Brian Shupe (Chair) and Hallie Tamez (Vice-Chair). Bob Shaffer stepped down from the Board of Adjustment when the DRB was formed and served as an Alternate to the DRB until he resigned late in the year. Bob's thoughtful contributions to the DRB's deliberations are missed. Presently, all Board seats are filled, although there are two vacancies for Alternate members to fill in when a permanent member is unable to serve.

The DRB meets the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Office. Our agendas and notices of public hearings are published in the Valley Reporter and on-line at www.waitsfieldvt.us. Our meetings are also frequently televised on Mad River Television's Channel 60.

Respectfully Submitted
Brian Shupe, Chair