



**Town of Whitingham
Zoning Board of Adjustment**

MINUTES OF JULY 29, 2026, PUBLIC HEARING

Christopher Roberts/Two Lakes, LLC zoning application W-12-26 for 6492 VT Route 100, Whitingham, VT (property known as Sawyer Mansion)

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda:

Rick Gramlin called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. There were no changes to the agenda.

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)

None

Attendees:

ZBA members: Rick Gramlin, Acting Chair; Amanda Pike, Troy Felisko, and Lyman Tefft.

Zoning Administrator/ZBA Clerk: Gig Zboray

Town Attorney: Robert Fisher

Applicant on Zoning Permit application W-12-26: Chris Roberts of Two Lakes, LLC and his attorney Ron Ferrara

Others: Ed Metcalfe, Carol Dubie, Laura Allen, Steve Betit, Darlene Betit, Brian Green, Rachel Littlehale, George and Gale Campo, Brent Betit.

Introductions were made around the room.

Open hearing

Mr. Gramlin opened the hearing and read the hearing warning.

Discuss any potential conflicts of interest

None

Applicant to explain what they are asking for

Ron Ferrara entered 6 photos into the record. He says two of these photos (exhibits 5 and 6) represent structures in the village that may not be New England style of architecture. Mr. Ferrara noted that Mr. Roberts is applying for a permit to build an accessory dwelling unit on the property located at 6492 VT Route 100 in Whitingham, know as the Sawyer Mansion property.

A previous enforcement action stipulated that if Mr. Roberts had obtained permits, he could move the ADUs to another location on the property by June 30th. "Failure to obtain the necessary permitting, however, means that the ADU must be removed from the Property by the expiration of that period." The town has filed a notice of contempt with the court because this zoning application was not received until June 26th, and his wastewater permit was not submitted until June 25th. Attorney Fisher advised the town to proceed with this permit application because the judge has not answered the complaint yet.

New England style is not defined in our zoning regulations, Mr. Ferrara provided information on Environmental Court cases related to the topic. Mr. Ferrara indicated that Mr. Roberts has designed this container-built structure with color, shape, and siding in what could be considered New England style.

Hear from all concerned

Mrs. Betit questioned if Mr. Roberts can have an accessory dwelling unit while he already has one on another parcel? She questioned where the driveway will go for the ADU? It would use the Betit easement. She says exhibit 4 shows trash that has been there since construction, she complains about garbage on the property where he is planning to move the ADU. That trash has been there since the camping trailers were moved last fall. She has no reason to believe that what Mr. Roberts says here tonight will be cleaned up. Mrs. Betit received a notice of a proposed isolation zone related to Mr. Roberts' wastewater permit. That is a state issue, not a local one.

Mr. Steve Betit asked Mr. Fisher to explain how ADUs can be issued to LLCs when they were originally allowed as "mother-in-law" apartments. Mr. Fisher noted that the state is encouraging ADUs to meet the housing shortage in the state. 2026 law states the property must be owner occupied. He is not sure that an LLC can file a homestead. Across the road, on Tyanoga Drive, Mr. Roberts indicated that that property was his homestead when he applied for that permit.

Mr. Ferrara, said that an LLC cannot have a homestead, but with the stroke of a pen the property can be transferred back into Mr. Roberts name. He suggested that the ZBA walk the property to see that this ADU will be well hidden from the road. For the purpose of this application, this property is his homestead.

Mr. Metcalf feels that Mr. Roberts should be applying under his name. And how can he have two homesteads at once? Mr. Ferrara did not answer that question.

Mr. Steve Betit questioned if he already has an established homestead, how can he apply for one here?

The fine that the court has imposed on the prior enforcement action on this property has not yet been paid.

Mr. Fisher noted that Mr. Roberts can ask for continuance of this hearing so that he can correct the homestead issue. However, it will not hold back (stop the clock on) any fines.

If a decision is made tonight and Mr. Roberts appeals the ZBA decision, the court will hear it all "brand new".

Mr. Ferrara suggests putting all the issues in one basket for the court.

Mr. Gramlin questioned who is applying for the permit? The name of landowner is listed as Christopher Roberts, but the landowner is Two Lakes, LLC. He thinks that the paperwork should be cleared up. He feels that the ZBA cannot accept this permit.

Mr. Fisher noted that the warning for the next hearing will have a site visit before the hearing. No testimony is done at a site visit. From a legal context – Mr. Ferrara has provided case study based on “New England style”, we must look at this project’s immediate surroundings. We should know the actual aesthetics/style of the area. IF there is any ambiguity the tie goes in favor of the applicant.

Mrs. Betit questioned if the blue trailer (exhibit 5) is in the historic district, Mr. Fisher noted that the zoning regulations regulate the Village zoning district, not the state designated historic district.

The way the containers are configured right now, the rear of the structure, which doesn’t have many windows in the back, will face the Betit property. The Betit’s are questioning if a fence can be required so they don’t have to look at it. The setback to their property line is over 100’.

Mr. Ferrara has now officially withdrawn this application. Mr. Roberts will change the ownership of the property and submit a clean permit and other photographs. The wastewater permit has been issued.

Mr. Metcalf questioned if the town would take an enforcement action on the Tyanoga property regarding the homestead needed for that property? An enforcement action on that property has already been filed in court, although the homestead issue was not included in that complaint.

Close hearing

A motion was made by Rick Gramlin to close the hearing, second by Amanda Pike, all in favor.

Adjourn

Mr. Gramlin adjourned the hearing at 6:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gig Zboray, ZBA Clerk