



**Town of Whitingham  
Zoning Board of Adjustment**

**MINUTES OF December 11, 2025, PUBLIC HEARING**

**Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda:**

Marshall Dix called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Site Plan Review by the Planning Commission should be number 4f on the agenda.

**Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)** none

**Attendees:**

ZBA members: Marshall Dix, Chair; Troy Felisko, Lyman Tefft, Rick Gramlin, and Amanda Pike.  
Zoning Administrator/ZBA Clerk: Gig Zboray

Applicant on Zoning Permit application #W-41-25: Chris Wasley and Andrea Wasley.

Others: Brad Lackey, Keith Thompson, and Peter Barus, Planning Commission.

Barbara Brocklehurst, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Mike Reagan (CEO of The Natural Funeral), Donnie Boyd, Rick Bucchi (Sacred Soil), Seth Viddal (The Natural Funeral), Katherine MacLean, Bernard Dupuis, Sage Myska, Matthew Myska, Bill McDougall (Sacred Soil), Jude Myska, Zachary Wasley, Anthony Contakos.

**Open WASLEY Hearing** Mr. Dix opened the hearing for Chris Wasley, application W-41-25, receiving permission to dispense with reading the warning.

**Introductions** were made.

**Discuss any potential conflicts of interest** none

**Applicant to explain what they are asking for**

Mr. Wasley would like to use the building as a sustainable funeral disposition service center for Natural Organic Reduction and install new signage for the business. There are no proposed changes to the site. He read a prepared statement (text from transcript prepared by AI from video recording of meeting):

So first of all, I want to thank everybody for coming in and allowing us to present this. I especially want to thank Gig for her assistance and help. She helped me with the application form and things like that. My name is Chris Wasley. My wife Andrea and I are the founders of Sacred Soil.

Andrea is a licensed funeral director who has walked alongside families with steadiness and care for more than 25 years. Together, we've dedicated our lives to helping people through some of the hardest and most meaningful moments that we'll ever face since 07.

Andrea and I have divided our time between our residents in Connecticut and our home here in Whitingham. Over the years, we've grown to love this town, the people, the landscape. Being able to spend so much time here has strengthened our desire to live and work in ways that protect and honor the environment.

We know that same care for the land is something many here feel deeply. Sacred soil is our way of bringing 2 commitments together. One is our commitment to serving families with compassion during times of loss. The other is our commitment to caring for the earth that holds all of us. Those two values are what led us to explore opening a small ecological care center in Whitingham, and it is why we are here tonight to share our intentions and answer any questions anybody has.

We also want to acknowledge two people who are here with us this evening from Colorado, Seth Vidal and Mike Reagan from the Natural Funeral in Colorado. The Natural Funeral is one of the pioneers and national leaders in natural organic reduction; or what many now call terramation. I invited Seth and Mike here to join us because it was important to me that this conversation be completely transparent. They bring years of experience designing, refining and operating the terramation.

Vessel network that we intend to install here. They're here to offer clear, factual insight into both the technology and the process. They'll help answer any questions you may have so that this board and community have a full, accurate understanding of how terramation works. And what it looks like in practice.

So, thanks again for taking the time to listen and we look forward to speaking with you and answering any questions anybody has in a meaningful, respected way.

### **Hear from all concerned**

No change to the outside of the building, just some interior changes, no special septic required. Everything is all natural, there are no chemicals involved, there are no flames, its all organic.

Mr. Dupuis (direct abutter) spoke with Mr. Wasley previously, his questions were answered, he doesn't really have a problem with it.

Seth Viddal gave a presentation noting that it is now legal in Vermont. Wood strips, alfalfa and straw are added within the controlled contained instrument there are no odors, takes about a month, the final output is soil. The state has 2 agencies (OPR and Department of Health) that oversee the industry, with a preliminary inspection, chain of custody, PPE requirements. One of the Sacred Soil affiliates spoke with someone from the state; that person is very excited that this may happen in Vermont.

The Wasleys want to make sure the local permit is approved before they pursue state permit/registration.

The soil is completely natural and won't interfere with well water. The process is self-contained. None of the soil that is produced ends up touching the ground at the facility, the families take the soil produced for their gardens or to plant a tree.

This would be the only facility in the northeast; there will be one in Georgia.

The capacity of the building will hold 8 vessels, and they plan to install a refrigerator to store up to 3 bodies. It takes about 1 month to bring the body to soil. They could do 96 a year, approximately 2 per week would be maximum capacity.

Mr. Wasley responded to a question about why he chose this site, he explained that he had been looking for a building for several years in nearby towns. There will be no services or family gatherings on the site, a van would come in to bring the deceased, and at most it would be 8 trips per month. The remains (soil) come out in about fifteen 25-pound bags and those will be put in a car and delivered to the family.

Backup generator already on site.

There will not be someone there 24-7, there is a security system indoors and outdoors. The employees will be certified and fully trained (certification program developed by the Cremation Association of North America). The certification program is mandated by the Natural Funeral for any TerraCare partners, Sacred Soil (Chris Wasley's business) being one. Anyone operating TerraCare equipment goes through the certification program with KNM and they become a certified natural organic reductionist.

In a perfect world when would this be up and running? April or May of 2026.

What is the cost? Terramation is more expensive than flame cremation but less expensive than a traditional burial.

Would there be any impact on property values of abutting properties? Unknown. All that enters the property will leave the property.

### **Site Plan Review**

Maximum safety of traffic between site and street – Mr. Wasley doesn't think it will change the level of traffic on the road

Traffic circulation and parking - plenty of space, for anything they are going to do

Landscaping, screening, setbacks, etc. All the neighbors were notified, they don't plan to change anything outside, perhaps plant some flowers

Renewable energy – very little electricity involved, a little bit of water

Exterior lighting – no plan for adding anymore lighting, parking lot has lights, outside of building has lights, no need for them to change anything

Sign – will go in the existing sign kiosk

General Standards:

Noise – very quiet process

Vibration – none

Air Pollution – none

Temperature, moisture – everything is contained

Electric emissions or signals – n/a

Light and reflection – not adding anything

Waste – there is none (just soil)

Hazardous – no chemicals are used  
Erosion control – no changes to the property  
Stormwater – no changes to the property

**Close hearing**

Marshall Dix closed the hearing at 7:16pm

**Other business**

None

**Enter deliberative session:**

All visitors left. **A motion was made to enter deliberative session and to include Planning Commissioners and Gig Zboray, all in favor.**

**Exit deliberative session:**

The board exited deliberative session.

**Findings on Wasley Application W-41-25:**

- The Zoning Board of Adjustment finds the proposed use meets the definition of a service business which is a conditional use in all zoning districts.
- There are no proposed changes to the site except the sign.
- The Planning Commission approved the site plan.
- There is an Act 250 permit on the property, because it was originally a Jehovah Witness Church, so they should get an amendment. That is a state issue, not a local issue.

**Decision:**

**A motion was made by Marshall Dix to approve Zoning Permit Application #W-41-25 by Chris Wasley, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.**

An interested person may appeal this decision within thirty (30) days to the Environmental Court as per 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117 § 4471.

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 7:28pm

Respectfully submitted,

*Gig Zboray, ZBA Clerk*