

**Calais Development Review Board
Minutes October 18, 2012**

Board Members Present: Margaret Bowen, Chairman, Steve Reynes, Barbara Weedon, Nedene Martin, and Ruth Porter

Others Present: Rolf Mueller, Zoning Administrator, Beverly Curtis, Jana Robicheau, Tom Bennet, Nancy Bennet, and Phillip Zalinger

The meeting began at 7:30. The first thing the DRB considered was Sally and Jim Olmstead's request for permission to add two windows to the south wall, the exterior wall of the study in their house which is in the historic district. Application 2012-51. Rolf Mueller said he had a letter from John McCullough, Chairman of the Design Advisory Board, saying that the DAB found the proposal acceptable. The DRB members agreed that they also found the proposal acceptable. The record was closed on the application.

Next the DRB considered Application 2012-49, a request for a change of use for a house in the village district to be converted to a Buddhist Dharma Center. The applicants would like the downstairs to remain as a residence, and the upper floor, which is one big open space to be used as the dharma center. They enclosed the porch and put in a set of outside enclosed stairs leading to the second story. They added the roof over the stairs, but they did not increase the footprint.

Jana Robicheau said that they formerly had such a center in Montpelier. That center had been in existence since 1977. They expect to hold meetings two hours once a week. They expect there will usually be only three people, although there might be as many as six. The application says one meeting a week with less than ten people in attendance. They always have to seek another venue when they have a teacher coming, or some other event where more people are likely to attend. They haven't put out any public notices and are not going to have public events. It is a private membership group. Steve Reynes read the definition of a church from the Calais Zoning Regulations: A building used solely for purposes of assembly and worship by a legally established and recognized religious institution. This definition also includes such customary accessory structures such as parish houses."

Nedene Martin suggested that they could call the dharma center a private club instead of a place of worship. But they are a tax-exempt entity with 501 3 C status.

Tom Bennet who lives across the County Road said he had no objection to having a dharma center. What he objects to is the danger of the driveway. Jana Robicheau said that their neighbor to the north, Ben Goodrich, gave them permission to use his driveway, but they prefer to make a turnaround on their own property. The drive is narrow. Trees block the line of sight to the south. It floods behind the house where there could be parking, and there is ledge back there, so it will be difficult to level it up for a parking area. The applicants are planning to hire Dylan Abare to raise the elevation of the parking lot. They plan to have space for eight cars.

They have all new wiring in the building, and they have had the septic system inspected by a property inspector and a septic company. There is a one thousand gallon tank,

which is new, and there is a leach field. It was pointed out to them that to have a center to which the public is invited they must meet standards set by the state. The fire safety standards need to be met, and also the septic and water standards.

There is a site visit scheduled for Sunday, October 21, at 8 o'clock in the morning. The application was left open.

The DRB also made and seconded a motion to approve the minutes of August 30, 2012, and September 20, 2012, with corrections. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Porter