

DRAFT
Town of Calais
Development Review Board Minutes
Calais Town Office
April 9, 2024

Present: DRB members: Willa Farrell (Chair), Candi Smith (Vice Chair), Stephanie Kaplan, Dennis Shaffer, Gabrielle Malina, Janet Ancel, Rachel Seelig, Scott Bassage (Interim Clerk)

Others present: Chris Andresen, Dot Helling, John Brabant

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Vice Chair Willa Farrell.

Farrell proceeded with the Agenda.

1. Introductions
2. Elect officers
3. Discuss Selectboard's recent process in making appointments to the DRB
4. Plan administrative meeting to include review of Rules of Procedure

Election of Officers

Dennis Shaffer nominated Willa Farrell to be Chair, Candi Smith to be Vice Chair, and Scott Bassage to be Interim Clerk. Stephanie Kaplan seconded the nominations. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Discuss Selectboard's recent process in making appointments to the DRB

Farrell invited members to say how they are feeling and to discuss how the group wishes to respond to the Calais Selectboard appointment of members to the Development Review Board at the Selectboard meeting of 25 March 2024 From the minutes of that meeting:

Executive Session – Jordan Keyes made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:45 pm with Kari Bradley under 1 VSA Section 313 (a) (3) the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that the public body shall make a final decision to hire or appoint a public officer or employee in an open meeting and shall explain the reasons for its final decision during the open meeting; Appointments, Employee Compensation. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Jordan Keyes made a motion to resume the Regular Session at 9:51pm. The motion was seconded, vote on and carried 5-0. {...}

Jordan Keyes made a motion to appoint the following people to three-year terms on the Development Review Board: Scott Bassage for a term ending in 2025, to appoint Gabrielle Malina for a term ending in 2027 and to appoint Janet Ancel for a term ending in 2027 and to appoint Dot Helling and Stephanie Kaplan as DRB Alternates with both terms ending 2027. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 5-0.

Several members questioned the process the Selectboard had used in making these appointments to the Development Review Board (DRB) and stated their opinion that the process was not consistent with certain requirements of the State's Open Meeting Law; that the Selectboard's failure to contact the DRB and particularly Stephanie and Dot, who had

been led to believe they would be reappointed, about concerns the Selectboard apparently had; and that their move into executive session to make appointments was also counter to the openness and respect for the volunteers and the Calais public that has been the long-standing Calais tradition.

Dot Helling, who had declined the alternate DRB appointment, explained her views on the Selectboard's decision and distributed a document itemizing her points and requests of the DRB. Upon Helling's request, this document is attached to these minutes.

After discussion, DRB members agreed to recommend that the Selectboard establish procedures for appointing Board and Commission members to ensure a more transparent and respectful process.

Farrell reported dates that the previous evening the Selectboard had discussed dates they would be available to meet with the DRB. A majority of DRB members stated they would be able to meet April 15 or April 19. Farrell said she would confer with Anne Winchester, SB chair, and report back to the DRB.

The group will hold a meeting to review the zoning application process, DRB's role and DRB Rules of Procedure. Farrell will contact members about scheduling.

Chair Farrell adjourned the meeting at 8:05PM

Scott Bassage, Interim Clerk