

Town of Bristol
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MEETING
Public Meeting
Tuesday, April 28, 2026
Meeting Minutes
Revised and Approved 6/9/2026

DRB Members Present: Allen Bilson, Kevin Brown, Rebecca Cole, Ted Desmond, Dale Dingler, Brenda Tillberg

Staff Present: AZ Larsen, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Chris Blanchard, Tim Blanchard, Virginia Bukowski, Michelle Cobb, Pete Combe, Randy Durand, Scott Emmell, William Grace, Sara Granstrom, Mr. Johnson, Shawn Laurie, Jackie Lefu, Dave Livingston, David Livingston, Lucas Livingston, Wendy Livingston, Greg McKenney, Samantha Morrisey, Dave Rosin, Slim Pickens, Dora Soberal, Tim Steele, Karien Wissell

1. Call to Order: Kevin Brown called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Review agenda for additions, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 V.S.A. 18 §312(d)(3)(A).
One item was noted to be postponed.

3. Old Business

Presentation of Final Plat: Permit#25-402, 3-lot subdivision located on Kilbourn Lane.
This item was postponed, and will be rescheduled when adjustments to the final plat have been incorporated.

Permit #26-400: David Livingston LLC of Hardscrabble Road (Parcel #020116) is requesting Final Plat Review for a 2-lot subdivision subject to Bristol Unified Development Regulations Article IX, SECTION 931.

Dave Livingston confirmed that the subdivision is to separate a parcel of a little over five acres from the existing parcel, and that approval had been granted by the Selectboard for access from Hardscrabble Road. No questions were raised by Board members or the public.

MOTION: *A motion to approve the subdivision according to the site plan provided by Ron LaRose bearing the revised date March 24, 2026 was approved unanimously.*

4. New Business

Permit #26-401: David Livingston of Upper Meehan Road (Parcel #040151.11) is requesting Sketch Plan Review for a 7-lot subdivision subject to Bristol Unified Development Regulations Article IX, SECTION 920.

Mr. Livingston explained that this subdivision was already in the planning stages when he purchased the property, and that he was working with LaRose to design the septic, the roadways, stormwater management, and other aspects of the plan. He confirmed that the lots will all be a little over 5 acres in size, and that each will be served by its own well and wastewater system, with some of those likely requiring easements on an adjacent lot. He noted that power will be along the roadway, with underground connections to each residence. He indicated his understanding that Act 250 review, as well as a curb cut permit from the Selectboard, will be necessary.

Mr. Brown noted that this will be considered a major subdivision, and explained that the Board will likely require that the roadway be constructed according to VTrans B71 standards. He also indicated that a letter from the Fire Chief, approving access/turnaround areas for emergency vehicles, will be required.

Permit #26-402: Alesia Grace of Estey Road is requesting Sketch Plan Review for a 2-lot subdivision located on the lands of Todd Baldwin (Parcel #020113.1) subject to Bristol Unified Development Regulations Article IX, SECTION 920.

Mr. Brown explained to Mr. Grace that because a town highway bisects the lot, it is already considered subdivided, and therefore a permit is not necessary.

Permit #26-301: Mountain Bike Bristol (Bristol Recreation Club) of Airport Drive is requesting Conditional Use Review for hiking and biking trails to be located on the lands of A Johnson Company (Parcel #060112.1) subject to Bristol Unified Development Regulations Article IX, SECTION 350.

Ms. Morrissey and Mr. Johnson were present to provide information about this application. Dave Rosin explained that The Bristol Rec Club, a 501C3, serves as the fiscal sponsor for Mountain Bike Bristol. Ms. Morrissey outlined the plans for development of this recreation area, indicating that trails are planned for hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing, while also providing for hunting, logging, and sugaring uses to continue on the property. She explained that this plan will help to remediate the degradation that is occurring along the property's Ledges trail, which sees approximately 1000 users per month. The new trails will be maintainable and sustainable, and will include an ADA accessible trail on a portion of the property away from the main hiking and biking trails. Ms. Morrissey indicated that the trails will be designed by and built under the supervision of professionals, following the Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) best trail management practices, which have been recognized by the State.

The map of proposed trails was presented, depicting the various trails planned for one section of the 2000-acre parcel. The development will be taking place under a ten-year lease agreement between Mr. Johnson and Mountain Bike Bristol. Mr. Brown requested that a more informative legend be included on future iterations of the map.

Mr. Johnson explained that signage and education strategies will be in place to provide safe use of the trail system by multiple users. He and Ms. Morrissey outlined that mountain bike culture has matured, and that it is generally understood that conflict avoidance is necessary in order to retain trail use. The logistics of management at other area trail networks were outlined, including the appointment of a trail boss to monitor usage and trail conditions; it was indicated that the same structure would likely be established for these trails.

Parking was discussed, with it being explained that trail visitors will be expected to use town parking, with 'no parking' signage to be increased where appropriate near the trailheads. There will also potentially be parking allowed on the Bristol Rec Club property. On the ADA trail side, a parking area will be created. Mr. Brown noted that the UDRs require that a parking plan be part of the application for approval.

Mr. Brown asked what State-level permitting is required for the project. Ms. Morrissey indicated that she did not believe that permitting was necessary, as no Act 250 review is required; but noted that she would confirm this with the trail designers and the DEC Stormwater program.

Ms. Morrissey further noted that VMBA insurance protocols will be followed for landowner protection. She explained that avoidance of ecological features is part of the VMBA trail standards; no motorized

vehicles or horses will be allowed on the trails; the cliff/peregrine falcon area is well away from the scope of the trail project; and vernal pools will be avoided.

Ms. Morrissey explained that the first trail phase may be completed by VYCC this coming summer; Mr. Brown indicated that the Board may require phasing in approval of the project. The L and D design/build group may also complete some work on the more complex trails this year, according to Ms. Morrissey, although she noted that mountain biking will not be allowed until the complete uphill/downhill loop has been constructed. She outlined that the goal is to provide for family/community riding, and therefore the trails will be built to somewhat compensate for the grade along the route.

In response to comments/questions from members of the public present at the meeting, the following was noted:

- The property may be offered to the Town once the ten-year lease expires.
- Insurance coverage for the Town was explained.
- Concerns regarding the safety of bikers when hunters are on the parcel, as well as the potential for biking activity to push the wildlife away were expressed; it was noted that the trails cover only ten percent of the parcel, and that closing the trails during hunting season is being considered. It was also explained that hikers have a greater impact on wildlife than does biking.
- It was clarified where the ADA parking will be sited.
- It was explained that human waste and trash removal are typically on a 'carry in, carry out' basis for trail networks such as this, and that there is a strong culture of respect for landowners, as most biking trails are on private land.
- All the trails will be on the Johnson parcel, with no encroachment on adjoining land.
- Leashing dogs is considered the best practice.
- The need for caution was expressed regarding wildlife impacts, with it being explained that it might be best to not update/increase peregrine falcon signage, as that serves to draw attention to the birds. It was also noted that the ACRPC has regional maps of wildlife corridors, which should be considered in trail planning.
- It was confirmed that the area is covered by Vermont State Police.
- Ms. Morrissey will be looking into what level of use is anticipated and how many people may be drawn to the area. She noted that a trail map will be created, but does not need to be published, and that creating awareness of the trail network can be accomplished gradually.

When asked why this trail network is being proposed, Ms. Morrissey explained that the area is being degraded by use of the current trail and that the network planned will be more sustainable; she also indicated that these plans are a strategy to keep forestland as forest by providing some value to the land and preventing other, more detrimental, development.

Mr. Brown outlined that a Jurisdictional Opinion from the LURB should be provided, as well as an outline of any necessary permitting required by DEC's Stormwater program. Also to be provided are an ecological survey, a copy of the lease agreement between A. Johnson and Mountain Bike Bristol, and documentation of VMBA's best practices.

MOTION: *A motion to continue this hearing until June 23 at 7:00 pm passed unanimously.*

5. Administrative Matters

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of April 14, 2026 were amended and approved.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary