

Town of Bristol
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MEETING
Public Meeting
Tuesday, June 23, 2026
Meeting Minutes
DRAFT

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

Staff Present: AZ Larsen, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Chris Blanchard, Tim Blanchard, Silas Clark, Carol Clauss, Randy Durand, Peter Hewitt, Tim Johnson, Porter Knight, Ricki Marcelle, Meridith McFarland, Chris Morrissey, Samantha Morrissey, James Patterson, Dave Rosen, Mike Steele, Tim Steele, Megan Walsh, Mary Yates

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).
No changes were made to the agenda.

3. New Business

Permit #26-404: Ricki Marcelle of Little Brook Road (Parcel #090137) is requesting sketch plan review for a 2-lot subdivision subject to Bristol Unified Development Regulations SECTION 920.

Mr. Marcelle provided some background information regarding the PRD that was approved for six lots in 2013, noting that four of those lots were developed and two lots had been combined and retained by Mr. Marcelle for his residence. He is now planning to subdivide that remaining lot, retaining a five-acre parcel containing his house and selling the other portion of approximately fourteen acres. The lots are referred to as Lot 5 and Lot 6 on the plan presented. He confirmed that there is already an approved wastewater system and water supply for a house site on the fourteen-acre piece.

Mx. Larsen noted that the location is generally in the RA5 District, with a portion in RA2. Mr. Marcelle indicated that the brook running through the property serves as the District dividing line. He also confirmed that all State-level permitting is in place, that a ROW to the parcel has already been established, and that there is land set aside outside of this and the other four parcels, which was included as part of the PRD approval.

Mr. Brown indicated that this minor subdivision should be applied for as an amendment to the existing PRD, and that the plat should reference the prior PRD.

Mr. Brown advised that Mr. Marcelle ask Fire Chief LaRose to review the plan, and provided approval for the planned turnaround at the property line between Lots 5 and 6.

4. Old Business

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.

This hearing was continued from April 28, 2026.

Samantha Morrissey presented some clarifying information regarding the proposed trail network, explaining that this would generally not be a new use of the land, as there has been use of trails on the property over the years during the regular timber harvests. She noted that, due to the nature of the existing trail use, there has been some degradation of the parcel. The proposed network is seeking to formalize what exists and to build trails according to approved standards that will not be subject to the same erosion, as well as to add the new use of mountain biking.

She confirmed that some of the switchbacks along the current most-used trail will be new, and outlined where the proposed hiking trail heading up from the school area will meet up with existing logging trails.

Ms. Morrissey outlined the materials which had been submitted, based upon requirements delineated by the DRB at the April 28 meeting. These include the fully executed agreement for use of the parcel, the Best Management Practices (BMPs) for trail building (as well as a link to the related ANR web page), a formal opinion stating that this project does not fall under Act 250 purview, a formal parking plan, and a fully executed MOU with the School District for parking. She explained that, because the amount of acreage to be disturbed is approximately 1.47 acres, it falls well under the threshold of ten acres of disturbance which would require Act 250 review for trails included on the Vermont Trail Network. She also noted that the MOU regarding parking includes no restrictions on the number of vehicles, or the days or times when parking may take place. It was noted that the UDRs do not have standards for the number of parking spaces required by this type of activity.

Ms. Morrissey presented information provided by the Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA), indicating the estimated average volume for the trail network being created. A large percentage of users are expected to be local residents, indicating that parking is not as critical a need as it might be otherwise. She also outlined that other area biking trails typically have only 3 or 4 cars in the parking area, and noted that this parking area will likely see more use by hikers than by bikers. Mr. Brown explained that changes will be needed if the MOU results in incompatibility with school use of the parking area. Current annual use information available from trail counters (5000 visits), along with the use information provided by VMBA (2000 visits) indicates that it is likely that there will be 6000 – 7000 visits to the trails annually; Ms. Morrissey indicated that this number will likely be at the lower end initially.

James Patterson of L&D Trailworks noted the detailed information included in the application packet related to the trail design and construction, and provided some explanation of the area's drainage and the low-grade impacts of the proposed trails. He indicated that no culverts are anticipated, and that there will be no ditching along the trails. Ms. Morrissey explained that the hiking trail has been flagged, and that flagging of the biking trails has begun, but will not be finalized until the current logging work is completed. They outlined that the hiking trails will be hand-built, and likely about two feet in width. The multi-use trails will be approximately four feet wide, and will be constructed in a manner to allow for use by those on accessible bikes.

Next, Ms. Morrissey confirmed that letters from the Fire Department and Bristol Rescue had both been submitted, and that Police Chief Nason is part of communications regarding provision of emergency services at the trail site. Appropriate E-911 signage is planned for the site; Ms. Morrissey will verify whether any fees are charged by these emergency services providers for rescue services.

No ecological survey has been undertaken at the site; Ms. Morrissey explained that conversations with Act 250 staff, along with the knowledge of the site resulting from decades of logging, did not indicate a need to incur the \$10K that would be required for such a study. It was noted that there are no wetlands in the areas proposed for trails on the western side of the mountain. On the eastern side, where there is planned future development of trails, wetland permitting will be necessary.

The timeline of the trail work was outlined next. The hiking trail beginning near the school is the first priority; VYCC will be doing this work, and it is hoped that initial work will take place this summer. Scheduling depends on VYCC's availability and the project budget. For the multi-use/biking trails, work will not begin until 2027. Ms. Morrissey indicated that it is hoped that these western side trails will be complete within two to three years, and explained that trail planning for the eastern side ADA accessible routes has not yet begun. Mr. Brown noted that a separate application may be submitted for those trails once the design is complete.

Several of those present had questions or comments about the application. It was confirmed that the bird-nesting cliff area is at least ¼ mile from the planned trails, and that Act 250 only has jurisdiction over this type of proposal if over 10 acres of soil is disturbed. There was some discussion regarding the use of motor bikes on the trails, with Ms. Morrissey noting that, while this is not a common issue on mountain bike trails in Vermont, such use will not be allowed. The various types of e-bicycles were outlined, it was noted that other VT trail networks allow use by Class 1 e-bikes. Mr. Brown pointed out that the DRB materials should include an outline of restrictions on e-bike use.

Ms. Morrissey outlined some of the communication strategies planned for keeping the community informed about the progress of the trail development, and the general nature of respectfulness exhibited by trail users was mentioned by some of those present.

MOTION: *A motion to close the hearing passed unanimously.*

Mr. Brown explained that the Board would move to Deliberative Session in order to discuss the application and any conditions which might be imposed on approval.

5. Administrative Matters

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of June 9, 2026 were amended and approved.

Execution of Approved Plats:

Permit #25-407: Bunny's Pond LLC 2-lot subdivision Parcel #030168.3 The revision date of May 5, 2026 was noted, as the revision incorporates what was required by the DRB regarding the landowner's name; this requirement was part of the approval issued on April 14, 2026.

6. Deliberative Session

The Board went into Deliberative Session from 8:50 pm to 9:35 pm.

MOTION: *Mr. Brown made a motion to approve Mountain Bike Bristol's application for hiking and biking trails, with the following conditions:*

- *The three trails proposed for the west side of the mountain are to be completed within four years*
- *Trails will be constructed using the BMPs as submitted with the application*
- *The Club will post emergency policies of the Fire Department, Ambulance Service, and Police Department as appropriate*

- *The MOU with the School District in respect to parking will be maintained*
- *Once the final routes are flagged, a plan will be submitted to the Zoning Administrator*
- *The Club will be solely responsible for behavior of the users*
- *Pedal or Class 1 pedal-assisted e-bikes will be allowed*
- *Once each trail is constructed, an as-built map will be submitted to the Zoning Administrator*
- *The Club will maintain the landowner lease agreement*
- *Prior to construction, the Club will either submit a letter from the DEC Stormwater Program stating that no permit is required, or will obtain a Stormwater Permit from DEC*
- *The Club is responsible for maintenance, repair, and upkeep of the trails*

The motion was seconded by Mr. Dingler, and was approved unanimously.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary