

## DRB Hearing

March 26, 2025

### Rutland County Humane Society Hearing

Board Members: Sam Stone, John Peterson, Jack Schneider, Jim Desmarais and Ralph Either.

Others Present: Mei Mei Brown, Hillary Knapp (Clerk) and Larry Stevens (Zoning Administrator).

### **Hearing Opening**

- The hearing is opened at 7:01 for the application from the Rutland County Humane Society, parcel number 01040218, at 218 Jones Drive for a local Act 250, section 6, 7, and 10 review.
- The application is to convert the current building to house the Rutland County Humane Society.

Mei Mei Brown and Larry Stevens were sworn in.

No interested party status was requested.

### **Mei Mei Brown's Testimony**

- The president of the board of directors for the Rutland County Humane Society, explained the reasons for seeking a new location:
- They have outgrown their current space.
- The current building is in disrepair.
- They have been searching for a new home for three years.
- Ultravation offered them \$50,000 off the asking price for a property, but it was too far north.
- They eventually accepted a better offer in the fall, as the Humane Society is a destination.
- The new building is 15,500 square feet, close to their ideal size of 16,200 square feet.
- We believe the location will be a great place for the Rutland County Humane Society as a community center.

- They are about ready to submit their State Act250 application.
- Regarding the three criteria for review (6, 7, and 10):
- Municipal impacts: They do not foresee any impact on the community. They already have water, and sewer permits from the town and a state water supply/ wastewater permit.
- School impacts: We do not foresee any impact.
- Compliance with the town plan: The only concern was the noise.
- Barking dogs were a concern.
- The designer specializes in humane societies and veterinarian clinics, where noise and quiet are key.
- The goal is to blend into the neighborhood.
- The building will be well-insulated.
- Play yards will be supervised; barking dogs will be brought inside.
- A \$500,000 air filtration system, like in a hospital, will prevent germ spread. •Each room will have its own air intake and outtake.
- This will reduce stress by preventing pheromone mixing.
- Sheltering is evolving to be more interactive.
- Following design guidelines to comply with noise ordinance.
- Aiming for 70 decibels at the property line, 60 at night.
- Open 8 AM to 4 PM, seven days a week, open to the public five days a week.
- Cats are not a major noise issue.
- Adopting "fear-free sheltering protocol" to enhance animal comfort.
- Using natural pheromones in kennel areas to reduce stress.
- A handout details steps to minimize barking dogs inside and outside. (Exhibit A)
- An ACT 250 questionnaire was sent out and received late on Wednesday. All required parties had signed off on the ACT 250 review. Larry will forward to the board tomorrow.

### **Act 250 Review**

- No adverse impacts are expected from the police department, fire department, rescue squad, education, and roads.
- Act 250 review is being done because the building was previously under Act 250 in 1997 when the training school was broken up.
- The state sold off all the buildings and created lots to go with each property
- The current action is amending the existing Act 250 application.

### **Property Details**

- The property is 1.64 acres.
- Neighbor to the east is Marine Engine, and they've been consulted. •The building is not occupied overnight; there is a security system.

### **Neighboring Residential Buildings**

- Park Village Partners and Compass Center are becoming residential.
- An existing residential building (formerly Peter Holmberg's) is approximately 184ft away, with one corner being 10ft closer.

### **Noise Concerns and Recourse**

- Question about recourse if there are sound complaints after the building is completed.
- Design Learned was hired because of their experience with designing humane societies on small lots with neighbors.
- "We will definitely respond to any noise complaint because we definitely want to be good neighbors."
- Scott, a certified engineer with 30 years of experience, will be able to provide solutions to noise issues.

### **Parking Question**

- Question about parking: the application states maximum parking will be 20, with 20 employees and 20 guests per day.
- Response: There will not be that many people at one time. Currently 17 employees with work shifts divided over seven days, so at most seven staff on any given day.
- Visitors never all come at once.

- A second parking lot will be added via boundary line adjustment with the town, immediately south of the two wooden buildings.

#### Construction Timeline and Fundraising

- Construction is expected to start sometime in 2026 but may not start until 2028.
- Fundraising will begin in 2026.
- The project is estimated to cost \$4.5 million.
- The design is for a long-term investment of 50 to 60 years.

The hearing was closed at: 7:18 pm

The board voted 5-0 to move the hearing date to the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hillary Knapp  
DRB Clerk