

Conditional Use
Highland Lodge
October 2, 2025

To consider a conditional use request for a beach repair at 1608 Craftsbury Road.

The application requires a review under the following sections of the Greensboro Zoning Bylaws: §2.7 Shoreland Protection District; §5.4 Conditional Use; §8.7 New Uses and Encroachments Within the Shoreland Buffer Resource Zone(B)1.

Warnings were posted on September 17, 2025, at the Greensboro Town Hall, the Greensboro Post Office, the Greensboro Bend Post Office, and Willey's and Smith's Stores. The warning was sent to the applicant and the following abutters and neighboring property owners: Thomas Scott Reynolds and Elsie Morgan Fisher; Perkins, Harriet J. Trustee; 2012 Home Trust; Philip H. Gray Revocable Trust; The Nature Conservancy; Jane Woodruff; Micheal and Anne Cassidy; Janet Rehnquist Trust; Sally Hedburg Trust; 1359 Craftsbury Road LLC; Jonathan Booth and Jane Mercaldi; Thomas and James Shattuck; Sandy Shores Trust; Frederick and Nicole Mann; Maureen and Ellen Mitchell; Robert Brigham; William Kiester; Valdine Hall; Narcissa Gomes Trustee. It was published in the Hardwick Gazette on September 17, 2025.

Development Review Board members present: Jane Woodruff, Wayne Young, Lise Armstrong, Tim Brennan, Mike Metcalf, Rob Brigham (alternate), Galen Fisher (alternate).

Development Review Board members absent: BJ Gray, Nat Smith.

Others present in-person: Cindy Rose, Tim Briglin, John Mitchell, Josh Karp (Greensboro FEMA coordinator).

Others present via Zoom: Patrick Hurley, Elsa Schultz, Christine Armstrong.

Correspondence from interested persons: None.

During the course of the hearing the following exhibits were submitted: None.

The hearing was in person at the Greensboro Town Office and conducted by electronic communication (ZOOM).

Summary of Discussion:

Ms. Woodruff, chair, began the application review at 7:31 p.m. and confirmed that the applicants understood the procedure of the hearing.

Tim Briglin, co-owner of Highland Lodge, referred to the photos in the request under consideration. Two significant flooding events in 2023 and 2024 deposited sand down Porter Brook and on the Highland Lodge beach area. He asked the Board to view an arial photo of what the beach looked like in the fall of 2022 and a drone photo taken two weeks ago. Recently, he and Mr. Millikin contacted Dori Barton from Arrowwood Environmental for a plan to repair the beach that was feasible and financially possible. Last month, Department of Environmental Lake and Shoreland Ecologist Laura Woods met with the owners. In Ms. Woods' email included in the application, she confirms that alternating the beach by grading or skimming is permissible and does not require state permit. Best practices include staking around Caspian Lake and Porter

Brook and taking photographs before, during, and after. After a site visit with Ms. Woodruff and Ms. Stanciu, the Lodge submitted an application. The straightforward plan is to stay eight feet away from the lake. There is no intention to go near Porter Brook. A bobcat will skim the Gebbie Road material back from the shoreline edge. The bobcat can easily access the beach through the parking area and along an eight to ten foot pathway. It will not cross any vegetation. The proposed work will be completed in one to two days. The preference is to complete this work in the current dry weather, before winter. Mr. Briglin acknowledged that the work that the Town completed on Gebbie Road is a significant improvement.

Questioning from the Board confirmed the applicants' desire to complete this work in October. The Board voiced concern for additional plantings to prevent sand from washing into the lake. Mr. Briglin noted that the riverbank fared fairly well in the flooding events. When the Gebbie Road material washed down, it created a "cork in a bottle," which was when the damage occurred. There was minimal bank damage. He agreed that additional plantings could reinforce the riverbank and was amenable to this proposal.

Mr. Brigham noted that the sand came from Gebbie Road, not from the Highland Lodge beach. Mr. Briglin added that the Highland Lodge beach withstood the floods fairly well. Erosion occurred on the corner behind the kayak stand; the bottling of the brook caused this. He reiterated that pulling the sand back towards that corner of the lot would make the beach more accessible for a kayak or canoe. The only way to fully restore the beach would be to remove the sand, which the Town is welcome to reclaim if desired. He estimates that, when the water returns to its normal level, 40% of the beach will be lost. The repair would improve use of the beach. With the current low water level, this work could be done now without a prohibitive cost. There is no intention to allow erosion into the lake. No fill will be added.

Ms. Christine Armstrong asked for clarification regarding proposed placement of sand. Mr. Briglin answered the plan is to scrape 12" to 24" deep and grade sand away from the waterline and towards the beach corner where the kayaks are stored. The proposed goal is, when the water returns, that this portion will be deeper. Ms. Armstrong voiced concern regarding the jetty and identified the changes as accretion, not erosion. She expressed a desire for more plantings and identified the condition of Barton Road as an ongoing issue.

Ms. Woodruff asked Mr. Karp, town FEMA coordinator, to weigh in. Mr. Karp said two Barton Road culverts washed out in the 2023 and 2024 flooding events, as had happened in previous years. The culverts were undersized. A FEMA plan to add a second 36" culvert to the existing 36" culvert should reduce the wash out there. The 42" culvert also needs to be addressed. This is a proposed \$150K culvert replacement on a road where no one lives. FEMA will help financially with the first repair but not the second. The Town is in the process of investigating funding sources. FEMA has provided money for stone to prevent scouring around culverts. The Town can only work in the right of way, so there's only so much the Town can accomplish. The larger Barton Road culvert is the trickiest financial replacement. A number of culverts along Gebbie Road have been replaced; all replacements are upsized. Ms. Woodruff confirmed this is need on the Town's radar. Mr. Karp replied that funding is being actively sought.

Ms. Christine Armstrong added that, as a neighbor, she is concerned that the Highland Lodge proposed beach repair will negatively impact her lakefront by further sending silt towards the Mann property and then the Armstrong property.

Mr. Brigham replied that the sand came from Porter Brook, not from Highland Lodge. He noted the culvert replacements will help. Mr. Briglin added that the intention is to lower the sand so Porter Brook flows more directly into the lake. He reiterated his concern that the sand doesn't get pushed into the lake. The reason people stay at Highland Lodge in the summer is that guests want to use the Lodge's beach. The owners wish to prevent the beach from deteriorating. The current conditions provide a repair opportunity. Mr. Mitchell said he sympathizes with Highland Lodge but isn't sure if this procedure would remedy the situation.

At 8:19 p.m., Ms. Woodruff closed the evidence for this application. The Board entered executive session at 8:20 p.m. and came out of executive session at 9:45 p.m. and announced their decision.

Findings of Fact:

Based on the application and testimony, the Development Review Board makes the following findings regarding the proposed shoreline restoration project: §8.7(B)1 and §2.7(B)

5.4 Conditional Uses

B) General Standards

The proposed conditional use will not have an adverse effect on:

1. *the capacity of existing or planned community facilities.* This proposed project will improve the beach facility.
2. *the character of the area affected, as defined by the purpose or purposes of the zoning district within which the project is located, and specifically stated policies and standards of the Town Plan.* The proposed repair will conform to the Purposes of the Shoreland Protection District §2.7(B) with a plan to “*preserve vegetation and natural cover of the shores adjacent to Caspian Lake*” and “*preserve or improve the natural stability of shoreline*” and “*prevent degradation of water quality.*”
3. *traffic on roads and highways in the vicinity.* Traffic will not be incurred by this project.
4. *bylaws and ordinances presently in effect.* This proposed project shall comply with bylaws and ordinances in effect.
5. *the utilization of renewable energy resources.* This is not applicable.

C) Specific Standards:

1. *The lot must meet the minimum size required for the district unless other standards are given for conditional use lot size in the district.* This is a conforming lot in the Shoreland Protection District.
2. *Setbacks will be the same as for other permitted uses unless other standards are given for conditional use setbacks in the district.* This is not applicable.
3. *Exterior signs shall not be internally lit and must be compatible in size, materials and workmanship to the area in which they are located.* This is not applicable.

4. Location, on the lot, of structures and service areas shall be compatible with other structures in the area affected. This is not applicable.

5. In each district, uses are given specific criteria. In all cases these criteria will be adhered to. The Board determined Highland Lodge's use is in compliance.

6. Noise, air pollution, exterior light, viewshed, and effects on the character of the neighborhood shall be considered. The character will not be altered.

7. In the Shoreland Protection District, the DRB must find that the district's purposes will be protected through erosion controls, supplemental planting of native species, protection of existing vegetation, and/or other measures. The Board addressed this through Conditions 2-4 below.

8. In the Shoreland Protection District, the visual impact of man-made development shall be softened by existing vegetation or additional planting of natural vegetation to provide visual breaks to and filtered views of building facades when viewed from the lake or the shoreline during summer leaf-on conditions. This is not applicable.

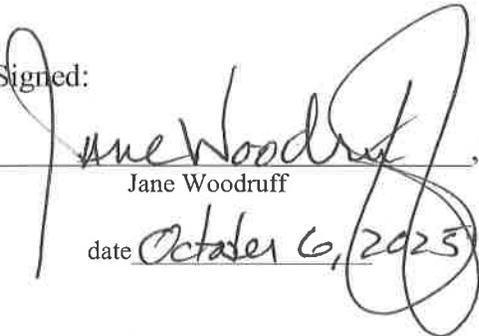
Decision:

Based on these findings, the Development Review Board voted (6-1) to approve a beach repair at 1608 Craftsbury Road. Ms. Lise Armstrong voted nay.

Conditions:

1. Any and all necessary state and federal permits must be in place.
2. Shannon Morrison, District Wetlands Ecologist, must weigh in and approve the proposed repair.
3. Chris Brunelle, River Management Engineer, must weigh in and approve the proposed repair.
4. In consultation with Lake Wise, the applicants shall submit a written plan for supplemental plantings along Porter Brook behind the Highland Lodge kayak stand. This plan shall be submitted by April 15, 2026, to the Zoning Administrator for approval. Plantings shall be installed no later than July 1, 2026.

Signed:


_____, chair
Jane Woodruff
date October 6, 2025


_____, clerk
Brett Ann Stanciu
date Oct 6, 2025

NOTICE:

This decision may be appealed to the Vermont Environmental Court by an interested person who participated in the proceeding (in person or in writing) before the Development Review Board. Such appeal must be made within 30 days of the date of this decision, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. #4471 and Rule 5(b) of the Vermont Rules for Environmental Court Proceedings.