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Town of Richmond Development Review Board Staff Notes 4/30/25

RE: CU2025-01- The Applicants, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC), are seeking to apply for conditional use review to expand VYCC's Richmond campus. Some of the changes to the campus include the addition of a new dorm, 6 cabins, outdoor kitchen, and other facilities. The Applicants are also seeking to continue to be classified as an education facility, which is an allowed use in the commercial district.

PARCEL HISTORY:

1. Conditional Use Review 13-026, Approved 6/18/13
2. Zoning Permit 2022-08, Approved 3/7/22
3. Sketch Plan Application SKSUB2022-06, 10/18/22
4. Notice of Intent to Build A Farm Structure, 1/19/23
5. Zoning Permit 2023-28, Approved 5/26/23
6. Zoning Permit 2024-09, Approved 3/11/24
7. Sketch Plan Application SKP2024-06, 11/25/24

LIST OF SUBMISSIONS:

- A. Abutters list
- B. Conditional Use Application
- C. Cover Letter
- D. Hillside Cabin Building Elevation
- E. Hillside Dorm Building Elevation
- F. Outdoor Kitchen Building Elevation
- G. Sheet 1 Existing Conditions
- H. Sheet 2 60- Scale Site Plan
- I. Sheet 3 Grading Plan
- J. Sheet 4 Utilities plan
- K. Sheet 5 Sewage Disposal Details Specification 1
- L. Sheet 6 Sewage Disposal Details Specification 2
- M. Sheet 7 Pump Stations Details Specifications
- N. Sheet 8 Lighting Plan
- O. Sheet 9 Stormwater Details
- P. Sheet 10 EPSC Landscaping Plan
- Q. VYCC Cover Letter

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION:

1. Application received 3/20/2025
2. Warning and agenda sent to Seven Days 4/9/2025
3. Hearing notice sent to applicant 4/9/2025
4. Abutters letter sent 4/9/2025

STAFF NOTES (Staff Comments in Bold):

1. The Applicants, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC), are seeking to apply for conditional use review to expand VYCC's Richmond campus. Some of the changes to the campus include the addition of a new dorm, 6 cabins, outdoor kitchen, and other facilities. The Applicants are also seeking to continue to be classified as an education facility, which is an allowed use in the commercial district.
2. Several of the proposed cabins appear to be located on slopes greater than 20%.
3. Land development on slopes greater than 20% is regulated by Section 6.11 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
4. The Applicants are also seeking to continue to be classified as an education facility.
5. Section 7. of the Richmond Zoning Regulations defines educational facilities as "Any establishment certified by the Vermont Department of Education, including parochial, private, public and nursery schools, colleges, universities and accessory uses, but specifically excluding commercially operated schools of beauty culture, business, dancing, driving, music and other similar establishments".
6. VYCC's campus was approved as an educational facility on June 7th 2013.
7. The project is located in the Commercial District and will be Subject to Section 3.2 of the Richmond Zoning regulations.
8. Educational facilities are an allowed use per Section 3.6.2 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
9. The project conforms to the dimensional requirements for lots noted in Section 3.6.3 a-d of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
10. The project conforms to the dimensional limitations for structures noted in Section 3.6.4 a-d of the Richmond Zoning Regulations. **(The existing Monitor barn exceeds the height requirements noted in this section. However, as this is a preexisting structure it can be in excess of the 35 foot requirement.)**
11. The Project will be subject to the requirements noted in Section 3.6.5 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
12. Section 3.6.5.d notes that no use shall generate more than 70 vehicle trip ends during the P.M peak hour. **(The Applicant has not provided traffic impact calculations. The Applicant will need to provide documentation showing that they are in compliance with this section.)**
13. The Applicants project calls for multiple structures on a lot.
14. Per the definition of accessory structure noted in Section 7. of the Richmond Zoning Regulations, accessory structures can be on the same lot as a principle structure if they are customarily incidental and subordinate to the principal structure or use.
15. As previously noted the principle use of the property is an educational facility.
16. The proposed dorms, cabins, outdoor kitchen and bathrooms would all meet the definition of accessory structures and uses that could be considered subordinate to the principle use of an educational facility.
17. The project will be subject to the regulations noted in Section 4. of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
18. The project will be subject to the noise regulations noted in Section 4.9.2 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations. **(The Applicants have not indicated how their project complies with this section.)**
19. The project will be subject to the Lighting regulations noted in section 4.10 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
20. The project is subject to the general lighting requirements noted in Section 4.10.2 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
21. The Applicants have provided a lighting plan for the project that meets the standards noted in sections a,b,e and f of Section 4.10.2.
22. Section 4.10.3.c notes that lighting needs to include timers dimmers, or sensors to eliminate unneeded lighting.
23. The Applicant's lighting plan does not indicate whether the lighting will operate with timers dimmers, or sensors.
24. Section 4.10.3.d notes that all electrical services shall be located underground.

25. The applicants site plan does not indicate underground electrical. (**The Applicants plan set does not indicate the location of underground electrical lines. The Applicants will need to show underground electrical in their utility plan.**)
26. **The applicants lighting plan complies with most of the standards noted in Section 4.10.3; however, the lighting plan is limited in scope. None of the proposed cabins have exterior lighting to allow program participants to navigate the sight during evening hours. This could prove to be problematic as the cabins will be relying on a separate bathroom facility. This will result in the participants having to walk in the dark which could pose a safety hazard. In addition, the parking area and other buildings have little to no lighting. While the goal of the lighting plan is to reduce light pollution onto other properties there are allowances to allow for an appropriate level of lighting to ensure the safety of the site. The Board could consider whether or not this lighting plan is sufficient to meet the needs of the site. If the Board feels there is not an appropriate level of lighting then the board could consider how much additional lighting to require.**
27. Section 4.10.3 notes the lighting requirements for parking and security lighting. (**See 26 for comments on lighting plan.**)
28. The project is subject to the height standards noted in Section 4.11 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations. **(The Monitor barn is in excess of the height standards noted in this section. However, as it is a preexisting structure it is exempt from this requirement.)**
29. Conditional uses are subject to the regulations noted in Section 5.5.3 and Section 5.6 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
30. The project will be subject to the traffic regulations noted in Section 5.5.3.a.i-vii of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
31. Section 5.5.3.a.iii and vi of the Richmond Zoning Regulations notes that projects need to provide pedestrian pathways and trails.
32. The Applicants have provided some pedestrian pathways on their site plans. **(While the applicants have shown some gravel paths on their site plans there are no pedestrian pathways and crosswalks in the parking area. The board could consider requiring more. As was noted above, there is little to no external lighting on the site. The board could consider whether or not the applicants should provide more illumination for pedestrian pathways to ensure safety.)**
33. Section 5.5.3.a.v. notes that parking must be located to the side well screened from view.
34. Both parking areas are located in the front of the lot. (**The Board could consider requiring the applicant to locate the parking more to the side to ensure it is not visible from Route 2**)
35. The applicants plan set notes that 54 of the parking spaces are screened by an existing curtain of trees. However, there are 13 parking spaces that are not screened by any vegetation and would be visible from Route 2. **(The Board could consider requiring landscaping to screen these 13 spaces from view or require them to be relocated to a location where they can be screened by existing vegetation. The Board could consider requiring additional lighting in the parking area as well.)**
36. The project will be subject to the landscaping requirements noted in Section 5.5.3.d.i-x of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
37. The applicants have provided a landscaping plan for the project and appear to comply with Section 5.5.3.b.i-vi.
38. The Applicants landscaping plan indicates that they intend to plant 10 new maple trees and they plan to spend \$72,500 in landscaping. However the applicants indicate that they would like to get some credit for existing vegetation and other landscaping work.
39. The applicants total projected construction cost is \$6.5 Million.
40. Per the chart noted in Section 5.5.3.b.vii the applicants are required to spend 1% of the total construction cost in landscaping. Given the applicants \$6.5 million construction cost they need to spend \$65,000 in landscaping.
41. As indicated above the applicants are proposing \$72,500 in landscaping which would meet the minimum requirement noted in Section 5.5.3.b.vii. **(While the Applicants have spent the required amount per section 5.5.3.b.vii their narrative notes that they are seeking credit for**

existing trees, site features and alternative improvements. The Applicants have not provided a detailed breakdown of their \$72,500 landscaping budget to indicate how much money will actually be spent on new trees as opposed to alternative or existing improvements. The DRB should consider requiring the applicant to provide a breakdown of the \$72,500 landscaping budget).

42. The project will be subject to the conditional use regulations noted in Section 5.6.
43. The project will have to comply with the specific standards noted in Section 5.6.2 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
44. The project appears to be in compliance with a, b, c, f, g, h, i, j, and k of Section 5.6.2.
45. Section 5.6.2.d notes that the applicants need a state wastewater and potable water permit prior to the use commencing.
46. The applicants have not submitted a wastewater and potable water permit for this project.
47. Section 5.6.2.e notes that the development has been proposed over a reasonable time period.
48. The Applicant's narrative indicates that they intended to start construction in September and continue at a reasonable pace. **(The Board could require a more detailed phasing plan for the project.)**
49. The Applicants have not submitted a letter from the Richmond Fire Department as noted in section 5.6.2.g.
50. The Project is subject to the parking standards noted in Section 6.1.1 of the Richmond Zoning regulations.
51. Section 6.1.1.b notes that loading spaces need to be 15 feet wide and 25 feet long **(The applicants site plan does not note a loading space and they have not requested a waiver from this requirement.)**
52. Section 6.1.1.c. notes that all loading spaces will be hard surfaced unless the applicant requests a waiver from that requirement in writing **(The Applicants need to submit a written waiver from this requirement.)**
53. Section 6.1.1.e notes that projects are required to have 1 loading space for the first 5,000 feet of gross floor area and an additional space for every additional 30,000 feet of gross floor area. **(The applicants plan set does not note the total amount of gross floor area for the project. The applicants will need to provide a minimum of one loading space or request a waiver from this requirement in writing.)**
54. The applicants have not requested a waiver from the loading requirements as noted in Section 6.1.1.g of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
55. The project will be subject to the parking requirements noted in section 6.1.2 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
56. Section 6.1.2.a notes that parking spaces have a minimum width of 9 feet and a length of 18 feet. **(The Applicants plan set does not note the minimum width and length of all parking spaces.)**
57. The parking area must meet the dimensional standards noted in Section 6.1.2.b **(The applicants have not indicated that their parking area will meet the standards noted in Section 6.1.2.b.)**
58. Section 6.1.2.d notes that educational facilities require 1 parking space per employee.
59. The Applicants plan set notes 67 parking spaces **(It is unclear how many employees VYCC has. The applicants will need to clarify that number in order to determine whether they have the required spaces or they will need to request a waiver from this requirement.)**
60. The project will be subject to the additional parking standards noted in Section 6.1.6.a-p of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
61. The Applicants proposed parking area will be gravel.
62. Section 6.1.6.b notes that all parking areas will be hard surfaced by concrete or asphalt unless the applicants submit a written waiver from this requirement.
63. The Applicants have not submitted a waiver from the surfacing requirement. **(The Applicants need to submit a written waiver from this requirement.)**
64. Section 6.1.6.c of the Richmond Zoning Regulations notes the drainage requirements for parking areas.
65. The Applicants have submitted a proposed gravel wetland with the project and have included a storm water plan on page 9 of their plan sheet. Their narrative also indicates that they will need a

state stormwater permit. **(While the applicant has submitted a stormwater plan for the project they have not indicated that their system was designed for a 25 year 24 hour storm event. The applicants will need to submit this information. The board could consider whether or not to have this stormwater system reviewed by the town engineer.)**

66. The project is subject to the landscaping requirements noted in Section 6.1.6.6.h.
67. The Applicants have submitted a landscaping plan for the project.
68. Section 6.1.6.6.j of the Richmond Zoning Regulations notes that a use that has 15 or more parking spaces is required to have a bike rack located near the main entrance unless the applicants request a waiver. **(The Applicants have not shown bike racks on their plan set and they have not submitted a waiver from this requirement.)**
69. Section 6.1.6.6.l noted that the DRB can require traffic control signs.
70. The applicants plan set shows a bifurcated entrance with what appears to be separate exit and entrance lanes. **(The DRB could consider requiring the applicant to install traffic control signs to regulate traffic flow.)**
71. Section 6.1.6.6.o notes the project is required to have fire lanes.
72. The applicants plan set does not show a fire lane or turning diagram for a fire truck.
73. Section 6.1.6.6.p notes that waiver requests need to be made in writing and are subject to the standards noted in i.-vii. **(The Applicants have not submitted any written waiver request from any of the parking requirements.)**
74. As previously noted land development on slopes 20% or greater is regulated by Section 6.11 of the Richmond Zoning Regulations.
75. Section 6.11 notes that any development on slopes 20% or more requires engineered plans for erosion and sediment control and safe construction methods.
76. The Applicant's plan set shows silt fencing located on the downslope of the proposed cabins. **(The Board could consider whether or not this silt fencing is enough to adequately control erosion.)**

OUTSTANDING ITEMS:

1. Traffic Calculations as noted in Section 3.6.5.d.
2. Plan to comply with Section 4.9.2.
3. Site plan showing underground electrical utilities.
4. Updated lighting plan with more lighting for pedestrian safety.
5. No State wastewater and potable water permit as noted in Section 5.6.2.d.
6. No letter from the Richmond Fire Department as noted in Section 5.6.2.g.
7. The parking information noted in Section 6.1.2.a-b.
8. No written waiver from the surfacing requirements noted in Section 6.1.1.c and Section 6.1.6.b.
9. No written waiver from loading requirements noted in Section 6.1.1.e.
10. Confirmation as to the total number of VYCC employees per Section 6.1.2.d.
11. Parking lot information per Section 6.1.2.b.
12. Confirmation that the stormwater system has been designed for a 25 year 24 hour storm event per Section 6.1.6.6.c.
13. No fire lanes shown as required by Section 6.1.6.6.o.
14. No written waiver request from the bike rack requirements noted in Section 6.1.6.6.j

ITEMS FOR DRB CONSIDERATION:

1. Should the Applicants be required to submit an updated lighting plan with additional lighting?
2. Should the Applicants be required to provide clearly marked pedestrian pathways in the parking area and should they provide additional lighting to ensure the safety of pedestrian trails?
3. Should the Applicants be required to relocate 13 parking spaces to a location with better screening?
4. Should the Applicants get credit for existing landscaping features and if so how much?
5. Should the Applicants be required to install traffic control signs?
6. Should the stormwater plan for the project be reviewed by the town engineer?

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DRB:

1. Continue the application until the Applicants have provided the following information:
 - a. Updated lighting plan for the site in order to ensure site safety.
 - b. Traffic Calculations as noted in Section 3.6.5.d.
 - c. Written waiver from the surfacing requirements noted in Section 6.1.1.c and Section 6.1.6.b.
 - d. Written waiver from loading requirements noted in Section 6.1.1.e.
 - e. Written waiver request from the bike rack requirements noted in Section 6.1.6.6.j
 - f. The parking information noted in Section 6.1.2.a-b.
 - g. Fire lanes as required by Section 6.1.6.6.o.
 - h. Letter from the Richmond Fire Department as noted in Section 5.6.2.g.
 - i. Confirmation as to the total number of VYCC employees per Section 6.1.2.d.
 - j. Confirmation that the stormwater system has been designed for a 25 year 24 hour storm event per Section 6.1.6.6.c.
 - k. Receipt of any necessary state permits.
 - l. Site plan showing underground electrical utilities as noted in Section 4.10.3.d.