CITY OF BARRE, VERMONT
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, July 13, 2026

Location: Council Chambers, City Hall, 6 N. Main Street, Barre VT and Remote Participation

1. **Call to Order**:
   Chair Sarah Helman called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

   Roll Call: Board Members Present:
   Sarah Helman, Chair, Ward II (in-person); Michelle Farnham, Ward I (video); Jayme Bauer, Ward II (video); Liz Turner, At-Large (in-person); Katrina Pelkey Ward III (in-person); and Philip Back, At Large (in-person)

   Board Members Absent: Chrysta Murray, Vice Chair Ward I

   Staff Present: Janet Shatney, Planning Director

   Public Present: From presentations and Sign-in sheet:
   - Martin McMahon representing Barre Evangelical Free Church
   - Brian Lane-Karnas P.E. representing Stevens Branch Limited Partnership
   - David Roy, Weimann Lamphere Architects representing Stevens Branch Limited Partnership
   - Ben Sturtz, Evernorth representing Stevens Branch Limited Partnership
   - Dottie Ricks, interested person from First Presbyterian Church abutting property owner

2. **Adjustments to Agenda**: None

3. **Visitors and Communication**: None

4. **Old Business**:

   a. Consideration of Minutes from February 5, 2026 hearing
   Motion by Pelkey and seconded by Turner with no discussion, ***motion carried***

   b. Consideration of Decision from February 5, 2026 hearing
   Motion by Bauer and seconded by Pelkey with no discussion, ***motion carried***

   c. Consideration of Decision from January 5, 2026 hearing
   Motion by Turner and seconded by Farnham with no discussion, ***motion carried***
   d. Consideration of Minutes from June 4, 2026 hearing
   Motion by Back and seconded by Turner, question on term non-substantive and grammar correction, ***motion carried***

5. **New Business**:

   a. **Barre Evangelical Free Church (BEFC), 17 S Main Street in Barre**

   Chair Helman asked if there was any ex parte communication, none identified. The summary for the application was read off the agenda.

   A passing motion requires 5 votes in the affirmative, so with only 6 members present of a current 7 out of 9 member board, the Chair gave the option to postpone the hearing to a future date for a more full board or proceed, and the applicant chose to proceed.

   A motion to open the hearing was made by Back and seconded by Bauer, ***motion carried at 6:09 pm.***

Martin McMahon representing BEFC was sworn in, but used the term affirmed. The outline given was the increased use of property by transients as a dumping ground, drug-use paraphernalia present, transients intimidating the users of the church, defecating and urinating on church property. The desire is to install fencing, and felt that a 6' tall fence was not adequate and wants an 8' tall fence. He added that privacy slats could be interwoven to help.

Board Discussion, Summary of Board questions, clarifications, and discussion:

- Back asked for clarification – safety, etc. of the weave and where the property line is between them and the railroad.
- Turner wanted to know how the 12 ½-foot height was arrived at, and would the stone wall adjacent would allow for ease over a 6' tall fence, McMahon answered that they wanted it as tall as the roof. Said that was shown on a railroad diagram included in the packet. Turner also asked why there were small segments of fencing being proposed, and McMahon responded that they want to minimize their exposure, and that fencing 10-12 feet long in the application, might need it longer in length.
- Farnham wanted to know what other methods were tried prior to seeking a fence. McMahon stated there is no fear from the men of the church, but for the women they are scared. Police are called but they cannot be exclusively at BEFC all the time to monitor the property.
- Chair Helman stated she understood the fence desired at the back of the property, and needed clarification for where they want it in the front, which McMahon showed, and stated the original plan was to close in the alcove area, but now wants it larger.

With no further questions from the Board, the applicant or any visitors and nothing to be read into the record, Chair Helman thanked McMahon and a motion to close the hearing was made by Turner and seconded by Pelkey, ***motion carried at 6:24 pm.***

b. **City of Barre and Stevens Branch Limited Partnership, 11 Seminary Street and 1 Campbell Street**

Chair Helman asked if there was any ex parte communication, none identified. The summary for the application was read off the agenda.

A passing motion requires 5 votes in the affirmative, so with only 6 members present of a current 7 out of 9 member board, the Chair gave the option to postpone the hearing to a future date for a more full board or proceed, and the applicant chose to proceed.

A motion to open the hearing was made by Back and seconded by Turner, ***motion carried at 6:26 pm.***

Brian Lan-Karnas of Dubois & King Engineering, David Roy of Weimann Lamphere Architects, and Ben Sturtz of Evernorth, all representing the applicant were sworn in. Lane-Karnas stated it was a limited change request this evening and that the overall project has not changed. There were 3 requests before the DRB:

1. Changes to the trash and recycling enclosure screening from wood to chain link: this is being rescinded, and they will stick with the originally approved materials.
2. Addition of lighting, and
3. Storage requirements reduction.

Testimony began with the additional lighting. It was explained that because the 1st floor is smaller than the upper floors, there is an overhang and entry tunnel that needs additional lighting. The increase in ceiling mounted lights is to 22 total lights, and altogether still meets all the lighting requirements in the regulations.

The reduction of required storage square footage for each unit came about when doing the actual hard designing of the building, like spacing for corridors and access, and with 32 units total, the design could not get to 30 square feet for each unit, but came up with what was proposed in the application. An additional building could be brought in, but that would reduce potential parking spaces. Each unit still has a storage area, but some would have a smaller space, and wanted to make it work for the tenants.

<u>Board Discussion, Summary of Board questions, clarifications, and discussion</u>:

- Farnham stated that it was too bad that an average couldn't be worked out so that each unit got approximately 25 square feet. Roy stated they could adjust, and those that aren't within each individual unit would be okay. Lane-Karnas went over the allotted units' proposed square footage.
- Turner was curious about different ceiling heights in the units, were some taller; and it was clarified every unit was under a full ceiling height between 8' and 10'.
- Bauer wondered if there could be optimal storage at higher levels, to accommodate those with higher/taller ceiling heights, but it wouldn't be equitable as Roy stated.
- Farnham followed up with storage area sf/unit, and wondered if the square footage related to the size of the apartment; Lane-Karnas stated that no, it was about trying to be equitable.
- Back asked if the new lights were down-shielded, and Lane-Karnas explained the site plan better that the lighting was all about what was underneath the first floor that which was undermounted, and that there were no changes to the pole lighting. Back also asked about storage, if one was allowed for more volume, and discussion occurred about potential redistribution.
- Pelkey asked about wall storage, closets, etc., and also about the storage units on the ground floor, were they all separated by chain link, and were open. Sturtz stated that changing to sheetrock for example would require more fire suppression, and that only the first floor units were getting storage reductions. Lane-Karnas stated that while reducing the storage is not ideal, they needed to look at the highest and best use of the building.
- Turner asked if there could be separate bike storage to help alleviate the storage unit compromise. Lane-Karnas said that the site is very tightly designed now, and would have to give up parking to make it work.
- Bauer asked about the trash enclosure, and was reminded that they rescinded this request at the beginning of the hearing, and would have to default to the originally approved design.
- Pelkey asked about the timeline for construction, and it was stated that breaking ground would be some time in September 2026.

With no other questions from board members, Dottie Ricks, a ruling Elder at the Presbyterian Church was sworn in. Her question was that of any of the changes proposed, would there be any increase in stormwater runoff onto the abutting church property. She gave background of their 2022 flooding problems, then the July 2023 and 2024 floods producing a great amount of runoff, that every time something changes, she wanted to be sure that this was not forgotten.

Lane-Karnas reminded her that this application request does not change anything previously approved. He did speak to stormwater in general, stating there are new catch basins, larger piping, and a gap under the trash enclosure being raised off the ground will allow water to flow like its supposed to, and with existing site conditions with a great amount of impervious surface, to new buildings with roof and drains, there is more landscaped area proposed.

Lastly she stated that the church was assured about contaminated dirt, but there was dust in the air now, and Chair Helman stated that the project underway on Seminary Street is a City project and not a part of this particular project.

With no further questions from the Board, the applicant or any visitors and nothing to be read into the record, Chair Helman thanked everyone and a motion to close the hearing was made by Pelkey and seconded by Bauer, ***motion carried at 7:13 pm.***

6. **Deliberative Session**: Motion to enter deliberative session was made at 7:14 by Back and seconded by Pelkey

and inviting Director Shatney in, ***motion carried***.

Motion to leave deliberative session was made at 8:07 am by Turner and seconded by Pelkey, ***motion carried***.

In open session at 8:08 om, Turner moved to table the application for 17 S Main Street and request a more detailed site plan from the applicant, including the dimensions, precise location, and proposed fencing material of the proposed fence. Once these additional materials and locations are submitted, the DRB will consider the application in full; seconded by Back, ***motion carried unanimously***.

Back made a motion regarding the Steven Branch Apartments application, and moved that we grant the application in part and deny the application in part. He moved that we grant that part of the lighting application as presented the with the following condition that any immaterial or non-substantive modifications to the approved lighting plan may be authorized administratively by the Zoning Administrator. And moved that we deny that part of the application seeking to reduce storage space pursuant to UDO Section 3201.C(4)as it limits the DRB's authority to grant that request, seconded by Tuner, ***motion carried unanimously***.

7. **Next Meeting scheduled for August 6, 2026**. Chair Helman also informed the board that there was at least 1 if not 2 applicants for the remaining 2 vacant seats on the Board, and hoping they were going to be appointed at the next City Council meeting.

8. **Roundtable**: nothing offered.
9. **Executive Session**: none needed.

10. **Adjourn**: Motion to adjourn by Turner and seconded by Bauer at 8:11 pm, ***motion carried***.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet E. Shatney, Planning Director