

WESTFIELD DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD HEARING
October 7th, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m.
Westfield Community Center, 59 North Hill Road

Town Officials in Attendance: Pat Sagui, Development Review Board Chair; Loren Petzoldt, Development Review Board Vice-Chair (Acting Chair); Ellen Fox, Development Review Board; Kitty Edwards, Development Review Board; Brian Dunn, Development Review Board; Will Young, Zoning Administrator; Niki Dunn, Development Review Board Clerk

Others In Attendance: Tom Howell (On behalf of applicant, Jay Peak Pacifica, LLC), Shelley Martin, Mark English, Rick Danforth, Jan Degre, Daniel McAvinney, Mike Piper, Dennis Vincent, Don Berthiaume, Lisa Deslandes, Richard Degre, Tony Distasi, Pauline Doyon (Via Zoom), Rob Trachtenberg (Via Zoom), Farzana Leyva, Pete Koutros (Via Zoom), Justin Leyva, LaDonna Dunn

- A. Welcome Participants:** Loren Petzoldt, acting as Chair, brought the meeting to order at 6:41pm. This hearing is regarding application 2025-14 for the property located at 979 VT Route 100, which is in the village district, brought forth by Jay Peak Pacifica, LLC. Change of Use for a multiple household dwelling is subject to Conditional Use and Site Plan Review and requires a hearing by the Development Review Board.
- B. Admissible Evidence:** The admissible evidence submitted by the applicant is a letter from Steve Wright, General Manager at Jay Peak Resort, outlining the plan for the property (A), permit application 2025-14 (B), Copy of a survey map from Truline Land Surveyors dated February 2016 (C) and a copy of a Parking Plan Survey from Ruggles Engineering Services, Inc dated June 10, 2021 (D).
- C. Interested Parties:** Loren explained that anyone wishing to speak at the hearing or who would like the chance to appeal the decision the Development Review Board makes regarding this application must sign in as an interested party and take the verbal oath. Interested parties were Tom Howell, Shelley Martin, Mark English, Rick Danforth, Jan Degre, Daniel McAvinney, Mike Piper, Dennis Vincent, Don Berthiaume, Lisa Deslandes, Richard Degre, Tony Distasi, Pauline Doyon, Rob Trachtenberg, Farzana Leyva, Pete Koutros and Justin Leyva
- D. Oath:** Loren read the oath aloud and it was verbally agreed to by all the interested parties.
- E. Presentation by Applicant:** Tom Howell, the Director of Administration at Jay Peak Resort, explained that employee housing is one of the areas he works in at the resort. The resort takes on roughly 450-500 employees each winter. This property would be the 13th property that they use for employee housing. They require that all employees have background checks, work reference checks, etc, to make sure the employees uphold the reputation of Jay Peak Resort. They provide the employees with the Jay Peak Resort Employee Handbook and Housing Conduct Policies when they are hired. They also house international employees in the winter. These employees come into the country on H2B and J1 Visas. They have many returning international employees each year, some have been with the resort for five years. He is aware that people are concerned with who the employees in the housing will be. The plan is to put 26 employees in the building, two per small unit and 6 in the larger unit. These employees will be primarily here on H2B Visas. These employees do not have vehicles, so Jay Peak provides them with transportation via shuttle each day to the resort and back. They also provide shuttles to bring the employees to Derby to do their shopping.
- F. Question Period:**
- a.** Pat Sagui questioned when the Jay Peak Resort Employee Handbook and Housing Conduct Policies are provided to employees. Tom noted that it is given to employees when they are hired and he can provide a copy to the board along with the lease they have employees sign. Pat questioned what the Housing Coordinator does. Tom explained that Courtney Fortin is the Housing Coordinator at Jay Peak, and she manages leases, does site visits, and conducts room inspections. Most of this work takes place during the winter

when they have more employees in their housing. Tom explained that the Inglenook Lodge is one of their housing units and it is very clean and updated.

- b. Ellen Fox questioned if there is a policy stating that employees cannot have vehicles on the premises or if it is just the nature of the type of employee they house. Tom explained that the H2B Visa employees don't come here with vehicles. Ellen noted that if they purchased a car, they would need to respect the parking spaces available on the property. She questioned if this is the first employee housing that they will own. Tom explained that they own the Inglenook Lodge and also use some of the condo housing at the resort. He has not had any complaints about damage or noise at these places. Ellen questioned what kinds of issues have come up at the other employee housing. Tom noted that the roommate's people are put with can sometimes become a problem. He noted that the J1 Visa employees usually have this problem more often and noted that they will not be housing J1 Visa employees at this site unless necessary. He has not had any instances where the police had to show up.
- c. Kitty Edwards questioned if they have any issues with immigration, such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement coming to the housing. Tom noted that they apply for petitions to Immigration and Customs Enforcement for their Visas and they are vetted before getting approved for the Visa. If there was a problem with something like drug use or disruptive behavior and that was reported to their sponsor, then they would be removed.
- d. Loren questioned how many times a day the shuttles will be coming in and out of the property. Tom explained that they try to house people together who work in the same positions, for example, housekeeping, so that their hours are all the same. If they only had a couple of people doing one job type, they would not send a bus to pick them up, just a regular-sized vehicle. Loren questioned how often the housing would be used. Tom noted that from November to April they will have people there and it may be empty in the summertime. They may house a few people at most if they don't have room at the resort during the summer. Loren noted that if the change of use was approved it would be approved for year-round use. Loren questioned if there was any possibility of J1 Visa employees being housed here. Tom explained that they recently redid the Inglenook Lodge, where they currently house the J1 Visa workers, but if something happened to that building, they may need to move them. In the summertime they have condo availability they could move them to. Loren questioned if any domestic employees would possibly live there. Tom noted that they have some currently living on the resort. He stressed that they primarily need this housing for their H2B Visa employees. He noted that there will be a large sign on the building with his and Courtney's phone numbers on it for anyone to call if there are any problems. Loren questioned if Jay Peak is purchasing the property or if somebody else is purchasing it, and Tom noted that Jay Peak is purchasing the property.
- e. Justin Leyva is the HR Recruitment Specialist at Jay Peak Resort. He oversees the H2B and J1 Visa program. He has a close relationship with each individual that comes through the program. They are at full capacity with their J1 Visa employees and noted that they are housed at Inglenook Lodge. They are younger than the H2B visa employees, and are mostly in their early 20's. They feel that it is better to keep the J1 Visa employees close to the resort. The H2B Visa employees are typically between the ages of 30-50 and they are here to work to provide for their families back home. Justin will be keeping an eye on the property as well as he lives across the street.
- f. Shelley Martin lives next door to the property; she noted that the main kitchen in the common room has broken appliances and wondered if that room would be getting fixed. Tom noted that the employees would primarily be cooking in their units. If they request to have the kitchen fixed in the common room they will look into it. They plan to put couches, games etc. in the common room. Shelley also questioned who to call if there's an emergency. Tom noted to call 911 if there is an emergency, but if there is any other issue that needs addressing to call him or Courtney, and they will have their numbers on the building. Shelley noted that there are cars that will pull into the lot in the middle of the night

and then leave after a few minutes. She questioned who to call if this happened now. Loren noted that you would call the police or Tom. Tom noted that they plan to install cameras there and the security team will be available to view those. Shelley also questioned if the fence between her house and the property would be painted so it doesn't rot. Tom plans to go over the inspection report and they plan to maintain the property correctly. They may paint the building in the brown and green colors of Jay Peak in the future.

- g. Dennis Vincent questioned the issue of people not leaving the property. Tom noted that they can leave the property to do things like visit the general store, hardware store, etc. They are not required to stay on the property.

- h. Don Berthiaume questioned the septic system capacity on the property. He wondered to what extent they went to getting it inspected. Tom noted that they scoped it, and it was deemed to be okay.

Loren noted that the comments were getting out of the scope of what is germane to the hearing.

- i. Richard Degre questioned if the septic system capacity would be increased. Tom noted that the system was approved for 19 people, and they will have 26 people on the property but only for the winter. They may have a few people there in the summer. Will questioned if the Agency of Natural Resources had an issue with them housing 26 people there. Tom noted they did not.
- j. Tony Distasi noted that he has worked at Jay Peak Resort for many years and has spoken with many employees who live in the housing and has heard of very few problems.
- k. Farzana Leyva was skeptical when Rural Edge first bought the Scenic View property. In the time they have owned the building there have been problems with drugs, firearms, knives, etc. There were people living there who were not 55 and older, some of whom had active arrest warrants out for them. She complained to Rural Edge and never got an adequate response. She felt that if this property turned into regular apartments they would need to move. She came into the country on an H2B Visa, and she is ecstatic that Jay Peak will be housing these types of employees there. She will feel much safer letting her kids play outside.
- l. Rick Danforth questioned the noise level as his elderly mother-in-law lives near the property. He also is concerned about people walking through town and traffic control. Loren noted that it is out of the DRB's hands to control traffic. Rick explained that he is looking to see if there is a plan to have the Sheriff patrol more to curb the speeding in the village. Tom answered the noise question and noted that they house employees in condos right near guests and have not had any issues. Will noted that VTrans was contacted as part of this process and asked if they had any traffic concerns and they did not.
- m. Mike Piper questioned if they allowed dogs on the property. Tom explained that they do not allow pets at their employee housing units.
- n. Shelley questioned if a copy of the employee handbook could be left at the Town Clerks Office so people could look through it. Tom will look into possibly getting a public copy available. Shelley noted that she supports Jay Peak purchasing this property.
- o. Tom questioned if the length of time to get the Notice of Decision completed and the length of time for an appeal to be filed would delay them in housing employees there this winter. Will explained that they should follow the current conditions placed on the building until the appeal period is over to make sure they remain in compliance.
- p. Shelley questioned if the building would be smoking or non-smoking. Tom noted that they would have a designated area to smoke but most of the Visa workers do not smoke.

q. There were no questions from anyone attending via Zoom.

Ellen Fox motioned to move into deliberative session at 7:37PM and invited Will Young and Niki Dunn to join them, Kitty Edwards seconded. Motion passed.

Loren Petzoldt motioned to exit deliberative session at 8:05PM, Kitty Edwards seconded. Motion passed.

Ellen Fox motioned to approve application 2025-14 submitted by Jay Peak Pacifica, LLC to change the use at 979 VT Route 100 to employee housing without conditions, Kitty Edwards seconded. Motion passed.

Pat Sagui motioned to enter executive session at 8:04PM, Ellen seconded. Motion passed.

Exited executive session at 8:24PM.

Pat Sagui motioned to adjourn at 8:25PM, Kitty Edwards seconded. Motion passed.