

**TOWN OF CHESTER**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION SUBCOMMITTEE**

**August 25, 2021 10:00 AM**

**Draft Minutes**

**Location:** Mount Ascutney Regional Planning Commission Building 38 Ascutney Park Road, Ascutney, VT picnic table on the front porch.

**Members Present:** Peter Hudkins, Cathy Hasbrouck

**Planners and Experts Present:** Alex Taft, Preston Bristow.

**Citizens Present:** None.

Peter Hudkins moved to approve the minutes from the August 11, 2021 meeting. Cathy Hasbrouck seconded the motion. No changes were requested. A vote was taken and the minutes were accepted as written.

Alex Taft distributed a memo detailing his analysis of present uses on the green and how they would be addressed by the proposed bylaws. The memo discussed

- mixed commercial and residential uses, both within a single structure and on a single parcel of land that could have separate commercial and residential buildings
- dimensional standards
- building footprint standards
- parking
- signage
- the number of uses and principal buildings allowed on a single lot
- how a list of uses would interact with a materially similar use provision
- site plan review

The subcommittee considered what makes a bylaw business friendly. It was decided that the full Planning Commission should be consulted on this matter and a memo summarizing the points raised should be prepared. The Planning Commission could discuss the memo at the next meeting and provide feedback to the subcommittee. The points to be considered were

- Whether bylaws should strive to reflect the built environment and minimize the number of non-conformities it creates.
- Whether reducing the number of permit applications requiring a DRB hearing is helpful, while ensuring that a project such as Dollar General requires a full hearing.
- Whether mixed-use (buildings or parcels that have both commercial and residential uses) should be allowed.
- Whether the level of required parking is appropriate for the V12 district
- Whether single-family or 2-family homes should be allowed in the V12

- How uses on a parcel are counted and whether the number of uses should be regulated
- Which standards should be evaluated for a permitted use versus a conditional use?
- What the requirement for a site plan document should be and if the requirements should vary with the zoning district or the type of application

Other topics discussed were whether long-standing commercial properties outside the village center which became non-conforming when the zoning districts were re-drawn in 2008 or 2014 should be allowed to keep their commercial use permits for more years after the business closes. Preston Bristow listed four non-conforming parcels where buyers are showing interest, but it will be difficult if not impossible to issue a permit.

Jason Rasmussen had distributed a copy of the V12 zoning district page with suggested changes and two suggestions for ways to streamline the permitting process.

Cathy Hasbrouck volunteered to prepare the memo about business-friendly practices for approval by Preston and Peter. Once the memo is presented to the full Planning Commission and their feedback is obtained, the subcommittee will schedule a meeting to discuss the result.