

1 **TOWN OF CHESTER**
2 **PLANNING COMMISSION**

3 **October 3, 2022, Minutes**

4 **Commission Members Present:** Peter Hudkins, Cathy Hasbrouck, Barre Pinske, Tim Roper, and
5 Hugh Quinn at Town Hall.

6 **Staff Present:** Preston Bristow, Zoning Administrator/Town Planner, at Town Hall; and Susan
7 Bailey, Recording Secretary, via Zoom.

8 **Citizens Present:** Bill Lindsay and Keith Marks at Town Hall; and Steve Mancuso via Zoom.

9 **Call to Order**

10 Chair Hugh Quinn called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

11
12 **Decisions Made:**

- 13
 - None.

14 **Action Items:**

- 15
 - Tim and Amie will send out the Community Survey postcards by next week.
 - Preston will follow up with Jason about the Bylaw Modernization Schedule.

17
18 **Agenda Item 1, Changes to the Agenda**

19
20 Tim said he brought this up while Hugh was away that the Open Meeting Law discussion was
21 clear that they couldn't add to the agenda without warning it appropriately. Both Tim and Cathy
22 offered that the agenda item could remain if they wanted to rearrange the order or drop something.
23 Hugh remembered the discussion and agreed they couldn't add something unless it was an
24 emergency, but they could rearrange or defer things, so they would leave it on as an understanding
25 not to use it as a vehicle to sneak a new item onto the agenda.

26
27 **Agenda Item 2, Review and Approve Minutes from September 19, 2022, meeting**

28
29 Tim moved to review and approve the September 19, 2022, meeting minutes and Cathy seconded
30 the motion. Hugh asked if there were any comments or feedback on the minutes or changes. Barre
31 had none. Tim said the bottom of page 1 referenced density was 56.25 and asked what that meant.
32 Cathy thought possibly people per square mile. Tim asked if it would show up in the recording.
33 Sue offered to listen to the recording. Tim said it wasn't that big a deal but if she could find out,
34 that would be great. A vote was taken, the motion carried, and the minutes were approved as
35 amended.

36
37 **Agenda Item 3, Citizens Comments**

38
39 Hugh asked for comments for items not on the agenda.

40
41 Steve Mancuso stated at the last Selectboard meeting that adaptive reuse was ratified and legacy

1 was tabled. He was under the impression that this Wednesday, legacy would be on their agenda
2 and didn't see it. He wondered what he was missing. Hugh thought Wednesday's Selectboard
3 meeting was a public hearing for the short-term rental draft ordinance and wasn't certain what else
4 was on the agenda. Peter said it wasn't tabled and it had to be left open to a time certain and the
5 time certain was Wednesday. Time certain meant it couldn't be tabled forever. They were leaving
6 an item open, but it had to be open to a specific time. Tim said it was item 4 on the agenda. Steve
7 said he stood corrected and thanked Tim for his clarification.

8
9 There were no other comments.

10 **Agenda Item 4, Value of Arts & Culture to the Community (Keith Marks)**

11
12
13 Barre introduced Keith Marks, Director of Next Stage Art Center in Putney. Keith came to Barre's
14 gallery and introduced himself when he got the job at Next Stage. Barre went to Next Stage to see
15 the comedy show in the spring and enjoyed it a lot and was inspired. As a result, Barre and a friend
16 started going to Burlington to participate in an open mic. Barre went back to the comedy show
17 they had recently and through that, he met a comic, they are now friends, and communicate online.
18 The purpose of the talk is to understand the value of arts and culture and Barre related through that
19 experience, it had enriched his life and created new friendships and given him more confidence
20 with his humor.

21
22 Keith is responsible for raising money and managing the schedule and all the things involved with
23 a nonprofit, which is a lot. He thought it would be great for Keith to share his experience and
24 insight and what the value of arts and culture is to a community like Putney and the region. Keith
25 thanked Barre for inviting him.

26
27 Keith moved here from Florida almost 3 years ago. Next Stage was doing a national search for a
28 director, and he was involved in a program through the University of Pennsylvania for non-profit
29 leaders and he met someone from Brattleboro and learned of the job at Next Stage and moved his
30 wife and 2 children from Florida. He has been involved in arts and culture, primarily music, some
31 theater, and variations since the age of 16. He's 43, so it has been the better part of almost 30 years
32 doing arts and culture.

33
34 In terms of thinking broadly about big brush strokes, he thought speaking about what art does for
35 a community was most appropriate. He imagined most of the members had been to big cities where
36 they have arts and culture, and people experience theaters, music, and different art galleries which
37 is a strong component of what makes places livable and attractive for people to want to live there.
38 He said what is beautiful about the Route 5 corridor from Bellows Falls to Guilford is there is a
39 wide breadth of arts and cultural organizations that make someone like him with young kids and
40 raising a family. Moving to a place that is beautiful but not necessarily culturally vibrant and has
41 opportunities and options for his children would probably be a place he is not necessarily ready to
42 live in. One aspect of arts and culture is attracting a younger population, which helps the tax base
43 and schools. If you think of arts and culture strictly in terms of what happens on stage, you're
44 missing the larger picture. At Next Stage, the magic of arts and culture is what happens prior to a
45 show, at the intermission of a show and serves as a community rallying point and a physical
46 location for community to call itself community. Living together doesn't create a sense of

1 community. It's not enough to have geographic proximity. Shared experiences create a sense of
2 community. The more you engage with your neighbors the more a connection you feel and the
3 more a sense of home it helps to create. Another important aspect of arts and culture is creating a
4 sense of community. It also gives a place for people to gather. They just hosted a memorial service
5 for a community leader and 175 people attended. That event probably couldn't have happened in
6 Putney if not for the Next Stage venue. They do community suppers, blood drives, host events for
7 the food shelf and have done cooking for new people who have come to the country. Next Stage
8 has a commercial kitchen, an art gallery, a community space, and a 200-seat theater. A few years
9 ago, The Vermont Arts Council did a study and 10% of Vermont's economy is the creative sector.
10 That includes not only musicians and visual artists, but sculptors, graphic designers, landscape
11 architects. It's the creative economy. A lot of the economy rests inside the arts and culture piece
12 that a lot of people aren't aware of. Since he arrived, he's been trying to speak with the Brattleboro
13 Development Credit Corporation that deals with the economic vitality of the region because they
14 were not mentioning arts and culture anywhere in their literature and website. He must have
15 bothered them enough because now he is on the board of The Southeast Vermont Development
16 Strategy which sets the economic/BDCC agenda every five years. He is the first person since the
17 beginning of BDCC invited to be on the board from the arts sector. He believes more small towns
18 will recognize to have a vibrant downtown village life they will need to give people reasons why
19 they exist other than a cute downtown or cafe. There is a strong economic piece that exists and
20 why Next Stage was created. There were two fires that burned down the general store in 2008. A
21 lot of businesses were going out. The fire happened, and then the church building became open
22 because the congregation folded. They wanted to get rid of the building so the historical society
23 temporarily took it over because they were managing the general store rebuild and a group of
24 citizens came together to preserve the space as a community gathering space which eventually
25 became Next Stage.

26
27 Cathy asked if they had classroom space in addition to what he had mentioned or if it was adaptable
28 to those things and how important it was to be thought of. Keith said in addition to the theater and
29 community space, kitchen, and gallery, there was an office and green room for artists. The space
30 was flexible, and they had just donated space to In-Sight Photography to have their 30th anniversary
31 gala. There was always more they could do, more amenities they could offer. He wanted to reframe
32 the question. He said he was in conversation with Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro in
33 the Northeast Kingdom. They had a very different relationship with its community than Next
34 Stage. Highland began with a woman coming from New York to do summer theater. The town of
35 750 would swell to 3,000 during the summer. She wanted a home to do theater and convinced a
36 hedge fund manager to dump \$26 million into a facility. They hired a New York based architect
37 to design it. The community didn't ask for it or have input into it and now the carrying costs are
38 currently under control at \$750,000. He continues to fund it. They struggle funding the
39 organization because the community had no input.

40
41 Next Stage wasn't a theater company looking for a home but community citizens wanting to
42 maintain a preserve a community space in the village core that could help with economic vitality
43 in their community. A lot of people were involved in the creation of the organization. He received
44 a grant from Vermont Humanities Council, and they are in the process of recording stories of what
45 the founding members went through, the arguments they had, opportunities, and the visions that
46 presented themselves. Keith was happy to share them with the Commission. They had a vibrant

1 community come together and preserve the space which is now Next Stage. That good will has
2 continued because they invest in their community. They give back where they can and provide a
3 meeting space and arts and culture. One of the focuses since he arrived, a focus of ethnic, racial,
4 and cultural diversity in their program. He brings that culture to the school. They just had composer
5 from Israel who composes in Ladino, an endangered language, and did a school assembly for the
6 students. They have a strong board and staff. To Cathy's question, rather than thinking about what
7 amenities might make a successful organization rather what a community needs or wants and who
8 will be using it and what do they want to see. It doesn't necessarily need to be a building. They
9 could have said they wanted to be an arts organization and rent the building from the historical
10 society. It doesn't have to be tied to real estate. In town, Chester probably has buildings and spaces
11 that could be repurposed. During COVID, Next Stage produced an outdoor summer series. Barre
12 was at their show yesterday. They had 200 people, including children and older people and people
13 from all over and not only Putney. They do outdoor mobile performances all summer long. They
14 probably already have several cultural assets if they were to map individuals in the community
15 who are artists. He suggested they build relationships with other towns and communities or
16 Vermont Arts Council and Vermont Humanities Council. He thought they would be surprised by
17 their asset map.

18
19 Hugh thought it was interesting and thanked Keith for sharing with them. Hugh asked what the
20 trigger was that made the community space transform into Next Stage. Keith said there were two
21 women at the Historical Society shouldering the reconstruction of the general store. They were
22 volunteers and they didn't have the capacity to take on another project so one of them reached out
23 to two of the co-founders and said they wanted to do something with the space and didn't know
24 what. The building was in disrepair, so nobody looked at it and saw a gem. Eric Bass from
25 Sandglass Theater organized a fundraiser that raised money for the general store and that evening
26 the community came together to grieve the store that burned down and there was an energy to that
27 night, and they thought they could do something. They got lucky because one of co-founders
28 involved has a family foundation that funded a feasibility study whether the building could serve
29 the purpose. They also funded the initial director. The Historical Society didn't want to carry the
30 responsibility for the building. The building was sold to Next Stage for \$1. Part of the responsibility
31 was the organization raised \$1.8 million to renovate the space. There are a lot more details but
32 that's how things went from a church to the Historical Society to Next Stage and how the
33 organization has grown and changed. One of the community challenges was people who grew up
34 knowing it as a church and had difficulty letting go. There was no congregation to support it and
35 it would have fallen into disrepair and been neglected and likely demolished. A developer could
36 have turned it into condos and the community recognized this was the best-case scenario for this
37 building. He said churches in New England used to be called meeting houses and this is what it
38 serves now.

39
40 Putney is going through a process with Vermont Council of Rural Development. He suggested if
41 Chester wasn't on their list, they should get on it. He thought in 12 years they had worked with 84
42 different municipalities, and they do a grass roots envisioning process with the community and at
43 the end of the process, each community has isolated 3 to 5 projects they want to do and then the
44 VCRD helps connect them with resources in the state to make it happen. Hugh thought that
45 sounded great. On November 10th they are doing an event at Next Stage that will speak to the
46 opportunity with VCRD and ARPA funding. They have three quarters of a million dollars to spend

1 and will use this envisioning process with the money and Next Stage gets to be the home where
2 conversations kick off.

3
4 Hugh asked if the community viewed Next Stage as their community center. He wondered why a
5 community center couldn't also be an arts and culture venue. Keith said Putney had a community
6 center that wasn't in great shape and the food shelf had moved in. There was nobody to program
7 it and they didn't have a fundraising approach which had to do with the food shelf that lives there.
8 He thought it was possible with enough money. He said a community center is like the word, love.
9 It means a lot of things to a lot of different people. They need to consider who is using the
10 community center and what they want to use it for. He said people tend to have top-down thinking
11 and for an organization like this, it needs to be bottom up. He said they need to ask the community
12 what it would look like and allow the community to envision what they would want.

13
14 Tim noted that Keith had pointed out there was a stage in Town Hall and Tim said it used to have
15 local amateur performances two or three times a year. He didn't know why it had ended but
16 assumed the energy that produced it got tired or moved on. They also have a nice auditorium at
17 the high school that hosted the Green Mountain Series where they brought in some top-notch
18 international shows in the winter. Barre said he attended them back in the day. Tim assumed the
19 energy it took to produce was all volunteer, people got tired, and nobody took over. Tim said he
20 wasn't sure Chester was looking for this plus they were sandwiched between First Stage in Saxtons
21 River and Weston Playhouse. He could envision music shows in the Town Hall and said there was
22 also a vacant church, and he didn't know the status of it. Mapping the existing artists and artisans,
23 Tim thought they had quite a bit of it in Chester, such as antiques. He asked what it would take to
24 start where Barre is located and going back to Main Street having a bunch of artisan shops where
25 people live upstairs and as people drive through buy bears, windchimes, and endless possibilities.
26 He asked how to start something like that. Keith suggested they start small. He said artists are the
27 most financially insecure. He said he creates future feelings of regret. Barre is creating future
28 feelings of regret with what he is putting out in the yard. If people feel like they're missing out on
29 something, they will come.

30
31 He mentioned Woodstock has something that begs people to get off the highway and see a cute
32 quintessential town and probably people in Chester take visiting friends there to show them that
33 piece of Vermont. He didn't know what Woodstock's secret sauce was but suggested Chester asset
34 map their resources and without looking to external energy sources what would it take to mobilize
35 what is in front of them. Keith said when he thinks of antiques, he thinks of older people and
36 something like that isn't drawing a young audience. What does Chester want it to look like. You
37 must find a way to get younger people and families in.

38
39 When he took the job at Next Stage, they said they were tired of gray and silver hair in the audience
40 and wanted younger people too. COVID helped because younger people moved to the area from
41 the cities. They were looking for cultural things and Next Stage was there. For years, Next Stage
42 hosted community suppers, and Keith suggested Chester could have local musicians get on stage,
43 suggest donations, and have gallery space and Barre could show photos of what he does. In two
44 months, the Putney craft tour, the oldest continuously run craft tour in America, is coming up and
45 people come from far and wide to see some of the artists' studios that are only open one weekend
46 a year. He suggested Chester could do something similar where they have artisans come together.

1 He also suggested the town could amplify the people who exist in Chester. The Selectboard could
2 highlight an artist once a month. To create a vibrant strip of artisan shops, there may need to be
3 tax incentives. He said there aren't resources like in Europe from federal municipal budgets into
4 arts and culture. A few vibrant people do things, and the community doesn't support it, so they
5 lose it. He said if you want to support restaurants, you go there. If you want to have arts and culture
6 and don't support it, you will have failure. If it's a priority, you start small and figure out ways to
7 fund those endeavors. He said every year the Town of Putney budgets money for an outdoor music
8 series that is free to the public. His town allocates a small amount of money to invest in its
9 community and create community cohesion and feel good. There is a real dollar and cost piece to
10 the equation.

11
12 He said if art centers were narcissistic oriented and putting feathers in someone's cap, it would be
13 a little harder to run them. Barre is lucky because he uses a powerful tool to carve wood quickly
14 and can make a living doing it. There are a lot of foundations and he thought Jeff Bezos' wife gave
15 away 12 million dollars. He believes there are resources out there. He said surviving on art is
16 difficult to do but the value and enriching people's lives is priceless. Barre wondered how much
17 of Keith's job was fundraising and how it works. Keith said primarily what he does at Next Stage
18 is development and fundraising which is knowing his P&L well and seeing how money goes out.
19 He signs every check and looks at every statement. He must negotiate contracts with agents and
20 artists. He has been fortunate that they won a 2-year grant to hire a development manager who is
21 now 1 month in, and it's changed his life because he can delegate work he was doing before. A lot
22 is grant research, proposal, reporting, cultivating, and inviting people in to become donors and it
23 involves donor management. They have sponsorships, including Bar Hill, Mad River, The Porch,
24 Wet Stone, VT Digger, The Brattleboro Reformer, and a homeschool company, named Oak
25 Meadow, based in Putney as the series' sponsor. It all takes time to negotiate and manage. He
26 straddles the line between being an artist and business. He has grown into this role of creative
27 administrator. He must be the development director and the marketing director and the facility
28 manager, and it's a lot of things he manages. They are a staff of 4 with the new development
29 manager. He has an operations programming production guy and an operations marketing
30 communications person. They are all under-resourced and overworked. He said some people need
31 to hear how arts impact the bottom line and what it does to businesses from a dollars and cents
32 perspective and then there are those who need to hear what it does for community cohesion or
33 enrich students' lives and broaden their world and perspective. We live in a state that identifies as
34 96% white. One of the critical components of what he does is the children in our region get to see
35 artists of color and cultural offerings from around the world. The parents come to him and say it's
36 amazing and thank him and say they thought it was something they would miss when they moved
37 here. They will become donors. From a fundraising perspective, they need to give the people what
38 they want and value. He asked his board to stop using the word donations. They are looking for
39 support and investment. If they are building a community as opposed to an audience, fundraising
40 will be easier. You need a groundswell of support to sustain. He said if a group was bringing some
41 level of sophistication, culture, value, and community cohesion, he thought there were probably
42 enough resources living in the community that they could probably find a way to sustain it. There
43 are grants but in terms of long-term sustainability success, they must come from the community.
44 They did a bandwagon summer series in response to COVID and brought in \$18,000 last year in
45 sponsorships and this year about \$25,000, and now he submitted a proposal to the National
46 Endowment for the Arts for \$40,000. He wasn't sure they would get it but having the groundswell

1 support made the case for the NEA much stronger. The community supported him. The local
2 businesses supported him. The state businesses supported him. And now they were looking for
3 federal funding. He couldn't have done it without having the track record.

4 Cathy asked if the young people who came from the big cities because of COVID caused housing
5 issues. She wondered what Putney was doing to address it. Like any other community in Vermont,
6 it is a storm between second homes, Airbnbs, Act 250, lack of prior investment in utilities, and
7 other factors that Vermont needs to address. It should be done quickly because there will be climate
8 refugees which they are already talking about and seeing. People are leaving Florida. Cathy
9 wondered if the arts organization had lost participation due to the lack of housing. Keith said if it
10 had, it never hit his radar. Putney's population grew over COVID. Next Stage has seen growth
11 from a brand perspective but also a financial perspective and an audience perspective. It could
12 have been better if they had more available housing. He hoped Windham & Windsor Housing
13 Trust would bring more density and more economic vitality and businesses in Putney will benefit
14 but they are like any other place in Vermont struggling to find affordable housing to allow middle
15 class families with middle class wages to come. Many of the families that moved there are remote
16 workers and had the opportunity to settle there or had other means available to them.

17
18 Hugh thought everyone would agree trying to bring new blood into a community wouldn't be bad
19 for a community. He had not considered that having a thriving arts community would draw
20 younger people to town to raise their families. All the byproducts of doing that which are good for
21 a town can be linked back to that. He thought it made sense.

22
23 Keith thought if a community wasn't thinking about vibrancy, it would be dying. He said last year
24 was the first year Putney's school population grew, which spoke volumes. It affects the tax base.
25 If a person grows up in a community and doesn't see themselves reflected in a community, they
26 will seek home elsewhere. Board members tell him their children grew up here but moved to the
27 cities. Vermont wants to attract people of color but if you're a person of color and there's nobody
28 around who looks like you, it isn't going to be home. If you're a young person growing up in a
29 retirement community, you're going to look for a more vibrant place to live. A friend of his moved
30 to Putney because one weekend they saw a show at Sandglass, attended a community supper at
31 Next Stage, there was a craft event going on the same weekend and they were so impressed and
32 imagined raising kids there that they bought a home in Putney.

33
34 Barre said they mention location for business and he's like a grizzly bear who only has to open his
35 mouth and a salmon jumps in. He can sell as many bears as he can make. The lack of culture and
36 distance he must travel to go to seek it out makes him think they are hungry for arts and culture
37 and food and if there's a way to make an investment in this and grow, it could be an incredibly
38 interesting place. He's willing because of the benefit of being on Route 103 and the people driving
39 through there, he's willing to sacrifice those other things. Dating for him is impossible because he
40 lives in the middle of nowhere. Hiring young people is also a challenge. He believed the Fall
41 Festival Committee will allow them their mailing list if they want to invite artisans to open shop
42 in Chester. He doesn't think people realize the potential money available because it's a drive
43 through town.

44
45 Steve Mancuso said as far as tourism, Chester is a flow through town as Barre mentioned and the
46 reason is because there's nothing to do here. Steve said young families want activities in the day

1 and entertainment at night. He said the Planning Commission had made Sisyphean efforts toward
2 the empty buildings in town. There were amazing legislative offerings the town was ratifying but
3 it would take the private market to step up and occupy these buildings that were once businesses.
4 Steve was sure if Next Stage were to step up and work with them, they would find a solution. He
5 sympathizes with Keith on community involvement, as he had done a lot of legwork. He joked if
6 half the people in Chester were lit on fire, he didn't think they would bother to put themselves out.
7 He thanked Keith for coming to speak.

8
9 Cathy asked if Keith had connected with Putney's library because Chester's library was a place
10 where very young kids were active. He sees himself as part of an ecosystem. He has a great
11 relationship with the town manager and has asked her to speak and give them some insight. The
12 town manager has tentacles all over and knows what's going on more than anyone in a community.
13 He was told the Stone Church in Brattleboro was his competition. One of the first things he did
14 was tour it and post it on the Next Stage social media. Keith's wife is Israeli, and his wife is
15 Russian. They both have young kids. Keith loves his programming. He has stuff they can't do at
16 Next Stage and the same applies to them. He doesn't want to be his competitor. He wants to be his
17 patron, his friend, and his co-collaborator. They have co-presented 6 different shows. Emily at the
18 library wanted to do kids' programming they didn't have funding for, Keith stepped in and paid
19 for it and Next Stage, and the library co-presented a comic book artist. There is a relationship
20 between your retail businesses and your restaurants. People need to be made aware of the vibrant
21 connections that exist. Keith's wife taught Pilates at Made to Move with Patty for a year and he
22 asked her what Chester was like and she said there were a couple restaurants. Every time someone
23 interacts with your brand, they're making a value judgment. Putney, off the highway looks like a
24 nothing town and you almost must coax people to come into town and realize something is going
25 on there. He suggested they look at Chester as an outsider does who sees a vacant building and
26 thinks nothing is going on there. He suggested putting art in the windows until something else
27 happens and making it feel more vibrant and alive. It's not the Planning Commission or the
28 Selectboard's responsibility. It should be a community initiative of how they reimagine Chester to
29 be what they want it to be.

30
31 Barre said when people come here, he likes taking them to Bellows Falls because of the
32 petroglyphs which they don't market at all. They have a big water wheel behind the power plant
33 which is cool to look at. Putney, Saxton's River, and Brattleboro don't have the money coming
34 through town like Chester. He's amazed they don't do more with it. You don't have to eat salmon
35 just because you have a whole river full of it and you're hungry, but you could.

36
37 Hugh thanked Keith. Tim said it was a beautiful theater and he had been to a couple of shows.
38 Keith invited them to Next Stage for a show or to see a tour of the theater.

39 40 **Agenda Item 5, Status Update on Community Survey**

41
42 Tim noted they had bright yellow postcards for the survey and if people throw them out, it's
43 because they don't want to do them. They have QR code on them. He met with Amie on Friday
44 and Cathy provided the mailing list from the Grand List and Amie got the voter list, and Cil helped
45 them dump it into one massive Excel spreadsheet. There was a lot of duplication, so he and Amie
46 split the list up. Tim took the first 2,000 and Amie took the rest with the goal of getting cards into

1 the mail this week if possible. With the group effort it was coming right along. Tim would email
2 everyone and let them know but didn't see anything holding it up unless others saw snags or had
3 questions. Hugh wondered what was on the postcard. Tim said there was discussion and the
4 Commission voted unanimously to let Tim handle it. The postcard won't hold the entire press
5 release, so they took the first paragraph and tweaked it. The goal was to hit every household. Tim
6 only had 386 more to look at on his list. Tim had gotten it down to 1386 from 2000 due to people
7 owning multiple properties or having multiple voters in the same household. Amie had done it
8 once before but was glad to have Tim's help. They may post the card around town on bulletin
9 boards which will have a QR code on it. Paper copies will be available at the Town Hall. Part of
10 the message on the postcard is if want a paper copy, to call or come by and they will mail one or
11 it can be picked up. Hugh was glad there were options but wasn't overly worried about not having
12 as many paper copies because more people were tech savvy having had to become so because of
13 COVID. Tim agreed they were tech savvy and if they weren't, they had an option to get a paper
14 copy. They were excited about the survey. The goal was to get them out this coming week, but he
15 didn't know Amie's workload.

16 17 **Agenda Item 6, Status of Proposed Legacy Use Bylaw Update**

18
19 Hugh was under the impression that even though it wasn't approved at the Selectboard meeting, it
20 was moving forward. Preston said there were some interesting questions raised and maybe the
21 Selectboard wouldn't approve it without modifications. He had shared with them by email that
22 Arne had come to see him the following day and said he had given it some thought and didn't
23 think it was a big deal so he would vote for it. Preston had spoken with Julie today and she said
24 Arne had been in to review with her the agenda for the Selectboard and Arne stated nobody had
25 said a single word to him about it in the past two weeks and he planned on voting yes. Julie and
26 Preston agree that it's probably not going to be used often but will be there if they need it. Barre
27 said it was a double-edged sword. It could be there if needed but if someone wrangled it the wrong
28 way, it could be an issue, but the likelihood was little. Barre wasn't a big fan of it and wasn't in
29 the position to stand in the way but didn't want to, either. Tim said as questions came up, it got his
30 wheels turning and he could see the potential concerns, but it was in the Selectboard's hands now
31 and if they put it through, it's a done deal. Preston found some humor; 2 examples were a quarry
32 and a sawmill and Cathy noted they both are conditional uses in all the rural districts now. Tim
33 said you could think of a lot of different what ifs but at the end of the day, someone could say there
34 used to be a tavern or a bar. Barre said much of why zoning started was because of neighbors. If
35 someone wants to resurrect and it doesn't fit the neighborhood, they have angry neighbors. Tim
36 pointed out that abutters have an opportunity to object. Hugh said they need to have a little faith
37 in the DRB and if it doesn't fit or isn't right, they will catch it. Tim said if there was an egregious
38 misuse, they would have to own it. Peter said they could check all the boxes and the DRB has the
39 tool to punt it anyway. Tim thought it was a good discussion. Cathy added the Selectboard could
40 have a voice in the discussion as an interested party and they were surprised to learn that.

41 42 **Agenda Item 8, Bylaw Modernization Adoption Schedule**

43
44 Preston went through the proposed schedule. Preston broke it into 5 pieces, each with its own
45 hearing and adoption. When you figure out it takes three weeks to warn a hearing, and you figure
46 out the time schedule, it's a bit of a gulp. Jason has been bullish about saying they can do it. Preston

1 said there was a 10% benefit if the plan is adopted before the grant expires but Julie said not to be
2 concerned about it. If they don't complete the terms of the grant, they won't receive the whole
3 grant. Jason had Preston go back and the actual task for the Bylaw Modernization Grant is they
4 redraft the portions of the bylaw that deal with community housing goals and village revitalization
5 strategies. You don't have to get to the rural and residential districts to satisfy the grant. If they
6 truly thought they could finish it in a year, here it is. If they don't, there are ways they can take
7 longer. Peter thought when they were selling it to the public, it was important to get their input.
8 Peter asked when they were working with administrative updates, what would happen to Chapter
9 3, which was the uses, and there were a lot of changes to be made when it came to housing.
10 Dropping the residential districts and the rural districts in Chapter 3 was one of the keys. Peter
11 thought they should put it before the DRB even if they didn't like it to get their input.

12
13 Hugh asked Preston if Chapter 3 was considered in the plan. Preston said he and Jason were
14 inserting things in the present bylaws that they thought to be changed throughout the whole
15 document, including Chapter 3 and parts of administrative update. Cathy asked if it would be more
16 than that. Preston said it wasn't just one article but through the entire bylaw. He sent a list of things
17 he suggested to be changed to Jason, but he hadn't formatted it yet. They may agree or say they
18 wanted something different. Barre said he was a guy rowing in the boat and was concerned they
19 didn't take off for a different island. If there were good reasons for it, it was fine. He liked the fact
20 they were making important changes. If they could do that along with what they're tasked to do,
21 that would be great. If he's just another rower, all he will do is get upset about going to a different
22 island but if they have a plan and are doing the work to make the plan happen.

23
24 Hugh would try to recap the operating model to get this part of the work done. They've entrusted
25 Jason and Preston with their expertise to propose the changes to the bylaws, and have agreed to
26 break it down into sections, so they must agree they trust Jason and Preston to lead the charge to
27 draft the content to make the changes. As the units of work get done, they come to the Planning
28 Commission for review and feedback so they get the best product they can. Hugh thought he was
29 okay with it. He asked Peter if he was concerned the schedule didn't allow enough time for the
30 DRB to review things and Peter said it didn't. Peter suggested simultaneous tasks which the
31 schedule didn't show. Peter said the administrative districts didn't need to be 100% done to begin
32 working on the village stuff. There was more than one task that could happen. Hugh acknowledged
33 a schedule was only a schedule. Preston said construction schedules that Peter was very familiar
34 with have overlapping tasks. Preston had just put something together with the deadlines on his
35 mind. There was agreement it could look different.

36
37 Tim asked if it was better to tackle Article 3 in a way it could be applied to the other articles or
38 was it better to get into the zoning districts and see where Article 3 needs to be tweaked as they go
39 through them. Peter would tweak Article 3 as related to housing first. If they do a district and need
40 to go back and change it, it will punt through all the other districts. Tim agreed. It made sense to
41 Tim to focus on housing in Article 3. Preston said he wasn't expecting the Commission to adopt
42 the schedule. Preston had taken that away from his conversation with Jason that they could satisfy
43 the state grant because they did the village revitalization strategies, and the community housing
44 goals. Cathy noted they have more resources now than 3 or 4 years ago as they had more members
45 on the board with DRB experience and a zoning administrator with twice the experience of the
46 former one. Others agreed.

1
2 Hugh was trying to get consensus around an order of work so Preston and Jason could crank out
3 content to come to the commission for review. They would need to agree that the plan, as laid out,
4 would make sense to move forward and if didn't, they would need to continue to work on the plan
5 until they agreed. They needed to figure it out so Jason and Preston would have something to look
6 at. Barre remembered going to the Selectboard back in the day and seemed like they were kicking
7 the can down the road. He thought it was the Commission's job to make the rules. He thought it
8 was great to have some input from the DRB, but it was their job to make the rules. He was glad
9 they were doing things, but it would be nice to finish some of the stuff rather than kicking the can
10 around. Tim said as someone who was initially not supportive of pulling the DRB into their
11 discussion when they did, it was helpful, so he thought he was wrong in that. Tim said it didn't
12 necessarily need to be face-to-face, but rather handing them a document for their input. Barre
13 agreed and compared it to the efficiency he uses in running his business. Tim said the challenge
14 was they meet twice a month and the DRB meets twice a month and if they have hearings, they
15 can't allocate time to them. Peter had no problem taking things to them and sitting in the back of
16 a hearing. Peter said the current generalized order will work. Until they get something back from
17 MARC, they're lost. Hugh said putting dates on paper, puts pressure on Jason to get done.

18
19 There was discussion about meeting November 7th per the schedule. Tim thought it seemed
20 unrealistic with only one meeting before November 7th. Peter reminded them how long it took
21 them to get through the Village Green, so November 7th was unrealistic. Tim thought if Jason could
22 get something to them by the next meeting, they would only need to push the date out a few weeks.
23 Hugh wasn't trying to suggest the dates were good, but he needed target dates to get work done.
24 Cathy wanted to include time to meet with the DRB. She would want to emphasize that they're
25 concerned about areas of town served by water and sewer. Preston will follow up with Jason. He's
26 worried about workshop #4 and Preston told him to let him worry about workshop #4 which is
27 realtors and builders coming in to talk to the Commission.

28 29 **Agenda Item 9, Adjournment**

30
31 Cathy moved to adjourn, and Tim seconded. A vote was taken, and it passed unanimously. The
32 meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.