

## **Rules of Procedure for the Town of Chester Planning Commission**

### **A. PURPOSE.**

The Planning Commission of Chester, is required by law to conduct its meetings in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law. 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314. Meetings of the Chester Planning Commission must be open to the public at all times, except as provided in 1 V.S.A. § 313.

### **B. APPLICATION.**

This policy setting forth rules of procedure shall apply to the Chester Planning Commission, which is referred to below as "the body." These rules shall apply to all regular, special, and emergency meetings of the body.

### **C. ORGANIZATION.**

1. The body shall annually elect a chair and a vice-chair. The chair of the body or, in the chair's absence, the vice-chair shall preside over all meetings. If both the chair and the vice-chair are absent, a member selected by the body shall act as chair for that meeting.
2. The chair shall preserve order in the meeting and shall regulate its proceedings by applying these rules and making determinations about all questions of order or procedure.
3. A majority of the members of the body shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum of the members of the body is not present at a meeting, no meeting shall take place.
4. No single member of the body shall have authority to represent or act on behalf of the body unless, by majority vote, the body has delegated such authority for a specific matter at a duly-noticed meeting and such delegation is recorded in the meeting minutes.
5. Motions made by members of the body require a second. The chair of the body may make motions and may vote on all questions before the body. A motion will only pass if it receives the votes of a majority of the total membership of the body.
6. There is no limit to the number of times a member of the body may speak to a question. A member may speak or make a motion without being recognized by the chair. Motions to close or limit debate will not be entertained.
7. Any member of the body may request a roll call vote. Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 312(a)(2), when one or more members attend a meeting electronically, a roll call vote is required for votes that are not unanimous.
8. Meetings may be recessed to a time and place certain.
9. These rules may be amended by a super majority (meaning 4 of 5 Commission members) vote of the body, and must be readopted annually.
10. The chair may be removed at any time by a super majority vote of the seated commissioners.

#### **D. AGENDAS.**

1. Each regular and special meeting of the body shall have an agenda, with time allotted for each item of business to be considered by the body. Those who wish to be added to the meeting agenda shall contact the chair and the recording secretary to request inclusion on the agenda. The chair shall determine the final content of the agenda.
2. At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting, and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda shall be posted on the interior and exterior bulletin boards at the town hall and on the town website, [chestervt.gov](http://chestervt.gov). The agenda must also be made available to any person who requests such agenda prior to the meeting.
3. All business shall be conducted in the same order as it appears on the noticed agenda, except that any addition to or deletion from the noticed agenda must be made as the first act of business at the meeting. No additions to or deletions from the agenda shall be considered once the first act of business at the meeting has commenced. Any other adjustment to the noticed agenda, for example, changing the order of business, postponing or tabling actions, may be made by a majority vote of the body.

#### **E. MEETINGS.**

1. Regular meetings shall take place on the first and third Mondays of the month at 6:30, at the Chester Town Hall and/or electronically.
2. Special meetings shall be publicly announced at least 24 hours in advance by giving notice to all members of the body unless previously waived; to an editor, publisher or news director, or radio station serving the area; and to any person who has requested notice of such meetings. In addition, notices shall be ~~posted in the municipal clerk's office and~~ on the interior and exterior bulletin boards at the town hall and on the town website, [chestervt.gov](http://chestervt.gov)
3. Emergency meetings may be held without public announcement, without posting of notices, and without 24-hour notice to members, provided some public notice thereof is given as soon as possible before any such meeting. Emergency meetings may be held only when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the ~~public~~ body.
4. A member of the body may attend a regular, special, or emergency meeting by electronic or other means without being physically present at a designated meeting location, so long as the member identifies him or herself when the meeting is convened, and is able to hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Whenever one or more members attend electronically, voting that is not unanimous must be done by roll call. If a quorum or more of the body attend a meeting (regular, special, or emergency) without being physically present at a designated meeting location, the agenda for the meeting shall designate at least one physical location where a member of the public can attend and participate in the meeting. At least one member of the body, or at least one staff or designee of the body, shall be physically present at each designated meeting location.

**F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

1. All meetings of the body are meetings in the public, not of the public. Members of the public shall be afforded reasonable opportunity to express opinions about matters considered by the body, so long as order is maintained according to these rules.
2. At the end of each agenda item, but before any action is taken by the public body at each meeting, the chair may limit the time allotted for public comment. By a majority vote, the body may increase the time for open public comment and its place on the agenda.
3. Comment by the public or members of the body must be addressed to the chair or to the body as a whole, and not to any individual member of the body or public.
4. Members of the public must be acknowledged by the chair before speaking.
5. If a member of the public has already spoken on a topic, he or she may not be recognized again until others have first been given the opportunity to comment.
6. Order and decorum shall be observed by all persons present at the meeting. Neither members of the body, nor the members of the public, shall delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the meeting or interrupt or disturb any member while speaking. Members of the body and members of the public are prohibited from making personal, impertinent, threatening, or profane remarks.
7. Members of the body and members of the public shall obey the orders of the chair or other presiding member. The chair should adhere to the following process to restore order and decorum of a meeting, but may bypass any or all steps when he or she determines in his or her sole discretion that deviation from the process is warranted:
  - a. Call the meeting to order and remind the members of the applicable rules of procedure.
  - b. Declare a recess or table the issue.
  - c. Adjourn the meeting until a time and date certain.
  - d. Order the constable to remove disorderly person(s) from the meeting.

**ADOPTED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## Draft 2022 Project List for Chester Planning Commission

Complete Village Green Zoning district changes and shepherd through the adoption process

Make changes to the administrative processes in the adopted bylaws for these issues:

- Craft permanent solution for legacy non-conforming uses that reflects the market realities and history of Chester.
- Expand and clarify exemptions in Section 4.3 using Article 1 of the proposed bylaws as a source.
- Establish difference between major and minor subdivisions and make a separate, simpler process for minor subdivisions
- Establish an optional non-hearing sketch plan review process with the DRB for a proposed subdivision
- Adjust required setbacks for parcels that do not meet the minimum lot size in a district. Make the setbacks proportional to the smaller size of the lot.
- Verify that the renewable energy installation requirements match the current statutory requirements.
- Substitute the word “dwelling” for the words house, home and apartment when describing residential uses.
- Substitute the word “household” for the word family.
- Correct the aquifer protection overlay district map to reflect what is written in the bylaw text.

Shepherd the administrative process changes to the bylaws through the adoption process

Gather information about village districts and infrastructure

- Superimpose municipal water and sewer service on zoning district maps. Meet with Jeff Holden to discuss current and future needs
- Conduct housing study, including meetings with realtors, Windham Housing Trust and Regional Planning, funded through the Municipal Planning Grant
- Walk Chester village streets to note zoning district boundaries, the as-built environment and possible locations for multi-household dwellings

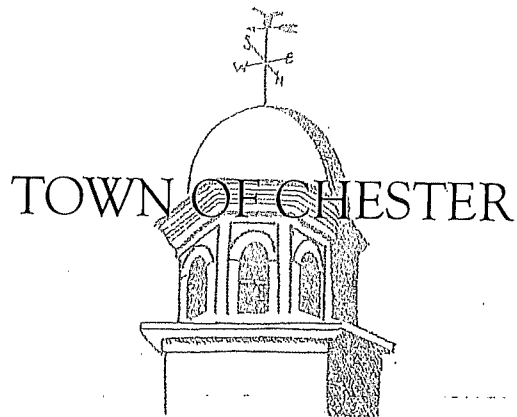
We may prepare an update to the Town Plan Housing Chapter. We may set aside formally amending the Town Plan depending on our workload and the Selectboard’s workload.

Having gathered information, choose the order in which revisions to zoning districts will be done. Grouping types of districts together, such as Village, Residential, or Business and Industry may be helpful when adopting bylaw changes.

Once the legislative session is over, and Housing study information is gathered, review the Short Term Rental situation in Chester, consider goals Chester has that may not be met by the state statute and make any bylaw changes needed to support those goals.

Address the zoning district changes in the order decided by the Planning Commission, making changes as needed for density, parking requirements, dimensional standards and uses.

We can save the matching funds the town must contribute for the Municipal Planning Grant if we can complete the requirements of the grant by February 2024. I can see quite a celebration when we make that goal.



556 Elm Street  
P.O. Box 370  
Chester, VT 05143

(802) 875-2173  
Fax (802) 875-2237

February 23, 2022

INVITATION TO BID  
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

PROFESSIONAL PLANNING SERVICES FOR UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT BYLAW  
UPDATE

The Town of Chester is seeking Requests for Qualifications for professional planning services to assist the Planning Commission in updating Chester's Unified Development Bylaws, to implement the Town Plan and Village Center Master Plan, with a particular focus on modernizing the document to better address housing and further village revitalization goals.

For a copy of the Request for Qualifications bid package please contact Julie Hance at the Chester Town Office, 556 Elm Street, Chester, VT, 05143, (802) 875-2173, or [julie.hance@chestervt.gov](mailto:julie.hance@chestervt.gov). Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

All bids should be submitted to the Town Manager's Office, 556 Elm Street (P.O. Box 370) Chester, VT 05143 and [Julie.hance@chestervt.gov](mailto:Julie.hance@chestervt.gov) on or **before 3:00 p.m. on March 18, 2022.**