

**TOWN OF CHESTER
PLANNING COMMISSION
February 5, 2018
Minutes**

Commission Members Present: Naomi Johnson, Tim Roper, Barre Pinske, Claudio Veliz, and Cheryl Joy Lipton.

Staff Present: Michael Normyle, Zoning Administrator, Cathy Hasbrouck, Recording Secretary.

Visitors Present: A. Lee Gustafson, Arne Jonynas Julie Hance.

Agenda Item 1, Review minutes from December 18, 2017 meeting

Tim Roper moved to accept the minutes from the December 18, 2017 meeting. Barre Pinske seconded the motion. During discussion, Tim Roper made a correction to Agenda Item 5: the word *changed* was missing in the second sentence. Claudio Veliz asked if the exchange between Ron Patch and Barre Pinske in the Citizen Comments section should be part of the minutes or be stricken from the record. Naomi Johnson said the statements were made in the public portion of a public meeting and the discussion should stand. Claudio had three other corrections: capitalize the A in A-weighted at the bottom of the first page, change the word *was* in the first full paragraph on page two to *might be*, and add a comma before the quote on page two. A vote was taken and the minutes were accepted with the specified corrections.

Agenda Item 2, Citizen Comments

Lee Gustafson asked the members of the Planning Commission if they had had any discussion about a philosophy of business development in Chester. He asked what it is that the Commission is striving for to encourage businesses to locate or expand in Chester while not interfering with the character of the downtown area. He also thanked the Planning Commission members for their service to the town. Naomi Johnson said there had been no specific discussion on economic development as yet. As Lee mentioned, this was due, in part, to the pending zoning bylaw audit. Naomi said the report from the audit will be discussed at the next Planning Commission meeting in two weeks. Barre Pinske said that as a member of the Commission he felt it was his job to listen to what residents have been asking for. He notes that there have been “squeaky wheels” in the community, but that squeaky wheels may not represent the thinking of the majority of citizens. He affirmed that every citizen has a right to be heard. He hoped that the Planning Commission could have a plan that was respectful of all residents and spoke for the majority of citizens.

Lee said he has been introducing himself to business owners in town to gather information about what people felt could be done to improve the business environment. He felt it was important for Planning Commission and Selectboard members to reach out to the community personally to collect information about what the citizens felt was needed to support economic growth.

Agenda Item 3, Formulate questions for Education and Child Care Facilities, Chapter 5 of the Chester Town Plan, to be sent to the Board of Education.

Naomi Johnson summarized the discussion that was held in January 2017 with Marylyn Mahusky and Alison DesLauriers about Chester - Andover Elementary School and Green Mountain Union High School. At the time, Alison and Marilyn said they were still working out proposals for Act 46 changes, which would have to be voted on by the citizens before they would go into effect. The Commission asked for more current enrollment statistics for the elementary and high schools. Since that meeting, no information has been received from either board member, despite Michael Normyle's repeated efforts to contact them. Julie Hance said that Alison DesLauriers had resigned from all her education board positions in the last week or so. She will no longer be a source for information. It was also acknowledged that the school boards had been meeting frequently to discuss the changes necessary for Act 46. Naomi Jonson felt the Town Plan should include a description of the current structure of the Act 46 changes with an as-of date and state that the structure is likely to change in the future. The Commission agreed that formulating a series of questions for the new school boards to answer might be a more efficient way to obtain information. Michael Normyle suggested that school principals or guidance counselors could provide enrollment information. Naomi Johnson said creating a statement about the current proposed Act 46 structure should be a priority. She said she knew the Baltimore representative to the new regional school district, Kathy Muther, and she would ask her for information about Act 46 changes. The Planning Commission could then give the information to Marilyn Mahusky, who could briefly say whether the information is accurate or not.

The Commission discussed ways to promote positive aspects of Chester in the Education chapter. Barre Pinske and Cheryl Joy Lipton proposed adding information about home schooling. Barre was impressed that home schooled children can participate in classes and activities as they chose. It was noted that the state of Vermont requires towns to allow home schooled students to participate. Although it is a state mandate, Barre and Cheryl thought that this would add a positive note to the Town Plan. Barre Pinske said he thought discussing Chester's Drug Education programs would be another positive note in the Education chapter and something that parents would find helpful. Cheryl Joy Lipton said one unusual program that GMUHS has is the Wilderness School, which takes place 1 day per week. Other programs and services discussed were River Valley Tech and its programs, safety measures and plans in place to prevent school shootings, the school choice program, and the new playground at the elementary school.

Naomi Johnson said that new goals could be added to the existing list of goals for the chapter. Claudio Veliz and Cheryl Joy Lipton said that the chapter should not be considered complete until the Act 46 changes, which go into effect in July 2018, were firmer, and a reasonable summary of those changes could be added to the Town Plan.

It was also agreed that Cathy Hasbrouck, the Recording Secretary, would go through the minutes of the meeting and add questions to the list sent out in the January 15, 2018 meeting packet.

Agenda Item 4, Discuss Response to Energy Survey

A link to the survey had been added to the Planning Commission page of the town website. Three responses have been received so far. Cathy Hasbrouck will work with Julie Hance to get the survey mailed out to as many citizens as possible.

Agenda Item 5, More review of Act 148 recycling law

Naomi Johnson said that the last time Tom Bock was at a Planning Commission meeting he offered to send some more information to the Commission about recycling. Michael Normyle said he had not received anything from him yet. Michael said that Derek Suursoo had told him there had not been many changes to the regional plan. Naomi Johnson asked if Chester was required to have facilities on the street. Julie Hance said that every public space was now required to have recycling containers available, and Chester does.

Naomi read the concluding statement about act 148 from Chapter 3, Utilities and Facilities. She said that, like the Education chapter and Act 46, the requirements for Act 148 could change and she didn't favor adding too many details to the Town Plan which could quickly become outdated.

Ideas about recycling and composting were discussed. Naomi Johnson pointed out that there were only 2 goals listed in the Town Plan for Solid Waste and suggested that those goals could be expanded or enhanced to incorporate the ideas discussed, such as a community compost facility and reducing and reusing as strategies just as important as recycling.

Agenda Item 6, Review Outdoor Recreation contribution from Gary King

Naomi Johnson noted that the Commission had received several pieces of information lately and asked Recording Secretary to provide an updated draft of Chapter 3, the Education and Child Care Facilities chapter.

Michael Normyle praised the contribution to the Facilities and Utilities chapter concerning Outdoor Recreation written by Gary King. Barre Pinske agreed it was very helpful and well written.

Agenda Item 7, Executive session for the purpose of reviewing the position of Zoning Administrator with the intent of providing a recommendation to the Selectboard

At this point Naomi Johnson moved to go into Executive Session. Tim Roper seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed. At the end of the Executive Session, Naomi Johnson moved to return to the public hearing. Tim Roper seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed.

In the public hearing, Barre Pinske moved to inform the Selectboard that the Planning Commission nominates Michael Normyle as a candidate for the Zoning Administrator position, to serve the remainder of the current 3-year term. Cheryl Joy Lipton seconded the motion. In the discussion, the Commission agreed to ask David Pisha to oversee the Zoning Administrator in

his duties, particularly as described in 24 VSA Section 4448, “The administrative officer shall administer the bylaws literally and shall not have the power to permit any land development that is not in conformance with those bylaws. An administrative officer may be removed for cause at any time by the legislative body after consultation with the planning commission.” A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

The board agreed that the next meeting of the Planning Commission will be Monday February 19, 2018 at 7:00 PM.

Claudio Veliz moved to adjourn the meeting. Tim Roper seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the meeting was adjourned.