

**TOWN OF CHESTER
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**November 7, 2016
Minutes**

Board Members Present: Tom Bock, Naomi Johnson, Tom Hildreth, Randy Wiggin, and Claudio Veliz.

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

Visitors Present: Philip Perlah, Kelly Arrison, Amy Mosher, Jay Blodgett, Mary Semones, Gary King

Agenda Item 1, minutes of the October 24, 2016 meeting

The meeting opened with a review of the October 24, 2016 meeting minutes. Randy Wiggin moved to accept the minutes, Claudio Veliz seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and the motion to accept the minutes as presented passed.

Agenda Item 2, Discuss VLCT workshop Complying with Vermont's Public Records Act

Michael Normyle announced that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns will have a workshop Wednesday December 7th at the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee. Commission members were invited to attend if they were interested.

Agenda Item 3, Review information gathered for Chapter 3 of Town Plan, if any

A list of open issues from the review of Chapter 3 has been created. The issues were discussed with Town Manager Dave Pisha and his assistant Julie Hance. Julie has a copy of the list and is working on answers. Other information gathered since the last meeting included

- Updated school enrollment and traffic data from Jason Rasmussen of the Regional Planning Commission
- Information from VTel about their part in a project to reduce the number of power poles around the green has not been received. Tom Hildreth has been in touch with VTel and is waiting for a reply.
- Information about solid waste. Michael Normyle had emailed Derek Suursoo, Chester's representative to the Solid Waste District for information about solid waste disposal. Derek referred Michael to Tom Kennedy. Tom Bock mentioned the state-wide recycling law, which will be requiring composting food scraps in the near future, as something he would like to hear Tom Kennedy address. Tom also discussed the landfill that is currently accepting solid waste. He knows it is expected to fill up soon and wanted to know what the plan for replacing that was.

The Commission discussed how to conduct information gathering and how to use resources offered by Jason Rasmussen from the Regional Planning Commission. It was decided to continue to keep a list of open issues and review the list with Jason, the Town Manager and possibly the VLCT on a regular basis. The list will be sent to the Commission members as part of their pre-meeting packet.

Agenda Item 4, Review of Chapter 4 of Town Plan, Natural and Cultural Resources

The Commission took turns reading Chapter 4 and discussed each section.

The Earth Resources section brought up the issue of the town's need for a new gravel pit . The pit will require an Act 250 permit which has not yet been obtained. This issue will go on the list of follow up items that Julie has.

Buffering around waterways was discussed as part of the Water Resources section. Michael Normyle noted that the proposed UDB changes have increased the recommended buffer around streams to 50 feet. The current Town Plan is recommending at least 100 feet as a buffer. No one knew whether the two documents should be in agreement. Some existing properties will not be able to be developed if the 100-foot buffer is adopted. There are currently many buildings in the center of town that are less than 100 feet away from the river. It wasn't clear whether the 100-foot buffer would accomplish much more than a 50-foot buffer. It could simply be overgrown by invasive species. It was decided to ask the Regional Planning Commission for buffer size recommendations.

Threats to forest lands listed in the Forest Lands section were also discussed. The sentence in question said, "Forests are threatened by fragmentation caused by roads and residential development, and irresponsible logging practices." It wasn't clear whether irresponsible logging practices were a threat to forests or a cause of fragmentation. It also wasn't clear what irresponsible logging practices were. Tom Bock remembered seeing a recent headline in VTDigger about new logging rules. Naomi thought that the state had a pamphlet about logging in Vermont. The Commission wants to see a copy.

During the discussion of Chapter 4, Phil Perlah pointed out several reasons for delaying the changes to R-40 and R-120 conditional uses in the Unified Development Bylaws until the Town Plan was complete. Jay Blodgett was able to offer helpful information about forests and waterways.

The following text corrections were noted:

- On page 1 in paragraph 3, remove the first 2 sentences that discuss some of the history of potable water and wastewater regulation
- On page 1 in the last sentence of paragraph 4, change "should" to shall.
- On page 1, remove "in terms of steepness of grade and drainage techniques" from the end of the fourth paragraph.
- A typo at the top of page 2 needs to be corrected. The words Natural Features are repeated.
- Add camping to the list of outdoor recreational pursuits in the fourth paragraph on page 2.
- On page 3 at the end of the first paragraph, add the word standard after performance to make it clear it is referring to the Unified Development Bylaws.
- On page 3 in the second paragraph under Water Resources, remove the sentence that reads, "The middle and north branches and the mainstem of the Williams River..."
- On page 3 in the third paragraph under Water Resources, remove the words "North Branch of". All branches of the Williams Rive are prone to ice jams.
- On page 3 in the last paragraph change "should be listed in the Town Plan" to "shall be listed in the Town Plan"
- On page 4 remove the orphan close parenthesis in the second sentence under Wetlands and Vernal Pools
- On page 4 in the last paragraph change the two aquifer protection districts mentioned to one overlay district.
- On page 7 in the Light Pollution paragraph change "should" in the last sentence to "shall".

- On page 8, in the first full paragraph, remove the reference to the Tavern building on Route 103 and replace it with a different landmark or an address. The tavern building has burned.
- On page 8, in the second paragraph, remove the reference to the Player's Guild.

Requests for the following pamphlets, maps and documents were made:

- The data from the 2008 – 2009 Outreach Study
- Town of Chester Road Standards booklet
- A final version of the Tactical Basin Plan stream geomorphic assessment of the Williams River. This may be available from Dan Potter at the SWCRPC
- Timber Harvesting booklet from Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (http://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/About_the_Department/Rules_and_Regulations/Library/Timber_Harvest_2012Web.pdf)
- VT Digger article about logging rules changes (<http://vtdigger.org/2016/11/02/new-rules-require-loggers-protect-water-quality>)
- The Henry Holmes map of the National Historic Registry District and buildings.

Information about the following topics is needed:

- Naomi Johnson will verify that vernal pools are protected under state law.
- Claudio Veliz volunteered to find examples of ridge line protection policies that other towns have adopted.

Agenda Item 5, Citizen Comments

There were no further citizen comments.

Agenda Item 6, Set the date for the next meeting

The next Planning Commission meeting will be Monday December 5, 2016 at 7:00 PM. On Monday November 21, 2016, a public hearing to discuss changes to the Unified Development Bylaws will be held at 6:00 PM.

Randy Wiggin moved to adjourn the meeting. Claudio Veliz seconded the motion. The motion passed.