

**TOWN OF CHESTER
PLANNING COMMISSION**

June 17, 2019 Minutes

Commission Members Present: Naomi Johnson, Barre Pinske, Tim Roper and Peter Hudkins.

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

Citizens Present: Michelle Bargefrede, David Bargefrede, Sheila Garaffa, Phil Perlah, Lori Quinn, Joan Grossman, Roger Batchelder, Ruthanne Batchelder, Heather T?, Susan Rushton, Jeff Ladd, Tom Bock, Robert Nied, Roy Spaulding, Randy Miles, Joe Karl, Gabe Ladd, Gerald Gleason,

Call to Order

Chair Naomi Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Agenda Item 1 Community Workshop #1: Rural zoning district and uses

Naomi Johnson welcomed the citizens to the meeting. She recapped the process the Planning Commission has been through thus far, discussed the open house meeting to come on Saturday June 22nd, and went over some of the steps remaining to be done before the bylaws will be presented to the Selectboard for hearings and approval. She then introduced Brandy Saxton of Placesense.

Brandy Saxton described the history of the project, which began in the Spring of 2018 with an audit of how well the current bylaws support the Town Plan. The audit revealed gaps between the Future Land Use Map and the current zoning districts, gaps between the stated Town Plan goals and the bylaws, and noted that the bylaws also needed updating due to changes in state and federal laws. She described the Future Land Use map, pointing out areas of forest with green cross-hatching that are meant to be conserved, and planned rural areas in white. She then described the current rural zoning, which has 3 rural districts and a forest district for public land only. She said the majority of land in the town (24,000 acres, or about 2/3 of the town) is zoned rural, 120,000 square feet, or three acres. The R-120 area of Chester has a density of one dwelling unit per 25 acres. The area is much less developed than the current zoning would allow. She said a rule of thumb to maintain rural character is not more than 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres.

Brandy Saxton then introduced the three proposed rural districts, the Rural 3 (3-acre minimum lot size) that is along major roads, the Rural 18 (18-acre minimum lot size) which includes public lands, conserved lands, lands not geographically suitable for development (usually steep slopes or wetlands) and land more than 1,000 feet from a maintained road, and Rural 6 (6-acre minimum lot size), which includes the remainder of the rural lands.

Before she went into the specifics of the three rural zones, Brandy Saxton discussed the concept of Density-Based zoning as it applies to the R6 and R18 districts. She pointed to the Dimensional Standards table entries of minimum lot size and maximum density. For the R-6 and

R-18 districts, the minimum lot size for residential lots versus any other primary use are different. In the R-6 and R-18, a house lot has a minimum of 3 acres while any other use requires a minimum of 6 or 18 acres respectively.

One of the goals for managing rural land is to avoid fragmenting wildlife habitat, forestry and farm land. Making lots larger by raising the minimum lot size to something over 10 acres can help. However, sub-dividing a large lot of perhaps 60 acres in the proposed R6 district is not likely to yield 10 6-acre house sites. Steep slopes, rocky and wet soil limit the possibility of finding 10 6-acre lots. It is likely that only part of the 60 acres can support residences with a well and septic system. There is also the question of whether there is a market for 10 homesites. Taxes on a homesite lot are higher than for the same acreage that is part of a larger piece. Sub-dividing all the possible lots at one time could result in significantly higher carrying costs.

Currently Chester has a large area of town with a 3-acre minimum lot size. Brandy Saxton noted that there has not been much development in Chester, but if development did take place on 3-acre parcels, the rural character of the town would disappear. A house every three acres exceeds the rural threshold of a house every 10 acres.

Density-based zoning addresses the conflict between allowing some development in the rural area and preserving blocks of undeveloped land for logging or farming. It allows a fixed number 3-acre lots to be subdivided from a larger lot for residential use. The number of possible development units is determined by dividing the size of the parcel by the minimum lot size. In the presented, a 138-acre parcel had 72 acres in the R18 zone and 66 acres in the R6 zone. The total possible development units would be the sum of the R18 units, which is 72 acres divided by 18 acres per unit, or 4, plus the R6 units, which is 66 acres divided by 6 acres per unit, or 11. $4 + 11 = 15$ development units for the 138-acre parcel.

The town would have to create a system to keep track of the number of lots sub-divided from the original parcel and the total development units the original parcel is allowed. When the limit is reached, no further sub-division would be allowed. The remaining land in the original parcel would have no development rights available. In the case of the 138-acre lot in the R18 and R6 districts, if all 15 development units were all residential and had the minimum 3 acres, there would be 45 acres of land used for homes and 93 acres of undeveloped land left for logging, farming and wildlife habitat.

Brandy Saxton pointed out that Density-base zoning is likely to produce the same number of house sites on a large piece of land as 3-acre zoning would, since it is unlikely that every three-acre chunk of property can support a well and septic system. Steeply sloped land, land that can't pass a percolation test, wetlands and flood plains would reduce the number of lots possible regardless of the zoning standards. Thus, people who may have bought land and planned to sell off portions to fund their retirement or create a homesite for their children will still be able to do so in most cases with density based zoning. Brandy Saxton asked the citizens present to consider this carefully and let the Planning Commission know whether they felt this change was taking more away from them than it should.

Brandy Saxton discussed a Planned Unit Development approach to sub-dividing the 138-acre example. She noted that Planned Unit Development is not new: it is available in the current Chester bylaws. The disadvantage for a Planned Unit Development is that the lots are created all at once, and if there is only a small market for them, the carrying costs for the sub-divided lots can be significant. Brandy Saxton said Planned Unit Development is rarely used in Vermont. The Density-Based approach allows incremental sub-division. The expense of carrying the sub-divided lots is reduced because the number of unsold lots is fewer. It does require more sub-division hearings over time and possibly higher survey costs. The Density-Based approach works well with the current state regulations for a shared septic system.

Jeff Ladd asked if the road frontage requirement may be met by a private road as well as a public road. Brandy Saxton said it could be met by either type of road. A citizen asked how a pre-existing sub-division of four lots, two of which have houses on them, would be treated by the proposed zoning bylaws. Brandy Saxton said that, as long as the sub-division was properly filed in the land records it will be honored by the proposed bylaws. Vermont statute will not allow a properly filed sub-division to be invalidated by a zoning change. The citizen said he didn't see where the proposed bylaws mention that. Brandy Saxton said she thought it was in Chapter 4, (Note: Section 120 addresses this issue.) She noted that zoning permits can expire if not substantially completed within the time limit required.

A citizen asked what could be done for people who haven't heard about this proposed zoning change, were planning on sub-dividing the property to fund their retirement, have not executed the sub-division yet and will not be able to create as many lots under the new bylaws, jeopardizing their retirement plans. Will there be a safety clause to protect those people? Brandy Saxton said a safety clause is not a common feature. No municipality wants to guarantee the value of land 20 years into the future. Many forces other than zoning bylaws have an impact on the market value of a parcel of land.

Brandy Saxton said the Planning Commission is hoping to reach people and discuss the process with them. No one wants to surprise land owners with unhappy news. She said that this is a complete revision of the bylaws and zoning map and every square inch of Chester is affected. She urged people to study the proposal for their own sake and tell their neighbors about it. She said there were many steps to be completed in the process and there was time for citizens to give feedback to the Planning Commission on these issues.

A citizen asked if the bylaws hadn't been changed 2 years ago? Naomi Johnson confirmed that there were changes adopted in 2017 after a large number of hearings before the Planning Commission and then before the Selectboard. She said that concerns about how the bylaws supported (or failed to support) the Town Plan arose at that time. An audit was performed in 2018, which listed issues that needed to be addressed. The citizen asked whether the 2017 changes were comprehensive enough or didn't meet the state requirements. Naomi Johnson said the changes met state requirements but did not resolve the differences between the Town Plan and the bylaws. The citizen said changes to the bylaws worry property owners who may have made plans that the new bylaws will not allow. Brandy Saxton said it was fairly common in Vermont for municipalities to make small changes to their zoning bylaws every two to five

years. She said a comprehensive revision is done in a 10- to 20- year time frame. Zoning is a complex process with many interrelated parts which require small amendments as conditions change. After a number of amendments, it is typically necessary to make a complete revision to the document because the bylaws lose their integrity after too many patches. Brandy Saxton said Chester's bylaws were not as patched as the bylaws in some towns she has worked in.

Naomi Johnson said the gaps between the bylaws and the Town Plan and the Future Land Use Map that is part of the Town Plan needed to be addressed. She said the Planning Commission is sensitive to the issue that this revision is so soon after the last revision. She said the last revision was surrounded by a lot of controversy. The Planning Commission is actively seeking input from citizens and wants to hear their concerns.

The citizen suggested that the Planning Commission send out a survey to gather input. Barre Pinske said that the Planning Commission had sent out a survey. Naomi Johnson said the survey had been about energy and the input was used for the new energy chapter in the Town Plan.

Randy Miles said that the 2017 revisions had taken a lot of time and effort. He is concerned that he will lose the permits that he has because he is not currently operating his business. He does not see any growth in Chester and wants to keep the zoning that permits businesses along Route 103 South. He felt that the changes would affect a lot of properties and word needs to get out about the changes.

Naomi Johnson said the Planning Commission is making an effort to reach out to citizens. She urged Randy Miles to bring his specific concerns to the Planning Commission. She said that if people are reluctant to bring their concerns to a public forum, they can send a letter or e-mail. Brandy Saxton said people are welcome to bring their individual concerns to the open house that will be held Saturday June 22nd from 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM. Randy Miles said his permit did not warn him that he needed to keep the business open in order to maintain the permit. Brandy Saxton urged Randy Miles to come to the open house on Saturday so she could discuss this in greater detail.

Michelle Bargefrede said she and her husband have property on Bargefrede Road in Chester. She said her property is currently in the Village Center zoning district and will be in the Residential-2 dwelling units per acre district under the new zoning. She said that a woodworking shop is currently allowed in the Village Center district and will not be allowed in the Res-2 district. Her husband is a carpenter and was planning on using a building attached to their house to set up a woodworking shop. She believed she would not be able to do this under the new bylaws. She felt that it was unfair to take away a use that she and her husband had counted on when they bought the property. She also felt it was unfair to hold an open house on Saturday morning when many business people would be unable to attend. She apologized for not attending the meeting two weeks ago that addressed the village districts, but she was unaware of the meeting at that time. She felt it was wrong to remove the village center district designation from an area so close to Route 103, which is a main artery and helpful to businesses.

Brandy Saxton suggested that Michelle Bargefrede look at the home business use, which would accommodate her husband's workshop as she described it. Michelle Bargefrede said the use was

marked with an X meaning it was not allowed, and Brandy Saxton said that home business was a separate use from wood processing and it was allowed in the Res-2 district. Brandy Saxton also suggested that Michelle Bargefrede ask Michael Normyle for help during his office hours on Tuesday if she couldn't attend the Saturday workshop.

Michael Normyle suggested that people send him an e-mail if they have a question and he would be sure that the question is addressed. Naomi Johnson said the Planning Commission is asking for input at these meetings to help the Planning Commission understand how the proposal affects different areas of Chester. The plan is to process the input from these public meetings at the next couple of regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings, on the first and third Mondays of the month at 7:00 PM. She said the meetings are open to the public and people are welcome to attend. She said responses to issues raised at the meetings will be seen in the changes made to the bylaws, not as specific answers to individuals. The revised bylaw will be presented in the fall.

Robert Nied said he was a resident of High Street. He said he had spoken at the June 3rd meeting and was concerned about the conversion of his neighborhood from residential to Village 4. Upon further reflection he decided his true concern was the process by which the Planning Commission arrived at the conclusion that the zoning district on High Street needed to be changed. At the last meeting he mentioned the properties on the Green and along Main Street which are standing empty. He noted that the properties along Grafton Street and High Street have historically been residential and remain residential today. Many of the homes are pre-1900. No one he spoke to from the area could think of any pressure to develop any businesses and no one expressed a wish to have a mixed-use district. He said the proposed change seems arbitrary.

He asked how a vital downtown could be maintained. He wondered how it would be helpful to convert a strip of property which is a block from the Green to more commercial space when there were so many empty commercial properties on the Green and nearby, such as the former drug store, the funeral home and the former Jiffy Mart building. He said he was concerned about the process that made such decisions. He suggested that the Planning Commission have a discussion with the Chester Economic Development Committee, the Okemo Valley Chamber of Commerce, and local real estate agents to get their input on local trends in real estate and what people are looking for. He said no one he knows of is looking to open a motel or a massage parlor or a tattoo parlor on Grafton Road or High Street. Those are all uses allowed in the V4 district. He suggested that the Planning Commission should find out where the development pressure actually is and address that area. He felt this dramatic change was coming very soon after the last bylaw amendments and questioned the need for it.

Brandy Saxton then began discussing the three rural districts. The first district she addressed was the Rural 3-acre. It is located along the major roads outside of the Village Center. She said some of the businesses in the R-3 district are those that don't fit well in the village center. It also includes agriculture and forestry uses.

Brandy Saxton compared the dimensional standards of the proposed R3 district to the standards of the current R-120 district. She noted a slight reduction in the lot frontage, an increase in lot

coverage for the first three acres and then a decrease in coverage for areas exceeding three acres. The setbacks are slightly smaller than the R-120, the principal building footprint is limited to 6,000 square feet. A group of housing-related uses are added and some business uses were added, such as small retail sales and vehicle repair. A group of food uses including restaurants and catering are added. Businesses that need more space such as car wash and transportation services have been added and specialty schools, such as a dance studio have been added. On-farm business are now required to be allowed in all districts in Vermont. Uses that have been removed are hotel, motel and extraction-quarrying.

Phil Perlah asked about the definition of on-farm businesses. Does it actually have to be located on a farm? Brandy Saxton said it did have to be on a farm as 'farm' is defined by the state, which is not a stringent definition. She referred Phil Perlah to Chapter 3 which has more specific use standards for on-farm businesses.

Gabe Ladd asked about the difference between home occupation and home business. Brandy Saxton said municipalities are required by state law to allow home occupations. A home occupation is defined as your right as a resident to use a minor portion of your home for a business purpose. A home business is a slightly larger scale home occupation. It could involve an out building, employees, more traffic and use of storage. Home occupation is allowed in every district and is a permitted use. Home business is sometimes a conditional use and not currently allowed in the R-18 district.

Randy Miles asked about full-fledged businesses in the R-3 district. Brandy Saxton said there are a number of commercial and industrial uses allowed in the district, many constrained by scale, and most of them are conditional uses, which would require a hearing before the DRB.

Gabe Ladd asked whether one is allowed to apply for a permit for a business when home business is not an allowed use in the district. Brandy Saxton explained the notation in the use table as follows: a P represents a permitted use which may require a site plan review with the Zoning Administrator, but rarely requires a DRB review; a C represents a conditional use which will require a DRB review before the Zoning Administrator issues a permit; an X means the use is not permitted. If the business an applicant wants to start is marked with a P or a C in the district in question, he may apply for a permit. If an applicant is seeking a permit for a use which is not listed in the table, but the use resembles another use in that is listed in the table, he or she may apply for a permit based on the resemblance of the use requested to the use currently allowed. She said the only way to pursue a use not allowed in the district is by a zoning change. There were no other questions about the Rural 3 district.

The next district to be considered was the Rural 6. Brandy Saxton said the district was found along the rural secondary roads and some major arteries. Some large parcels are in both the R6 and R18 district. Brandy Saxton said that in the case of wetlands, and land that is 1000 feet from any kind of road, a parcel was sometimes divided between 2 zoning districts. She said one of the purposes of the district is to protect natural resources, working farm land and working forest land. The Town Plan frequently refers to these goals. Brandy Saxton said together, the R-6 and

R-18 districts take up 80% of the acreage in Chester. The other 20% of land is divided among the other eight districts.

Brandy Saxton compared the dimensional standards of the proposed R6 district and the current R-120 district. She noted that the setbacks in the R6 district are shorter than in the R-120, and the building height allowed is lower. More complex comparisons are the 6-acre minimum lot size for nonresidential uses in the R6, the longer frontage requirement of 300 feet for nonresidential uses and the 20% lot coverage allowed on the first 3 acres in the R6 district, with the rest of the parcel only allowed 5% coverage.

Brandy Saxton listed the uses added in R6 compared to the current R-120 district. They include camp, (a new use in these bylaws), food services such as catering/commercial kitchen, event facility, composting services, equestrian facility, social club and on-farm business, which is now required to be allowed everywhere in the state. Some uses not available in the R-6 district, but had been available in the R-120 district are hotel, motel, rooming and boarding house, office, storage and distribution, indoor recreation, government facilities and a day care facility, a use that is separate from a home-based daycare for a few children.

Jeff Ladd asked why the road frontage requirement is higher for a non-residential use than a residential use. Brandy Saxton said making the frontage requirement greater will prevent shoestring shaped lots. He asked whether the road could be a private road. Brandy Saxton said yes, the road could be a private road. He then asked about the storage and distribution use that was removed from the list of allowed uses. He asked whether a wine distributor with a warehouse based in a barn could be a home business. Brandy Saxton asked if the grapes were being grown on site or if the wine was being made on site? Jeff Ladd said it was not. Brandy Saxton said a farm would allow such activity as an on-farm business. A business with few employees would be allowed as a home business. She said the storage use defined in the bylaw is self-storage, and the wine distribution use does not fit that.

A citizen who said he had moved to Chester 2 years ago said he would not have moved to Chester if he had known that artist gallery and studio would not be allowed in the R6 or R18 district at all. He said he thought Vermont was supportive of creative people, but the use table with all the X's seemed very discouraging to him. He acknowledged that it was possible he didn't understand the intention of the bylaw and he was misinterpreting it. He called the use table format frightening.

Brandy Saxton said it was true he was misinterpreting the bylaw. She said that the uses listed in the use table are the principal or primary use for the lot. An artist gallery use would need a permit if it is the primary use for the lot. An artist gallery in a building on the lot where your residence is would be a home occupation or home business and would be allowed in almost all districts. She said most businesses in the rural districts are home occupations or home businesses.

The last district to be discussed was the Rural 18 district. This district's purpose is to conserve public lands and priority forest blocks. Development is constrained both to preserve natural resources and working land and to keep road maintenance costs down.

Brandy Saxton compared the dimensional standards of the R18 district to those of the Conservation Residential district. The density of the R18 district is lower than the Conservation Residential district, the minimum lot size is larger, the lot coverage is lower. The setbacks in the R18 district are smaller than the Conservation Residential district and the maximum building height allowed is lower.

Phil Perlah asked how the minimum lots size and the maximum density for the R18 and the R6 districts. He asked how many houses he could have on an 18-acre lot in the R18 district. Brandy Saxton said one house would be allowed. The lot would have to be 36 acres before two houses could be put on it. However, the lot for one house on the 36 acres could be only 3 acres, leaving the other 33 acres for the second house.

Joe Karl asked if, in the example just cited, after the 3-acre lot had been sold, could the other 33 acres be subdivided further? Brandy Saxton said it could not be further sub-divided. There were two development units associated with the 36 acres and both have been used already. She said keeping track of the number of development units associated with a parcel that is sub-divided over time would need a procedure put in place to monitor how many units are used up. She noted that in the example she used at the start of the presentation there were 15 development units associated with the lot. If the lot is divided more or less equally into 2 parts, the 15 development units would need to be divided between the two lots. The details of the division are up to the sub-divider.

Jeff Ladd asked what would happen if someone who owned 100 acres abutting the 33 acres left of the 36 in the last example were to buy the 33 acres and merge the two parcels into one 133-acre parcel. Brandy Saxton said the 33 acres had one development unit associated with it. A new plat would be done for the merger and the development units belonging to the two pieces would be added up and noted on the plat.

Brandy Saxton said the Density-Based system was introduced in Addison County in the 1980's. Middlebury has had a density-based system 1985. There is a long track record for managing the density-based system. She acknowledged that there is an administrative process to get the system going, but people in the rural districts were happy with the result once it got going. She said the density-based system works well with the new state wastewater rules.

Bill Dakin asked how anyone can tell that a town is happy with the density-based system. Brandy Saxton explained that she had returned to the town in question to work on the Town Plan with them and citizens told her about it in the course of the meetings they had for the Town Plan work.

Brandy Saxton compared the proposed uses for the R18 district with the existing uses in the Residential Conservation district. She noted several added uses such as Camp, B&B, Inn, short term rental, museum and equestrian facility. She noted that uses that generate traffic not associated with recreation were taken out such as two-family dwelling, golf course, and child day care facility. Brandy Saxton said there had been discussion within the Planning Commission about the appropriate density for this area and the Planning Commission will appreciate input on this.

A citizen asked how businesses are defined because he saw in the list of uses being removed from the district, four or five uses that could be considered home businesses. He asked what the difference between a home business and other businesses was. Brandy Saxton said the difference is that a home business occurs on the property you live on. She directed attention to section 3205, Home Business and section 3204, Home Occupation and noted that the regulations address scale and impact of the business. She pointed out that a home business may not employ more than 8 people regardless of where they live, and a home occupation may not employ more than 2 people who do not live on the property. The citizen still felt the bylaw was confusing. Brandy Saxton said there were currently many home occupations in Chester which take place at the residence of the permit holder.

A second citizen asked about the removal of the home business use from the R18 district. He looked at the event facility use that was added to the R18 and asked whether the impact of an event facility was not greater than the impact of a home business. Brandy Saxton said event facility was added to the list in part because on-farm business was required to be added to the list and the on-farm business use allows event facilities on farms. Brandy Saxton said it wasn't uncommon in Vermont for a farm to convert an unused barn into an event facility. The citizen suggested that Chester ought to allow more flexibility for rehabbing existing unused barns for other purposes. Brandy Saxton suggested that specific examples would be helpful to the Planning Commission and said that the Planning Commission is still discussing uses in the rural districts.

Barre Pinsky asked whether an additional 8 people, working in a home business at a residence with a septic system, would overwhelm the septic system. Brandy Saxton said wastewater is a state issue and the town would not have any jurisdiction. She said it's possible that the state may step in and require more permits.

Gabe Ladd said he lived on land where his parents had a construction company for 25 years. The land is changing from R-120 to R18. He said he would like to find a way to spend more time in Vermont and is looking for ways to make a living here, particularly using the property his parents had used. He noticed that many of the ways he could earn income are not allowed in the R18 district and that an existing barn on the property is taller than the maximum building height allowed in the district.

Brandy Saxton responded by first explaining some of Vermont's land use history. She said Vermont is a state where municipalities only have the rights specifically granted to them by the state. Other states are the opposite, municipalities have all the rights not claimed by the state. In Vermont, the state will not allow municipalities to grant a variance for a use in a zoning district, so it would not be possible to get a variance for a construction company on Gabe Ladd's land. He would have to try other avenues to get a permit.

Randy Miles said it was extremely critical that the language in the bylaws be very clear. He said the confusion that resulted in so much hubbub two years ago was caused by unclear language. Brandy Saxton said that many more specifics have been added to the bylaws in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 contains the bulk of the bylaw standards. Many uses have additional specific

standards that are listed in Chapter 3. The site design and engineering standards are listed in Chapter 3. One of the goals of the new bylaws was to make it easier for businesses to get through the approval process for a new business or a change to a business. Currently most business uses must go through a Conditional Use hearing to obtain a permit. In the proposed bylaws, more uses are permitted and will not need a Conditional Use hearing, they will only need a site plan review conducted by the Zoning Administrator. The detail in Chapter 3 guides the Zoning Administrator in the site plan review.

Roy Spaulding from Gassetts said the 2017 Bylaws had huge support from the town. The meetings were well attended and there was massive support for the final product. He questioned whether the town needs these changed bylaws. He thinks that an extensive revision two years later is asking too much from the citizens. He asked whether massive push back from the community could slow down the process to a reasonable level where everyone could be informed of what potentially could happen to their property.

Naomi Johnson said the Planning Commission would not try to push anything through just to meet a schedule. 1:42The Planning Commission's objective is to continue with their Monday evening meetings. The public is welcome to attend those meetings. She said the Planning Commission will not send a controversial document to the Selectboard. She said the Planning Commission wants to know from its public meetings that there is general agreement about the document. The Planning Commission will consider the testimony taken and make changes to the draft based on that testimony. The Planning Commission also has a number of other issues in the proposed bylaws to resolve that are not connected to the zoning districts. The bylaws will not be passed on to the Selectboard until the Planning Commission has resolved the expressed public concerns and the list of issues remaining.

Roy Spaulding said he didn't see evidence of the issues people had discussed in 2017 in this new version of the bylaws. He said he hadn't heard much about the bylaw rewrite project and was unaware of it until recently. He asked if the project was going to go ahead whether the townspeople wanted to do so or not. Naomi Johnson said the town had received a grant to go through the process and had spent a lot of time identifying the specific issues that needed to be addressed. The process would continue until the Planning Commission has a document to present to the Selectboard.

Brandy Saxton said this meeting is the second of three public meetings planned for June. The next meeting would be Saturday morning at 10:30 where people may ask questions about specific parcels of land they have concerns with. She agreed that the Planning Commission has a number of issues yet to resolve. There are many steps remaining before the proposed bylaws could become law. The process of hearings, once the document is complete, will take a minimum of three months and will not start for some weeks.

Barre Pinske said he heard a lot of fear from citizens about something that is different, fear of change. He said he saw opportunity for citizens to work together on this. He said the Planning Commission was not trying to create change for the sake of change. He said he believed the Commission was trying to make zoning better. He said he understood people's fear. He hoped

their reaction would be to try to understand the proposal and contribute to the discussion, putting their stamp on the bylaws. He didn't want the project to be a collection of random changes to the current bylaws. He said the Planning Commission was relying on Brandy's expertise to create bylaws that work and on citizens to help tailor those bylaws to fit Chester.

Tim Roper said he has been on the Planning Commission for a year. He said it has been a great learning experience with an amazing group of people who are committed to the community. He agreed with Barre that the Planning Commission sometimes feels it is working in isolation, in a bubble. He valued the participation from the community and he assured the citizens attending that they will be carefully considered. He said he saw three goals the project was trying to balance: support business, maintain the quality of life (often identified as quiet and solitude) and protect Vermont's heritage of wild lands.

Naomi Johnson thanked citizens for their input and adjourned the meeting.