

**TOWN OF CHESTER**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION SUBCOMMITTEE**

**October 13, 2021 2:30 PM**

**Draft Minutes**

**Location:** Mount Ascutney Regional Planning Commission Building 38 Ascutney Park Road, Ascutney, VT conference room.

**Members Present:** Peter Hudkins, Cathy Hasbrouck

**Planners and Experts Present:** Jason Rasmussen, Alex Taft, Preston Bristow.

**Citizens Present:** None.

**Agenda Item 1 Review minutes from August 25, 2021 and September 13, 2021.**

Peter Hudkins moved to accept both sets of minutes as written. Cathy Hasbrouck seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and the minutes were accepted as written.

**Agenda Item 2 Citizen comments.**

As there were no citizens present there were no comments.

**Agenda Item 3 Discuss administrative approval of projects in the proposed V12 district.**

The subcommittee discussed the minor site plan review leg of the proposed bylaws, which allows the Zoning Administrator to approve a project without a Conditional Use hearing before the DRB when the project does not meet the criteria for a major site plan review. They reviewed the standards to be met for every site plan review, which includes items 1 – 9 in Figure 4-01. Peter Hudkins asked that item 12, “Traffic generated by the proposed development will not exceed the capacity of or create congestion or unsafe conditions on roads, highways and intersections in the vicinity” be amended to include a requirement not to exceed the weight limit of roads surrounding the project.

Administrative Review of a project was seen as business friendly as it would not require a published notice for a full DRB hearing or sending letters to abutters. This would reduce the process time to obtain a permit by 3 to 5 weeks. In addition, a findings document would not be needed and the appeal period for the permit would be 2 weeks shorter, reducing the process time by another 4 to 6 weeks.

The subcommittee discussed the possibility of requiring some portion of the DRB to review the Zoning Administrator’s decision to approve a project under Administrative Review, as is done in Killington. State statute did allow some form of this. At the same time, abutters and other interested parties may feel their right to be heard is ignored if the DRB is consulted outside of a hearing and may appeal a permit issued under Administrative Review.

The Administrative Review process review criteria in Section XX were discussed only for the V12 district. The subcommittee agreed that parking requirements would be greatly scaled back in the district, landscaping requirements of some type would be kept and a review of the Performance Standards would be included.

The subcommittee considered how useful a district like the proposed V12 district would be to Chester in the present moment. It considered the steps which would be needed to add such a

district to the adopted bylaws: the zoning map changed, a new zoning district page added and a new review process section for Administrative Review. They felt the changes would not be extensive. The dimensional standards for the V12 are much more in line with the actual parcel sizes and would make almost every lot between School and Cobleigh Street a conforming lot.

The advantages of implementing a version of the V12 district in the adopted bylaws included avoiding the long delay of reviewing the entire proposed bylaw before it could be adopted, allowing a small test of the concept of Administrative Review introduced in the proposed bylaws and fulfilling the Village Center Master Plan goal of making Chester more business friendly.

The subcommittee agreed that it was time to present these proposals for the V12 district to the full Planning Commission.

No date was set for the next subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee needed feedback from the full Planning Commission before proceeding. The meeting was adjourned.