

1 **TOWN OF CHESTER**
2 **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**
3 **DRAFT MINUTES**

4 *March 23, 2026*

5 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Robert Greenfield, Harry Goodell, Mark McKeon, Phil
6 Perlah and Gary Coger at the Town Hall,

7 **STAFF PRESENT:** Zoning Administrator Hugh Quinn and Recording Secretary Cathy
8 Hasbrouck at the Town Hall.

9 **CITIZENS PRESENT:** John Broadley and Randy Miles at Town Hall.

10 **Call to Order**

11 01:22 Chair Bob Greenfield called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He led the group in the
12 pledge of allegiance and introduced the members of the Development Review Board and staff.

13 **Agenda Item 1 Review the minutes of the February 23, 2026 meeting.**

14 The DRB considered the minutes of the meeting on February 23, 2026. Mark McKeon pointed
15 out that Scott MacDonald was listed as a member of the Development Review Board attending
16 the meeting. Scott is no longer a member, though much missed. Mark McKeon attended the
17 meeting and was not listed. Harry Goodell moved to accept the minutes as amended. Phil Perlah
18 seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the minutes were approved with the amendment of
19 the attendees list.

20 **Agenda item 2 Citizens Comments**

21 There were no citizen comments.

22 **Agenda Item 3 Hearing #623 for a Conditional Use Permit at Green Mountain Union High**
23 **School, 716 VT Route 103 South.**

24 3:31 Bob Greenfield swore in John Broadley and Randy Miles to give testimony in the hearing.

25 Bob Greenfield asked if any Board members had a conflict of interest to report. None did. He
26 asked if any board member had had any ex-parte communication on the issue. No one had.

27 Bob Greenfield then entered the exhibits presented into evidence.

28 The first document was an application for a Hearing before the Development Review Board
29 dated 1/16/2026, permit number 623 from John Broadley on behalf of Green Mountain Union
30 High School. The application for the hearing was signed by John Broadley, the principal of
31 Green Mountain Union High School Bob Greenfield noted that the application was stamped
32 Received Jan 30, 2036. Harry Goodell moved to accept the application as Exhibit A. Phil Perlah
33 seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the application was accepted as Exhibit A.

34 The second document was a Notice of Hearing for a Conditional Use permit on March 23, 2026.
35 Harry Goodell moved to accept the notice as Exhibit B. Phil Perlah seconded the motion. A vote
36 was taken and the motion passed unanimously. A vote was taken and the Notice of Hearing was
37 accepted as Exhibit B.

1 The third document was a list of 35 100-foot abutters to the parcel applying for the conditional
2 use permit. Notices of the hearing were mailed to the property owners on the list on February
3 26, 2026. Harry Goodell moved to accept the list as Exhibit C. Gary Coger seconded the
4 motion. A vote was taken, and the list was accepted as Exhibit C.

5 The fourth document was a portion of the tax map dated 2/24/26, showing the parcel in question
6 and the abutting parcels. Phil Perlah moved to accept the map as Exhibit D. Harry Goodell
7 seconded the motion.

8 The fifth document was six pages of information on seven sides of paper. It included a narrative
9 written by Randy Miles, photos of the area where the sign will be placed and drawings of the
10 proposed sign. Harry Goodell moved to accept the documents as Exhibit E. Phil Perlah
11 seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the exhibit was accepted as Exhibit E.

12 07:46 Bob Greenfield asked Randy Miles if he would give some history of the project. Randy
13 explained that an electronic sign would allow the high school to announce plays, concerts and
14 ball games taking place at the school. He felt the sign would be a tremendous asset to the school
15 and the community. He thought the regulations for electronic signs which the Planning
16 Commission developed were reasonable and prevented a proliferation of unwanted signs.

17 Phil Perlah asked if the electronic display would show on both sides of the sign. Randy said it
18 would. Phil asked if the proposed sign was like the sign in Springfield VT whose picture was
19 part of Exhibit E. Randy said the proposed sign had simpler electronics, but it would be similar
20 in appearance to the Springfield sign with granite posts.

21 Mark McKeon asked about the square footage shown on Exhibit E. It appeared to be out of
22 balance. Randy said the final design was not complete. The measurements in Exhibit E did not
23 consistently include the topper.

24 Harry Goodell said it appears that the sign will go on the concrete pad that currently supports the
25 granite marker which says Green Mountain Union High School. Randy said the concrete pad
26 may need to be replaced because the supports for the new sign will need to go deeper into the
27 ground. The location of the sign is where the concrete pad is now.

28 11:57 Bob Greenfield then read the language in the Chester Unified Development Bylaws that
29 addresses electronic signs:

30 **23. Electronic Message Display (EMD) Signs:**

31 **(a) General Standards for EMD Signs:** EMD signs are permitted on municipal and public-
32 school properties in the Village Mixed Use (VMU) and Neighborhood (N) Districts for
33 community/public service content only, subject to conditional use review by the
34 Development Review Board, and shall meet the following standards:

- 35 1. An EMD sign shall not have any distracting appearance of motion, including, but not
36 limited to, flashing, blinking, shimmering, pulsating as well as animation,
37 streaming, or video displays.
- 38 2. An EMD sign shall have characters of sufficient size to be easily discerned and must
39 not constitute a safety hazard by being a distraction to drivers. All characters will be
40 a minimum of 6" tall.

- 1 3. An EMD sign display shall consist only of alphabetic and numeric characters and
2 related symbols on a plain background, and shall not include any graphic, pictorial,
3 video or photographic images.
- 4 4. The message display area may have a maximum of four lines of characters,
5 including all letters, numbers, spaces, or other symbols.
- 6 5. A maximum of two colors shall be used for an electronic message or at the
7 discretion of the Development Review Board.
- 8 6. Messages must have a display time of no less than eight (8) seconds unless
9 modified by the Development Review Board.
- 10 7. When the display of an electronic message changes, it must change as rapidly as is
11 technologically practicable with no phasing, rolling, scrolling, flashing, or blending.
- 12 8. An EMD sign shall include ambient light sensors that automatically adjust the
13 brightness level of its display to natural ambient conditions and shall not exceed
14 250 nits during nighttime or 5,000 nits at any time unless modified by the
15 Development Review Board.
- 16 9. An EMD sign shall automatically shut off between the hours of 11 p.m. – 6 a.m.
- 17 10. An EMD sign shall contain a default mechanism that freezes the sign in one
18 position, or shuts off the device entirely, if a malfunction occurs.

19 **(b) Design & Mounting Standards for EMD Signs**

- 20 1. All EMDs shall be incorporated only into a free-standing, ground-mounted
21 monument sign. Single-post-mounted, roof-mounted, wall-mounted or box-
22 cabinet-only EMDs are prohibited.
- 23 2. The EMD display must be designed as an integral element of the monument sign
24 face and shall be fully enclosed with a permanent frame or cabinet constructed of
25 materials that match or complement the principal building or adjacent historic
26 structures (e.g., painted or stained wood, natural stone, brick, or architectural
27 metal).
- 28 3. The decorative frame or cabinet shall extend not less than six (6) inches beyond the
29 EMD display area on all sides to ensure a finished, recessed appearance.
- 30 4. The illuminated EMD panel shall comprise no more than eighty percent (80 %) of the
31 total sign face area permitted for the monument sign.
- 32 5. The free-standing, ground-mounted monument sign containing an EMD shall not
33 exceed forty-eight (48) square feet in overall size and shall not exceed ten (10) feet in
34 overall height.
35 Phil Perlah asked about the dimensions of the sign as stated in the bylaws. Phils said the
36 overall dimensions shown on the sketch, 7 feet by 8 fee 5 inches, would produce a sign
37 with at least 56 square feet. Zoning Administrator Hugh Quinn explained that the Bylaws
38 intended to limit the EMD part of the sign to no larger than 48 square feet. Phil was
39 satisfied by the explanation.
- 40 6. Frames and bases shall use non-reflective, low gloss finishes in earth tone colors
41 earth tones and traditional New England hues. Bright or metallic finishes are
42 prohibited.

1 7. During Conditional Use Review the Development Review Board shall determine that
2 the proposed monument sign, including the EMD panel, frame, base, and any
3 landscaping, is compatible with the scale, materials, and architectural character of
4 surrounding properties and streetscape. The Board may require material samples or
5 renderings to make this determination.

6
7 18:05 Bob Greenfield asked how easy it would be to hack into the sign. Randy Miles said he
8 wasn't sure of the answer, but he believed this type of sign had been around for a while and it
9 would be difficult to hack in. He said it was computerized and there would be edits that
10 prevented people from displaying objectionable words.

11 Harry Goodell asked if the sign could be updated from inside the school. Randy Miles said it
12 could not be accessed from the school. A person would need to be within 150 feet of the sign to
13 access it. Harry and Bob agreed that accessing the sign that way would allow it to be hacked.

14 Bob asked how the sign could be protected from hackers. Hugh said in this configuration, the
15 sign would not be on the internet and not available online. Gary Coger asked if there was a
16 separate keyboard available for the sign. Hugh referred to the last page of Exhibit E which says
17 the sign comes with a QWERTY keyboard which can access the sign from up to 150 feet away
18 and does not require the internet. Hugh speculated it was wireless technology like blue tooth.

19 Gary Coger suggested that if someone hacked the sign their identity could be discovered. Randy
20 Miles believed the signs would not be as popular as they are if they could be hacked. Cathy
21 Hasbrouck pointed out that computer-based access was an option for the sign that had to be
22 purchased separately.

23 21:22 Phil Perlah asked if the proposed sign could meet the requirements just read, such as no
24 flashing, size of characters and automatic shut off. There were numerous requirements and he
25 wanted to be sure they could be met. Randy Mile and John Broadley were confident the
26 proposed sign was capable of meeting those requirements. Phil also said he thought this was the
27 first hearing he had participated in as a member of the DRB where there were no changes or
28 corrections to be made to the application.

29 Bob Greenfield asked John Broadley and Randy Miles if they had permission to erect the sign.
30 John said he had discussed it with the School Board, and they had approved it enthusiastically.
31 He said there was no final cost yet. The cost would also have to be approved by the School
32 Board.

33 Cathy Hasbrouck asked if the Board wanted a final drawing of the proposed sign. Only a sketch
34 had been provided and the bylaw asked for a drawing of the final version of the sign. Bob
35 Greenfield said the sketch would be sufficient and the board members agreed.

36 25:45 Hugh Quinn told Randy and John to be sure the sign they purchase could meet the many
37 technical requirements in the bylaw. Hugh said he would get calls about it as the Zoning
38 Administrator. He would have to approach failing to meet the requirement as a zoning permit
39 violation. Randy Miles said the sign companies that make the panels can accommodate many
40 communities' standards. Phil Perlah said it appears the regulations are trying to prevent the sign
41 from being a dangerous distraction to traffic. Hugh agreed.

1 Phil Perlah wanted to know if there were other places where signs like these could be placed in
2 Chester. Hugh explained they were allowed for schools and municipal buildings and only in two
3 zoning districts. The elementary school in Chester is in a district where an EMD sign is not
4 allowed. Bob Greenfield said having several EMD signs in a row would not agree with the
5 character of the town. Gary Coger said he went to pick someone up at the high school and
6 couldn't see the driveway in the dark. Randy Miles said the sign would help identify the
7 driveway and dress up the school.

8 There being no more questions, Harry Goodell moved to close the hearing. Phil Perlah seconded
9 the motion. A vote was taken and the hearing was closed.

10 Mark McKeon moved to enter deliberative session. Harry Goodell seconded the motion, and
11 the board entered deliberative session at 6:28 PM. No votes were taken in deliberative session.
12 Mark McKeon moved to exit deliberative session and Phil Perlah seconded the motion. The
13 board returned from deliberative session at 6:38.

14 Phil Perlah moved to adjourn the meeting. Gary Coger seconded the motion. A vote was taken
15 and the meeting was adjourned.