

1 **TOWN OF CHESTER**  
2 **PLANNING COMMISSION**  
3 **April 17, 2023, Minutes**

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5 **Commission Members Present:** Cathy Hasbrouck, Barre Pinske, and Hugh Quinn at Town Hall.  
6 Absent: Tim Roper.

7  
8 **Staff Present:** Preston Bristow, Zoning Administrator/Town Planner, at Town Hall; and Susan  
9 Bailey, Recording Secretary, via Zoom.

10  
11 **Citizens Present:** Bill Lindsay, Peter Hudkins, Jason Rasmussen of MARC, and Kathy Giurtino at  
12 Town Hall; and Steve Mancuso, Kevin Delaney, Louis Hodgetts, Brian Sullivan, Eric Kallio via  
13 Zoom.

14 **Call to Order**

15  
16 Chair Hugh Quinn called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

17  
18 Decisions Made: Adjust the letter to the 16 landowners per the Commission's discussions and send  
19 it with the maps to the landowners and schedule the public hearing for May 15<sup>th</sup>.

20  
21 Action Taken: None.

22  
23 **Agenda Item 1, Update on Planning Commission Appointments**

24  
25 Hugh said Chester has a conflict-of-interest policy that was adopted in November of 2016 which  
26 doesn't allow for a member to be on both the Selectboard and the Planning Commission or the  
27 DRB. As a result, Peter Hudkins submitted his resignation from the Planning Commission.  
28 Appointments will happen this Wednesday. In addition to Tim Roper and Barre Pinske who are  
29 both up for reappointment, there are two volunteers who have thrown their names into the hat.  
30 Barre thought that was a little quick and wondered if more time was needed to create awareness  
31 and give more people the opportunity to apply. Hugh said Tim and Barre's positions being open  
32 have been known for a while. Hugh thought they normally make appointments earlier, but things  
33 had gotten backed up. Barre wondered if this was even an appropriate time to discuss this. Cathy  
34 said people knew that two people would be up for reappointment and there would be two potential  
35 vacancies. Barre apologized and was beginning to understand that the people who were potential  
36 replacements for Tim or Barre could now be considered for Peter's seat. Hugh said there were  
37 three positions and four candidates.

38  
39 **Agenda Item 2, Review and Approve Minutes from April 3, 2023, meeting**

40  
41 Hugh moved and Cathy seconded a motion to approve the April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 minutes. There were no  
42 changes. The minutes were approved as written.

1  
2  
3 **Agenda Item 3, Citizen Comments**

4 Kathy Giurtino referenced a housing needs assessment study that Londonderry, a community like  
5 Chester, had done that indicated seasonal housing units grew by 32% between 2010 and 2020 and  
6 short-term rentals had played a role. Seasonal used to mean a family owned a home and came to  
7 ski and stay in the summer, which was totally different from what was currently done where people  
8 buy a home here and turn them into unhosted short-term rentals. Kathy said the article noted this  
9 was displacing workers out of the community and constraining the local economy and business  
10 vitality. She thought Chester's ordinance was great and was glad it happened but said Chester  
11 needs to put a cap on the number of short-term rentals and then raise it if needed. She thought they  
12 would face lawsuits if they tried to cap it down the road. She thought Peter Hudkins had suggested  
13 previously that they be capped at 10%. She is concerned because she lives in the Stone Village  
14 where houses are starting to turn over as people get older. It is a prime location for short-term  
15 rentals. She didn't move here to live among hotels but wanted neighbors. People in the community  
16 are needed. Kathy pointed out the board was volunteers and if all or a good portion of the housing  
17 are turned into short-term rentals, they will lose volunteers on the fire department and boards and  
18 will have to pay them because there won't be people in the community to serve. Kathy said they  
19 had proposed a \$20 million bond for the schools and in five years, we may ship our kids to Bellows  
20 Falls and Springfield for high school but would still pay on the bond. Approving the bond could  
21 come back to bite us because we're dependent on kids coming from Ludlow and Cavendish and  
22 their population has decreased because their families need work, and they can't afford to buy in  
23 these communities if people are permitted to continue to buy homes and turn them into unhosted  
24 short-term rentals. She wanted the commission to give serious consideration to implementing a  
25 cap now rather than later. Hugh said short-term rentals were a component of what was causing the  
26 housing problems in communities. It wouldn't solve all the problems, but it was a component.  
27 Hugh said they had provided the Selectboard with a list of other measures that could be taken to  
28 regulate short-term rentals. Hugh recommended Kathy have the same discussion with the  
29 Selectboard. Hugh said the approach they were taking was conservative and less regulatory, but  
30 the Selectboard could choose to implement other controls within the ordinance to create more  
31 restrictions. Preston said the ordinance was passed in December with 60 days before it became  
32 effective at the end of February. They contracted with Granicus in January, and it took a while to  
33 provide the grand list in a form they wanted. He expected their report by the end of April. They  
34 are saying there are 80 to 90 short-term rentals. Once they know, they can contact the short-term  
35 rentals and ask them to apply for registration if necessary. Preston said they will have an online  
36 registration so people can complete it on their device and will let them know if the rental is hosted  
37 or unhosted when they apply. Preston was optimistic most people would apply.

38 Peter Hudkins said there was information in their packet. Hugh thanked him and said it was a  
39 provision in the state statute to allow someone to serve on both boards. Hugh thought it was great  
40 they had the provision and if the Selectboard wanted to pursue it, they could but at this point, it  
41 was more a matter for the Selectboard than the Planning Commission.

42  
43 Steve Mancuso thanked them for all their good work. The town is adopting LEMP (Local  
44 Emergency Management Plan). He said while he was nursing a generator, he had time to talk with  
45 others doing the same and wondering how they could help their community. 211 puts it all under  
46 one doctrine which offers shelter, food, services, and takes the weight off 911. He saw they were

1 addressing communications, which was nice but having done EMS and meals on wheels, he said  
2 there are a lot of shut-ins existing from one meal to the next who don't have an \$800 cell phone.  
3 He thought they should up the ante with 211. He did not want to disparage communications and  
4 said it all rolls in under the same direction which is very upbeat.

5  
6 **Agenda Item 4, Discussion with Industrial Wireless Technologies on Application for**  
7 **Chester Wireless Towers**  
8

9 Brian Sullivan and Louis Hodgetts are in the Burlington area, and Kevin Delaney and Eric Kallio  
10 are in Massachusetts, and they all attended by Zoom. Brian Smith is the attorney in Vermont for  
11 Industrial Wireless Technologies. Louis Hodgetts of DuBois & King is the project engineer. Kevin  
12 Delaney and Eric Kallio are at Industrial's headquarters in Marshfield, Massachusetts.

13  
14 Industrial is a provider of both infrastructure and wireless services. Some companies build towers  
15 but don't hold licenses to provide communication services where Industrial does. They are  
16 developing their own wireless network in Vermont which was a recent development. In addition  
17 to seeking to provide services, the tower they propose building would also allow other carriers to  
18 co-locate their antennas on the tower and equipment in the ground space. Industrial has provided  
19 the 60-day advance notice required by the Public Utility Commission.

20  
21 Louis Hodgetts shared his screen with those in attendance. His presentation was a map with  
22 potential tower locations. A balloon float had been conducted a couple months prior for various  
23 proposed tower locations. They drove around within a two-mile radius of the proposed sites  
24 looking for the balloons. The tower would be 180 feet tall. The balloons were at 180 feet and 170  
25 feet. They took photos from the locations to confirm visibility analysis they had done. A desktop  
26 review used topography and surface features to indicate approximately where the tower would be  
27 visible, and Louis presented those points on the map. Once the tree heights were factored in, it  
28 reduced the number of points (in purple) it would be visible from which was only a portion of the  
29 tower that was usually above the average tree heights in the vicinity. There was limited purple  
30 which meant the tower visibility would be negligible. They conducted the test as a rough guide for  
31 areas to target and then they drove around the roads to confirm the visibility and obstructions. They  
32 were only able to see the balloons in one location indicated by a green circle. All other viewpoints  
33 were obstructed by the foreground vegetation. The trees and topography, although the trees were  
34 100 feet plus shorter than the tower, created very limited views of the proposed tower.

35  
36 Louis said there were other viewpoints including from off Cavendish and 103, from Spaulding  
37 Service Station, Sugarbush and Whitmore Brook Roads, from Vermont 103 towards Chester,  
38 Smokeshire Road and Route 103, Route 103 facing Southeast from the town line, where the tower  
39 could not be seen. There were similar viewpoints not specifically mentioned.

40  
41 Barre was travelling from Keene, New Hampshire recently and Okemo was in clear view. He  
42 wondered if they had gone anywhere that may be higher. He respected what they were doing and  
43 didn't have a negative feeling but wanted to point out that if you were in a circle in a valley looking  
44 up with trees all around, you wouldn't see it but said there were higher places in Springfield where  
45 the tower may be visible. Louis said they typically don't go beyond 2 miles in their reviews because  
46 they don't have access to privately owned roads, so they stay within the public road system.

1 Outside of two miles, the ability to recognize the tower as a structure becomes severely limited  
2 and the overall viewscape becomes much broader. The ability to point out and recognize a tower  
3 as an adverse effect on the overall visibility and viewshed minimizes outside of a two-mile radius.  
4 Barre thought that made sense and wasn't like seeing a ski area. Barre can define the fire tower on  
5 Okemo amongst the trees because it's unique. He wasn't trying to be negative but was curious. He  
6 thought somewhere there was higher ground, and someone could see it and asked Peter if he  
7 thought they would be able to see it. Peter had no idea. Peter was familiar with the topographical  
8 map and didn't see anything that popped it out there. Louis said if you were above the tower  
9 looking down into the valley, you would see it. The structure is 180-foot steel, most likely  
10 galvanized, lattice tower and gray. It will contrast with the green trees but will be less visible in  
11 the fall and winter. The top of the tower would be less than 3 feet in diameter. Other carriers that  
12 may attach antennas to it would stand out up to 12 feet total face width. It would be visible, but  
13 the structure is much smaller than a normal residential house and finding it in a wide panoramic  
14 view would be challenging to the average viewer.

15  
16 Preston said he noticed that cell towers weren't camouflaged as much as they used to be and  
17 wondered if it wasn't successful. Louis said trees can be very successful if sighted properly. Trees  
18 near the tree line within ten to fifteen feet of the average tree height blend in well and can obscure  
19 the tower for a lot of viewers. When additional tower height is necessary to make up for  
20 topography, which was the case here, they need the tower height to provide adequate coverage to  
21 meet coverage objectives and looking at a tall tower when disguised as a pine tree is very out of  
22 place with anything natural. The mass of the branches to a tower just makes it more massive and  
23 visible, so they have actively discouraged stealth trees because they find them more obtrusive than  
24 a standard tower that has become ubiquitous throughout the state. There are hundreds of towers  
25 throughout the state that are well hidden, much like the proposed tower should be. The average  
26 person will never see it, so it doesn't make sense to spend extra to build out a structure and give it  
27 more visibility. Barre asked if it would require a flashing light on top due to its height. Louis didn't  
28 believe so but said it would have to go through an FFA review. Towers under 200 feet, typically,  
29 don't require lighting. Barre wondered how far out from the base would any necessary support  
30 cables go. Louis said it was a self-support lattice tower and didn't require cables. It would be  
31 located within a 50 x 50 equipment compound. The base of the tower was less than 20-foot face  
32 width at the base tapering to a 2-foot face width at the top. Each phase of the triangle decreases in  
33 size as it goes up. It made sense to Hugh not to camouflage it. Barre thought people were used to  
34 towers now and valued their cell phones and that it would be nice to have service in that area.

35  
36 Louis believed Industrial had already had preliminary conversations with the power company and  
37 knew what pole they were connecting to. The proposed tower will require a service line from the  
38 existing overhead pole line. They rely on the utility company to have reliable service on their pole  
39 system. Louis thought a commercial operation on the power company's pole system provides a  
40 good opportunity for them to upgrade their service as towers require reliable power. He couldn't  
41 speak to the utility's willingness to upgrade the service to an insulated line but thought it would be  
42 in their best interest to do so. Industrial has not proposed a generator backup at this location. In his  
43 work with any carrier such as Verizon or AT&T, they generally have their own battery backups  
44 built into their equipment for 4 to 8 hours. Throughout Vermont, most of their sites have either a  
45 diesel or propane generator. Barre compared Industrial to a landlord with a cell tower and the cell  
46 providers rent space to provide their cell service and thought it was not Industrial's responsibility

1 to provide a generator. Barre wondered if they could require cell providers to provide a backup  
2 generator. Kevin said they do a lot of work for all the major carriers and in the mountainous areas  
3 of Vermont where you can be without power for extended periods of time, they all install  
4 generators. They couldn't require it in the contract, but there was a 95% chance they would do it  
5 at every site like this. Hugh said that was good to know. The carrier was ultimately responsible for  
6 providing service at a site which would be done with battery backup or a backup generator for  
7 their own customer experience. It would be up to Green Mountain Power to do what was right  
8 regarding the power. They have a good working relationship with GMP and have been successful.

9  
10 John McKinley of Smokeshire Road was concerned about the location of the tower and didn't  
11 think it was the best location. He wanted to know if they had spoken to landowners as nobody had  
12 talked to him. He had a topographical analysis of his property, which he presented to the  
13 Commission. He said there was a big dead spot located on Route 103 and thought most people  
14 would love cell service in that area. Hugh agreed. John's location had a direct line of sight to  
15 Proctorsville. He thought the tower being located there would cover the entire Proctor Gulf and as  
16 far down Route 103 as the proposed tower. He felt once a tower was built, they couldn't build  
17 another. John also thought the people in Smokeshire Valley would be left out of the proposed site  
18 and would never have service. If someone had a better location, he would be happy to step aside.  
19 John suggested holding a public hearing before they committed to a site and considering all  
20 options. Hugh asked how they identify the best locations and decide so they could understand how  
21 it works. Kevin said they analyze all the existing towers in the area for coverage to see if there's a  
22 gap. After that, they look for an accessible property. A higher property may provide superior  
23 service, but it needs to be accessible and consider the cost and footprint required to make it  
24 accessible. A remote property a good distance away from existing homes is ideal. After analyzing  
25 the topography, they run propagation studies which is a computer-generated map that includes the  
26 site coordinates, elevation, vegetation, tree height, and frequency ranges. From that information,  
27 it predicts the cell coverage from that site. They have done that for several sites in the area. Kevin  
28 works closely with Eric Kallio, the site acquisition specialist, and they looked at John McKinley's  
29 site which had reduced coverage along Route 10. The proposed site would cover Routes 103 and  
30 10, which is why they chose it. John questioned whether their tower would reach down into the  
31 valley and Kevin confirmed it would because it was high up. Kevin said they would be happy to  
32 look at a specific area if John wanted them to and suggested he contact Eric. Barre thought it  
33 sounded like Industrial had done their homework. Hugh agreed but suggested John reach out to  
34 the company. John said he had and suggested they may want to take a slower road rather than rush  
35 into it. John thought a tower on top of a hill would not need to be as tall and would be less intrusive.  
36 Hugh said they either had to trust the data or not, but they had provided data. Hugh wasn't sure  
37 what authority the Planning Commission had surrounding the issue. Preston thought both the  
38 Planning Commission and Selectboard had the right to comment but Industrial could choose to  
39 make their application to the Utility Commissioner. They agreed. Once the 60 days had passed,  
40 they could file the application. Unless they were in a situation where they felt there was a serious  
41 disagreement with a municipality, they would not wait until August when they must start the  
42 process over. Preston asked if they had a hearing. Brian said there was an opportunity for the public  
43 to comment. Because Mr. McKinley was a mile away and not an abutting landowner, he would  
44 not get a copy of an application, but one would be available through the town because the  
45 Selectboard and Planning Commission receive copies. Brian said John could also petition the  
46 Public Utility Commission to intervene and it would be up to them to decide whether to grant him

1 the status or hold a hearing. John thought they would be more likely to listen to him if others were  
2 in support of considering his property as an option. Barre said when the housing authority gets  
3 shut down negatively by a community, it makes it difficult for them to move on with other projects.  
4 Barre said they don't want to stand in the way of community good, such as housing. In this case it  
5 was cell phones and business, and he would listen to the professionals rather than a landowner  
6 with a financial interest. Barre thought, as a board, they needed to support Industrial.

7  
8 Hugh added that the recent town survey indicated people want better cell service and the  
9 Commission is in support of that and other carriers being able to put equipment on the tower was  
10 great. Hugh hoped many major carriers would participate. He thanked Industrial for their  
11 presentation. Brian expected to file an application within the next couple of weeks. Barre wished  
12 them luck.

13  
14 **Agenda Item 5, Review Proposed Open Space Letter to Residents. Schedule Public**  
15 **Hearing.**  
16

17 The packet included a draft of the letter that would be sent to landowners who would be part of  
18 the new open space district. Hugh asked for feedback on the letter. Preston noted the new district  
19 was in the mapped floodplain around the village area and there was concern at the last meeting  
20 that Commission wanted to look at the letter to make sure it had the right tone and was as sensitive  
21 as it could be. Cathy identified the property owners affected and there were 16. She had been  
22 working on the maps to include with the letter and had some samples. Preston felt people would  
23 be very well informed with the letter. Hugh asked which map(s) they would send. Cathy said two  
24 maps for each property owner showing their parcels. The maps have the floodways and special  
25 flood hazards on them. She thought they may need to modify the letter to explain the new district  
26 would be a combination of the yellow, which was the floodway, and the blue stripes, which is the  
27 special flood hazard area. They felt the maps were helpful to see a recent picture of the structures  
28 and how they fit into the special flood hazard area or the floodway. Preston agreed with Cathy's  
29 suggestion to modify the letter to explain there are both floodways and either floodplain or  
30 floodway fringe, whichever term they chose to use. Preston said nationally they keep coming up  
31 with new terms, flood fringe being one of them, which he found could be frustrating. Hugh had no  
32 issue with tweaking the letter to provide clarity on the map attachments. Preston said he didn't  
33 think they would need to see the letter for that tweak, as it wasn't a big change. Hugh suggested  
34 annotating a legend on the maps as a backup, if possible. They thought they could do that even  
35 with a sticker. Hugh expected the recipients of the letter would either accept the proposed district  
36 or participate in the hearing in May. Barre suggested adding a screenshot of a sticker to the map.  
37 Barre was concerned about floodways that only happen every 100 years and said the spring thaw  
38 had just happened and the water hardly went anywhere and was much more reflective than normal.  
39 Barre didn't want someone's house to wash down the river but thought they were limiting their  
40 ability to do things over something that doesn't happen often. Barre thought their effort in  
41 communicating with them so clearly and providing maps would provide transparency, which was  
42 their goal. Preston agreed. Barre praised them for their work on the letter and maps. Hugh thought  
43 they had created flexibility and if the community didn't approve, they would hear about it.

44  
45 Cathy noted the middle paragraph began "While development within FEMA's map special flood  
46 hazard area is already quite limited, this district would only allow minor structures that are

1 anchored and not on fill.” She wondered if they should remove the first clause to say, “This district  
2 would only allow minor structures that are anchored and not on fill.” She asked if anyone else had  
3 trouble understanding the sentence. Preston had no trouble with removing it. Preston said some  
4 things could be built on fill but trying to get it through engineering could be difficult. Hugh said  
5 he was trying to convey they weren’t creating any additional restrictions or hardships that didn’t  
6 already exist on the parcels. As a board, they were attempting to keep a landowner from being in  
7 a frenzy because it wasn’t necessary. Cathy and Preston thought even if only the word “while” was  
8 removed, it would help. She said they weren’t adding anymore restrictions and only making them  
9 clearer. Barre thought mentioning FEMA and their regulations and working in their parameters  
10 and not taking away anymore but allowing different structures sounded good to him. Preston said  
11 they could reduce the sentence to say, “This district would allow minor structures that are anchored  
12 and not on fill.” Barre thought they should leave the part about FEMA because he didn’t want it  
13 to sound like they were making it worse for them. Hugh thought just removing the word “only”  
14 would work. Hugh pointed out that it didn’t need to be perfect and the whole point was to  
15 communicate intent before the public hearing so landowners would be aware. Hugh thought it  
16 would be great if all 16 landowners attended the hearing and discussed it. Preston pointed out  
17 reaching out to all the landowners was helpful for the Village Green District. Cathy said they are  
18 creating several lots that would be in two different zoning districts and the bylaws are prepared to  
19 cope with it, Section 3.21 Parcels in two or more zoning districts, stated the building must meet  
20 the requirements of the district it’s in. Hugh was glad Cathy called it out.

21  
22 Hugh moved to adjust the letter per their discussions and send it with the maps to the 16 landowners  
23 and schedule the public hearing for May 15<sup>th</sup>. Cathy seconded the motion. The motion carried  
24 unanimously.

25  
26 **Agenda Item 6, Begin Discussion on Village Center and Neighborhood Districts.**

27  
28 Jason said they were suggesting a tweak to the boundary of the Village Center District and had  
29 some modest changes to allowed uses and more substantial changes to dimensional standards.  
30 They reviewed the map drafted on March 30. Jason said they were looking at the existing sewer  
31 line information. Brandy had drafted some zoning language a few years ago they were starting  
32 with. The little yellow areas in the Village Green District created last year and the orange color  
33 surrounding it was the new and improved Village Center. It was shrinking along Church Street  
34 some and extending out more along Route 11 West taking advantage of the sewer line. Going up  
35 Depot Street it was similar but took away a couple of the commercial/industrial lots and some of  
36 the Stone Village. There were no huge changes and was largely the same geography.

37  
38 Peter pointed out that at the bottom of Church Street, they moved the boundary there because of  
39 the language. The bylaw language they were talking about putting in a Cider Mill. Peter said they  
40 had water all the way up to the Jeffrey Barn and thought they should take advantage of that water.  
41 Peter had received a letter from Lillian that there was no use for Jeffrey Barn as it was too expense  
42 to repair. If they move the district there and it has water, someone interested could subdivide the  
43 barn off as it could be a smaller parcel. The problem currently is the solar field and Jeffery Barn are  
44 in the 3-acre zoning, which Peter tried to break up, there is a problem with the road frontage. Peter  
45 said sewer went all the way up by the brook on North Street so sewer could be accessed to the  
46 bottom of Trebo without too much difficulty because there’s enough slope in that line. Barre asked

1 if he wanted to jump over the Stone Village District and add the same use there. Peter said out to  
2 where the solar field was. Peter said Lillian oversaw the historical building and thought the town  
3 had no use for it. Peter thought if someone had the money and wanted to do something with it, it  
4 would be nice to use. Peter said it was a 3-acre zoning and although it was a big parcel, because  
5 of the requirements it was hard to subdivide lot.  
6

7 Peter mentioned the people who were going to have the cider project and said they don't have a  
8 bylaw to limit from the previously proposed by law change, so he thought it should be put back in  
9 the neighborhood district. Barre understood. Jason wasn't sure he understood, and Preston  
10 suggested that he mark the map up to reflect what he was talking about. Peter pointed out an area  
11 on the map near the Pinnacle that he thought was the most excellent housing site in town because  
12 a development could be done without having the N.I.M.B.Y. issues.  
13

14 Jason said they were looking at water and sewer infrastructure and combining the Village Center  
15 District with the Stone Village and with the Neighborhood Districts and general business to be in  
16 its entirety where development happens. He asked how others felt about having a district separate  
17 and not being contiguous. Preston clarified that they were just expansions of the neighborhood  
18 district which had enough flexibility to allow a variation. Barre asked why they were doing them  
19 together. Jason said they were shrinking Village Center in some areas which then became  
20 Neighborhood, and it was hard to do that without discussing what it becomes. Barre understood.  
21

22 Hugh understood the goal of the Neighborhood District and that they were sort of combining the  
23 20 and 40 and understood the rationale and they were trying to keep it primarily in the areas where  
24 water and sewer was. Jason agreed. Hugh asked if as a byproduct of that, they were shrinking  
25 Village Center some and wondered what their strategy or rationale was for any changes to the  
26 Village Center. Jason thought initially they were looking at the Village Center as the heart of the  
27 business and where civic activity happens, and commerce, and it also included some residential,  
28 and it was along Main Street, and was kind of the busiest part of town and where more was  
29 supposed to happen and where larger buildings are. The surrounding neighborhood would be a  
30 little more residential with a few other uses allowed and it would allow for some of the housing  
31 they had been discussing for so long. Peter said there was mixed use on the map but not a definition.  
32 Jason said it was true they hadn't gotten there yet. Barre said they were trying to focus on defining  
33 the areas and what would happen in them, but they were really focusing on the map and area and  
34 the next stage will be defining the uses within the area. Barre thought they were trying to focus on  
35 trying to create a better picture of the map and where the districts are, and they had an idea what  
36 would go there but would focus on uses. Jason agreed they were working their way out from the  
37 Village Center and were beginning to rethink the names and shapes of the outer districts. They  
38 were trying to stay focused on the Village Center and Neighborhood and would work their way  
39 out to mixed use or similar things. Preston wondered if they would put general business and mixed  
40 use in and look at all four districts in terms of the next public hearing rollout because the four  
41 pieces work together. Hugh was in favor of that. Cathy pointed out that they had a definition for  
42 mixed use, and it was confusing to have a district of the same name. Preston said mixed use was  
43 something that Brandy came up with that they thought was a good term, but Cathy had made a  
44 good point and they may want to re-think that. Hugh agreed it could create confusion and they  
45 may want to separate them. Barre thought it was called general business at one time. Preston said  
46 mixed use and general business were two different districts and didn't know their prior names.



1 Jason thought it was called residential/commercial and didn't necessarily like it but didn't like  
2 missed use so he wasn't sure what they would call it. Jason suggested thinking about Village  
3 Center and Neighborhood now and before they were done looking at the other districts and they  
4 may find they need to tweak some things. Hugh thought that was the right process not to look at  
5 everything at once but rather do Village Center and Neighborhood and decide how to package it  
6 for public hearing. Barre was more concerned about what was different. Barre thought there was  
7 a lot that was the same but a few things that were different and it was more important to understand  
8 the latter for someone like him. Barre hoped he wasn't creating more work but making it simpler.  
9 To Barre's point, Hugh said when things are generally in the same place and there are some  
10 differences in the map or with uses and standards, he finds himself wanting to know the major  
11 differences between what's current and what's proposed. Cathy said the red text explains use  
12 changes. Barre trusted them implicitly, but preferred to know what they did, the way it was, and  
13 what was different. Barre thought they did good work. Jason said initially they had shown all the  
14 changes in the document, but it got messy and asked if they preferred to see a side by side. Hugh  
15 didn't have an issue with markups and asked them to defer to whatever they thought was easier to  
16 show the net changes in the map and language. Jason said the map had changed a little bit in the  
17 Village Center as they were trying to take better advantage of water and sewer. In the Village  
18 Center, the permitted uses hadn't changed much. Home occupation used to be under accessory  
19 use, but they separated it out, so it wasn't so confusing or hidden. They changed single-family and  
20 two-family dwellings to single and two-household residential. The bigger change under permitted  
21 use was they added up to four-unit multi-household residential so that would get a simple zoning  
22 permit in the Village Center where currently it doesn't. They removed building and construction  
23 trades because in Jason's mind, it didn't make the most sense there. Cathy said Preston had pointed  
24 out that every single district had building and construction trades in it. Cathy thought it was a little  
25 over the top but one morning she was on the Green and there was a linesman truck of someone  
26 who lives on the Green with his own little company. Preston said the highway crew finds his truck  
27 obstructive in the winter. Hugh asked if it constituted his home occupation and Preston said it  
28 could. Hugh was somewhat in agreement with removing building and construction trades but given  
29 what Cathy discovered, he hoped that was allowed because it was that person's home occupation.  
30 Hugh said this scenario was a little different because his home occupation involved going to  
31 customers to do the job where a home occupation is inside your home. Barre noted parking a  
32 commercial vehicle on a street when you live in an apartment was a gray area and wondered if it  
33 was removed as a conditional use if he would have to go before the DRB. Hugh said it meant it  
34 wasn't allowed. Jason said usually you have a stockpile of materials which wasn't a home  
35 occupation because it didn't allow for that. Preston felt comfortable that any journeyman,  
36 carpenter, or plumber works out of their home and has a truck there and wouldn't go to the DRB  
37 but was a home occupation. Hugh agreed to that, and Jason thought it made sense. Cathy said they  
38 just needed to be up on how it would work. Jason pointed out that he didn't hear anything negative  
39 about the simple zoning permit for a three- or four-bedroom apartment, which was probably the  
40 biggest change other than dimensional standards. Preston said the DRB may wonder why they're  
41 losing that power but all the direction the state gives is making those things go through the DRB  
42 is an obstruction. Hugh agreed. Peter wondered if changing the three- or four-bedroom affected  
43 PDU because they were already increasing the number of units. Jason envisioned it could be  
44 conversion or new construction and thought it could be a building with 3 or 4 units in it and not  
45 three or four separate buildings clustered together. Preston had been surprised to find how many  
46 of the old houses located downtown are four, five, or six units, which was a good thing, but he was

1 surprised how many there are. Jason was thinking a principal building needed to meet the minimum  
2 lot size and wasn't multiplied by the number of units in the building. A house needs to meet the  
3 minimum lot size and the same applied to a unit apartment and wasn't a different number based  
4 on the number of units.

5  
6 Page 406 which had a dimensional standards table at the top had 1/8 of an acre highlighted and the  
7 reason it was highlighted was a lot of the conversation at the state level was about 5 units per acre  
8 when there is water and sewer and Jason started looking at the Neighborhood District and was  
9 presenting it at a 1/5 of an acre minimum lot size which caused him to rethink the Village Center  
10 and make it smaller. Jason changed it to an 1/8 of an acre, which is the minimum size the state  
11 requires to build a house. The Village Green was smaller at 3,000 plus square feet so they are small  
12 but on water and sewer, but it was a big change going from 20,000 square feet. Barre mentioned  
13 the lot near his place and thought it could be split four ways given the lot size. Jason would need  
14 to know the lot size before he could answer. Hugh thought it was making it almost 4 times denser.  
15 Peter thought the lot could be split interestingly given that it had access from different streets and  
16 Barre agreed and that it would make a nice housing development. Barre liked the idea of the lot  
17 size change and wondered what a potential detriment would be. Barre thought they were breaking  
18 things into smaller pieces and rather than selling a pie they would sell slices and didn't think it  
19 would have a negative effect but would be the difference. Jason said they still have the  
20 supplemental standards that would help define character. Preston said historically, the New  
21 England pattern was to put things close together like on the Green and Town Hall and Yosemite  
22 Fire Station. In the 40's and 50's when everyone had a car, the move was to make lots bigger to  
23 accommodate parking. Now the trend was back to smaller not only for community and walkability,  
24 but the cost of providing water and sewer and roads. Preston felt it was returning to our roots.  
25 Barre saw it as much more to the good and less of a detriment. The only detriment Preston saw  
26 was the possible absence of parking. Preston didn't see much downside. Barre thought they could  
27 create parking. Peter asked how much the setbacks would change. Jason said lot frontage was cut  
28 in half from 100 to 50. The front setback went from 20 to 10. The side was 15 and now was 5. The  
29 rear was 15 and now was 10, so it was shrinking. Hugh noticed lot coverage went from 35 to 80.  
30 Jason said if they had 1/8 of an acre lot and it was 30, it was a tiny house, so they needed to increase  
31 the lot coverage to allow for a normal sized building. Preston said the state's Better Places  
32 document wants to do that and even says to do away with it. Hugh said everyone has their own  
33 notion of how much is enough room when it comes to their yard and house. People who want more  
34 room will object and those who are on board with it being more like a little city and denser and  
35 more compact will be fine. The only detriment Barre could see was if there was a bigger lot with  
36 an interesting structure and it would be economical to tear it down and create something with  
37 higher density that wasn't as attractive. Preston said the Adams Funeral Home would be torn down  
38 because of the fire and under these bylaws could support two structures instead of one.

39  
40 Peter said because of the way it overlaps on the hill, they would need a Class 3 because there would  
41 be lots that didn't have access to water and sewer. Jason said they had Class 1 and 2 categories.  
42 Class 1 was municipal water and sewer, and Class 2 was one or nothing. Peter said there was a lot  
43 more water than sewer and he would be more in favor of getting between 1 and 2. Jason said they  
44 had discussed having a third category. Cathy said the simple thing for her would be if they stopped  
45 calling them Class 1 and 2 and called them municipal water on-site or on-site water and sewer.  
46 Preston said septic seemed to be self-regulating because it required a certain amount of space to

1 install and said for many years, the limited factor for developing was septic and now with the  
2 PFOAs and other things, for commercial property, you want water more than septic. Jason said  
3 they had merged R-20 and R-40 for the most part. Since they were doing an incremental approach,  
4 there was a little R-40 that remained outside the Neighborhood District. Hugh wondered why it  
5 was outside and Jason said the way Brandy had mapped Neighborhood, it was smaller than R-20  
6 and R-40 combined so there were a few remnants. Barre thought it became more rural and would  
7 need to be defined at some point and would be absorbed by the rural districts as they moved out  
8 into that direction. That was Jason's thought initially but thought they may want to see it. Hugh  
9 said they would need to figure it out. Barre thought it made perfect sense. Jason said when they  
10 made the changes Peter suggested, they would put it up on the screen at that meeting for review to  
11 make sure they were all good with it. Cathy suggested Otis make a mostly blank map that  
12 highlighted the changes in R-40 that didn't make it into Neighborhood or Village Center. Jason  
13 said they could try.

14  
15 Jason said permitted uses hadn't changed much and basically the same level of changes they saw  
16 in Village Center. In other words, they were allowing for three- to four-unit apartments as a zoning  
17 permit, and they deleted building and construction trades. Hugh wondered if three- to four-unit  
18 apartments were currently conditional use. Jason said that was correct. Anything beyond 4 would  
19 go to the DRB. Their thinking was this was where housing should go so, they tried to make it more  
20 of a streamlined process. Hugh thought it made sense, but change could be hard for some people.  
21 Barre thought one problem in town was if someone has a trade-oriented business, many towns  
22 have an industrial park or a small row of garages with an office. He thought the land next to the  
23 carwash was a perfect place for that. In Chester, where that isn't available, they would have their  
24 house in the neighborhood with their truck with ladders. They didn't have a choice unless they  
25 moved out into the country and bought more land, they couldn't have their business. Barre said  
26 they were trying to be business friendly and house friendly and eliminating that to create the  
27 potential for that. Barre thought they needed to be careful and down the road, they needed to try  
28 to get into how they could fund it so there were opportunities for people. Jason thought they could  
29 talk more about it. Jason didn't know there was a right answer and thought the rural and industrial  
30 areas were for the building trades. Cathy said light industry was a use in the Village Center. Preston  
31 said Elm Street and the Gold River was the mini-industrial park but there wasn't much capacity  
32 for expansion, and it wasn't used well. Barre noted when he lived in Massachusetts, he had 3  
33 properties: one for living, a gallery, and a studio which created triple the cost and was one of the  
34 reasons he moved to Vermont so he could live, work, and sell out of one building. Barre saw that  
35 as a benefit of living here and the protection of home occupation which is different from industry.  
36 Barret thought if Chester was going to grow as a town, it needed industry somewhere. Jason didn't  
37 disagree but the question was what and where. Brandy had a live/work unit type use and Jason  
38 thought they could do that if it made sense. Hugh wasn't sure when they would tackle it but thought  
39 they had discussed in the past the reality of the world will require mixed use in more places and  
40 he wanted to make sure as they are going through the process they are thinking about it and  
41 appropriately addressing it so if it did make sense for mixed uses where they aren't now, to have  
42 the conversation so they are all aware. Barre said on his road, there was the hardwood store, his  
43 business, the grain store, and the railroad so the piece of land next to him could be an expansion  
44 of his bear business if it grows and he has more machinery as much as it could be small density  
45 housing, whichever was more beneficial for the town. If he couldn't add machinery without rattling  
46 the neighborhood because they weren't allowing for trades there, he thought it was a commercial

1 area. Hugh said that was another angle, if needed, they could adjust definitions to fill a gap and  
2 make things work. Jason said they had R-20 and R-40 and R-20 had 20,000 square-foot Class 1  
3 lots and 30,000 square-foot Class 2 lots and R-40 had 40,000 square-foot lots. Class 1 for  
4 Neighborhood was getting a little more than cut in half down to 1/5 of an acre and all the frontages  
5 are getting cut in half. Nothing is written in stone so it could be changed as seemed appropriate.  
6 Cathy just wanted the class names changed. For Hugh, for dimensional standards and lot sizes, his  
7 inclination was to defer to look at what is happening and trending and becoming more mainstream  
8 and align to it in some way that makes sense and engage the public to make sure they participate.  
9 Jason thought the changes were consistent state-wide and nationally but whether it was right for  
10 Chester should continue to be talked about.

11

12 **Agenda Item 7, PC Roundtable**

13

14 Nothing addressed.

15

16 **Agenda Item 8, Adjournment**

17

18 Hugh moved to adjourn, and Cathy seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion carried.  
19 The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.