

1 **TOWN OF CHESTER**  
2 **PLANNING COMMISSION**  
3 **April 18, 2022, Draft Minutes**

4 **Commission Members Present:** Peter Hudkins, Tim Roper, Barre Pinske, and Cathy Hasbrouck  
5 at Town Hall; and Hugh Quinn via Zoom.

6 **Staff Present:** Preston Bristow, Zoning Administrator at Town Hall; and Susan Bailey, Secretary,  
7 via Zoom.

8 **Citizens Present:** Steve Mancuso and Chester Telegraph via Zoom. Bill Lindsay and Arne Jonynas  
9 at Town Hall.

10 **Call to Order**

11 Chair Hugh Quinn called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

12  
13 **Decisions Made:**

14  
15 **Action Items:**

- 16
- 17 • Tim agreed to take on the "Community Survey" Topic.
- 18 • Hugh agreed to follow up with Jason Rasmussen on the Bylaw Modernization Grant  
19 work.
- 20 • Hugh agreed to update the PC Agenda Topic List.
- 21 • Peter agreed to take on the "Legacy Use" Topic.
- 22 • Peter agreed to take on the "Home Occupation Permitting" Topic.
- 23 • Cathy agreed to take on the "Community Education & Outreach" Topic.

24 **Agenda Item 1, Changes to the Agenda**

25 Hugh asked for changes and there were none.

26 **Agenda Item 2, Review Minutes from the April 4, 2022, meeting**

27 Tim moved to approve the minutes of April 4, 2022, and Peter seconded the motion. Tim had some  
28 changes. On page 3 of 14, the fourth paragraph “Cathy asked if wanted to vote on them individually  
29 or together.” He assumed it was the Commission and thought it should say commission or we. Tim  
30 had no other changes. Barre noted on page 4 of 14, line 7, the very end of the sentence was home  
31 business. Because there is a difference between a home business and a home occupation, he  
32 wondered if it should say home occupation. Tim asked where Barre was referring to. Barre read  
33 the sentence, “...having a paid podcast, or anything they’re doing to generate income in their home  
34 is considered a home business.” They’re talking about home occupations and not home businesses  
35 but using the reference as a business. When you use home and business together, it becomes the  
36 formal term, home business. Barre suggested either striking the word home or saying home  
37 occupation to make it proper because a home business and home occupation are two different  
38 things. Hugh agreed that it should read home occupation. Cathy asked if it could say home  
39 occupation or home business, depending on how many people were involved. Barre said he was  
40 the one that said it so if were up to him, he would strike the word home and it just becomes a  
41 business. Peter liked that better, speaking in generalities. Barre said that was the issue. If they  
42 struck the word home, it’s just a business. There were no other changes, and the minutes were

1 approved as amended.

2

### **Agenda Item 3, Citizen Comments**

3 Steve Mancuso thanked them all for attending the Business Coalition meeting and said it remained  
4 upbeat, which was good. One of the issues that has gone around town is the rewrite of the bylaws.  
5 Pursuant to that, he had been given the document he was trying to digest: Enabling Better Places,  
6 A zoning guide for Vermont neighborhoods. It apparently is a guide from the state that preaches  
7 clarity and simplicity and not trying to write a bylaw for everything. Steve said it stated to stay  
8 away from consultants, but he understood the funds were already out for another consultant to  
9 come to Chester and parse things out. Steve said Chester had gone down the business-friendly trail  
10 last August and the businesses appreciated it. He suggested that if they want to get businesses  
11 involved in workshops, the Business Coalition would be meeting again at the end of May and if  
12 they want the business community's help in becoming business friendly, there would be nothing  
13 better than having them advocate what the Commission is doing. He asked them to keep in mind  
14 that they will put it on their agenda, shake the tree, and live up to being a sidearm for them. Hugh  
15 thanked Steve and said the Planning Commission had been looking at the document and there were  
16 several activities that would take place as they move forward. There are things in the hopper related  
17 to education and outreach. They will keep everyone in the loop as they move forward.

18 There were no further comments.

19

### **Agenda Item 4, Updates from the Chair**

20 (12:28 recording) Hugh included it on the agenda and will leave it on as a standing item in case  
21 there are things he learns that would make sense to share with the larger body. Sometimes he will  
22 have an individual conversation or hear something that will make sense to bring it to the team.

23 Since they have transitioned from Cathy to Hugh as Chair, he will not have the same bandwidth  
24 and ability to do the Planning Commission work that Cathy was able to devote doing. The model  
25 he was hoping they could move forward with was more of a delegation model. As they move  
26 forward and identify work that needs to be done, it would be his hope they could delegate the work  
27 to different members who could take the lead on that item and report back regularly to the Planning  
28 Commission as it relates to escalation and decision making. He hopes as they moved forward,  
29 people will identify things the Commission is working on, and they have passion for, and  
30 volunteer. Hugh is happy to make assignments if they don't get volunteers. If they don't get  
31 volunteers and don't delegate assignments, they can always work in the time allotted for Planning  
32 Commission meetings. It wouldn't be his first choice because it's probably the least efficient way  
33 to make progress but was an available option. He asked if there were any questions or comments.  
34 Tim and Cathy thought it sounded like a good plan.

35 Hugh said Steve had touched on it during citizens comments, and there was a request for  
36 qualifications sent out by Julie Hance to solicit bids under the Bylaw Update Modernization Grant  
37 to get quotes to continue the work. There was one response to the request from Mt. Ascutney  
38 Regional Commission, so they were awarded the work. He had the documentation related to the  
39 request and MARC's response if anyone was interested in it. He was aware it was in the works  
40 and the contract had been awarded and he would be reaching out to Jason Rasmussen to get his  
41 initial thoughts about what the best way to move forward and engage the Planning Commission  
42 on the work in his scope. He asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

43 Barre asked if it was different from the housing study. Hugh wasn't sure and said they have been

1 loosely using the word housing study because there was an element in Jason's response which was  
2 related to what they could do in the walkable areas of town and there was some education and  
3 outreach examples, and he thought a housing study was a necessary component that was part of  
4 the grant. His belief was the word housing study was being used and he believed what he had just  
5 talked about were one in the same. He thought in the title to Jason's response, he just responded  
6 under the title of Bylaw Modernization Grant, but he thought it included it.

7 Peter said the request they sent out was housing specific. Cathy agreed and said the modernization  
8 had been included to cover more bases.

9 Hugh said to provide some clarity, he would send out the request for qualification document and  
10 Mt. Ascutney's response and then people could read it and they should be clear about the scope of  
11 work.

12 Hugh asked if there was anything else.

13 Barre said because they were talking about the grant and because of the nature of the housing issue,  
14 he wondered if there was stuff they could do as a board that may work to address some of it.  
15 Looking at the in-law apartment and stuff like that, he didn't know how long it would take to do a  
16 housing study and what the result would be. If it was a problem that needed attention, they might  
17 be able to do some aspect of it without having a study done ahead of time. Barre said sometimes  
18 he wonders about all the studies anyway.

19 Hugh said he was right, and it would be discussed later in agenda item #6. There were things that  
20 may have a certain amount of urgency and they may be able to do them quicker and they may not  
21 be completely necessarily tied to the housing study and/or the work Jason would be helping them  
22 do. It could be related but it may not be exclusively a dependency so he thought they could leave  
23 the door open to a lot of different possibilities once they get into that area. And once they  
24 understand a little more about how Jason wants to work with the Planning Commission to advance  
25 that item, he thought it would become clearer.

26 Peter said there was a study that Boise put out that was on the Chester page about accessory  
27 dwelling units, mixed use, and change of density, which were all things they just did in the Village  
28 Green. ADUs which is the big item, are allowed in all the districts except forest, which doesn't  
29 even have a house. Surprisingly enough, they have done the right things already. They just need  
30 to carry that through as they look at the next districts.

31 Barre thought in allowing all the stuff was one thing, but it doesn't necessarily help specific issues.  
32 He was not against Airbnbs but those and temporary housing created a problem. He wondered and  
33 when they dug in a little deeper, he thought if they allowed more mother-in-law apartments and  
34 garage type buildings they have at a lot of houses here, they limit it to that specific purpose. The  
35 reason the mother-in-law apartment was allowed back in the day was because there was hardship,  
36 and you would allow that and wouldn't rent to someone else because you had a parent you wanted  
37 to care for. He was suggesting if they open all these other opportunities for housing, people will  
38 just Airbnb it and we really need people who are going to work jobs here to be in some of these  
39 places. If they had some of these places that wouldn't conform normally, then they would restrict  
40 it to something that had to be rented to an annual tenant rather than temporary housing.

41 Hugh said he thought it would make more sense to address it later in the agenda. He said they  
42 could take a deep dive on many things but today was not the meeting to deep dive anything. When  
43 they get to the item related to the topics they want to undertake, they would touch on them to make

1 sure they understand at a high level what they are and try to set some priorities. He wanted to keep  
2 agenda moving and then they could get to that item which had better context around some of the  
3 things they were discussing.

4 **Agenda Item 5, Status of In-Flight Initiatives**

5 He asked Cathy to talk about first one because she was marshalling the Village Green work through  
6 the remaining process to completion. But before Cathy gave her update, he wanted to give an  
7 update to the Planning Commission's Rules of Procedure. He wouldn't consider it an in-flight  
8 initiative any longer. He put it there to say at the last meeting they discussed it and made some  
9 changes and agreed to those changes and the document has been updated and distributed. So, for  
10 him, that one was finished. He didn't expect much conversation on it, but it was a way to tie it off,  
11 unless someone had some items with respect to the Rules of Procedure they wanted to discuss. If  
12 not, he would assume that one was done. He asked if there was any objection to that.

13 Tim had a question for clarity on the status of in-flight initiatives. He wondered if a better wording  
14 would be status of in process initiatives. He was thinking about the public. Hugh was happy to  
15 change the wording. Ultimately, they would delegate work out to different Planning Commission  
16 members, so it was entirely possible, as they moved forward, each member on the Planning  
17 Commission could be actively working something and he wanted to have a touch point on it so  
18 each person could say that's where they were on this item and that's what's going on. Hugh had  
19 no issue with changing it to in-process. Tim thanked him.

20 **Agenda Item 6, Updates from the Chair**

21 Hugh asked Cathy for an update on where they stood with the Village Green District process.  
22 Cathy said the next step after they agreed on the version to move forward, she had turned over to  
23 Julie Hance, the Town Manager, a text of the bylaw amendment, a text of the full set of bylaws  
24 with changes highlighted, a reporting form and summary. Julie will schedule the Selectboard  
25 meeting, and they will warn a hearing as the Commission had done. At the hearing they will decide  
26 how to proceed. They can vote as the Selectboard on adopting it or can turn it over to the town or  
27 return the proposal to the Commission with changes. They must give 15 days' notice from the time  
28 the warning is posted until the hearing is held. She has not yet seen the warning go up so it will  
29 likely be three weeks before they could possibly have a hearing. She asked Arne Jonynas,  
30 Selectboard Chair, who was in attendance, if he had heard anything and he had not.

31 Hugh said they were in a holding pattern waiting for the town hearing to be warned.

32 Arne said once Julie and the Selectboard get there are notifications they need to do with Regional  
33 Planning and the surrounding towns. Cathy said the first step the Planning Commission takes is  
34 they send out a version to the 9 abutters, the Regional Planning, and the ACCD and even if they  
35 make changes, they don't send the modified version out but turn it over to the Selectboard after  
36 holding a hearing and making changes.

37 Arne said if the changes the Selectboard make are minor, it's straightforward and they change  
38 things but if the changes are major, it must go through the same process again. Arne said it wasn't  
39 spelled out exactly what was major or minor but usually it was commonsense. From what he  
40 remembered from older hearings, a Planning Commission member or a few were present and took  
41 questions. Hugh thanked Arne for the update.

42 Hugh said that was it for item #5 but expected the list to grow as they continued to meet.

1 He thought item #6 was the main topic for the meeting, so he wanted to spend a minute or two  
2 setting it up before they began discussing it. The last thing he did at the prior meeting was ask  
3 Commission members to share with him what they thought was important for the Commission to  
4 consider and they would use that information to build a list of topics they would use as a basis of  
5 future agendas for the Commission meetings. He thanked everyone and noted he had received  
6 responses from all the members. He attempted to take their input and aggregate it into a single  
7 document. He reworded some things so it was possible he may have lost some of the meaning and  
8 if so, they would fix it. He saw the same idea or theme from multiple members which was a good  
9 thing because it meant there was some synergy in the thinking amongst the group about what they  
10 need to work on.

11 Hugh added that there was a wide range of scope and level of efforts that were inherent in each  
12 one of them when they looked at the list. Some were straightforward and taken care of in a few  
13 meetings with a shorter amount of work. Others had so much work behind them that they will  
14 ultimately unfold into many work streams or tasks that will need to be taken care of and have a  
15 much longer lifespan before they can complete them. He said to look at the items and know some  
16 were short and easy and others long and difficult and that's just the way it is. Hugh didn't want to  
17 deep dive on any of the items in this meeting because they may not get through the rest of them  
18 due to time. The goal of this meeting was to make sure they captured the spirit of the topic and to  
19 make sure they didn't miss anything. He asked them if they thought of something new or there  
20 were modifications, they should get that basic work out of the way. If they could do that, he wanted  
21 to take a shot at discussing how they would prioritize these things. When he thought about how  
22 things were typically prioritized, it could happen with a few different lenses. Sometimes people  
23 consider the urgency of a topic in terms of its timing, or some other dependency related to the item.  
24 The impact the item may have to the town could make it high impact or high value. The other thing  
25 that will go into prioritizing is the level of effort to accomplish it. In a perfect world, it be great if  
26 everything would be high impact to the town with a low level of effort making them easy to  
27 complete and return the best value to the town. When they got to the point that they were scanning  
28 the list to determine priority, he wanted people to be thinking about that and other things they  
29 weigh when determining priorities.

30 He said they could go through them one by one or if people had read them and thought he hadn't  
31 captured something accurately, they could discuss it and fix it, or if someone had a question and  
32 didn't understand, they could have that discussion.

33 Peter said they had done a survey before, and said Arne kept mentioning an earlier survey. Arne  
34 said it was done before Brandy came there when they had workshops and community input. Tim  
35 asked if Arne was thinking of the energy chapter survey. Arne said no. Peter said there was one  
36 done earlier than that and Cathy mentioned it was in 2008. Peter said there was more than one  
37 survey that had been done in the past 12 years. He wanted the surveys combined to see if there  
38 was a huge change rather than send out another survey. If they were all leading in the same  
39 direction, he suggested following the direction there rather than doing a whole new survey. Arne  
40 said it was up to the Planning Commission and suggested checking with Julie to see what surveys  
41 were out there. Preston had all the information from Brandy's survey. Peter said there was an  
42 earlier one and Preston said he could look. Hugh said if there were other surveys having a look at  
43 those so that whatever was done in a future survey would be consistent and taken it into account.  
44 Hugh cautioned if a survey was done in 2008, he would question its relevance, but it was still  
45 worth a looking.

1 Peter said if they were both close to the same thing, then you know the direction you're headed or  
2 if they didn't match, where was the question and what was the question they should ask.

3 Barre thought the content of survey was relevant and asked Tim if he had specific content from  
4 the survey that he thought would be unique or different than what they had done prior. He asked  
5 Tim what his idea of the content was. Tim said they were talking about what Brandy had done and  
6 they hadn't done it as a Planning Commission. He said the only survey he had been involved with  
7 the Planning Commission was on the energy chapter, so he wanted to see the survey. Preston said  
8 he would make sure they found it. Tim said if there was a 2008 survey, he wanted to see that as  
9 well. Either of those would logically preclude getting a new survey given the town had changed  
10 significantly in the population makeup since COVID. Tim thought it was important they got the  
11 most up-to-date feedback from their citizens as possible. Hugh thought that made sense and in  
12 general, the notion of a community survey was a way for a community to engage the people of the  
13 town and business owners and get their inputs. He was in favor of it if they could make sure they  
14 were accounting for stuff that had been done in the past that may still be relevant, it would make  
15 sense.

16 Hugh suggested going through the list from top to bottom to see if there were questions as to what  
17 it was and why it was there. Barre apologized for interrupting and said different people have  
18 different interests and his has been arts and culture since he moved to town. He wondered if they  
19 had ever done anything with a survey that included arts and culture. Barre said he and Tim had  
20 some discussion about it. The concept of a survey Barre would be more interested in was what  
21 kind of town you wanted to live in. Tim said he had started drafting a survey and that was one of  
22 the topics. Tim said his vision for it was he volunteered to draft something and get it circulating  
23 among the commission and get input and feedback as they had with the energy chapter and tweak  
24 it based upon other people's thoughts and possibly expand it beyond the Planning Commission.

25 Hugh thought it was good discussion and one of the things he had already heard out of the first  
26 line item was that Tim had started it and raised his hand to own the workstream. Even though they  
27 don't know where it fits in the grand scheme of priorities, they likely knew who would be leading  
28 this one. He thanked Tim.

29 The next one was the Planning Commission's mission, scope, and goals. He saw it in some stuff  
30 Barre sent and then Tim sent, and then he had his own ideas about it. It was open-ended but for  
31 Hugh it was about trying to do some work to put down on paper in a short executive summary way  
32 what the Planning Commission's mission, scope, and goals are for the town of Chester. He thought  
33 everyone would acknowledge that their sole purpose wasn't just to update the unified development  
34 bylaws. It was a big piece of what they needed to do, but their scope and reach could be much  
35 broader than that. He thought it would make sense for them to spend a little bit of time trying to  
36 envision what it might look like, put it down on paper, and then be able to talk about it amongst  
37 the group and agree it represents what they're able to take on and what they're wanting to take on,  
38 and there's a difference there. The scope of a Planning Commission can be wide, but not every  
39 Planning Commission has the resources or time to take on the broadest scope. He thought there  
40 would be discussions that would say that these are all the things we could do, and these are the  
41 things we think we can realistically do, so there may be some element of that.

42 Tim thought Hugh covered it well.

43 Barre said without getting too deep in the weeds, he wondered if they knew what they can do or  
44 could do and that was something he wanted to know. He wanted to know what their scope was of

1 what they could do as a planning board when it comes to painting the future of the town, the  
2 economic aspects of it and things like that. He knew in other places where he's lived those things  
3 happen and they happen through planning. He mentioned last time about a soccer field that was  
4 built in New Bedford and it was part of the planning board and then the town planner on a  
5 greenfield site. He said he had mentioned it to a few people. There are things done in different  
6 towns that happened through planning and the town planner that were a real benefit for the  
7 community. He thought it would be good for them to look at those things because often in Chester,  
8 they look for someone to do something but there are not enough volunteers. He thought maybe  
9 they could do things as a municipality or a board to try to have them happen because they don't  
10 have the volunteers. That's where he was at in terms of scope, what could they really be doing?

11 Hugh thought that was a good call out. When he read Barre's input, he thought about that. When  
12 Hugh worded it, the first word is research. Hugh said whoever takes it will have to do some  
13 research. They will need to do some reading and looking at what other areas and towns are doing.  
14 There is some good documentation in the law and some guidance from some of the regional  
15 planning groups and some other places. He couldn't remember them off the top of his head. Cathy  
16 offered that it was the Municipal Plan Manual and Hugh said that was it. Cathy said Appendix 1  
17 talked about the roles the Planning Commission and DRB play. Hugh thought there was probably  
18 plenty of information out there so that whoever took it could do some research and reading and  
19 create a high-level document that would crystalize that item.

20 Hugh said the next item was the Planning Commission operating model and procedures. It was  
21 broad and could take on a lot of different meanings. For example, one part of the operating model  
22 was the discussion they had earlier about how to move forward, they needed to be able to delegate  
23 work to members. There are other things in that lane. Hugh said this was one that came from Tim  
24 and then Hugh put his name on it because he had been considering it with respect to all  
25 organizations and bodies having a code of conduct. He wondered if they wanted to consider it.  
26 With everything in the media and social media, he wondered if the Commission needed any  
27 guidance on how to interact with the media and social media. There is nothing in the Rules of  
28 Procedure currently. Tim had some thoughts regarding it and Hugh asked him to share them. Tim  
29 said when he put it on his list he was thinking about efficiencies. Sometimes they can be very  
30 inefficient with the directions and tangents their meetings can take. Tim said when he said  
31 procedural process and decorum that was what he was thinking about, not hard rules but what is a  
32 good way to run a meeting so people can briefly talk about things that are important to them  
33 without spending a lot of the Commission's and public's time getting into details. Tim thought the  
34 current discussion was a good example of one way to do that by just limiting the discussion. Tim  
35 pointed out that they are a five-member commission, and their perspectives are diverse and that  
36 can be an asset or a detriment. If they could establish the right decorum, they could turn it into  
37 more of an asset than it had been in the past. Hugh agreed. He said maybe they would establish  
38 some notion of a parking lot or a way to keep the meetings on track. If they go down a rat hole, he  
39 may try to pull them out of the rat hole and put it into a parking lot, if necessary. He asked if  
40 anyone else had comments regarding this item before they moved on.

41 Cathy knew the DRB has a conflict-of-interest statement. She wasn't sure if the Planning  
42 Commission did or was required to. Hugh had looked at it a little. He said a conflict-of-interest  
43 statement may make sense but was a little narrow for him. He thought they could add it to the list  
44 because he had seen some other stuff about it. He didn't think they had anything specifically and  
45 didn't know if they really needed anything but would make a note of it anyway. Barre said they

1 had previously discussed it a while back and the town attorney came and spoke to them about  
2 conflict-of-interest, and it is in the meeting minutes somewhere. Tim thought it was simple and  
3 maybe to Barre's point, they could just dig up the minutes. Cathy said the meeting had included  
4 both the Planning Commission and the DRB and she knew the DRB needed a conflict-of-interest  
5 statement policy. Hugh said he would make a note on that.

6 Hugh said the next item was from Tim and he called it Accessory Dwelling Unit enablement. He  
7 wasn't sure it was doing it justice. Tim thought the statewide issue of lack of housing and the cost  
8 of housing, it seemed like a high priority piece of work. They have all discussed it and Peter had  
9 already mentioned it tonight. He wasn't sure and agreed with Peter that in the draft bylaws they  
10 addressed it heavily. He wondered what other things they may be able to do to make it easier to  
11 permit that type of housing expansion but maybe even incentivize it somehow. At that point, it  
12 was just conceptual, and he didn't know what their limitations would be legally without going  
13 down the rabbit hole, maybe there was some kind of tax abatement thing they could work on with  
14 it but thought it bared discussion. Peter said accessory dwelling was allowed in every district in  
15 the town except for forest and it was permitted. Peter said the problem wasn't there because all  
16 you get is a building permit but once it becomes an accessory dwelling, then it's the fire marshal  
17 and the state because now you're bringing someone else in and they wouldn't be able to circumvent  
18 the state. Tim thought there could be some loopholes and didn't want to get into it now but thought  
19 it was worthy of some discussion at some point. He assumed they would prioritize the list at some  
20 point. Hugh said they would prioritize it. He said they would get through the list and see how far  
21 they get in prioritizing. Hugh said he liked this item for several reasons and new it was permitted  
22 in every district except forest, which was great. One of the things, which Barre had mentioned  
23 earlier, was there was a relationship between this item and the one below it. In Tim's call out for  
24 item #4, he alludes to trying to make it for long-term use in rental. What can we do to make sure  
25 accessory dwelling units are made available, to Barre's point, the mother-in-law or the relative, or  
26 long-term rental? And is there anything they can or should be trying to do to so that every  
27 accessory dwelling unit doesn't turn into a short-term rental? He didn't know the answer to any of  
28 that and didn't want to get into the details but thought #4, which was the accessory dwelling unit,  
29 and the one below it, which is short-term rentals are related to each other in some way. Preston  
30 added that Woodstock has a grant program to help people put in an accessory dwelling unit and  
31 when you get a grant, you must sign an agreement that it will never be used as a short-term rental.  
32 Hugh loved that.

33 Barre asked if they would be doing the priority list after they went through everything or could  
34 they nominate things as priority as they went along, because if they could, he wanted to nominate  
35 #4 as a high priority. Hugh was flexible but the only thing about saying something was high was  
36 if nobody else had looked at the rest of the list, how did they know it was high. But if everyone  
37 had already looked at the list and didn't have any questions, he didn't think they needed to go  
38 through each line item. He didn't need to go through it line by line because he wrote it and knew  
39 what was there. He just wanted to make sure everyone on the Planning Commission had an  
40 opportunity to either ask a question about it or embellish it before they went into prioritizing.

41 Hugh asked the other members if they wanted to continue to run down the list or if they were  
42 ready to prioritize the items.

43 Peter said both The Chester Telegraph and Bill Lindsay wanted to speak.

44 Bill Lindsay thought items #4 and #5 were big priorities. One of the items he thought they may

1 have to review were the qualifications for connecting water and sewer to prospective properties.  
2 At one time, a two-car garage was not able to be converted to an ADU because there was a separate  
3 charge for water and sewer running off the main line. He thought there may be some regulations  
4 they would want to check. That extra cost prohibited a lot of people from connecting. He thought  
5 it was a \$2,500 fee for water and the same for sewer. It was an additional cost to convert the garage  
6 into living space and he believed it was prohibited at one time. Peter knew Jeff was working on a  
7 rewrite but didn't know the status. Bill brought it up because they needed to be aware. Tim thought  
8 it may be a cost they could impact. Bill said additionally when people were connected to town  
9 water and sewer, they phased out a year and a half of inducement to get people to connect. That  
10 could be an inducement that would save people money. Hugh and Tim thanked Bill.

11 Tim thought it would be good to touch on the items quickly. Hugh apologized in advance for  
12 cutting members off but if they started to go deep into discussion, he wasn't being rude, but needed  
13 to cut them off so they could get through the list.

14 Hugh said he had put short-term rentals on the list. He knew there was activity in the legislature  
15 trying to figure out if they wanted to do something at the state level. He had put it primarily on the  
16 list because there was a ton of activity in many surrounding towns and all the country. He put it  
17 on the list because it's in the news, the media, and all the surrounding towns. It was a hot topic to  
18 him. Nobody else had comments regarding that item.

19 Hugh said item #6, update the Unified Development Bylaws was the 800-pound gorilla. This one  
20 would be tightly tied to the grant awarded to Mt. Ascutney Regional Commission. If you looked  
21 at the related items column, there were a lot of other things on the list that are somehow related  
22 back to that. He thought he saw something in Tim's feedback also. He added to the list to recognize  
23 it was a continuation of the work that had been going on for several years to get the bylaws in  
24 alignment with the updated town plan. They would be able to use Jason Rasmussen and his  
25 organization to help them move that workstream forward. He would reach out to Jason just to chat  
26 about engagement and have him come to the Planning Commission to provide an outline or game  
27 plan of how he would want to work with them to move it forward.

28 Cathy asked if Jason had a clear idea of scope and Hugh said Jason wrote the scope in response to  
29 the RFQ. Hugh had Jason's response which outlined the work scope into two broad categories:  
30 one around workshops and one around bylaw updates.

31 Item #7 was the Cannabis Impact Assessment. Hugh put it on there because they needed to at least  
32 give it a look. Chester opted in and in all the guidance he has seen from the state about what  
33 municipalities can do, they all suggest that municipalities look at their bylaws to see if there is  
34 anything they need to be aware of as it relates to cannabis so that was why he put it on the list.

35 Item #8, Unified Development Bylaw Administration Section he got from Peter but also  
36 remembered from a time ago that Cathy had surfaced it during a meeting around things that weren't  
37 related to a zone, specifically, but things that should be tuned up. Peter said they had talked about  
38 lowering the fee for home occupation permitting. It was just agreeing what they thought the fee  
39 should be and sending a memo to the Selectboard. Preston and Peter had talked about legacy uses  
40 and that one could be done and brought to the next meeting and that would be done. The  
41 exemptions in the subdivision regulations in the shift back and forth between Brandy, it all ends  
42 up going back up to the 800-pound gorilla. Hugh agreed. Peter said those were two quick things  
43 they could easily accomplish in one meeting and would clean up whatever happens on Route 11  
44 west for a little while and give them time there and clean up legacy uses about the town. Hugh

1 asked Peter if he was volunteering to take that. Peter volunteered to take both balls and have them  
2 on the desk at the next meeting. Hugh asked if Peter was agreeing to take home occupation and  
3 legacy use. Peter said home occupations a reduced permit level for that. It was what they had talked  
4 about before. Hugh asked if he was only taking a couple of things in there. Peter said he could take  
5 the whole thing, but exemptions and minor and major subdivisions would all be in Jason's lap.  
6 Peter wanted to see what happened there, meaning they could check off two things. Hugh  
7 understood. Tim asked if they should strike exemptions and major/minor subdivisions from the  
8 item so they could complete the whole item. Cathy said it was important and shouldn't be dropped.  
9 Tim didn't mean to drop it. Peter said they would end up going through that with whatever Jason  
10 did. Tim agreed and said it would be back in when the discuss UDB and would fit there. Peter and  
11 Tim agreed. Tim was just saying to strike it from there and put it where it belongs. Peter has a  
12 good relationship with Jeff Holden, and he knew he was working on writing a reg and would be  
13 open to Peter working with him on it. Peter said he would take it and talk back and forth with Jeff.  
14 Tim asked what Peter was going to talk with Jeff about. Peter said Jeff's goal was to rewrite what  
15 is required for connections to water and sewer, as it hadn't been rewritten in years. He would  
16 discuss with Jeff the possibility of ADUs connecting to water and sewer for free or how difficult  
17 it would be to do so, and the cost associated with it. Hugh said for now, he would remove  
18 exemptions and major and minor subdivisions, so that Peter could own home occupation  
19 permitting and legacy uses because he seemed to have a handle on it. Hugh said he would likely  
20 add another line item about the sewer mapping because it didn't fit in there and wasn't part of  
21 UDB administration and was a separate item. Peter said the sewer was done and when you looked  
22 at the plans, whoever did them in the 60s, really had it together. They were really set for expansion,  
23 but the problem was things were worn out and need to be addressed in a timely manner.

24 Cathy said Peter was talking about sewers in relationship to accessory dwellings and not mapping.  
25 Hugh agreed said the sewer mapping could probably be tied to the village, housing availability,  
26 accessory dwellings. He wasn't going to tie it to anything yet but was going to put it as an item.  
27 Peter had already spoken with Jeff and thought there was work he could do and bring information  
28 back to the Planning Commission that would be useful to them. Peter agreed. Hugh said it could  
29 be a stand-alone item and they didn't need to attach it to anything else now. He thought it could  
30 apply to a few things.

31 Steve Mancuso said there was a meeting with Green Mountain Power last week and they need to  
32 redo the powerline down Lover's Lane and what they're going to do is come over the Pinnacle  
33 from the motel in the meadow and come down and swing around onto Lovers Lane and bury it  
34 and resurface somewhere past the ballfield. It had been in the works for a while. What is right  
35 underneath it is water and sewer that may need to be addressed before there's 1,000 amps running  
36 over it. It may need to be a priority. Hugh understood and thanked Steve for the update.

37 Hugh said the next item was brought in by Peter regarding housing availability. Peter said it could  
38 be combined with items 4 and 5 and suggested he remove it. Hugh said it made sense and he would  
39 tie it in with 4 and 5.

40 Barre thought they could put the exemptions and major and minor subdivisions into item #9. Hugh  
41 said he would figure out something out for those. He didn't want to lose them. He would remove  
42 them from #8 but wouldn't want to drop them on the floor.

43 The next item was the Village District. Peter, Tim, and Cathy and possibly others agreed to start  
44 thinking about things from the inside out. They had gotten the Village Green underway and maybe

1 the next thing to look at was the Village District and he thought that also tied into item #13, because  
2 they discussed it when they talked about the westward expansion and how it related to Sugar Bob's  
3 at the last meeting.

4 Hugh asked if there was any discussion on 10. It seemed clear they should be putting some energy  
5 into that part of town. Tim thought it also tied in with item #11. Hugh agreed they were related.  
6 Hugh thought as they tackled the other districts it would be important for them to look at the future  
7 land use map in the town plan and see how it looks with respect to the plans they're considering  
8 with the district boundary maps. Hugh said you could see items #10 and #11 were linked directly  
9 back to item #6 because he thought Jason would have a lot of insight in the way to think about it  
10 and approach it, so he wanted to get Jason in the loop and get some dialogues going with the  
11 Planning Commission about how he feels it may make sense to tackle the problem and that would  
12 pull in #10 and #11 he was certain. While some of the items may naturally roll into item #6, he  
13 didn't want to drop anything for the night's meeting because everyone had provided input and  
14 everyone's input is important. Even if it ultimately was rolled into something else, he didn't want  
15 to make assumptions about that and leave something behind someone felt was important.

16 Hugh asked for any comments about items #10 and #11.

17 Preston said regarding #11 that Jason had commented that if they changed the zoning map enough  
18 that it didn't align with the future land use map, they would need to change that too. It would be  
19 another hearing, but Preston said they would be good at it. Preston said it was supposed to be an  
20 implementation of the town plan so if it went further than that, you would need to change the town  
21 plan. Hugh said that was something to consider.

22 Item #12 was received from both Cathy and Peter separately. Hugh said he would let Cathy talk  
23 about some to see if he had captured it and to let him know what she thought. Cathy said the  
24 municipal plan manual talked about the role of the Planning Commission in reaching out across  
25 the town to all parts of town and all views of town and it was very important to bring people  
26 together. She was startled when she learned how little people understood about zoning and bylaws  
27 when she was out speaking with people and how apprehensive they were because they didn't  
28 understand it. She thought education would be an opportunity to meet people and talk with people  
29 and stop being strangers and hopefully once they understand what they're looking at, it wouldn't  
30 be so upsetting to them. She didn't think it was good for the town to have people full of  
31 apprehension about zoning. She said it was hard to get changes through if people were worried  
32 about problems that were non-existent. Peter's outlook was a little different. It was about educating  
33 the commission. As a board, they need to take simple steps. There are three levels of permits: home  
34 occupation, home business, and a real commercial permit and they all should understand the steps  
35 for each one because they are supposedly going to rewrite them. They should understand each of  
36 the necessary steps and what they currently are. He was thinking in the steps of doing it and  
37 listening to some of the people on the DRB that they should be able to do it jointly with them.

38 Tim said one of the great things about taking on a task and teaching a topic is that you learn a lot  
39 while you're doing that. If they develop documents for the public, in the process, they would by  
40 default learn. Hugh said he was thinking the same thing. Hugh thought it was a great one and  
41 suggested Cathy own it and figure out how to break it down and make some recommendations. He  
42 knew one of the components was outreach in terms of being available to the community to answer  
43 questions but there was another element about developing some documents that not only the  
44 Planning Commission, but the community can use to better understand what this is all about, so

1 they don't have to operate from a position of fear or unknown. Cathy knew the Business Coalition  
2 was looking for speakers. Hugh thought the item was clear and important.

3 Hugh said the last item on the list was that it was the continuation of the discussion about the  
4 tactical and strategic options related to the last meeting where they were discussing what they  
5 could do to help enable the reuse of the Baba Louis' building. Hugh thought the item was clear  
6 and asked if anyone had questions about it. Peter said they could take care of that one if they took  
7 care of legacies. Hugh said maybe but the attorneys have the last word about whether it's good  
8 enough. Tim suggested adding something to the list, so it didn't get lost. He was a little taken  
9 aback by his lack of awareness when he saw the email they had all received that afternoon about  
10 making sure they align their UDBs and the rest of their work with the climate action plan the state  
11 has passed and is working hard to develop guidelines for. The goals in the plan are required and  
12 seem like they're hard plans. He hadn't studied it but wanted to get it on their radar. He thought  
13 they would be charged as a town to do their part to help achieve the goals in that law. Hugh had  
14 the same thought when he saw the email and thought it needed to go on the list.

15 Barre asked if he wrote he communicated with Zon Eastes about the arts and culture aspect of the  
16 community and that he would be willing to speak. Hugh said he probably tried to tie it into item  
17 #2 but if he wanted a separate line item specifically related to the arts, he wasn't the one who was  
18 going to say what could and could not go on the list. When he read Barre's thing about what they  
19 could or should do with the respect to the arts, it felt to him like once they defined what the  
20 Planning Commission's mission and scope is if it were to include that, it would cover it, but maybe  
21 that wasn't what Barre meant. Barre thought it was and didn't want to step out of bounds but as  
22 much as they have the environmental people trying to influence them in their decisions, the arts  
23 and culture people are doing a similar thing and they are coming with money available too. There  
24 is another meeting this month. Barre felt that since he has been in town, they have missed out on  
25 a lot of these opportunities because nobody has brought them into the light. He thought Chester  
26 lacked compared to other communities and they have opportunities and thought it should be a  
27 separate item. Hugh was agreeable to it being a separate line item related to arts and culture.

28 He thought their scope could be broad. They are only five people and have a limited number of  
29 resources but would ultimately set some priorities. Not all work happens at the same time. Some  
30 things get hot, and they will need to work on them but then they will cool off because they are  
31 waiting for something, and they can pick something else up. He wanted it to be a scenario where  
32 there is important work and people have passion about that work and it's within the scope of  
33 responsibilities for the Planning Commission, he didn't know why they wouldn't do that work.  
34 Ultimately, they will do the higher priority work before the lower priority work but as everyone  
35 knows, there's more than one person on the Planning Commission and if the high priority work is  
36 in a holding pattern for some reason and you have another work stream assigned to you, they can  
37 work on more than one thing at a time. Barre mentioned the Fall Festival committee which is arts  
38 and culture related and Julie Hance is good at getting grant money. He thought one thing that might  
39 be interesting for Chester is a band shell. If they have money for these sorts of things and they  
40 have someone like Zon come and speak about what's available and it gets Julie to write a grant  
41 and the next thing they have a band shell and they've brought it into the light, he thought it would  
42 be something good for them to do. Hugh didn't disagree with that. He asked if anyone else had  
43 feedback and Tim said it sounded good to him.

44 Hugh thought if they wanted to do some quick prioritization in 3 minutes, he was okay with that.  
45 If they wanted to defer prioritizing until the next meeting, he was okay with that. The only thing

1 left on the agenda was the PC Roundtable. It was where everyone on the Planning Commission  
2 gets a couple minutes in case they have something on their mind that they didn't get to speak about.  
3 His recommendation was because it was almost 8:00, they don't try to prioritize in this meeting  
4 because it could take a while and they may want to have some discussion. He recommended to  
5 defer prioritizing until the next meeting and just go around the room and see if anyone had anything  
6 they wanted to discuss. Tim agreed with deferring the prioritization. Hugh asked if anyone had  
7 objections and there were none.

8

9

### **Agenda Item 7, PC Roundtable**

10 Hugh said they would go from Preston to Peter to Tim to Cathy to Barre. If they had something  
11 on their mind, now was the time to share it. Hugh said if they didn't have anything, that was fine,  
12 but he wanted to make sure everyone had a chance.

13 Preston had been told Sugar Bob's and the McLure had a handshake agreement and were moving  
14 forward. Tim and Hugh thanked Preston for the update.

15 Peter was looking for a list of things that Preston needed to change to help his job along. Preston  
16 said he had started the list.

17 Tim had said he had nothing else.

18 Cathy said the zoning and listers had moved into the old police quarters and there was space. She  
19 said Preston was good at keeping records and keeping track of records. There is a drawer for the  
20 Planning Commission and a lot of history he has dug up. She added there was a place for the Rules  
21 of Procedure and stuff like that. They just started moving today. Tim said that was great news.  
22 Hugh said he'd be right over. Cathy said they found a map.

23 Barre thought they had an opportunity to really do some significant things as a planning board and  
24 he agreed with not having it just be about zoning bylaws. He was excited about moving forward  
25 to see what they could do. He thought Chester was an interesting town but lacks a lot. He said if  
26 there was any way they could incentivize some things or have some vision or work with the  
27 community to make up for some of that and said the towns he grew up in have shrunk to nothing  
28 and Chester has money coming in and there was a lot they could do to make the town vibrant and  
29 interesting. He can't get young art people who he can afford to pay to move here because they  
30 don't want to live here. He thought if it was more interesting, more young people would stay. He  
31 thought it would be cool if it was in their scope.

32

### **Agenda Item 8, Adjournment**

33 Hugh moved to adjourn, and Cathy seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and it passed  
34 unanimously. Everyone said Hugh did a great job. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.