TOWN OF CHESTER
CHESTER HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING
September 22, 2026 Minutes

Present: Bryan Santiago, Caroline Morgan, Sharon Baker, Courtlandt Pennell, Julie Hance and Preston Bristow at Town Hall; Jason Rasmussen via Zoom.

Absent: Joe Karl, Hugh Quinn and Jerry Ucci

Visitors: Peter Hudkins

Call to Order

With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 3 – Approve Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Sharon Baker moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting of August 18, 2026, and Caroline Morgan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved without change.

Agenda Item 2 – Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

Agenda Item 3 – Analysis of two Village Center properties using the Vermont Homes for All Toolkit

Preston Bristow provided aerial images of the properties at 35 Depot Street and 427 Depot Street at a scale of 1:12 with cutout pieces at scale of various multiunit housing footprints, parking spaces, and driveways taken from the Vermont Homes for All Toolkit. The exercise is sometimes called the "Game of Zoning" because positioning the cutout pieces on the aerial phones is like a board game.

Peter Hudkins led the exercises, and for the property at 35 Depot Street, the group worked through several possible subdivision and housing layouts. The property could potentially be divided into three or four lots with duplexes on each lot. The most favored scenario was a "Village 3-Unit" (rectangular building) on the west side and a "Side-by-Side 3-Unit" (square building) on the east side with a 20-foot-wide right-of-way to the Chester-Andover Elementary School down the middle.

Next the group turned to the property at 427 Depot Street. The group noted that this parcel has road access on both sides, which could eliminate the need for an internal road. It could potentially be divided into three lots without using a planned unit development, although a PUD could allow greater density at the cost of additional complexity. Although there is a significant slope on the First Avenue side of the property, that slope could be used to provide split-level housing with at-grade access to the first floor from Depot Street and at-grade access to the

second floor from First Avenue. That could make this parcel particularly suited for senior housing, especially with Smitty's Chester Market a short walk away.

It was agreed that this planning exercise was quite useful.

Agenda Item 4 – Board/Staff task updates

Joe Karl, via email, provided a report of his conversation with Wayne Gilcris, owner of 35 Depot Street. Preston Bristow reported on his conversation with Tim Crosby, owner of 427 Depot Street. Courtlandt Pennell reported on his conversation with Art Randolph, Vice President and area manager for M&T Bank, who indicated the bank's willingness to consider buying federal tax credits, administering Invest in Vermont low-interest loans, or financing by other means.

Agenda Item 5 – New Business/Next Agenda

The Commission's next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Tuesday, October 20, 2026. Julie Hance will contact the Two Rivers Supervisory Union to determine their level of interest in creating a second driveway access to the Elementary School. Preston Bristow will contact the state Department of Housing and Community Development to ask if any of the structures in the toolkit have been built. Preston Bristow will also check to see if the small carriage house on 35 Depot Street has historical significance, and report on upcoming discussions with a firm that could provide development pro forma plans that are permit-ready and shovel-ready.

Agenda Item 6 – Adjourn

Caroline Morgan moved and Sharon Baker second a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.