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**TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECTBOARD MEETING
March 6, 2024, Minutes**

Board Members Present: Tim Roper, Arne Jonynas, Arianna Knapp, and Peter Hudkins at Town Hall. Absent: Lee Gustafson.

Staff Present: Julie Hance, Town Manager, and Preston Bristow, Zoning Administrator and Town Planner, at Town Hall; and Susan Bailey, Recording Secretary via Zoom.

Visitors Present: Bill Lindsay, Shawn Cunningham of Chester Telegraph, Cathy Hasbrouck, Joe Carl, at Town Hall; and Travis Thompson-Sevcik, Robert Nied, Hugh Quinn, Caroline Morgan, and SAPA TV via Zoom.

Call to Order

Town Manager, Julie Hance, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

Agenda Item 1, Organization

Julie asked for a nomination for Board Chair. Arianna moved to nominate Arne Jonynas to be Chair and Tim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Arne Jonynas said it was a privilege to be in the position, especially with the current board. He acknowledged Tim was new but thought he would be a welcome addition. It was humbling, and Arne was happy they were okay with him as Chair. Arne welcomed Tim to the board and thanked Heather Chase for her 9 years of service to the Selectboard and community which required a lot of time and devotion.

Arne asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Peter nominated Lee Gustafson, who was absent. Julie said Lee had said he would be agreeable to the position. Arianna seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Arne asked for nominations for secretary. Tim nominated Peter Hudkins. Arne said he would second it. Peter nominated Arianna and Tim seconded the motion. There was discussion whether nominations required a second. Peter was not interested in serving as secretary. The motion to nominate Ariana passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 2, Addition or Deletions

There were none.

Agenda Item 3, Rules of Procedure

Arne noted the packet included Rules of Procedure for the Town of Chester Selectboard, which

1 had been used for a couple of years. Arne asked if there were any questions or concerns. There
2 were none. Arne entertained a motion to accept the rules. Arianna moved and Peter seconded the
3 motion to accept the Rules of Procedure. Arianna asked Julie if it would be an example of a policy
4 that would be reviewed at some point. Julie answered that the Rules of Procedure and Conflict of
5 Interest policies were something that should be approved every year during reorganization due to
6 new board members who need to be brought up to date. The motion passed unanimously.

7
8 **Agenda Item 4, Adopt Conflict of Interest Policy**
9

10 Arne noted the packet included the Conflict of Interest policy that they had been using for quite a
11 while. Arne asked for questions and there were none. Arianna moved and Peter seconded a motion
12 to accept the policy. Arne said the VLCT had training later this month for new board members.
13 Tim will attend on March 23rd. The motion carried unanimously.

14
15 **Agenda Item 5, Approve Minutes from the February 21, 2024, Selectboard Meeting**
16

17 Peter moved and Arianna seconded a motion to approve the February 21, 2024, Selectboard
18 meeting minutes. A vote was taken. Tim Roper abstained. The minutes were approved, as written.

19
20 **Agenda Item 6, Citizens Comments/Answers from Previous Meeting**
21

22 There were none.

23 **Agenda Item 7, Old Business**
24

25 Julie had reached out to Greenbacker to start conversations about next steps if the Town chooses
26 to submit a contract for negotiation but had not heard back. She would follow up with an email,
27 which was standard procedure where it takes 3 weeks to receive a response. Julie said tomorrow
28 would be one week since she had sent emails. She would not commit but ask what the process was
29 to take it to the next step, as the contract is not clear regarding the steps.

30
31 Earlier in the week, it was announced that the December flood event was declared so they can seek
32 funding. Expenses were about \$300,000 and Julie expected they would get at least 75% back.
33 There is a webinar tomorrow about what they are looking for.

34
35 Julie said they are in full-blown mud season and some roads are quickly starting to fall apart:
36 Davidson Hill, Crow Hill, Trebo, and others. They are not new places for mud season in Vermont.
37 She asked people to hang in as there are always one or two days when travel is difficult. They have
38 asked people to limit trips and not make unnecessary travel. The guys are planning to work
39 overnight at the end of the week to begin rebuilding roads if the temperatures drop. Julie said rain
40 was expected and depending on how it all played out, it could be a very expensive mud season.
41 Arne noted mud season was very early this year. Julie agreed and said normally there are freezing
42 temperatures at night that allow things to gel up, but it isn't happening in addition to the extra rain,
43 which is often helpful during mud season, but not this year. Julie will keep them updated if it looks
44 like they will have to spend extra money this year.

45
46 Arne asked if the state would kick in any part of the remaining 25% cost for the December

1 flooding. Julie said because of the programs Chester had developed, they would be on the hook
2 for 12.5% of the total cost. There is an ERAF (Emergency Relief Aid Funding) share and
3 depending on the level of highway regulations that are adopted, and Chester follows V-Trans codes
4 and standards, those steps get them points towards a match declared disaster and Chester is at
5 12.5%. They could receive 17% if they adopted the river corridor but that was hard to do. Julie
6 said in the worst-case scenario, they would be responsible for 12.5% of the cost.

7
8 Peter said the Transportation Advisory Board told them that the monies received last year for safety
9 projects that had not been done would not be taken back. They have the striping and safety projects
10 they had discussed which will be funded this year because the money was not used last year. Julie
11 said they have sent several emails, but the grant agreements had not been sent out yet. Arne asked
12 if they were monies granted last year that they were going to let them use this year and Peter said
13 they need to be used for the same specific projects, which were safety projects. A lot of the town
14 roads have a center line, but a lot of the new cars require both a center and sideline, so they would
15 use the painting to do that. Julie said the project was going to be secondary striping and some of
16 the key stop bars in the village. Arne asked if it included crosswalks, and it didn't. Julie said the
17 reason they are not painted is because they are letting the old paint go away from when they were
18 painted crooked before they repaint in the spring. Tim asked if the crosswalk by Smitty's could be
19 marked better because it was dangerous. Julie will speak with the guys about doing something
20 special this year. If they ever get the rail easement and can do the Depot Street sidewalk project, it
21 will help but she would see what could be done this year. Arne asked if there was a chance the
22 sidewalk could happen, and Julie said there was hope maybe within two years. The holdup is the
23 rail giving an easement for a pedestrian crossing. Julie said bike ped money would open back up
24 soon and they are able to reapply for additional funds because it had been delayed 5 years and the
25 original amount was based on pre-COVID costs. In the next round, she will eliminate the rail and
26 have the engineer redesign and not include a pedestrian crossing across the tracks. Peter said the
27 sewer line would cross there. Julie said the issue would be the pedestrian crossing over the rail.
28 She has tried to explain to them that pedestrians already cross the rails, and they would like it to
29 be done in a safer way. They are more responsive to infrastructure upgrades and not sidewalks.

30
31 Heather Chase had indicated at Town Meeting that an additional \$200,000 would come to Chester
32 and Arianna wondered if it was assigned. Julie said it was not something that had been conveyed
33 to her, so she was not sure what it was for. Arne thought it was for the summer flood. Julie said
34 they had not attached a dollar value yet and she hoped it was not as Chester had expended well
35 over \$2.5 million and had discussed taking Chester from 90% to 99%. Julie would look into what
36 Heather had said.

37 38 **Agenda Item 8, Short Term Rental Policy**

39
40 The packet included a draft that reflected some of the changes and considerations discussed at the
41 January 17th meeting, where Preston Bristow had prepared a list of changes brought up by the
42 public and there was a vote to choose five of them. Preston prepared the document for their review
43 for discussion February 21, but it had been postponed because of Julian Quarry. Jim Carroll had
44 not reviewed it and it was Preston's attempt to put into ordinance language the five things they
45 voted on in January to consider. Julie knew Joe had some comments. Arne wanted to go through
46 the five things first. On the first page, the only thing changed was unhosted to non-hosted. Preston

1 said other bylaws used non-hosted instead of unhosted. Arne thought that made sense. Arne had a
2 question regarding registration and the confirmation of liability insurance of \$1 million unless they
3 were on a site that provided it. Arne wondered if they had to give proof or if the fact of being on
4 the site meant they had it. Preston said they simply asked on the application that they submit and
5 sign and check they have it with no verification. Most say it's offered by the hosting site. Preston
6 said Proper Insurance offers it for STRs which he thought was wise to have but Chester doesn't
7 require an independent policy.

8
9 Joe Carl, of Flamstead Road and a member of the affordable housing commission and a realtor,
10 said he wasn't a super expert but has dealt with a lot of this stuff for years. He thought they were
11 overreaching in some spots and missing in others. He deals with fire marshals day in and day out,
12 sells real estate, and does seasonal rentals for 5 months but not STRs. He sometimes feels he knows
13 the laws better than some fire marshals. Joe said state law requires fire marshals to inspect STRs
14 that sleep up to 8. Joe said selling a house to someone in Vermont requires a basic level of fire
15 safety, which is carbon monoxide and smoke detectors on each level outside bedrooms. The minute
16 you rent to the public; you need a certificate. Depending on the age of the building, you need 10-
17 year tamper proof lithium batteries or hardwired in each bedroom, handrails, and fire egress for
18 windows. Joe said it was state law and needed to be added to the STR ordinance. He said it made
19 him think about the requirement for insurance. He wondered if the town had the STR registry if
20 someone could sue them because they didn't require proof of insurance. Joe thought they should
21 have fire and safety for sleep up to 8. For limitations, he said they were trying to create affordable
22 housing, but it's a free market, so it seemed un-American to him to not allow someone to rent a
23 house out for a year after purchasing the property and was overreaching. He also thought a waiting
24 list was unheard of. Joe didn't think they should penalize someone because their neighbor was
25 already renting by having 1,000-foot zone. Joe thought the other ideas were great to protect people
26 and the town and thought he had a solution. All the towns in Vermont were trying to figure it out
27 and there should be a cap on the number of days someone can rent. If they enforce fire and safety,
28 and septic and sewer allocations, and limit the number of days they can rent, they will send the
29 investors flying. Joe thought rather than limiting the number of people allowed to have STRs, they
30 should tell them they can only rent it out for 30 or 40 days because a true investor will be upset by
31 that. Joe thought it would free up for those who want to rent and can't and said when someone
32 buys a home in Vermont and there's no documentation for septic, it falls on clean slate. Joe said if
33 it wasn't documented that someone lived in the home full-time between 1986 and December 31,
34 2006, it is designated clean slate but only for seasonal use or 182 days per year. If you can prove
35 someone lived there during the 20-year period, it can be lived in full-time. Joe thought they should
36 know for the registry if it was seasonal or full-time use. Arne said some of the things Joe mentioned
37 would be caught by the attorney during legal review if there was potential for lawsuits or if they
38 were doing anything illegal. Arne thought regarding limitations and numbers and conditions,
39 zoning laws do that all the time and this ordinance was doing something along the same line as
40 zoning ordinances. Preston said they can ask the attorney about the insurance and the town being
41 liable, but he didn't think that was an issue. Preston said there is a carveout for short-term rentals
42 8 and under because there isn't enough manpower to do all the inspections, so they have a self-
43 certification. Chester doesn't have to follow it and could ask the inspector, Ben Whalen, if he has
44 the time to do it. Joe said he thought it was \$125 to request Ben to show up. Joe's firm did 30
45 seasonals and Ben was ready, able, and willing. Joe said people must request it when Ben is slower
46 and not in October before skiers show up. Joe said if the cap was kept at 60, Ben could start to eat

1 away at it, though he couldn't speak for Ben. Joe said the biggest concern was they want fire safety.
2 Arne said when they first discussed it, it was self-certification. Preston said there were two sides
3 to the argument and because inspection isn't required for 8 or less, they are choosing to rent to that
4 group, so it brings down especially for those on sewer. Septic is usually limited to 8 because of its
5 capacity. With respect to a cap versus a waiting period, registration cap, and density limit, Preston
6 wasn't super fond of them anyway, so he was open to consider it. The Selectboard has received
7 input from the public who are afraid of short-term rentals getting out of control and want to slow
8 them down. How that is done is up to the Selectboard. Preston said he often considers how difficult
9 enforcement will be but will do whatever the board decides. Preston knew Woodstock had a cap,
10 so a 30- or 40-day cap was possible. Preston said their new contractor, Rentalscape, has loaded
11 their data and they now have a system that looks good because it shows how frequently houses are
12 rented and provides a lot of data. Some people say Chester isn't that hot of a market and they don't
13 make a lot on rentals, but Preston had no way to confirm that. Arne said part of the ordinance was
14 to get a handle on it and put something in place to satisfy the concern of people who came before
15 the board and board members.

16
17 Peter asked Preston for the data on the number of non-hosted they currently have. Preston didn't
18 have it with him but said it was roughly 2/3 non-hosted and 1/3 hosted and 56 were signed up.
19 Peter said there was a cap of 20 not used. Peter said the density limit was for any unhosted short-
20 term rental and has struggled with trying to write a density limit and there was only one community
21 he could find that has a density limit and tried to use their wording as best he could. Preston thought
22 the density limit applied only to non-hosted rentals, but they must be 1,000 feet from any rental
23 whether it was hosted or non-hosted.

24
25 Hugh Quinn, with respect to insurance, said the hosting platform may provide some level of
26 insurance for damage to the property itself but wasn't sure about liability. Hugh thought the town
27 attorney should do some research about what the platform's insurance covers. Hugh was going to
28 do some reading of his own to see what the hosting platforms provide as part of their service. Hugh
29 wasn't a fan of the density limit because he didn't think it worked in the rural areas with small
30 subdivisions. Arne said the insurance was a decision they would have to make as a board with how
31 far they were going to take it. Tim didn't recall the application and asked if they had to check a
32 box for insurance like they did for fire safety to self-certify and Preston said they did. Tim said
33 they were letting the STR operator confirm they had those things covered and wondered if Jim
34 Carroll had reviewed it. Julie didn't think he had. Preston said that was a good point. Preston had
35 used models that were out there.

36
37 Joe asked if they implemented some of his ideas regarding limitation of days and fire safety for 8
38 and under and he had been number 61 and couldn't rent but now was 41 because others couldn't
39 comply with the rules they had implemented. Joe thought they needed better follow up and added
40 that people don't comprehend septic and sewer regulations nor fire and safety. All day long he
41 tries to educate people about it. Joe said people think they're in compliance when they're not even
42 close. Joe said he walked into a bedroom that had 3 tall bunkbeds in one room to sleep 9 people.
43 Joe said he chose to live in Chester and loves it, but they are an abutting neighbor to a ski resort
44 and there are several nearby and they can't ignore they feed the economy. They pay plumbers,
45 electricians, and buy groceries so they need to make it so they can rent their properties and not be
46 on a waiting list to help cover their taxes and still have people spending money in Chester. Arianna

1 thanked Joe and said he was bringing up guardrails that may or may not have been discussed
2 previously. Arianna is anxious to have boundaries and guardrails and they had settled on the
3 current ones. Arianna didn't see a difference between a cap and only allowing a certain number of
4 days to STR the property. She hoped they would find the one that best serves everyone and
5 whatever they decide will be wrong for a large portion of the population. Joe told Arianna he had
6 voted for her the day before because he read her bio. Joe said it is extremely different between
7 putting someone on a waiting list and if it was him, he would sue the town. Arianna said it wasn't
8 un-American to set a limit and is a very common way to manage things, so she was curious about
9 the strength of Joe's convictions as that being unacceptable while other limits were okay. Joe asked
10 how it was fair if someone who lived there 50 years and decided they needed income and had been
11 dedicated to the town was on a waiting list and someone who bought a place 3 years ago could
12 rent. Peter said the person who was here was a hosted rental and Joe said maybe not if they go to
13 Florida. Peter said currently they were only at 2/3 of the number and could receive 20 more. In the
14 last year, the data hasn't changed much. The original reach out grab number was 84 and now they
15 are down to 60 total and unhosted is only 2/3, so they're down to 40. It was done as an ordinance
16 because it only takes 60 days to increase the number. Arne explained it was a living document and
17 they were trying to do their best to get to a point that made sense for the Selectboard and town.
18 Hugh has listened to both sides of the cap argument and thought a cap limit could be viewed as
19 unequitable and had seen where other towns make the STR registration valid for a limited time
20 and everyone goes back in the pool, so someone doesn't get locked out indefinitely. It would be
21 a nightmare to administer, and he would not recommend it. He merely shared it because other
22 towns have considered it and have pivoted to an alternative because of the inequity associated with
23 a cap. Hugh did side with Joe because he said if you don't get there first, you may never get a
24 chance due to the cap. Arianna didn't have an opinion and was why she wanted to hear more from
25 Joe. Joe has sold real estate for 25 years and wants to find equitable housing for locals and his
26 daughters want to buy houses and has colleagues who struggle to buy houses. Joe has been
27 fortunate to sell housing to locals and it makes his heart swell because they are cornerstones of our
28 society. Joe was concerned that someone had to leave to care for an ailing parent and they're faced
29 with the ordinance and unable to rent out their place, which Joe saw as insane. Joe said the
30 ordinance would hurt values and didn't think it would help affordable housing. Arianna said with
31 the limited number of days to rent, she has heard owners passionate about questioning how they
32 can be told they can only rent their property for a certain number of days. Joe was concerned about
33 Mr. and Mrs. Jones who wanted to sell their home and it would hurt values. Arianna said they are
34 getting equally passionate responses from the other side. Joe said he would rather fight for the
35 number of days than the density or waiting line, which seemed unfair to him. People call Joe from
36 Kansas who want to put a house on a portfolio to rent and if the ordinance is tweaked, they can
37 eliminate that. Joe said if they have safe properties and educate the public, they will eliminate the
38 fear and help his job on the affordable housing committee if they fairly adjust the STR registry.
39 Joe said to people who want to buy but can't afford it, this would help them if they could rent it
40 under a 30-day limit. Arianna asked if Joe was having those conversations and Joe said every day.
41 Arne said when he hears that conversation, he doesn't have sympathy for those buying a second
42 home and can't afford it when there are those who live in Chester who are looking to rent to make
43 ends meet to pay their taxes. Arne understood they were a big part of the community and economy
44 but didn't want to see Chester turn into Ludlow but noted he had nothing against Ludlow. Arne
45 said Ludlow is a shell of a community now with no high school and these are things they are trying
46 to implement because they are passionate about Chester and trying to protect it. Arne said they

1 have discussed it for 3 or 4 months and have discussed most of the items and have had input from
2 Chester citizens. Arne said there have been pushbacks and most of the time it's from real estate
3 folks. Arne doesn't have anything against real estate folks, but they are the ones who give the most
4 pushback. A lot of work and thought has gone into the ordinance by the Zoning Administrator and
5 the Selectboard. Arne said possibly some things should be tweaked but he hasn't seen too many
6 laws that come out perfect and solve all the problems and make everyone happy. It is a tough job
7 for the board, and they have 3 weeks before the moratorium expires. If the board approves it at
8 this meeting or the next, it still requires 60 days before it becomes law so there would be a gap
9 unless they change the moratorium date. Peter said the ordinance, as written, would stand after 60
10 days. Peter had heard the fire marshal won't inspect 8 or less because they don't have the
11 manpower but would have no problem adding the fire inspection requirement because it would
12 remove some short-term rentals in Chester. Arne said if the fire marshal was willing to inspect 8
13 or less, that would help. Julie thought Ben feels and she thought it was the opinion of his office
14 that the self-attestation was a joke and would just check the box. Joe said they don't understand.
15 Peter asked if Julie had asked Ben and she said she would. Arianna said it was a good change and
16 wondered why they hadn't done it from the start. Preston said Ben wasn't there from the start and
17 there was a period before they hired Ben when they were low on staff. Preston also pointed out
18 that the self-attestation was statewide. They were dealing with Killington and Ludlow and other
19 ski resort towns, but Chester is a different case. Arne said they could get provisional approval if
20 the fire marshal was scheduled.

21
22 Cathy Hasbrouck said Joe had wondered how they figured out how many days to limit it. She said
23 Rentalscape can provide information of how many days have been rented by each property. Cathy
24 said generic expenses for the building and how much they charge to rent; they can decide how
25 much cost they want them to cover with their STR. That may be one way to figure out a number.
26 Cathy saw that as a reasonable way to choose the number.

27
28 Tim was hearing if they stayed with 60 as the cap, there was room for 20 or more unhosted so they
29 weren't close to the cap and shouldn't stop them from moving forward and they could always
30 change the ordinance if necessary. Tim was hearing a lot about managing details that could create
31 enforcement challenges and cautioned against it. Tim was fully in favor of the fire inspection if
32 the manpower was there. Joe said it was state law to have a fire certificate to rent and couldn't
33 understand how the town could say it wasn't necessary. Preston again explained there was a
34 carveout for STRs and Julie agreed, and Preston offered to send it to Joe. Preston said Ben could
35 say it was a joke but couldn't tell them the carveout didn't exist. Tim said the onus is on the
36 operator who self-attests and Arne agreed. Arne could imagine people renting to more than 8. Arne
37 was willing to change the part of the ordinance to require an inspection to 8 and under. Preston,
38 who lives in Woodstock, said they require STRs to fill out a form attesting to the number of days
39 they rent their property out and people say it's a joke. Preston added there was the question of how
40 they prove someone is violating and how easy it is to make them stop but saw Rentalscape
41 providing information as to the number of renters. Tim didn't see Cathy having time to monitor it.
42 Joe thanked the board for doing their job and he loved Arne for the plumbing work he had
43 performed at his house and understood he was just doing his job and said he was trying to be
44 respectful. Joe didn't understand why they wouldn't want to limit the number of days to clean out
45 someone only operating a home to make money who didn't care about the community. Joe saw it
46 as a better mechanism and asked if they would sleep better at night if they knew someone was

1 going to short-term rent their home for a fire certificate than to know the 40 or 60 below don't.
2 Arne said they agreed on that, had said that, and appreciated Joe emphasizing that point. Joe said
3 obviously nobody gets the state fire safety regulations and if he does them everyday and can't
4 understand them and the sewer regulations go in one ear and out the other. Joe wanted a roadmap
5 for those who register their STR to be compliant in Chester and thought they were missing it
6 because people just checked off boxes. Arne said when the ordinance goes into effect and they
7 must register annually, if they decide to enact the fire certificate, people will have to comply.
8 Robert Nied wanted to step back and remind himself and everyone that any land use or zoning
9 regulation is imperfect and would impose itself on someone's right to do something. It is an
10 important issue and if they spent 5 years trying to come up with the perfect regulation, they never
11 would have anything because it wouldn't be perfect. Robert thought the board should listen to the
12 issues people raise but at some point, they must decide to do something. Short-term rentals have
13 dramatically changed the economy and culture of communities and if they spend endless years
14 trying to do it perfectly, nothing will be done, and they could have changes to the community that
15 are detrimental. Robert encouraged the Selectboard to continue and try to reach a consensus for a
16 regulation to draw a fine line and balance between the rights of landowners and, more importantly,
17 the overall good of the community. Robert said one issue that has been raised multiple times that
18 concerns him is the argument that if they regulate short-term rentals, for someone trying to sell
19 their home the value will be lowered. He didn't think it should be a consideration for the governing
20 body of the community for someone to make a profit nor did it address the greater good of the
21 community. Robert said if there was a land rush or tidal wave in market increases, it is not the
22 Selectboard's responsibility to make sure it is maintained but to do what is best for the community.
23 Julie said Ben Whalen said other towns require certification of all units. Julie asked him if they
24 added it for all levels would they have time and he suggested they should have a conversation with
25 Landon. Julie will reach out to Landon.

26
27 Peter said the ordinance would stand when they are done and didn't think they would have a huge
28 explosion in April. Arne agreed and if some came in, they were still below the amount they were
29 considering. Arianna asked if the ordinance remained in effect as of the end of 2022 and was told
30 it did. The pause was for new registrations and when the pause ends, new registrations can resume
31 no matter where they were with the changes in the ordinance. Preston tells people when they
32 inquire that he assumes the board will extend the moratorium until the amendments become
33 effective which will probably be June or July. Preston was okay if the board decided to do it
34 differently. Currently, April 1st people can register per the existing ordinance. Arianna thought
35 they wanted to continue looking at the ordinance because there was a problem not yet solved and
36 Arne said that was one opinion, but he thought it accomplished what they wanted with the minor
37 tweak of inspecting 8 and under. Arianna confirmed they were discussing the list they received
38 from Preston. Tim asked Preston how many calls he received. Preston thought it was under a dozen
39 and only received one application where they were told they had to wait but it wasn't like the door
40 was being beaten down. Tim asked what the ratio was between hosted and unhosted and Preston
41 clarified the moratorium only applied to unhosted. They have received 2 or 3 applications for
42 hosted that they have processed over the past 5 months. Preston gets many inquiries from people
43 wanting to buy a house in Chester and the only way they can afford to retire is to buy it now and
44 rent it out.

45
46 Tim asked Julie if she recommended that they vote and adopt it at this meeting or have it reviewed

1 by legal counsel and she said yes, it should be reviewed by legal counsel. Preston said they aren't
2 required to have a hearing but wait 60 days for people to appeal but having a hearing was the right
3 thing to do. Arne hadn't thought they would enact the ordinance tonight but hoped they were close.
4 Tim asked if they should entertain the thought of extending the moratorium given the time before
5 the new ordinance, if approved, would take effect. Arianna wasn't a fan of it but hadn't stuck her
6 feet in the ground. She thought the pause had served its purpose and enabled them to learn more
7 and she felt they were ready to allow registrations to resume. Arne said there was another meeting
8 before the deadline, and they had the option available. Arne agreed there wasn't a big deluge of
9 people waiting to secure spots for short-term rentals. Arianna was interested, if they agreed as a
10 body, in enacting the fire certificate for 8 and under retroactively as soon as they could so everyone
11 would comply. Peter agreed and said it would slow them down because it took 4 months for Ben
12 to look at their place. Arne asked if they were good with the document with exception to the self-
13 attestation and Arianna wanted to look at A through E as they had never discussed them. Tim
14 agreed they should discuss each of those points. Peter had a hard time getting C to work regarding
15 density because he envisioned it in the Stone Village which would only allow one rental and that
16 wasn't even the case now, so it was a problem. Peter agreed with the registration cap which was
17 the total plan, and they were only at two-thirds. Peter agreed with the owner limit and prohibition
18 of corporate ownership, but he didn't like the number of days because a lot of people in town were
19 using it to make a living and if they suddenly were unable to, it was an issue. Arne was onboard
20 with everything Peter had said. Arianna asked if they should say owner limit and prohibition of
21 corporate ownership, D and E. Tim pointed out that section 6 was really section 5. Everyone was
22 happy with D and E. Arianna noted nobody had brought up A, which Joe had said something about.
23 Peter wanted to strike C because it didn't make sense. Arianna thought Peter had proposed C, but
24 he said not in its current form. Peter said 1,000-foot density would work in rural areas but not in
25 the village. Arianna and Arne thought C would be difficult to enforce. Arianna wondered what
26 they would lose, and Tim said Stone Village had a high density of STRs and thought that's where
27 the idea came from. Peter said if there was a one-year moratorium on having an STR, it would
28 limit that. Arne said other parts would fall in place to accomplish the same thing without the density
29 limit whether it was the total cap or waiting period and to apply it fairly would be difficult. The
30 others agreed. Joe said the whole thing was an enforcement nightmare and asked Peter if people
31 who were making a living were inns. Peter said he owns an STR with his sister and there are
32 residents in town who have STRs. Peter said in Gassetts there was a building with at least two and
33 that was part of their living. Peter thought if they existed before the ordinance, they should be
34 allowed to continue. Joe thought the cap regarding the number of days should apply to unhosted.
35 Arne told Joe he was repeating his comments and wanted to get it back on track. Joe asked if they
36 knew how many people who had STRs and were oblivious to the moratorium and thought the
37 public had no idea there was a moratorium. Arianna clarified the moratorium only applied to
38 registering new STRs. Joe said you could buy a house and rent it without registering. Cathy said
39 the firm the town hired has 9 properties they brought to the town's attention that she has not heard
40 of and will investigate. Arne said when the discussion began 6 months ago, Peter mentioned he
41 had a conflict of interest because he owned an STR. Peter saw the number of days being a hardship.
42 Arne noted they wanted to include the fire certification and were removing the density and asked
43 if there were any concerns with the rest of the document. Tim had a question about the definition
44 in Section 9 under penalties regarding timely payment of penalty and wondered if they should
45 specify a specific number of days rather than say timely. Preston said it was boilerplate language
46 that had been reviewed by Jim Carrol, but he would call it to Jim's attention to see if the number

1 of days should be specified. Preston said more than half Chester's housing stock predates septic
2 rules of 2007 and he deals with clean slate and 10-acre loophole that predate regulation properties
3 regularly, so he personally reviews that, and registration isn't issued unless he's satisfied their
4 septic system is adequate and was not just checking the box. Tim asked Preston to note that Section
5 6 in red should be Section 5 and Preston had. Tim wondered if 60 should be lowered for unhosted
6 but wasn't going to push it. Arianna wondered if they moved forward with the language in place,
7 if the registration cap should be reviewed annually and thought there was room to include that
8 language. Arne thought it wouldn't be a bad idea. Julie asked how many new ones they would
9 have in a year because there was a waiting period of one year. Arianna said it included an annual
10 renewal of April 30th for registrants so that seemed an appropriate time to review. Peter said it is
11 an ordinance that only takes 60 days to change, and they would know if Preston told them that
12 there was an issue. Tim agreed and that it wasn't necessary to be done annually but rather on the
13 recommendation of the zoning administrator. Preston said towns have stepped in because the state
14 has been unable to make it happen, and Arne understood because as a small town they were having
15 difficulty.

16
17 Caroline Morgan has been a resident of Chester since 2021 and they were considering having a
18 hosted STR but thought a person looking to invest in Vermont and move here eventually and
19 wondered how much of the moratorium is a deterrent to Chester. Caroline thought the inspections
20 would rule out a lot of people having an STR with 9 people in a bedroom. Caroline said if she had
21 recently purchased an investment property, she would be frustrated and thought those people were
22 out there but just not participating in the process.

23
24 Peter said the changes they discussed should move to Jim Carroll as soon as they got an answer
25 from fire and safety. Julie would get an answer from fire and safety before sending it to Jim.
26 Preston had heard that Landon's response would be it should be a state registration, but he
27 wondered if that would happen. Arne and Tim thanked Joe for his attendance and concerns. Arne
28 said they were all in the same boat and just wanted what was best for the community. Tim asked
29 if they needed to clarify what was sent to Jim Carrol. Density limit under 5C goes away. Julie
30 would speak to Landon first about the fire marshal and if it is something they can manage timewise,
31 they would add the language and it would go to Jim. Peter asked if Jim had reviewed the
32 application form and Preston said he would have Jim review it.

33
34 Travis Thompson-Sevcik was feeling the things that Caroline Morgan had said. He purchased a
35 property recently and it had been delayed a large amount. They are not intending to rent it out full
36 time but hoped to subsidize some of the costs of repairing the house by renting it out one weekend
37 every other month. They are sitting there waiting and are not sure what the guidelines will be. He
38 wanted to add their voice to the situation. They are sitting there not able to do anything in their
39 current state. Arne thanked Travis.

40
41 Arne expected they would finalize it at the next meeting. Arne wasn't sure if when the moratorium
42 expired if they would leave it open and just work under the old ordinance. They are trying to be as
43 thorough as possible and fair for everyone involved.

44

45 **Agenda Item 9, Annual Appointments**

46

1 Arne read the new appointments from the attached list of 2024 appointments. For the vacant spot
2 of fence view, Peter offered to do, as he loves animals. Peter thanked all those stepping up for the
3 positions. Arianna moved and Peter seconded to accept the slate of appointees. The motion carried
4 unanimously.

5 **Agenda Item 10, Certificates of No Suits Pending – Listers**

6
7 Arianna moved and Peter seconded a motion to accept the certificate of no suits pending. The
8 motion carried unanimously. Julie and the board members thanked Cathy for a job well done.

9 **Agenda Item 11, Executive Session: Town Manager**

10
11 Arianna moved and Peter seconded a motion to enter executive session for the purpose of town
12 manager review and to invite Julie into the session. The motion carried.

13
14 (Executive session entered at 8:18 p.m.)

15
16 Arianna moved and Peter seconded a motion to the executive session. The motion carried.

17
18 (Executive session exited at 8:47 p.m.)

19
20 **Agenda Item 12 Adjourn**

21
22 Peter moved to adjourn, and Arianna seconded a motion to adjourn. A vote was taken, and the
23 motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

2024 Appointment List

Position	Term Limit	Current Holder of Position:	Request for Appointment
Animal Control Officer	1 Year	Police Chief	Police Chief
Cemetery Sexton	1 Year	Ed Rushford	Ed Rushford
Connecticut River Authority	1 Year	Vacant	
Senior Solutions	1 Year	Vacant	
Emergency Manager	1 Year	Town Manager	Town Manager
Fence Viewers	1 Year	Derek Suursoo	Derek Suursoo
		Jack Cable	Jack Cable
		Vacant	
First Constable	1 Year	Jeff Holden	Jeff Holden
Green Up Day Chairman	1 Year	Frank Kelley	Frank Kelley
Inspector of Lumber, Shingles and Wood	1 Year	Derek Suursoo	
Pound Keeper	1 Year	Police Chief	Police Chief
Regional Planning Representative	1 Year	Julie Hance	Julie Hance
RPC Alternate	1 Year	Derek Suursoo	Derek Suursoo
Road Commissioner	1 Year	Town Manager	Town Manager
Secretary to Selectmen	1 Year	Susan Bailey	Susan Bailey
Board of Wastewater Disposal	1 Year	Selectboard	Selectboard
Solid Waste District Rep	1 Year	Derek Suursoo	Derek Suursoo
Solid Waste District Rep Alternate	1 year	Alden Blodgett	
Town Service Officer	1 Year	Town Manager	Town Manager
Transportation Advisory Council	1 Year	Peter Hudkins	Peter Hudkins
Transportation Advisory Council Alternate		Arne Jonynas	Arne Jonynas
Tree Warden	1 Year	Arianna Knapp	Arianna Knapp
Water Commissioners	1 Year	Board of Selectmen	Board of Selectment
Weigher of Coal	1 Year	Derek Suursoo	Derek Suursoo

