

1 **TOWN OF Chester**
2 **PLANNING COMMISSION**
3 **September 20, 2021 Final Minutes**

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

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

8 **Citizens Present:** Bill Lindsay at Town Hall; and Cheryl Joy Lipton and Arne Jonynas via Zoom.

9 **Call to Order**

10 Chair Cathy Hasbrouck called the meeting to order at 6:41 p.m. (0:26 on recording)

11 **Agenda Item 1, Review Minutes from September 6, 2021 Meeting**

12 Cathy asked for a motion for a review of the minutes. Peter Hudkins moved to review the
13 September 6th minutes and Barre Pinske seconded the motion.

14 Discussion included:

15 Tim Roper called attention to “B-12” and said it should be “V-12” throughout the minutes. Tim
16 and Sue both agreed it could be easily fixed. Tim also noted that on page 2, line 32, “Preston said
17 Cathy did the first draft and then he put it in the form it was in.” Tim wondered if it could be
18 referenced in parenthesis that “Cathy did the first draft of the 6-item document and then Preston
19 put in form it is in.” Cathy said she could help Sue with the change.

20 The minutes were unanimously approved, as amended.

21 **Agenda Item 2, Citizens Comments**

22 (6:44 p.m. – 3:05 on recording)

23 Cathy asked for citizens comments on anything that was not on the agenda. There were no
24 comments.

25 **Agenda Item 3, Progress Update from the Proposed Bylaw Subcommittee**

26 (6:44 p.m. – 3:22 on recording)

27 Cathy said the subcommittee would present the zoning page for the V-12 District at the October
28 4th Planning Commission meeting, which would include uses; dimensional standards; and a
29 proposal for administration - what type of permit will get what type of review. Jason Rasmussen
30 of Regional Planning would be at the meeting to give the presentation.

31 **Agenda Item 4, Discuss 5-Year History of Subdivisions in Chester with Preston Bristow**

32 (6:46 p.m. - 4:36 on recording)

33 Preston gave a presentation on the 5-year history of subdivisions in Chester. In preparation of the
34 presentation, Cathy had included, in the meeting packet, a graph of the subdivision history, as well
35 as a spreadsheet of all the hearings the DRB has had since September of 2015.

36 Preston began by thanking Tim for putting him onto the fact that Excel has graphs and he used
37 Excel to create the graph for the presentation.

1 There were two graphs (one that had gone out in the earlier packet) - subdivisions compared to
2 boundary adjustments simply because they consider boundary adjustments to be a type of
3 subdivision when a boundary adjustment does not create a new lot or more development. It takes
4 time for the DRB to review and approve them.

5 He sent out a later graph that compared subdivisions to dwelling permits. They weren't sure why
6 there was a bounce in subdivisions in 2017. The only speculation Preston could offer was he
7 thought the change in administration in Washington may have had something to do with it given
8 the economy boost, or maybe it was just random.

9 Current count is at 10 new houses approved this year, which included 4 that were replacements
10 and not brand-new additions to the housing stock. He didn't expect to have any more in the next
11 couple of months.

12 He also added that 2020 was a banner year for people moving or wanting to move to Chester
13 because of COVID. For some of those people, it took time to get the land perked and a house
14 designed, and a crew lined up to build, so the houses they wanted to build in 2020 may be showing
15 up in 2021. Preston said the numbers were not high, but if they stayed at 10 houses per year, in 5
16 years that would be 50 houses, in 10 years, 100 houses, which was meaningful. He said they were
17 all individual houses and not multi-unit subdivisions.

18 Cathy added they were all on previously subdivided parcels and some of those subdivisions went
19 back to the 1980s.

20 Since Preston had gone to all the effort, Peter asked since each was a subdivision, if they could be
21 more than one lot.

22 Preston agreed and said in terms of presenting it, it was a work in progress. He said merely
23 recording how many times there was a subdivision request that went to the DRB was not the same
24 thing as saying how many lots came out of it.

25 Cathy said there was only one that was a major subdivision, so everyone else was under 5 or 4.
26 Peter said they were talking lots per year from 2016.

27 Preston said he could attempt to do a graph that included lots created per year and not subdivisions
28 per year. He hoped to produce that soon.

29 Tim thanked Preston for doing the work and said it was nice to have a visual.

30 Cathy said there was a technical term, flutter, for when there is only a little bit of data and there is
31 a bulge, and it makes a big shift in the graph. She said Chester would have flutter this year.

32 Preston said they were just dealing with small numbers, and it was difficult to make big
33 extrapolations, but it could be seen from looking at the line of dwelling permits that, except for a
34 little dip in 2018, seemed to be making an arc.

35 **Agenda Item 5, Discuss History of New Single-Family Housing Starts and Population Shifts**
36 **with Preston Bristow and Cathy Hasbrouck**

37 Cathy said she had sent out information about the population in Chester. She had printed off
38 Appendix A from the master plan and there was a lot of discussion about the town center, which
39 is called the Chester Census Designated Place and is a subset of the town of Chester.

40 Cathy said it had projections for population based on both a good economic scenario and a less

1 positive economic scenario. The state publishes a 47 page report every year listing information by
2 town and county, including births, deaths, and migrations. Chester's population was 3,154 in 2010
3 and it very slowly dropped to 3,023 in 2017. It rose to 3,032 in 2018. It dropped to 3,024 in 2019.
4 The 2020 numbers were not available yet. She said Wikipedia had a low of 3002, but 3047 was in
5 the Census Reporter. She also found places that said Chester had 4,000 residents, so she was
6 inclined to go with 3,047 for 2020.

7 Tim wondered if the state had any data on second homes for the town.

8 Cathy said she had a dump of data from the grand list, and they could view property owners that
9 had mailing addresses that were not in Chester, which was significant in number.

10 Tim said for zoning, it wasn't really population but buildings. Cathy agreed but said they needed
11 to consider both. She said a whole subdivision of second homes would be different than one of
12 primary residences. She said the biggest thing she had seen in the six years she has written findings
13 and conclusions for the DRB was the Gold River subdivision which she thought had 6 lots.
14 Otherwise, it has been 2 or 3 lots. She said construction permits come in one at a time. Preston
15 agreed. He said the DRB can approve a master plan but the individual permits to build after they
16 approve the plan come in one at a time.

17 Cathy said she had looked at the tax map to learn when some of the subdivisions had taken place
18 and it wasn't always easy to find because they are so old. She is marking up a map to indicate how
19 many parcels have been developed but that won't be finished until sometime in the future.

20 She asked if there were any other comments or questions and there were none.

21 **Agenda Item 6, Presentation from Preston of his Building Permit Process**

22 Cathy said she had asked Preston if he could give a presentation since he has been a zoning
23 administrator for multiple towns. Preston said Chester is part of the Mt. Ascutney Regional
24 Commission and north of that is the Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission in
25 Woodstock. Preston was a circuit riding zoning administrator for them, so he worked with a lot of
26 towns. At one point, he was serving 7 towns at the same time. A couple of the towns were on an
27 on-call basis and the others he would work at for one day a week. He also worked a little while for
28 West Windsor and then left at his choice. He also has experience in Killington. He's been doing
29 planning and zoning for over 15 years and nearly as many towns.

30 Cathy said the bylaws she has seen did not contain much information about issuing a building
31 permit, which is the most common transaction that the Chester Zoning Administrator handles. She
32 thought they should take advantage of 15 towns' worth of experience and hear about zoning
33 permits from Preston. They put together a checklist and Preston designed a new application for
34 use when obtaining a zoning permit from Chester. He included a redacted permit he had issued.

35 Preston said his motivation for designing a new application to obtain a zoning permit was that he
36 thought the current forms were tired and he wanted to make them more user-friendly and
37 aesthetically pleasing. He added that over the years, when he had observed someone struggling to
38 complete a form, it inspired him to make a better form that was easier to complete. He held up the
39 new form he created which is now on the town's website as an application for a zoning permit.
40 Preston said it was true that the bylaws did not mention the words building permit anywhere. He
41 said he calls them zoning permits, because that's what they're called, and they are for all kinds of
42 things. He referred to a 21 points long building permit checklist that he goes through when people
43 want to build something. He said someone new to zoning would need to go over the list. Preston

1 went through the list and said they could ask questions. He explained when someone submits an
2 application, he looks up the owner's name and address and the tax parcel number and reviews the
3 parcel file.

4 Cathy pointed out that someone could apply even if they don't own the parcel. Preston agreed and
5 said it was common for people to apply who don't own land. The form asks for the name of the
6 applicant and the name of the property owner. People often apply before they buy a property to
7 make sure they can get a permit. The permit is issued to the applicant but is indexed in the land
8 records by the owner. He said Chester had not been recording their permits and state law is clear
9 and they aren't enforceable unless recorded. Going forward, Chester is now recording them.

10 Barre asked if they were recorded with the state and Preston said they were recorded in the local
11 land records. Barre asked for how long had they not been recorded, and Preston suggested they
12 had never been recorded.

13 Preston said Cathy had been recording the DRB decisions but given they were 10 pages long, that
14 was a lot to put in the record book. He said the bylaws indicate a permit will be issued for each
15 DRB decision. Preston said it was like a ministerial permit and he simply recited the order in the
16 permit and that was what got recorded.

17 Barre asked if they were kept in the Zoning Administrator's Office in a file so that there was a
18 record. Preston and Cathy said they were. Cathy explained that recording means a stamped paper
19 copy winds up in the vault.

20 Barre asked if when a title search was performed by someone if the permit information would be
21 attached to that property in that file. Cathy said it would. Preston said it was customary for someone
22 who does a thorough title search to come into his office and look in the parcel files, but the reality
23 was if the permit was recorded it is unavoidable and is part of the chain of title.

24 Barre asked if they do this all online now, or did it have to be printed out on paper and put in a
25 box. Cathy said the land records live in the vault and the state hasn't approved another way of
26 recording them.

27 Preston said they can be looked up online. He said many title searchers still come in person, but
28 they are online. Cathy added that not all the records were online back to 1761. She thought possibly
29 40 years' worth. Preston said 40 years was marketable title. He wasn't sure how far Chester's went
30 back.

31 Tim wanted to confirm if a permit is not properly recorded, it is not enforceable by state statute.
32 Preston said they may not want to shout that too loudly to the public but that was what statute said.
33 He said he would look that up to confirm it.

34 Preston added that digitizing zoning records would be a monumental task to put them in the correct
35 order. Cathy said it would be dependent on the product used to digitize them.

36 Preston said the land records are easier to digitize because every document has a book and page
37 number, and every document has an index card. He said he didn't want to give the impression the
38 current files were bad but that they contained a variety of correspondence and handwritten notes
39 and different maps. Cathy said they mostly belong to specific parcels but there were probably some
40 records that applied to different parcels. If they sent them to someone in a box to be scanned, it
41 would be a disaster.

42 Preston said that Chester's were just loose in a file and often not in chronological order. He said

1 he tries to leave every file he looks at better than how he finds it, but they are far from ready for
2 scanning.

3 Preston said Item #3 is looking up the zoning district; Item #4 is determining the setback
4 requirements for that district; Item #5 is Aquifer Protection Overlay Districts, because Chester has
5 two of those; Item # 6 is determining if the property is in flood zone; Item #7 is finding out if they
6 have a town highway access permit if it's new construction, or a state permit if it's on a state
7 highway; and Item #8 - before he will issue a permit for a building that someone is going to live
8 in, there needs to be a septic permit, either a heritage one issued by the town before the state took
9 jurisdiction for all septic permits in 2007, or a current one issued by the state.

10 Barre asked how that would affect someone who wanted to do a compost toilet. He asked if there
11 was a clause in place for that or if it was something they needed to consider for the new zoning.
12 Preston said he didn't see it as a zoning issue because septic is under the exclusive jurisdiction of
13 the state. He said many people ask him about composting. The state will allow a compost toilet,
14 but because the dwelling still produces gray water, they require a system to be installed for those
15 uses. It is simpler and less expensive, but still requires a state permit that indicates the house is
16 composted for a toilet and has a gray water disposal system. Preston said there are currently so
17 many alternatives for housing now, but they all require a septic permit. He did add that a camp
18 which is only occupied for less than 60 days out of the year does not require a septic permit.

19 Preston continued. Item #9, you can't build on a slope over 25%. He said that's not an issue he
20 runs into, but it still is on his checklist. Item #10 has setbacks from stream, river, or pond. He said
21 it has a curious definition of a stream: it must be 2 feet or wider from the high bank, which leaves
22 a lot of room for interpretation.

23 Parking requirements for houses are two parking lots per unit and even though it's a requirement,
24 it's nothing he has ever had trouble with.

25 He likes to ask if a home occupation or business is anticipated because home occupations don't
26 need a permit, but home businesses do. Signs also need a permit.

27 Is a short-term rental anticipated is another question he asks. Even though the current bylaws don't
28 regulate short-term rentals, he likes to ask the question because people are often limited with the
29 septic capacity they have. If they have a 3-bedroom house and they want to sleep 20 people there,
30 it could be an issue. Another reason is with the new construction, if it's over 8 occupants, it's
31 supposed to be sprinkled and have hard-wired alarms.

32 Barre asked Preston if he thought there were any questions he asks that aren't required, and if so,
33 should they be presented that way so people were aware they could choose not to answer.

34 Preston said he has a light touch when he questions them. The reasons he asks them is so they
35 know they need to come back to him if they want to do certain things. With respect to short-term
36 rentals, he said some towns are regulating it, and the state is considering regulating it. So far, he
37 hasn't had many complaints in Chester. He said there is the thought that if it ain't broke, don't fix
38 it.

39 Barre's concern was he didn't want the town to be in trouble for asking questions they shouldn't
40 be asking if they weren't required. On the other hand, Barre said he was the Zoning Administrator
41 and if he was just trying to be helpful, he should be able to ask them. Preston replied that he usually
42 tells them in the perspective that he wants to be helpful.

1 Preston said the next one was interesting. When people want to build a garage, he asks questions
2 and finds out if it is going to be more than a garage. He asks them things such as: is it going to
3 have a second floor; are they going to heat and cool it; are they going to use it. He said it is amazing
4 that by asking those questions, he often learns it is going to be more than a garage. He said if it has
5 space upstairs for an office, playroom, exercise space, etc., he will approve it, but then specifically
6 states it is not to be used as a dwelling room. It can be approved as an ADU if they have the septic
7 capacity.

8 Barre asked if he would calculate that septic capacity into their septic system ahead of time. Preston
9 said as discussed other times, the state thinks ADUs are going to be a big solution to the housing
10 crisis but if you're on a 3-bedroom septic, the house should only be allotted 2 bedrooms to be able
11 to accommodate the accessory dwelling. If the property is on sewer, it's not so difficult, but you
12 really need a 4- or 5-bedroom septic for and accessory dwelling. It limits a lot of people.

13 Cathy asked if someone was on their own septic system and wanted to convert the upstairs of the
14 garage into an in-law apartment, would the state say the zoning administrator needed to ask if it
15 was an additional bedroom and check the septic permit. Preston said it is cited in the bylaws from
16 the state that it must have adequate septic.

17 Preston said the rules are changing. For a while, ADUs were either a studio or one bedroom, but
18 the state now allows for towns to make it more than 1 bedroom. They still require state approved
19 septic for every bedroom.

20 Preston referred to Item 15 and stated the bylaws say all developments should have exterior lights
21 that are down shielded, and he is starting to inform people of that. It also says that state erosion
22 and prevention and sediment control measures must be followed. Cathy asked if it was a state
23 requirement. Preston wasn't aware, but that the state likes the bylaws to state that. Cathy asked
24 him if he had seen it in other towns and he replied that he had. Preston said most excavators are
25 aware of those requirements. He said it is always possible someone will be doing it on their own
26 with rented equipment but that most of the time it's someone who has been hired and is familiar
27 with those rules.

28 Preston said it was a state law and not included in Chester's bylaws that he is supposed to inform
29 them they must fill out a Residential Building Energy Standards Certificate when their house is
30 complete. He informs them, but Chester doesn't have a system in place to follow-up to make sure
31 that gets done. Preston has worked for other towns that had a method to follow up and said it was
32 a bear to enforce. He said it can create an issue and he is happy to stay out of that.

33 Preston said Item #18 was obvious - to refer the application to DRB if the use requires conditional
34 use review. He said if you were in that arena, you would ask the permit specialist to issue a project
35 review sheet. He does not request that for a regular single building because it isn't necessary. He
36 then calculates the fee, collects it, and issues the permit.

37 He said for a lot of projects, if they: meet the setback; have their septic permit; and their driveway
38 access permit, they are good to go.

39 Cathy said in an ideal world, they would not be calling it the building permit checklist but the
40 zoning permit checklist. Preston agreed. He called attention to his sample zoning permit form and
41 noted that under zoning permit in parenthesis he had building permit. He does it because those are
42 the permits he issues for people who are building things. He said there was nothing truly wrong
43 with saying that but that the bylaws say every use in town that needs a permit needs a zoning

1 permit. And even the conditional use for the DRB needs a review and approval by the DRB but is
2 then followed by a zoning permit.

3 Preston said the practice before he became zoning administrator was that people just filled out the
4 application, the ZA signed the bottom, and that was the permit. He said that practice was done
5 widely twenty years ago but is very frowned upon today. As a result, he has developed the permit
6 which includes a book and page stamp on the top of it and gets recorded. It contains the following
7 information: who it is issued to; who owns it; where it is located; the nature of the permit; and
8 what condition, if any. He now has 10 additional requirements which repeat some of what he
9 already mentioned. They are only authorized to do the work described in the application; the permit
10 is only effective after 15 days after issuance – the appeal period. That is when the red P sign is
11 displayed, and people can appeal. Preston added number 3 was it runs with the land, is binding
12 and enforceable on all successors and assigns. Number 4 is that it expires if not substantially
13 completed within two years, but a one-year extension may be requested. That is exactly what is
14 stated in the current bylaws.

15 Cathy said that was one of the issues with Jack's Diner.

16 Preston also included no clearing or ground disturbances allowed within 25 feet of a stream or 50
17 feet of a pond or river; all exterior light fixtures shall be down shielded; and all construction shall
18 meet state erosion prevention and sediment control guidelines, all of which are in the bylaws. He
19 said they are required by state law to inform people of the state residential building energy
20 standards requirement which is included in his form. Preston said he also included new driveways.

21 The form also includes his standard clause which most permits have that states the applicant may
22 have other permit obligations and it is up to the applicant to contact the state. He shared that he
23 had an experience in his career where he told someone he didn't think they needed an Act 250
24 permit, and they did. The person was very angry with him, but the language on the permit protected
25 him from being sued. It was an Act 250 criteria that he didn't see coming and he has learned to
26 stay out of that. He said you never know if you're under Act 250 jurisdiction until you ask the state
27 to issue a jurisdictional opinion.

28 He concluded saying he was happy to address other things but that is where he is currently at.

29 Cathy wanted to clarify that even a building permit for a garage or woodshed belongs to the parcel
30 and not the landowner at the time. Preston said it was part of the land record and goes with the
31 land, which is why it makes sense to record it with the land records. He added that some kinds of
32 permits expire but others are indefinite and go forever.

33 Cathy asked if he had ever worked in a town that issued a permit for a permitted use, such as a
34 home occupation.

35 Preston said the home occupation is the most common. He said people are protected by state to
36 use a minor portion of their dwelling for a home occupation. He said what was awkward was if
37 there was no permit because you're never sure if someone is doing something to keep track of.
38 Cathy added it also makes it difficult to know how industrious the town is. Preston said some
39 towns require a permit, but they get it because it's a guaranteed state right. Preston said if someone
40 wants the posterity to know they're legal, he will issue a permit, but if they don't, he doesn't
41 because he doesn't think he can require that they ask for a permit.

42 Barre asked if someone came in for a sign, all that stuff kicks and that's the trigger. Preston agreed
43 and said he tells people they have a right to a home occupation, but if they want a sign for the

1 home occupation, they must get a permit, which at least creates some record of the home
2 occupation. He said there were a few home occupations that don't have signs. Preston mentioned
3 talking with a guy recently who wanted to put an office in his home to do IT work and was
4 surprised to learn he didn't need a permit. In Massachusetts, where he was from, he did. Preston
5 told him that Massachusetts requires permits for everything. Barre said that was part of the reason
6 why he moved to Chester.

7 Barre asked if it was true when you ask for a sign permit, the town makes you get a business permit
8 along with that; knows what your business is; and lets the neighbors know and other things. Preston
9 answered they had talked about how permits go with the land. Preston said if the property has a
10 permit for a retail store and it changes hands, you don't give them another permit unless they are
11 changing how they do it. Preston mentioned on Main Street when shops change hands, they get a
12 permit for another sign, but he doesn't necessarily issue a permit for the change in ownership
13 because they already have one.

14 Cathy said the only time a use permit expires or becomes invalid is if the bylaws change and the
15 use that the permit was issued for is no longer allowed in that district. Preston said they have a few
16 of those. Preston said like the R-20 district that used to allow restaurants and no longer does. He
17 said there are some that used to allow retail and now don't, so some that are caught in that situation.

18 Barre said he had been thinking about it since he has been on the board. He said there seems to be
19 certain sorts of things that become don't dos, such as spot zoning. He thought the intent was to
20 avoid placing something somewhere that isn't appropriate. Barre said if people want something
21 where it isn't appropriate, they can tell them it's not zoned there and isn't appropriate. He said in
22 the case of an existing structure, that could be of some substance architecturally or size wise, the
23 idea of spot zoning is probably not applicable in its purest terms because they're not changing
24 something so that someone who wants to do something can fit it in in an inappropriate spot. Those
25 things already exist. In that case, he suggested they come up with another name for it or they need
26 to have a little more willingness for spot zoning, or those things will get caught up because they
27 may not want to make the whole area open for that type of business. Barre asked if he was right
28 about that.

29 Preston replied that the concept of zoning is a set of different zones: a zone for business; a zone
30 for industry; and a zone for residences. And yet peppered throughout town there are various
31 businesses in residential districts, so they are called non-conforming because they don't conform
32 to the zone they are in. Preston has reviewed some of the older bylaws and it was possible for the
33 DRB to approve continuations of non-conforming uses. The current bylaw says if it lapses for
34 more than 2 years, it can't be resumed. As a result, there are buildings that don't have uses.

35 Barre said that was in the current bylaws and not the proposed. Preston said he wasn't sure he
36 could say what was in the proposed bylaws but that it was a waste. Barre said there has been some
37 argument about the new bylaws being bad for business but thought this was a prime example of
38 the old bylaws being bad for business. He asked Preston if that was true. Preston said without even
39 knowing what the new bylaws say, he is not happy with what the current bylaw says, and he isn't
40 the only one who has expressed that. There are businesses that get caught in that situation.

41 Cathy asked if other towns he had been in, if the 2-year limit was common. Preston agreed. He
42 said there was a decision issued by the Vermont Supreme Court some years ago that said it should
43 be the goal of any bylaw that non-conforming uses would ultimately stop so that the district would
44 be all conforming. He said we don't live in that kind of pure world, nor is it state law. Some people

1 have suggested that they be called something different such as differently conforming to get away
2 from that non-conforming label. Cathy suggested historically conforming. Preston said when
3 someone purchases a house in a residential neighborhood, they have the right to expect that they're
4 not going to have anything noisy next to them. But if you buy a house next to a general store that
5 has existed for 100 years, you shouldn't be saying it's a residential neighborhood and pushing to
6 get rid of the store.

7 Preston mentioned several area businesses that are now in residential districts that, in theory, they
8 should be getting rid of them, and he didn't know if that's what they wanted to do. Barre said it
9 wasn't. Preston said he should get back to the question and he knew it was a charged issue, but he
10 didn't honestly know what the proposed bylaws said regarding it. Preston thought it would be nice
11 if there was some flexibility and wasn't happy with the current bylaw, in that regard.

12 Cathy said in the 1960s her high school she went to Hartford, CT to look at urban renewal which
13 was favorably looked upon at the time. Some kids came back and said they tore down
14 neighborhoods to make way for the new. When she was standing on the Green a few weeks ago
15 taking inventory, it occurred to her that urban renewal would have wiped Chester out. She said
16 there's been a huge shift in 50 or 60 years from wanting to wipe out and start fresh because they'll
17 do a better job to why should they throw away all the material and labor and tradition. In many
18 cases, it's been good for decades, if not hundreds of years. It's been such a shift that it is hard to
19 keep up with. She thought the shift was happening quicker than some bylaws can get revised.
20 Cathy suggested it was something they could look at with fresh eyes when they move forward with
21 the bylaws.

22 Preston concluded his presentation by saying there was a spike in permits last year because of
23 COVID and thought this year would be similar.

24 Tim said it was a good discussion.

25 Barre thanked Preston and told him he appreciated his insight and that his experience was
26 beneficial to the town.

27 **Agenda Item 7, Discuss the Agenda and Set the Date for the Next Meeting**

28 Cathy said unless she heard differently from Jason Rasmussen, there would be a zoning page to
29 discuss for the V-12 District. She asked if anyone had anything else they wanted to bring up at the
30 upcoming meeting. Tim said he didn't. Barre said for him personally, he has wanted direction and
31 a plan, and he wasn't sure if he had expressed that in the past, but he was thinking forward until
32 after March when they could have some reorganization and some more direction. He said when
33 Naomi was chair, they had a plan and some direction as to where they would be in a certain amount
34 of time. He realized they were doing some review of the old bylaws and the new bylaws and
35 thought that tonight was an example of an argument that there's good and bad in both. He asked if
36 there was any way they could have a plan from now until the end of the year as to what they were
37 going to accomplish. He said stuff like this is nice but wasn't helpful in getting the new zoning
38 bylaws done which was their plan.

39 Cathy said the subcommittee was reviewing V-12 and they were making assumptions about what
40 was business friendly, and she thought the entire Planning Commission should make that decision,
41 so they had a meeting and discussed it and took the answer back to the subcommittee and based
42 on that, they picked one of several options that Jason had put together on how to organize the V-
43 12. Jason took it and is composing the zoning district page for the V-12 and wants to discuss it

1 with everyone. When they are finished with that, the next step for the subcommittee would be the
2 administrative review portion of the bylaws. That would mean when something is a permitted use,
3 what do you have to do and when it's a conditional use, what do you have to do. That's part of the
4 reason why she wanted Preston to go over what just a regular building or zoning permit entails. If
5 you look at things that need to be checked, you need to be aware of the entire set of bylaws as it
6 applies to a new building, use, or whatever. She said as a zoning administrator, all the bylaws
7 come into play in one fashion or another. They took the simplest, least defined transaction and
8 went through it in preparation for when they review administration of the V-12.

9 Barre said it all made sense, but he questioned if they were going to have Jason do everything for
10 them and review it when he was done. Barre seemed irritated that they had spent their time listening
11 to what was involved in the permit process. He said filling out a permit was nothing new and
12 everyone must do it. He didn't feel it was going to be any harder or less hard no matter what and
13 was just part of the deal. Cathy said she felt it was important that they all spent one time looking
14 over what goes into the process of obtaining a simple zoning permit. Barre then asked if there was
15 a plan of what they were going to try to do between now and March and what some of their jobs
16 might be or were they just going to wait for those guys to do stuff and look at it.

17 Cathy said they would proceed through the V-12 District. They would start with the zoning page
18 with the uses and dimensional standards and then proceed to the administrative part of the bylaws.
19 She said in two weeks when they see the zoning district page, they would establish levels of review
20 and give some direction to Jason about how much work they want to put into each level of review.
21 She said those were things they went over very briefly with Brandi that they would now go over
22 in more detail. Cathy said that was one of the places, the administrative part, where people start to
23 say that the bylaws aren't business friendly.

24 Barre replied that they didn't have a plan then, but that was okay.

25 Preston offered to help Barre and suggested that next week when he saw where the subcommittee
26 was headed, and it wasn't at all what he wanted then whatever schedules they have made are kind
27 of blown up. Preston said they are counting on the next meeting to be a watershed and if they can
28 find some ground there, they can chart out where they are going to go.

29 Barre said that would be good. But then he said that he felt they were spending too much time on
30 the business-friendly element when the bylaws encompass so much more than that. He thought the
31 business-friendly part should be approached from a business plan or the town plan.

32 Preston hoped the next meeting would be more clarifying. Barre thanked him.

33 Tim made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Barre seconded it. It passed unanimously and the
34 meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.