

**TOWN OF CHESTER  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**October 10, 2016  
Minutes**

**Board Members Present:** Tom Bock, Tom Hildreth, Randy Wiggin, and Claudio Veliz.  
**Staff Present:** Michael Normyle, Zoning Administrator, Cathy Hasbrouck, Recording Secretary  
**Visitors Present:** Julie Hance, Jeff Hance, Philip Perlah, Kelly Arrison, Amy Mosher, Marilyn Mahusky, Kelly Arrison, Shawn Cunningham.

**Agenda Item 1, minutes of the September 19, 2016 meeting**

The meeting opened with a review of the September 19, 2016 meeting minutes. Randy Wiggin moved to accept the minutes, Claudio Veliz seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and the motion to accept the minutes as presented passed.

**Agenda Item 2 Follow up from previous Citizen Comments**

Julie Hance addressed the Commission on the issue of a grant the town received for work on the Town Plan. Citizens and select board members had asked her if Chester had lost a grant by not completing a new town plan on time. She explained that a state law required two new chapters in the Town Plan, one on economic development and the second on flood resiliency. The town obtained a grant whose sole purpose was to create those two chapters. Working with the Regional Planning Commission, the chapters were written. The Town Plan adopted in 2015 consisted of the previous Town Plan and the two new chapters. The grant was closed out once its purpose had been fulfilled.

**Agenda Item 3, Review and vote on revised Reporting Form with respect to the proposed amendments to the Unified Development By-Laws**

The Commission reviewed the Reporting Form emailed to them the evening before. The Reporting Form is a summary of the changes proposed to the Unified Development Bylaws. Many of the comments from citizens were about the proposed changes to the Bylaws themselves, not on whether the Reporting Form was an adequate and accurate summary of the changes and the reasoning that the Planning Commission used when proposing them.

Two concerns about the document emerged. The first was that it implied that a request from a single citizen could create a change to the Bylaws. The second was that the justifications for Bylaw changes listed in the Reporting Form were primarily economic, as opposed to other reasons, such as public safety. Claudio Veliz said that he felt that many of the justifications listed in the document were simply assertions and not justifications. Marilyn Mahusky and Amy Mosher also spoke in the discussion.

There was a discussion about the role of public comment in the creation of the Reporting Form. While the writing of the Reporting Form is the responsibility of the Planning Commission, the public may comment on the document with regard to how it summarizes and presents the reasoning behind the proposed changes to the Bylaws.

It was agreed that two corrections to the Reporting Form be made during the meeting. The changes

added two conditional uses to a table of proposed added uses in the document. A motion to approve and sign the Reporting Form and to schedule a public hearing for Tuesday November 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM was made. Tom Bock, Tom Hildreth and Randy Wiggin voted in favor of the motion and Claudio Veliz voted against it.

**Agenda Item 4, Review the structure of the current Town Plan and drafts of chapters for new Town Plan**

The process of creating a new Town Plan was discussed. Tom Bock described methods employed in the past. Claudio Veliz made suggestions for the current process, specifically having a “bucket” to collect ideas. The inventory of Town Plan versions was discussed. There is a current Town Plan, sent in the Commission member’s packet, and a collection of chapter drafts, sent to the Commission members as e-mails. Chapter 3, Utilities and Facilities Plan is the chapter to be discussed first. The draft of Chapter 3 has a date of 3/24/16 and includes recent (as of March 2016) input from heads of several town departments. It was decided that at the next meeting the draft version of Chapter 3 would be discussed. Tom Bock would locate information about Section 248 of Act 250, which discusses the rights of towns in the placement of renewable energy resources such as solar farms. Once the Commission had discussed the chapter, town department heads will be contacted for more input.

Claudio Veliz offered to assemble a list of reading materials for the commission members to aid in the plan creation process.

**Agenda Item 5, Citizen Comments**

There were no further citizen comments.

**Agenda Item 6, Set date for next meeting**

The next meeting will be Monday October 24, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

Randy Wiggin moved to adjourn the meeting. Claudio Veliz seconded the motion. The motion passed.