

Town of Chester Planning Commission
Nov. 20, 2017 7:00pm
Minutes

Commission members in attendance: Naomi Johnson, Barre Pinske, Tim Roper and Cheryl Joy Lipton. Claudio Veliz was out of town.

Staff present: Zoning Administrator Michael Normyle.

Others present Terry Christenson, Lee Gustafson, Richard Cloud, Matt McCarthy, Dan Cook.

Naomi opened the meeting and asked for a review of the draft minutes from the Nov. 6th meeting. There was no discussion, Barre made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Tim. The minutes were approved with no dissent or changes

Naomi asked if there were any Citizen Comments, and there were none.

Naomi recognized the three department heads who were also in attendance: Dan Cook from the Ambulance, Police Chief Rick Cloud and Matt from the Parks & Recreation. Naomi asked for each to review and describe any changes to their departments section in Chapter 3 (Utilities & Facilities).

Rick updated the number of officers currently on the force (5 including himself). He also advised that with changing regulations, none of the officers are EMTs. Rick added that they are hopeful the new Public Works building is a reality soon. A reference was made as to the Chief's opinion on the drugs and opiates in Chester. He will follow up as requested.

Matt offered a few updates: the ice rink was relocated from Cobleigh Field to the Pinnacle, the new playground at the Pinnacle, 9 hole disc golf course also at the Pinnacle.

Referencing very positive comments he heard from friends, who recently moved to Chester, regarding the recreation amenities, Barre suggested that Matt might want to make his section more of a promotional piece. Tim relayed a story about meeting a few of his ex-baseball players, who commented to the Coach that "those were the best days" and also encouraged Matt to feel free to promote all of the good facilities and programs the Parks & Recreation Dept. offers.

Naomi read the notes provided by Jeff Holden, which included misc. statistics regarding lineal footage of new water lines, various changes from plastic lines to 8" ductile pipe, 12 new hydrants, etc. He is very hopeful that the proposed GIS Mapping of the W & S sewer lines will be implemented soon.

Naomi confirmed that with changing State regs, the Town Plans are now valid for 8 years vs the old model of only 5 years. She also confirmed that the Planning Commission is really interested in the Dept. Heads goals and objectives for the future, as opposed to updating what has been done in the past. Agreeing with Naomi, Barre wants the Town Plan to include more of a vision toward the future.

Recognizing the tone of the discussions so far, Dan asked for more time to re-think his goals and objectives for the Rescue Squad. Naomi confirmed that she would like Dan, Matt and Rick to take some time over the next week or so, and come back on Dec 4th with another update

The newest Planning Commission member, Cheryl Joy, offered that she would encourage the Dept. Heads to come up their own section from scratch as opposed to just updating old data. This would ensure all new ideas are considered.

Naomi thanked the 3 Dept. Heads, who began leaving the meeting and the discussion continued.

Following the theme of having the Town Plan include more promotional/visionary ideas, Cheryl Joy brought up the fact that Chester was ranked the 4th safest Town in VT in 2016, although the PC members were not certain who & where this award came from. As the Board continued to review the Chapter 3 draft in more detail, they realized there were more updates needed. For example Tim pointed out that the Police coverage is no longer handled at the old Rockingham location on VT. Rte. 103 South.

Lee asked if we could make the Planning Commission drafts and Town Plan be *Searchable Documents*. Michael offered that David and Julie were looking into the Planning Commission being issued Town owned laptop/tablets from which the board packet materials could be uploaded and therefore accessed from home *via the Cloud*. In the meantime, it was agreed that board members would be sent MS Word versions of the working drafts along with a PDF version, to ensure there was one working document with all agreed upon changes complete as per Tim's request.

With no further comments on Chapter 3, Naomi referenced the summary notes from the *Noise Presentation* by Tech Environmental on Sept 18th. Naomi listed 3 key take-a-ways from this meeting and her notes:

- Clarify that the sound levels are maximums
- Clarify that the decibels were A weighted (dBA)
- Clarify the property line point of reference for the readings. The assumption by Tech Environmental and the DRB interpretations to date are that the location is the property line of the parcel where the sound is being generated, but this is not stated (or clear) in the by-laws.

Naomi volunteered to draft a letter to the DRB requesting they comment and hopefully attend a future PC meeting to clarify what if any changes are to be made regarding sound levels. There was lengthy discussion from Barre of what the goals of the sound ordinance should include, and that they be written so as to not interfere with traditional activities of Chester residents at their homes. Some of the specific activities mentioned were using air tools to work on a vehicle in one's driveway and running a chainsaw to cut cordwood from logs. Barre also asked that there be some gray areas left for interpretation, kind of like police having leeway to not write a ticket for someone driving five or ten miles per hour over the speed limit.

Naomi requested all PC members carefully review the Tech Environmental summary notes and appropriate links for review at the Dec. 4th meeting. Naomi also confirmed that Michael had printed out another copy for all board members.

With no further discussion, Naomi requested a motion to close the meeting. A motion was made by Barre with a 2nd by Tim.

