

TOWN OF CHESTER
SPECIAL SELECTBOARD
UDB PUBLIC HEARING

February 15, 2017
Minutes

PRESENT: John DeBenedetti; Dan Cote; Arne Jonynas; David Pisha

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Shawn Cunningham; Randy Miles; Neil Allen; Lillian Willis; Peter Klepp; David Willis; Phil Perlah; Russell Monier; Justin Savage; Maureen Savage; Amy Mosher; Barre Pinske; Claudio Veliz; Margaret Straub; Roy Spaulding; Roy Spaulding, Jr.; Jan Moot; Nena Nanfeldt; Frank Bidwell; Gail Stewart; Huzon Stewart; Cathy Hasbrouck; Carla Westine; Tom Hildreth; William Lindsay; Marilyn Mahusky; Prescott Warren; Laura Martinez; Joanne Warren; Mike O'Neil; Amy O'Neil; Kelly Arrison; Suzy Forlie; Kathy Pellett; Brian Mosher; Laurie Goodrich

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Everyone stood for the pledge of allegiance.

John DeBenedetti stated that this is the reconvening of the public hearing for the UDB review. He reminded everybody that the Selectboard is trying to keep comments to 3 minutes if possible.

Lillian Willis asked that she be allowed to speak to Article 1. She presented a letter to the Selectboard. Lillian Willis stated that she is speaking on behalf of the Chester Historic Preservation Committee. The letter presents draft language for the purpose statement in Article 1 as well as the application of these Bylaws. The letter is attached to these minutes.

Nena Nanfeldt, Chester Conservation Commission volunteer, would like to support the changes proposed by the Chester Historic Preservation Committee to Article 1.

Amy O'Neil stated that she had not attended previous meetings of the Planning Commission when they adopted the first round of the UDBs. She stated that when she reviewed the UDBs for the first time, she noticed that Heavy Construction Trades and Building Construction Trades were not allowed uses anymore but there were still definitions. Amy O'Neil stated that she brought this to the attention of the Planning Commission who indicated that this was not their intention. Amy O'Neil also discussed Article 3.21 which refers to parcels in 2 or more districts, which language had changed. She stated that this locked her property dramatically. These conversations with the Planning Commission prompted the DRB to review the UDBs further and see if there are other errors. Amy O'Neil stated that she objects to having her property restricted further. She gave a history of her property and what she and Mike O'Neil have done to improve

the property. This property is now a covenanted industrial park which adds benefits to the town. Amy O'Neil asked the Selectboard to focus only on the changes that are being presented by the Planning Commission and move these documents forward as there are businesses waiting.

Peter Klepp stated that he owns the armory and J&L Metrology. He encouraged the Selectboard to move these bylaws forward as they are waiting to move into their building.

Maureen Savage stated that she and her husband purchased the old Universal Map property. She stated that under the current zoning they cannot develop their business as intended when they purchased the property. Maureen Savage stated that she has invested thousands of dollars into this building and cannot get tenants because of the zoning issues. She encouraged the Selectboard to move these bylaws further so that business can develop in Chester.

Tom Hildreth, Planning Commission member, clarified that the lot coverage issue for J&L Metrology was addressed by the Planning Commission members over 1 year ago. He apologized to Peter Klepp for what has happened.

Dan Cote stated that he is not happy about why this is taking to so long. He is discouraged that businesses are being held back from further development.

Michael Normyle, Zoning Administrator, stated that the Planning Commission has been working on this document for over a year. He gave his opinion that no individual intentionally held up the process. The process took time. He also stated that all of the businesses that talked tonight will still have to go through the DRB process and will still be screened.

Barry Pinske encouraged the Selectboard to move the UDBs forward. He stated that there is an argument for the rural character in town. He stated that farming is a huge industry which surrounds this community. Barry Pinske stated that logging is a huge industry in Vermont and Chester has some of the longest mileage of dirt roads. He spoke in favor of dump trucks and farm tractors.

Randy Miles stated that his business is in limbo as well. He urged the Board to focus on the issues that are critical and move things along quicker. He stated that enhancing businesses in town only benefits everybody.

Marilyn Mahusky stated that it is important to remember that the business uses are only one part of town planning. She stated her concerns that the Planning Commission has not considered planning for the entire community. She stated that the bylaws are not supposed to be written to benefit sole property owners. Marilyn Mahusky stated that she encourages the Planning Commission to look at overlay districts. She stated that when a change is made to benefit one property owner, it can have an impact on another property

that is negative. Marilyn Mahusky encouraged the Selectboard to move forward with the rest of the bylaws and send the conditional uses back to the Planning Commission.

John DeBenedetti clarified that not making changes to Article 2 is a major change that will have to go back to the Planning Commission. Marilyn Mahusky stated that she believes that not all of Article 2 would have to go back to the Planning Commission. Discussion ensued on this. Dan Cote stated that he still has concerns that this would hold up business development in town. He stated that he would like to see this settled much quicker. Marilyn Mahusky stated that there are people who are going to be hurt on either side. She stated that she does not feel the solutions of the conflicts are so simple. She stated that this is not philosophical but there are consequences to individual property owners.

Carla Westine, resident and DRB member stated that the DRB met soon after the 2014 bylaws were adopted because they noticed that there were many inconsistencies among the document. These changes were brought to the Planning Commission long before any other individuals came to the Planning Commission with their concerns. These inconsistencies were oversights made by the Planning Commission when they made the changes. These inconsistencies are attached to the minutes. Carla Westine stated that most of these changes were not made by individual property owners they were requested by the DRB. She also reviewed the permitting process as the property owner comes before the DRB. She encouraged the Selectboard to move forward with the proposed changes.

Dan Cote questioned how the process can move faster. Carla Westine stated that she doesn't believe that the process can be moved quicker. She explained that the Planning Commission did put some thought process into adding these uses. The concept of overlays was not discussed as a DRB group. Phil Perlah brought the concept of overlays to the Planning Commission as a private citizen. Carla Westine stated that this is a great concept that can be reviewed after these bylaws are adopted. Arne Jonynas stated that he is not in favor of holding up these bylaws and does agree that changes could begin very soon after these bylaws were adopted.

John DeBenedetti stated that the Board has received 5 letters which are all attached to these minutes.

Arne Jonynas suggested that there be a special meeting just for the purpose of the bylaws.

The hearing was recessed until March 1, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. prior to the Selectboard meeting. Articles 2 and 3 will be on the agenda. The UDBs will be most of the agenda at that meeting.

The public hearing was recessed at 8:12 p.m.