

1. Call to Order

The Chester Planning & Zoning Commission met on Thursday, June 10, 2021 as a hybrid meeting, with virtual participation via ZOOM. Chair Jon Lavy called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M.

2. Roll Call and Seating of Alternates:

Commission members attending in person at Town Hall and seated were Seth Fidel, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Henry Krempel, Jon Lavy, Steve Merola, Bettie Perreault, Michael Sanders, Peter Zanardi and Alternates Pat Bisacky (seated for Keith Scherber), with Shubert Koong via ZOOM.. Also present via ZOOM was Zoning Compliance Officer John Guskowski. Peter Walsh of Lyman Real Estate was present via ZOOM; John and Sally Ratchford attended in person for part of the meeting.

3. Audience of Citizens: none had anything to say at this time.

4. Old Business: There was nothing brought up.

5. New Business: In response to multiple requests for variance related to side and rear set-back requirements, proposed amendment to the Zoning Regulations to address the issue was presented. Following detailed discussion and careful consideration of ramifications varying options might present, while maintaining the intent to protect neighboring residents,

**Motion by Pat Bisacky, seconded by Seth Fidel, to formally receive the application for addition to the Zoning Regulations of Section 60A.3 (E) ACCESSORY BUILDINGS: Except within the Gateway Buffer Area required under Section 90, detached accessory buildings in the R-1 and R-½ Zoning Districts not to exceed 250 square feet in size, not more than fifteen (15) feet in height, and not used for the housing of humans or animals, may be located in the required rear and side yard set-backs, rearward of the front primary façade of the principal building to which they are accessory, but not less than five (5) feet from any lot line, provided such accessory buildings do not, in the aggregate, occupy more than twenty percent (20%) of the total are of such rear and side yard set-backs.** The motion passed unanimously.

**On Motion by Seth Fidel, seconded by Bettie Perreault, the Commission will schedule a Public Hearing on the proposed addition to the Zoning Regulations at its next regular meeting on Thursday, July 8, 2021.** The motion passed unanimously.

6. Other – Guests or Members: Nothing was brought up at this time.

7. Report of Officers and Subcommittee: Report of Zoning Officer:

John Guskowski reported on the following:

- Met with John and Sally Ratchford (85 Wig Hill Road) and has received complaints from other neighbors concerning activities at 87 Wig Hill Road. A commercial camp ground is being operated, events held, an accessory building constructed in an R-2 Residential Zone with no record of permits having been applied for or approved, all

in violation of the Zoning Regulations. A Notice of Zoning Violation has been sent to property owner Christiaan Cokas advising such commercial uses are not allowed. Owner has been given ten (10) days to either cease operations described entirely, or initiate corrective actions, including but not limited to application for construction of an accessory structure, Zoning Board of Appeals, proposed text amendment to the Zoning Regulations, or other permit and documentation and explanation of how the current operations could come into compliance with local regulations. The correspondence was copied to both the Building Official and CRAHD Sanitarian.

- Peter Walsh of Lyman Real Estate approached the Commission after having met with the Zoning Officer in connection with parcels #2 and #4 on Inspiration Lane for Commission feedback relating to a proposal to rezone the properties from Industrial to Residential. Various options were offered for consideration, as well as a number of reasons such a change might provide beneficial employment, transportation and economic options for residents. Walsh was advised to review the suggestion further with the Zoning Officer and then return to the Commission with more property information and detail, more clarification of potential development details, etc. The item will be included on a meeting agenda when information is available and submitted.
- Owners of Main Street restaurants and other businesses have been advised of a Governor's Executive Order and requirements of the Zoning Regulations in connection with outside dining, sidewalk tables and seating and pedestrian use of sidewalks, as well as the annual renewal of permits for outside dining. A second letter has been sent requiring compliance with regulations within two (2) weeks. Non-compliance will result in a Cease and Desist Order, effective immediately, effectively shutting down non-compliant operations. These steps establish a clear paper trail for enforcement going forward.
- The Planning & Zoning section of the Town's website has been upgraded to include additional information, clearer detail and link to GIS mapping. Future improvements are expected to include organizing the Zoning Regulations and numerous amendments into a single document, and to add action steps as provided in the 2019 POCD as items to review and address on monthly meeting agendas.
- Proposal by Tyche Planning & Policy Group to continue to provide Planning and Zoning Support Services has been received. It included the proposed scope of services and associated fees for performing this work for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Commission members noted with approval the services that have been provided for the previous six months and noted that funds for the extension are included in the approved Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget for the Town of Chester.

**On Motion by Michael Sanders, seconded by Seth Fidel approved the Commission's acceptance of the Proposal as present, to be sent to the Board of Selectmen for approval and signature.** The motion passed unanimously.

- Legislative update focused on legislation recently considered and/or passed in the Legislative session which just ended. Affordable housing and related topics were discussed and options to address these issues reviewed. In addition, Planning & Zoning officials will now be required to participate in four (4) hours of training annually, with one hour to be related to affordable housing. Local zoning regulations and related issues will need to be considered to address the new requirements and their available options. RiverCOG is currently beginning development of a Regional Affordable Housing Plan, and will likely be seeking two representatives from each member town to generate a plan within the next year.
- An Executive Order in connection with virtual meetings will expire on June 30, 2021. A Special Legislative Session may need to be called to address the need to cover municipal needs concerning adequate technology to continue to provide for virtual meetings for those who require or desire to continue them.

9. Bills for Payment: There were none presented.

10. Communications, Receipt of New Petitions, New Applications received after posting of Agenda: There was nothing presented.

11. Approval of Minutes: May 13, 2021 Regular Meeting

**On Motion by Henry Krempel, seconded by Steve Merola, the minutes of the May 13, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved.** Elaine Fitzgibbons and Michael Sanders abstained.

12. Pending Litigation: There is no pending litigation.

Chair Jon Lavy advised the Commission that after almost 20 years as a member of the Planning & Zoning Commission, he has chosen to step down both as a member and as Chair, effective June 11, 2021, and will submit his resignation to the Town Clerk and Town officials. He noted that his time on the Commission has brought him much satisfaction. Commission members unanimously expressed their appreciation to him for all he has done as Chairman, and the achievements and successes the Commission has gained under his leadership.

13. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission,

**On Motion by Peter Zanardi, seconded by Henry Krempel, by unanimous approval the meeting adjourned at 8:14 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Secretary