

1. Call to Order

The Chester Planning & Zoning Commission met on Thursday, January 31, 2023 at the Town Hall with Chair Michael Sanders calling the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

2. Roll Call and Seating of Alternates:

Commission members present and seated were Michael Sanders, Pat Bisacky, Seth Fidel, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Henry Krempel, Steve Merola, Bettie Perreault, Keith Scherber, and Peter Zanardi (seated for Shubert Koong). Participating via ZOOM was Zoning Compliance Officer John Guskowski. Also present were Gary Rooke (representing 85 Dock Road), Joe Cohen and Rich Tsou.

3. Audience of Citizens: Nobody spoke at this time.

4. New Business

a. Gary Rooke, representing property at 85 Dock Road, advised he had submitted a narrative from James Hayes in connection with the proposed development at 85 Dock Road and the application for a Special Exception that was being submitted to the Zoning Official. It was noted that the Commission has 65 days from date of submission to schedule a Public Hearing on Applications. Following comments by ZCO Guskowski and discussion by members, it was decided to schedule a Public Hearing for the March 9, 2023 meeting pending submission of a completed application prior to publication of the legal notice fifteen days prior to that date.

b. Update on status of regulations in the Gateway Conservation Zone: There was no additional information available.

c. Status of RiverCOG region Comprehensive Economic Strategy: There was no additional information available.

d. Plan of Conservation and Development: There was no additional information available.

5. Old Business: There was nothing brought up.

6. Other – Guests or Members:

Joe Cohen provided a photo of an area of Pattaconk Creek area abutting the Valley Railroad rail line and in the approximate vicinity of Pattaconk Yacht Club on which a floating structure was located with an apparent connecting causeway across the waterway. He questioned the legality of the structure, its location and its legality, with additional commentary concerning the lack of enforcement of regulations and activities.

7. Report of Officers and Subcommittees:

8. Report of Zoning Compliance Officer

ZCO Guskowski advised enforcement action in connection with a property on Butter Jones Road was had been resumed following the closing of earlier foreclosure action. Legal counsel is pursuing a “final warning” to the property owners.

Planting of replacement vegetation on property at 85 Dock Road will commence when spring weather permits in compliance with plans approved by the Gateway Commission. Commission members repeated concerns about the removal of trees and other vegetation that had taken place and the lack of enforcement of such regulated activities was unacceptable.

9. Legislative Update:

Legislation has been proposed concerning Special Exception procedures. The proposal would move action of applications for Special Exceptions from the local Planning and Zoning Commissions to the Zoning Board of Appeals. ZCO Guskowski, as chair of the Connecticut chapter of the American Planning Association, reviewed that organization’s opinion as finding little opposition to the proposed legislation. The opinion of another state-wide organization, however, was not favorable.

10. Bills for Payment:

**Courant invoice in the amount of \$66.44 was unanimously approved for payment on motion by Seth Fidel, seconded by Peter Zanardi.**

11. Communications, Receipt of New Petitions, New Applications

Communication from a group named Desegregate CT requesting to make a presentation to the Commission was received. It was noted that the organization is speaking to groups throughout the state. Chair Sanders will contact them to follow up with the organization. It was noted that Chester currently has many of the locations and services, such as access to bus service and transportation planning already available. ZCO Guskowski advised that participation through a meeting with a group such as this could be considered a part of the legislatively required training for Commission members.

DEEP notification to property owners of 2 Dock Road was reviewed. The correspondence was a Warning Notice of “an additional dock float out of compliance” with DEEP license #200601564 from December 2008. The property is located in tidal wetlands; local agencies do not have jurisdiction.

12. Approval of Minutes: January 12, 2023 Regular Meeting

**On Motion by Steve Merola, seconded by Seth Fidel, the minutes of the January 12, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved.** Elaine Fitzgibbons and Henry Krempel abstained from voting.

13. Pending Litigation: Nothing additional was reported.

13. Adjournment

The Commission was scheduled to be co-presenter with the Board of Selectmen at an informational meeting with potential developers/owners/managers of a proposed multi-family project under consideration for 47 Middlesex Avenue (property of former St. Joseph's R.C. Church Parish Center) immediately following the end of this meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Commission,

**On Motion by Peter Zanardi, seconded by Henry Krempel, the meeting adjourned at 6:32 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Bettie Perreault*, Secretary