

Chester Planning & Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting, November 9, 2017
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1. Call to Order

The Chester Planning & Zoning Commission held its regular meeting on Thursday, November 9, 2017, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Acting Chairman Sally Murray called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

2. Roll Call & Seating of Alternates

Those members in attendance and seated were Sally Murray, Steven Merola, Keith Scherber, Henry Krempel, Peter Zanardi, Patricia Bisacky (seated for vacancy), Michael Sanders (seated for J. Stack) and Elaine Fitzgibbons (seated for D. Joslow). There were approximately 30 citizens in the audience.

Acting Chairman Murray reminded everyone that officers will be appointed next month.

3. Audience of Citizens

There were about 30 citizens in the audience. Copies of a draft Short Term Rental Regulation was distributed to everyone in the audience and Commission members. Acting Chairman Murray noted the Commission has consulted with its attorney and he has provided a “bare bones” draft of a new regulation for Short Term Rentals. Everyone is welcome to take a copy, review it and send comments to either the Zoning Compliance Officer or come back to the next month's meeting.

4. Old Business

(a) Draft AirBnB Regulation, for discussion purposes

Christine Palm, East Liberty Street, asked if this was a draft. Acting Chairman Murray stated it was a draft and the Commission would be willing to take any input.

Deb Vilcheck, 23 Butter Jones Road asked if this property is continuing to be rented. Acting Chairman Murray replied yes, as far as we know.

Elaine Fitzgibbons noted she would like to get an understanding of where the public lives. She indicated this situation encompasses a lot of properties throughout the Town. This is a major complex problem not only in Connecticut but other states as well. California doesn't know what to do about it. The

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Commission is asking for everyone's patience and is interested in supporting everyone.

Kim Senay noted in Colorado they allow two permits for a neighborhood. Acting Chairman Murray noted that definitely is on our list of considerations.

Lois Nadel asked about the movie being filmed and whether the Town has regulations for that use. Wouldn't that be a commercial use in a residential area.

Deb Vilcheck noted this seems like the homeowner is not there. It is being switched to a commercial use and is beyond a reasonable use for the neighboring area. What about commercial liability insurance, etc. Acting Chairman Murray noted all these things are under consideration.

Michael Sanders asked if any permit was required for this. Acting Chairman Murray replied not at this time. She also noted the Commission will be discussing this in detail.

Karli Gilbertson noted she met with the police who urged the neighbors to call them if there were issues.

A resident from Spring Street noted this town has a lot of attractions. If there are a lot of these going on, it will change the attractiveness of the town.

A resident from 4 School Lane asked if this affects property taxes. Buyers don't want a lot of noise. Acting Chairman Murray noted that also is under considerations. She reiterated there are towns all over the nation dealing with this issue. There is a wide range of approaches to this, but there is no major answer at this time. The Commission will proceed and do what it can to protect the quality of life and protect the town, etc.

Letter from Drew Knowlton and William Schaeffer was submitted to the Commission. Acting Chairman Murray read the letter into the record.

Acting Chairman Murray noted the Commission will review the draft language and go over it in detail next month, Special Exception vs. Permit. We not only

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need to think about the regulation but enforcement as well. We will ask Commission Counsel to attend the next meeting.

First Selectwoman Gister noted for the record there was one Deep River resident present this evening because “this is going to hit my town.”

5. New Business – none.

6. Report of Officers and Subcommittees

(a) Report from Zoning Compliance Officer

ZCO Brown reported on the following -

- 18 E. Liberty Street – Notice of Violation letter has gone out.
- 15 Prospect Street, School Bus property – Notice of Violation letter has gone out.
- 167 W. Main Street, No Dumping Sign – sign has been removed.
- Received inquiry regarding Gun Repair Business as a Customary Home Occupation.
- December is the Commission's Annual Meeting for electing officers.

(b) Plan of Conservation & Development Update

Michael Sanders gave an update on the POCD. He noted Chester is due for the 10 year update for the State on the local POCD. The Town issued Requests for Proposals. The POCD Committee selected the consultant. Sanders noted he and Sally Murray are committee members. The consultant contract was signed in September and the committee met with the consultant on October 11th. A survey was prepared and was distributed on First Friday as well as put on the Town Website with a link to WeKnowWhereItIs.com. The purpose of the survey is to get ideas on what people want. Sanders indicated that Planning & Zoning is responsible for doing the POCD. It is also being looked at as a strategic plan and a plan guiding the Capital Budget. The Committee is also looking at sending out a post card to everyone in town. The last sentence will read, “it is your town, tell us what you want.” The Committee will be looking to see what the priorities are that people want. The first Workshop will be some time in January. We expect a different level of product this time. The cost for the consultant is about \$60,000. The last time P&Z used CRERPA and the cost was about \$20,000.

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Sally Murray urged everyone to fill out the survey. Public input is very important. This will be for the next 10 years. The goals stated in the Plan will have a direct effect on our State Grants and Funding.

First Selectwoman Gister urged everyone to tell their friends and neighbors. Everyone has a different prospective and everyone should be an ambassador to this process. What's meaningful to everyone.

Michael Sanders reiterated the survey is just a starting point. How do residents want to redirect or not change things in Town. The Town is about 20% industrial and commercial in the tax base. What will be the impact of Chester Village West and the change of ownership. How will this effect the Town in the future. How does 20% commercial compare to public lands. Chester has a lot of State Forest.

7. Bills for Payment – none.

8. Communications, Receipt of New Petitions, New Applications – none.

9. Approval of Minutes – October 12, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes
Motion by Zanardi, second by Krempel, to approve October 12, 2017 Minutes as written. Approved with Bisacky and Scherber abstaining.

10. Pending Litigation – none.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Fitzgibbons, second by Merola, to adjourn at 9:00 PM.
Unanimously Approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Judith R. Brown, Recording Secretary