

Chester Planning & Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2021
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1. Call to Order

The Chester Planning & Zoning Commission met on Thursday, January 14, 2021 via ZOOM. Vice Chair Michael Sanders called to meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.,

2. Roll Call and Seating of Alternates:

Commission members attending via ZOOM and seated were Michael Sanders, Seth Fidel, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Henry Krempel, Steve Merola, Bettie Perreault, Keith Scherber, Peter Zanardi, Alternates Pat Bisacky, Shubert Koong (seated for Jon Lavy) and Andrew Landsman. Also present were John Guskowski, Mike D'Amato and Joe Cohen.

3. Audience of Citizens

- a. John Guskowski and Michael D'Amato were introduced. They will serve as Zoning Compliance Officers for the Planning & Zoning Commission, assisting the Town with other tasks as appropriate and needed. Guskowski advised they serve in a consulting capacity, providing land use services for numerous small towns, provide grant-writing services, while tailoring those services to each community. They will hold regular hours in the Town Hall, coordinating with other land use officials, and be available by phone and/or email when not in the Town Hall, streamlining the systems within the Land Use office, meeting changing needs and regulatory requirements, while trying to make zoning understandable. For a six-month agreement, a flat monthly fee would allow budget certainty while addressing immediate needs. Commission members asked numerous questions including the number of hours per week, feedback from the community on their service, with note that following regulations does not always result in praise but does bring professionalism to the zoning compliance function.

Motion made by Bettie Perreault, seconded by Peter Zanardi, to appoint John Guskowski and Michael D'Amato as co-Zoning Compliance Officers for the Town of Chester Planning & Zoning Commission for the period from January 15, 2021 through June 30, 2021 for a monthly fee of \$3,000. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Old Business

- a. Discussion of Gateway Standards: pending further review and action by the Gateway Commission, no discussion was held. Mike Sanders suggested the Commission invite Chester's member of the Gateway Commission, Tom Brelsford to attend the Commission meeting in February or March to brief members on what Gateway is doing and the regulations for the Gateway zone.
- b. Status of Land Use Office and Zoning desk: Bettie Perreault advised that the Land Use Office currently has no clerical staffing, that the clerical duties are included in the duties assigned to the Zoning Compliance Officer in the Town's Personnel Manual. The position should fulfill the clerical responsibilities for the positions of Zoning and Inland Wetlands Officials, Sanitarian and Building Official, coordinating the responsibilities of those

agencies/offices. As a part-time position, potentially another, possibly part-time Town employee might be assigned those tasks. Desirable skills should include familiarity and knowledge of land use functions, ability to relate to the public and good clerical skills. Supervision of the position is, per the Town Personnel Manual, by the First Selectman and funding for the position should be included in that budget, not the budget of the Planning & Zoning Commission.

- c. Committee Report: Zoning Enforcement Officer: No report, action taken and reported earlier.

5. New Business

- a. Commission members were reminded of the 2021 meeting schedule, which had been previously distributed.
- b. Budget for fiscal year 2021-2022: Budget recommendations for the up-coming fiscal year were reviewed, explained and discussed.

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	
Regular Payroll	\$28,890	\$1	Eliminate this line and put in \$1 as a "place holder"
Outside Clerical	\$2,000	\$1,460	Reduced. 12 meetings @ 4 hours @ \$20/hour plus \$500 to cover posting legal notices, etc.
Advertising	\$800	\$1,500	Based on actual for current year
General Legal	\$15,000	\$10,000	With new ZCO, should see less need/use
Outside Contractor	\$0	\$42,000	Based on advice from new ZCO
Printing	<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$2,000</u>	Need to update and print Zoning Regulations, etc.
	\$47,190	\$56,961	

On motion by Seth Fidel, seconded by Shubert Koong, the proposed recommendations were unanimously approved for submission to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance.

6. Other – Guests or Members:

Joe Cohen advised that in September 2020 he had recommended to the Board of Selectmen the Town purchase the property at 9 Parkers Point Road, which is currently for sale at a little over \$1 million. By bringing it to this Commission and with more public input, acquisition of the property could provide Chester residents with greater access to the CT River, be immediately abutting the existing Town boat launch, allow the CT River to play a greater role for Chester residents, and would be an asset to the community. Potential uses were noted and discussed extensively; note was also made of potential future costs. Such an acquisition would also implement a goal in the 2019 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) to provide greater access to the CT River.

7. Report of Officers and Subcommittee

In the absence of acting Zoning Compliance Officer Jon Lavy, Bettie Perreault reported the zoning office has received phone calls addressing fences and property line issues, interest in undeveloped parcels of land for single-family residential construction, realtors with clients who have interest in the property at 244 Middlesex Avenue and the constraints the property and its prior uses has, and a realtor seeking information concerning the St. Joseph Church parking lot and parish center, noting it would be a good location for senior housing or similar.

8. Bills for Payment

On Motion by Seth Fidel, seconded by Keith Scherber, invoices from Dzialo, Pickett & Allen for legal services in the amounts of \$55.50 and \$79.00, a total of \$134.50 were unanimously approved for payment.

9. Communications, Receipt of New Petitions, New Applications received after posting of Agenda

There was no correspondence to report; no petitions or applications received.

10. Approval of Minutes: December 10, 2020 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting.

On Motion by Peter Zanardi, seconded by Seth Fidel, the minutes of the December 10, 2020 Public Hearing were approved by seated members, with Henry Krempel, Shubert Koong and Keith Scherber abstaining.

On Motion by Seth Fidel, seconded by Elaine Fitzgibbons, the minutes of the December 10, 2020 Public Hearing were approved by seated members, with Henry Krempel, Shubert Koong and Keith Scherber abstaining.

11. Pending Litigation: There is no pending litigation.

Mike Sanders reminded Commission members that as representative to CT RiverCOG he had forwarded to them the information and links to the Regional Land Use Map the RiverCOG was working on, advising how to access the material and asking that they contact him with their input, information and advice to be brought back to the RiverCOG for inclusion in its review.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission,

On Motion by Elaine Fitzgibbons, seconded by Seth Fidel, the meeting adjourned at 8:02 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault

Secretary