

1. Call to Order

The Chester Planning & Zoning Commission met on Thursday, May 13, 2021 as a hybrid meeting, with virtual participation via ZOOM. Chair Jon Lavy called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.

2. Roll Call and Seating of Alternates:

Commission members attending and seated were Seth Fidel and Henry Krempel (both via ZOOM), Jon Lavy, Steve Merola, Bettie Perreault, Peter Zanardi and Pat Bisacky. Also present via ZOOM was Zoning Officer John Guskowski. Tim Santochristo of Hebron attended (via ZOOM) briefly at approximately 7:30 P.M.

3. Audience of Citizens: there were none present

4. Old Business: There was nothing brought up.

5. New Business: there was none.

6. Other – Guests or Members: there were no guests present.

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

John Guskowski reported on the following:

- The Zoning office has been busy, primarily with a lot of inquiries, questions and administrative tasks. The ZCO reviewed a draft one-page zoning guide that will be available on the town website and linked through the Town's online GIS system.
- ZCO has been coordinating with the Zoning Board of Appeals with applications and details required.
 - Action by the ZBA has modified its application requirements to now require applicants to provide notification to property owners within 150 feet (vs 500 feet) of applicant's property. (The Town had been responsible for notification.)
 - Five applications had been received in the last two months requesting variance in connection with set-back requirements as called for in the Zoning Regulations for half-acre and one-acre zones. The Commission should review and consider revising these requirements, potentially with some restrictions regarding the size and height of the proposed new structure. The matter will be included in the June 10 meeting for review. (Any proposed change to the Zoning Regulations will require a Public Hearing to become effective.)
- Administrative support for all functions within the Land Use Departments continues to be a serious, detrimental problem for the office. ZCO and Building Official have been meeting with officials of Chester and Deep River, seeking to coordinate an arrangement to provide a full-time, four-day workweek with

benefits to serve both towns. Adequate funding has not been identified/secured by either town, both of which are currently under-staffed. After considerable discussion, with further details of the urgent need for staff support for both municipalities,

On Motion by Seth Fidel, seconded by Henry Krempel, it was unanimously voted to send a Resolution to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance requesting that sufficient funds be provided to hire a high-quality land use office administrative assistant for two full days per week, possibly in coordination with the Town of Deep River, as soon as possible.

- Tim Santochristo of Hebron inquired what type(s) of potential use(s) might be found to be acceptable by the Commission for the property at 244 Middlesex Avenue, which had previously operated as a service station/auto repair. He inquired specifically if repairs associated with boats would be considered favorably by the Commission. Chair Lavy responded the Commission would be supportive and look favorably on that type of proposed use. A Special Exception would be required and would include a Public Hearing. It was suggested a short-term option to purchase to allow for due diligence be sought.

9. Bills for Payment:

- a. Hartford Courant: \$98.62 – April 8, 2021 Notice of Approval of Zoning Regulation Amendment.

On Motion by Seth Fidel, seconded by Peter Zanardi, the bill (listed above) was unanimously approved for payment.

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

11. Approval of Minutes: April 8, 2021 Regular Meeting

On Motion by Henry Krempel, seconded by Peter Zanardi, the minutes of the April 8, 2021 meeting were unanimously approved. Pat Bisacky abstained.

12. Pending Litigation: There is no pending litigation.

Commission members reviewed activities on Main Street, particularly those associated with outdoor dining. There have been complaints concerning pedestrian use of sidewalks and inconvenience to parked vehicles. The ZCO has issued a letter to all affected businesses detailing annual permitting requirements, including individual site plans, and the requirement for annual renewal for that use. (It was noted that an Executive Order by the Governor extending outdoor dining until March 2022 still allowed the requirements of local Zoning Regulations to be enforced.) Reluctance to comply has historically been a problem. All establishments will be advised to recommend patrons make use of the multiple nearby municipal parking lots to alleviate some of the congestion. Employees of all retail businesses should also use municipal parking lots.

A construction dumpster parked on Main Street in connection with construction activities at 43, 45, 47 Main Street was noted. Commission members recalled the applicant's architect had made note during the Special Exception Public Hearing that construction equipment and vehicles would be placed behind the stone wall or behind the building. The current situation is not a zoning issue but will be forwarded to the Police Department.

13. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission,

On Motion by Pat Bisacky, seconded by Steve Merola, by unanimous approval the meeting adjourned at 7:47 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Bettie Perreault, Secretary