



CHESTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

MINUTES- D R A F T

1. Call to Order / Roll Call
Meeting was called to order at 8:34 AM by Chairman Jon Joslow. Pat Bandzes and Susan Wright in attendance. Audience of citizens, Mandy Carroll, Facilitator- The Merchants of Chester and Peter Zanardi, Chester P&Z.

Jon reported that First Selectwoman Charlene Janecek called a few minutes prior to the meeting to say she would be delayed.

2. Approval of draft minutes 5/23/22
Rescheduled by consensus because Pat and Susan needed more time to review. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting on 7/11/22.
3. Recent commercial listings and transactions- no material change. Former Kismet location being actively shown.
4. ARPA Request: Funding for advertising and communication (Chester Merchants)
Held for discussion upon Charlene's arrival
6. Progress against existing town initiatives
Held for discussion upon Charlene's arrival
7. EDC priorities relating support of existing initiatives

Chester Projects/Initiatives- BOS List- DRAFT

Content held for discussion until Charlene's arrival. Jon distributed an existing partial listing of Chester Initiatives developed with Charlene and reviewed/expanded during each EDC meeting. These are actively tracked, supported or managed initiatives. It is from this list that the EDC and other boards and commissions can insert, track and communicate who is working on what project and who is specifically responsible for progress. It is designed to also include which additional agencies and individuals are part of the team effort. When the first draft of the initiatives are distributed by the BOS, it is envisioned that this document might be expanded to include other key initiatives that are being actively addressed by the various agencies, boards and commissions serving the Town.

Jon noted that this format is similar to Section 6 of the 2019 – 2029 Plan of Conservation and Development, Chester, 10 year forward look that was updated and approved by Town Meeting in



4/1/19 covering 2019- 2029. That part of the plan summarized the 118 recommended initiatives grouped support six major strategic goals for the town.

Jon suggested that these two combined documents embody Chester’s planned and current issues and once prioritized and resourced, would help the town manage its future with a coordinated and communicated approach.

First Selectwoman Charlene Janecek joined the meeting.

Merchants of Chester ARPA application (Item #4 on Agenda):

Mandy Carroll, representing the Merchants of Chester, discussed their \$15K ARPA Funding request- for advertising, promotion, printed material, event signage, Zoom subscription for remote monthly meetings, re-stringing of Chester Stars, etc.

The lights are powered by electricity through Chester business.

Charlene mentioned that she supports this application based upon the information received to date. The next step is to send it to the ARPA committee.

Jon explained that ARPA funds are available to be approved over the first two years and must be spent over the next four years. We are now approaching the end of Year 1.

Motion to recommend approval of the Merchants of Chester to receive \$15K in ARPA funding to support promotional and marketing-related expenditures. Motioned: Pat Bandzes, seconded, Susan Wright. Unanimously Approved.

Other topics of concern related to Downtown:

- Public Rest Room
- Water station for pets and people
- Weekend Trash Removal
- Recycling stations downtown
- Compacting trash cans
- Main Street Maintenance

Mandy stressed the the importance of clean side walks, maintained plantings, watering, weeding, street trash removed—all important to supporting and servicing visitors.

Jon said that these other topics are now included in the 6/14/22 Projects/Initiatives list and will be addressed when that list is reviewed upon Charlene’s return.

6/14/22 Projects/Initiatives list

Jon distributed this list which was divided into three groups: Projects/Initiative (active projects), Watch List (MS Brooks, Ted Tine Motorsports, Goodspeed, St. Joseph’s Parish Center) and To be deleted (RiverCOGS 15% ARPA funding 2021 request). The updates are posted below:



59 Winthrop Road (Skyview)

Lead: BOS/Charlene Janecek

5/23/22- Paperwork from Atlas signed, Charlene to follow up

6/15/22- 104K state brownfield grant notification received to cover initial remediation and testing.

There is funding available for a second phase of remediation if that is required. No incremental costs to the town based upon available brownfield funding. Once remediated, the Town will seek to sell it.

Meet with large Chester employers

Lead- BOS/Charlene Janecek, Support- EDC/All members

5/23/22- Charlene to request Jenny to schedule with select employers and to coordinate as best as possible with EDC so a member could attend. Not a requirement, but an objective. Jon to draft an interview format with standard questions as part of a call report to be filed with the Selectwomen's office so there is a permanent record and history.

6/15/22- Now that the budget is passed, she has asked Jenny to schedule appointments. Jon to send an interview format for comments. Jen to send the dates and times convenient for Charlene and the employers to all EDC members to join.

WIFI/Towers

Lead: BOS/Charlene Janecek, Support: BOS/Ed Mehan, EDC/ Susan Wright

5/23/22- Charlene signed the agreement for the \$93K Steap funding but it does not commit the project to move forward. Charlene is working on the costs of providing free internet service downtown. She is also addressing cell reception within Chester.

6/15/22- To be discussed at BOS meeting this evening. One-time and recurring expenses appear too high. This 10-year discussion has changed over time. The consensus is that we need cell coverage for all of Chester and this remains a problem downtown. Discussions about new cell towers as a solution. Jon suggested that a more focused solution would be to contact the cell service providers and ask them for a coverage map for Chester. If there are voids, then request that the utilities connect to existing towers that already provide coverage for Chester.

Charlene contacted cell tower specialist Ray Lenly who has contacted two companies who are surveying town-owned property to determine if there is an area where Chester can locate a cell tower. Regulations for town-owned cell tower permits are less cumbersome than private property installations that can take two years.

Transportation to and from Chester Marinas to Chester Center



Lead- BOS/Charlene Janecek, Support- EDC/Pat Bandzes

5/23/22- Charlene meeting with marina representatives this Thursday to discuss a pilot program and the cost structure. Cost to Chester \$10K. Small bus from Downtown Transit is accessible on an application where the rider specifies a pickup. Deep River has expressed interest as well. Chester's motivation is to reduce parking congestion. Pat will join Charlene at this meeting.

6/15/22- Charlene and Jon (in Pat's absence) met with three Chester marina owners to determine their interest in providing transportation. 1 of 3 of who attended liked the concept. There was no response to the invitations to all other clubs and marinas. It appears that most of the activity at these marinas relate to boat owners who drive their cars to the marinas. If they need to go into town, they drive their car. Charlene asked for statistics to quantify the potential demand for local trolley service. The transportation needs of boaters who are visiting any of these marinas remains unknown as is their interest in public transportation to and from downtown Chester. This is on hold waiting for feedback from the marinas that might benefit from this \$10K initiative.

Boardwalk from North Quarter Park to the Cemetery Road

Leads- Park and Rec/Mike Abramson and John Ivimey, Support- Susan Wright

5/23/22- no update

6/15/22- no update, Rotary has some money allocated. John indicated to Charlene that they are trying to determine the scope of the necessary land survey of town property. The cost is \$7K for a partial and \$12K for a complete survey that addresses two proposed paths that appear to traverse wetlands. Full cost estimates are estimated at \$200K. Susan to request an update.

Child Care in Chester

Lead- Chester Community Partnership/Kim Megrath

5/23/22- no update from 5/11 report except CBSRZ announced their interest in renting out a portion of that facility to a preschool operator.

6/15/22- Kim Megrath provided the following written update on the proposed opening of a CBSRZ early care and education program:

“1. In progress: Survey of families in Essex, Deep River, Chester, and possibly Haddam to assess the needs of these communities for infant/toddler and pre-K classrooms, as well as school-aged program (before/after school). The planned distribution of the survey was last Wednesday, June 8 with return date of June 20. Apparently, CBSRZ is revising the survey. I have not received new dates.

2. Ongoing conversation with Valley Shore YMCA as possible partner. I understood that the timeline for a completed business plan, which should include both application for licensure and budget is June 30, 2022.

I have not yet received an overview of the project management with actions, timeline, and assigned responsibility that I requested from CBSRZ (and Y) earlier this month. I will continue to update the EDC. “

- 6/15/22 email from Kim to EDC Chair Jon Joslow



East Haddam Ped/Bike Path Spur

Lead- EDC/Pat Bandzes, Support-Chester Sustainability Committee/Cindy Lignar

5/23/22 - Cindy, Rick and Pat met last week to coordinate efforts to improve Chester's ped/bike infrastructure. No Locip funding to be available to pay for sidewalks (connectivity) for at least 3 years.

6/2/22- Cindy Lignar, Pat Bandzes, Rick Holoway, Stephanie Stroud- Community Planner with National Park Service- Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, Bob Casner – East Haddam EDC. They walked the proposed “East Haddam Ped/Bike Spur” as part of a regional initiative to connect 9-10 mile loop, 154, over the East Haddam Bridge, Town Street, River Road, take the Ferry from East Haddam to Chester, Ferry Road and back to 154. The proposed spur (initiated by EDC several years ago) would start at the intersection of Ferry Road and 154 and continue across the street at the Moravela's Pizzeria (139 Middlesex Ave) traffic light on Water Street. The spur follows Water Street through the center of town, past the Post Office to the 154 intersections then continue, left, until intersecting the beginning of the spur at Moravela's. The loop is 2 miles.

Pat reported that Stephanie noted the condition of the road and its narrowness. It is a State Road. The Federal Agency of the NPS, has an arm that focuses on working with local communities to develop recreation projects. There is a lot of federal funding for projects like this. East Haddam received an in-kind services grant from this agency that performed a feasibility/design study that is a long-term project that fits the criteria for federal assistance. The next step is for the team to redraw the proposed map to make us part of the plan. Bob Casner is our single point of contact who interfaces with Stephanie. Pat is EDC's contact for this project.

No follow-up from EDC at this time.

Complete Streets- Sidewalks, Crosswalks, etc.

Lead- Chester Sustainability Committee/Cindy Lignar, Support- EDC/Pat Bandzes

5/23/22 - Cindy, Rick and Pat met last week to coordinate efforts to improve Chester's ped/bike infrastructure. No Locip funding to be available to pay for sidewalks (connectivity) for at least 3 years.

See “*East Haddam Ped/Bike Path Spur*” meeting on 6/2/22

Rails to Trails

Lead- Chester Sustainability Committee/Rick Holloway

6/15/22- Pat recommended discontinuing based upon the 6/2/22 meeting and that the concept is part of a regional objective to connect all paths.



Handicapped Accessible Public Bathroom for downtown Chester

Lead- EDC/Susan Wright, Support- BOS- Charlene Janecek

5/23/22- there is interest in locating the bathrooms at 4 Water Street (the old drive-through bank branch on Water Street). There is no septic and the thought is either porta-potties or composting units in or around that building. Charlene will check to see when that lease expires.

6/15/22- Charlene that the lease expires in 2024. The building is not on the town sewer. Susan to scope out options/alternatives including the one-time, non-recurring expenses and the ongoing operational costs.

Water station for people and pets

Lead- EDC/Susan Wright, Support- BOS- Charlene Janecek

5/23/22- Charlene said that this has been tried in the past and that the water company wants \$20K/line plus an annual cost for the water. Charlene is fine with this project going forward but that the one time and recurring expenses would have to be understood in advance. No one is working on this presently.

Pat mentioned that there is a tie-in to the Bike / Pedit path regarding water stations and toilet facilities. The group that met on 6/2 (see above) discussed possible locations.

Susan suggested that for that reason, she will address both issues.

Weekend trash removal- street receptacles

5/23/22- The Merchants of Chester brought up this concern. Charlene spoke to Sue Hotkoski about hiring Scott Mills to keep the trash cans empty before and after the summer market. The town is presently paying overtime and Charlene would like the Market to pay for this expense since it is a privately funded business.

6/15/22- Charlene reported that this is no longer an issue.
Item to be removed from this list.

Recycling stations in Chester

Lead: UNASSIGNED

5/23/22- not discussed

6/15/22- Kim Price is addressing zero waste at the Chester Fair and for the rest of Chester. Charlene said that this is perfect for the Chester Sustainability Committee.

Maintenance of Main Street streetscape

Lead: Charlene

5/23/22- not discussed (Charlene left the meeting)

6/15/22- Per Charlene- that is part of the Town Crew's responsibility.
Item to be removed from this list.



47 Middlesex Ave (St. Josephs Parish Center)

Lead- BOS/Charlene Janecek

5/23/22- Charlene and John are meeting Thursday 1:00 with a potential affordable housing developer. Mike might attend.

6/15/22- Charlene reported 2 companies in negotiation with the Church to purchase the 3 acre plot for affordable housing. Both are in the design stage. 830G process in the works. Applied in January and awarded in April 2023. Proposals need to go to Norwich Diocese/Bishop for approval.

Affordable Housing/Committee

Lead: EDC/Pat Bandzes

3 town committee to be formed. Affordable housing must follow public health and safety regulations but is exempt from most other restrictions. There is a two story limit in Chester for fire protection reasons. Pat noted that the recently approved Affordable Housing Plan is unrelated to the 47 Middlesex Ave (St. Josephs Parish Center) project.

East Haddam Swing Bridge Rehabilitation

Lead: BOS/ Charlene Janecek, Support- EDC/Pat Bandzes

5/23/22- Bridge mapping in Judy, construction in the Fall.

Transportation To and From Marinas: Charlene

6/15- Charlene reported that the contract awarded to same company that built the bridge. The roundabouts will start next Spring.

212 Middlesex Ave (Ted Tine Motorsports)

Lead: BOS/Charlene Janecek

5/23/22- Property still for sale

6/15/22- Charlene is inquiring about the type of remediation that occurred on that property as is it a registered brownfield.

56 Middlesex (Organon)

Lead: UNASSIGNED

6/15/22- zoning issues restrict potential use. Liquor permit next to the church is an issue. That appears to be a town ordinance that could be changed. Discussion centered about who should take the initiative to change the zoning. For now, it will be posted as UNASSIGNED

Goodspeed at Chester

Lead: BOS/Charlene

5/23/22- No performances scheduled for this season, 3 productions planned for next year

6/15/22- Meeting with Caryn Paradis who is talking with Goodspeed to develop the property which would include providing space for a 3 show season next year.



ARPA Request for Funding for advertising and communication

Lead: Merchants of Chester/Mandy Carroll, Support- EDC

5/23/22- Charlene would consider supporting an ARPA request once it is presented

6/15/22- EDC approved the \$15K ARPA request. Charlene concurred subject to BOF review.

33 Liberty Street / MS Brooks Factory

Lead: UNASSIGNED

5/23/22- Potential buyer -approached P&Z a few months ago. They cannot apply for affordable housing waiver because they are not the landowner. He doesn't want to purchase the property unless he knows that he can develop the property as he wants.

6/15/22- No update

8. Adam Perl Resignation

Adam resigned to focus on his startup: Arrangr.Com

9. Community Involvement:

Community Engagement tent at Farmer's Market

Lead: EDC/Jon Joslow

5/23/22- Jon suggested setting up a summer market 10 x 10 tent that focuses on COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT. The intention is to post openings on committees and commissions, and this list of projects which identifies where we need specific assistance to make progress. The booth would be manned by Republicans, Democrats, Independent/other parties and by people who are already involved. Jon to follow up with Susan Hotkowski.

6/15/22- Jon communicated with Susan. There is space and a tent, potentially for Sunday in August.

Community volunteerism and leadership initiative

Lead- EDC/Jon Joslow

5/23/22- Regarding the desire to engage Chester residents to help in the community, Jon will research a successful Essex initiative that trained a new generation of volunteers and community leaders around 25 years ago. Volunteerism, leadership continuity and succession planning are issues in Chester.

Discontinue special meetings between monthly meetings

Because we now have a list of assignments, Jon suggested that we no longer need to meet more frequently than once per month and we can use that time to work on our assignments. Future meetings will be devoted to communicating progress and issues related to making progress. There was consensus. 2:00 second Monday of every month. 7/11/22 next EDC meeting.

10. Audience of citizens

Peter Zanardi suggested that the town have a coordinated approach to addressing building applications, changes to zoning regulations and enforcement. To that end, Charlene recently

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established a weekly Thursday meeting between the Building, Zoning, Inland Wetland and Sanitation Departments for the purpose of streamlining doing business in Chester.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn and seconded by Pat and Susan respectively. Motion passed unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 10:12 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Joslow, Chair