

MINUTES

VILLAGE OF CHESTER VILLAGE BOARD

FEBRUARY 20, 2018

SPECIAL MEETING

- PRESENT:** John Thomas BELL, Mayor
Chris BATTIATO, Deputy Mayor
Brian BOONE, Trustee
- PLAN COMMITTEE:** Leslie SMITH, Member
- ALSO PRESENT:** Henry CHRISTENSEN, Village Board Attorney
John ORR, Code Enforcement Officer
- NOT PRESENT:** Alan BATTIATO, Trustee
Elizabeth REILLY, Trustee

SPECIAL MEETING

Mayor Bell opened the Special Meeting at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Code Enforcement Officer John Orr advised tonight's meeting is to discuss the committees ideas. It was also suggested that Planning / Zoning Board Attorney Harold Pressberg attend a meeting to discuss current zoning.

Historic Preservation, Community Character, Aesthetics, Design Guidelines discussed / suggested:

- Leslie Smith provided handouts re: Appropriate New Construction in Historic Districts and Zoning to Preserve Historic Resources (copies attached);
- The following suggestions were made:
 - Design Guidelines be created as used in Dutchess and Orange Counties as well as Newburgh;
 - The Village use Goshen's Historic District Regulations as a guideline. It was mentioned that Goshen's building design guidelines are built into their Zoning Code;
 - Architectural Review Board guidelines be created as part of the Village's Zoning Code;
- It was noted that a majority of the suggestions being made require legal action by the Village;
- Leslie Smith reviewed the proposed Historic Overlay Districts;
- The Village look into purchasing development rights;
- The Town of Chester is going through their own preservation.

Economic Development discussed / suggested:

- Parking;
- The properties which will attract people from Route 17 will be approximately ¼ of a mile off Route 17 – mostly along Brookside Avenue, across from Lowe's and a few parcels in the Industrial Park;
- Downtown in the Village of Chester needs to become a destination;
- It was noted that the Village is not aware of any planned changes for the Brookside Avenue / Route 17.

Transportation, Infrastructure discussed / suggested:

- Connecting the parking behind the buildings to reduce curb cuts, increase parking and increase pedestrian traffic;
- It was noted that some provisions for rear parking already exist in the Village's Code, but those provisions could be revised;
- The Village would have to look at the New York State right of ways, easements, etc.;
- When Route 17 becomes an interstate, New York State will be closing exits, but the Village believes the exits will be in Goshen or other municipalities;
- Round-A-Bouts by Kings Highway and other locations along Brookside Avenue. It was noted that these are State and County roads and the Village has no authority to construct Round-A-Bouts;
- One way through the Downtown Historical District Overlay along with tiered parking and wider sidewalks;
- Water / Sewer usage needs to be looked at and planned for.

Agriculture, Farmland Preservation, Natural Resources, and Sustainability discussed / suggested:

- Preserving the Black Dirt and protecting it from future development;
- Housing for farmers, workers, etc.;

- The possibility of “Tiny Houses”, temporary housing or shared housing with common areas for farm workers;
- Who could benefit from the farm workers – where could they work in the winter to keep them in the area all year long instead of seasonal workers;
- The idea of an Agri-hood was discussed. An Agri-hood is a small, sustainable community connected by the black dirt. The Agri-hood would have a minimal impact on the Village;
- Review the RA District Regulations potentially for an overlay district to assist the farmers;
- Consider what businesses would / could be compatible with the Black Dirt area;
- Include the Green Onion in the development of Downtown;
- The vacant properties along Greycourt Avenue and Meadow Avenue need to be protected;
- There needs to be cooperation between the Town of Chester and Village of Chester about adjoining properties such as Camp LaGuardia.

Housing discussed / suggested:

- Leslie’s hand out about Appropriate New Construction in Historic Districts has a section titled Visual Context for an Appropriate Infill Project with a bullet point referring to mass and scale. It states that your infill construction should be consistent in mass and scale to the buildings to which it is visually connected.
- The Town of Chester has a proposal regarding the floor ratio to the square footage of the lot for new construction. There’s an opportunity for the Town and the Village to work together for consistency;
- The Village of Chester has in its code limitations on lot size, setbacks, building height, etc. in certain districts;
- We need to protect the housing in “old” neighborhoods – like Elm Street, which has old ranches that serve specific demographics like older residents so they can stay in their homes or a young family starting out – it’s more affordable for them to live in those neighborhoods.

Recreation, Entertainment, Arts & Culture, Public Space, and Open Space discussed / suggested:

- This is why the Village is building the amphitheater to bring entertainment to the downtown area with the Tuesday night music series;
- Needs better promotion – social media, Instagram, word of mouth, posters / flyers, etc.;
- Make undeveloped Village properties “pocket parks” with benches, etc. for residents to enjoy the views;
- Needs to have an economic development component;
- Promote the Heritage Trail as a destination;
- Promote for artists, painters, etc.;
- Maybe have a “Founder’s Day” with local painters and artists like Eric Sloan;
- Need staples to bring people to Downtown like the parades, the music series, etc.;
- Organize art festivals with the music series with local artists;
- Invite people in – go the realtors (commercial and residential), developers, local businesses, boy / girl scouts;
- The downtown business owners are not participating in the meetings. They need to get involved in bringing people downtown, which would help their businesses as well as the Village.

Invite planners to the next meeting to interview / see what they propose. As the committees haven’t met, let’s have another meeting with Harold to provide an overview and invite the planners to the following meeting.

It was noted a public meeting is being held on Thursday, February 22, 2018 regarding Police Department grievances. It was also noted that the Village is purchasing the Lippincott Funeral Home and plans to move the Village Hall to that location in the future.

Mayor Bell asked if there was anything else to discuss. As there were no other comments, ***MOTION** was made by Trustee Chris Battiato, second by Trustee Boone, to **ADJOURN THE MEETING**. Motion passed 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sandra VanRiper
Planning Board Secretary