

**CHELSEA PLANNING COMMISSION
10/20/16 MEETING
SCHOOL LIBRARY**

Members present: Dickson Corbett, Tim Courts, Ed Burger, Neil Kennedy, Marianne McCann

Public present: Taylor Katz, Misha Johnson, Nick Zigelbaum, Joan Goodrich, Susan Elder, Nicholas Bennett, John LaChapelle, Rosalind Osterbye, Kate Willard, Susan Hardin, Carrie Caouette, Rebecca Sanborn-Stone.

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Rebecca Sanborn-Stone is a community organizer who led a conversation about how to start imagining what we want Chelsea to be. A slide show was presented with ideas from many different towns across the country. The primary example was Bethel which has undertaken some community redevelopment in the form of potluck dinners, using the town hall as a communal space, a better-block festival, winter arts concerts, revival of interest in town meeting, pop-up competitions including a pop-up taco bar at the better-block festival that may lead to a taco restaurant in town, Bethel University, a dance at the town hall, a book club, an operator's manual for the town, a small pop-up library, and chalkboards where people can leave ideas. The organizing question for all of this seemed to be "What do you imagine for Bethel?" Examples of ideas from other towns included a map where people identify what they love about the town, reclaiming vacant lots as public space, stickers on abandoned stores inviting passers-by to express "I wish this was _____," the tiny business movement, and high school students who built and run a grocery store as part of their high school curriculum.

After the slide show there was an open conversation about what everyone imagined for Chelsea. Ideas included:

A potluck dinner club

Winter arts concerts

The two greens are a significant town asset

We have many performing artists and visual artists in town

We also have many people who run home businesses; these could be better known and better-supported

Enthusiasm for movie night and/or B-movie night

Enthusiasm for the tiny business movement and wondering aloud whether this might be a strategy for reclaiming some of the vacant storefronts in the center of the village

Emphasizing regularity as a means of encouraging business development

Plays at town hall

Old Home Days – could this be transformed into a harvest festival?

Ecotourism is a significant and perhaps underappreciated economic activity in town

We have several commercial kitchens in town that are not being used. Perhaps there is opportunity for pop-up restaurants and shared spaces; the guest chef model

We used to have square dances and fiddlers' festivals

Craftsbury Arts Center as a model

Kingdom Trails as a model, and the potential for trail biking on/near West Hill

Lack of cell phone service may be viewed by some as an asset

An idea expressed by Rebecca Sanborn-Stone was that the traditional model of a major employer is good, but leaves towns susceptible to devastating job loss if / when the employer leaves. A current model is to diversify and to engage in community development with a goal of establishing 10 major reasons to live/visit the town. It was noted that millennials are less likely to work at one employer for their entire careers, or even for more than a few years at a time, and are much more likely to work for smaller businesses or themselves.

The open conversation concluded with an agreement to try to get the ball rolling with a community potluck. Dickson agreed to take the lead on organizing this.

2. The selectboard deferred a decision about the proposed zoning bylaws because there was an issue with the way that home occupations had been handled. The intent was to exempt home occupations from regulation but the changes made didn't quite accomplish this. It is unclear whether the selectboard will make the change themselves or send it back to the planning commission but either way the proposed changes will not be on the ballot in November. Voting on the flood hazard bylaws has also been delayed. Ed agreed to investigate whether there is any likelihood or possibility that FEMA laws and regulations might change on this issue, which would affect calculus.

3. Four people have expressed interest in the open position on the planning commission. Neil suggested sending the four names to the selectboard and asking the selectboard to invite the candidates to a selectboard meeting and introduce themselves and explain why they want to be on the board. Planning commission members would be interested in attending this. The candidates are: Alan Ackerman, Susan Hardin, Ed Kuban, and Jessica Zieleski.

4. Next meeting is November 17, 7:00 p.m., in the school library. No other new business.

5. Adjourned at 9:15.