

**TOWN OF MANCHESTER  
JOINT WORKSHOP OF THE  
  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
AND  
THE CHENEY NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2017**

***Members Present:***

- PZC:** Eric Prause, Chairman; Michael Stebe, Secretary; Timothy Bergin, and Patrick Kennedy
- Cheney:** Bettye Kramer, Co-Chair; Lynne Ferrigno, Co-Chair; Leslie Frey, Secretary; Bruce May, John Wilks, Rita McParland, Mary Dunne, Jack Prior, Ex Officio
- EDC:** Jack Sayre, Chairman; Peggy Jacobson; Joy Dorin, and Tana Parseliti
- Staff:** Gary Anderson, Director of Planning and Economic Development; Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner, Judith Schuberth, Senior Administrative Secretary

The attendees introduced themselves and indicated the commission they represent. After introductions were complete Mr. Anderson said the purpose of the workshop was to gain an understanding of each Commission's charge, the roles of each Commission and to discuss any opportunities for buildings within the Cheney District to be repurposed in order to ensure they continue to serve as the unique historic assets they are.

Mr. Anderson provided an overview of the type of Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) applications that require review by the Cheney Historic District Commission (Cheney), primarily any Planning and Zoning application within the Historic Zone that requires exterior building modifications. Mr. Anderson referred to the Plan of Conservation and Development and Growth Management Principle 2 "*Conserve, Restore and Protect Cultural and Historic Resources*" and reviewed a map of the Cheney National Historic Landmark District, comparing it to a map of the Historic Zoning district.

Mr. Anderson said that unless federal funding is involved, National Historic Landmark District designation does not include regulations for property owners within the District so local and/or state requirements are the only means by which changes are regulated.

Mr. Anderson summarized the review process of a PZC application in the Historic Zone. Applications are received by the PZC at the first meeting after submission and the PZC meets twice a month. Once the application is accepted by the PZC there is a 65-day decision period. The Cheney Commission only meets once a month so if the application is accepted after the

monthly Cheney meeting then it is heard the following month. Due to the 65-day deadline and the meeting schedule of the two commissions, the review period for Cheney members can be short. He said the Cheney Commission could call a special meeting if there is a need for one. Cheney members have been added to the email distribution of the PZC future agenda which indicates tentative meeting dates of various agenda items. This is intended to provide the Cheney Commission additional time for review.

Ms. Kramer said in the recent case of 99 Hartford Road the Commission was frustrated by the lack of time to offer comments and by the fact the Commission was unable to explain to the PZC why it was not in support of the application. The attorney representing the applicant made a strong case for approval after listening to the Cheney meeting recording, but because this application was not a public hearing Commission members could not provide testimony.

In response to a question from Mr. Prause and Ms. Bertotti, Mr. Anderson said he would have to confer with the Town Attorney as to whether the Cheney Commission could seek intervenor status and if they could speak at the PZC meeting even if it was not a public hearing application.

Ms. Ferrigno said that the 99 Hartford Road application material presented to the PZC much more detailed than what was provided to the Cheney Commission. Mr. Stebe said that as a former member of the Cheney Commission he agreed with Ms. Ferrigno. Applicants should provide the Cheney with a full, detailed presentation so the Cheney could provide a more detailed and descriptive report to PZC outlining the reasons for the recommending an application for approval or not recommending an application for approval. Mr. Anderson said he could request applicants provide the same presentation materials to the Cheney Commission but he could not require it of applicants. He said staff will err on the side of passing along too much, as opposed to not enough information. Mr. Prause said more detailed information regarding the Cheney Commission would be helpful, perhaps even providing the Cheney minutes to the PZC for review. Mr. Anderson said he would submit the Cheney recommendation memo to the Co-Chairs for review before adding it to the PZC packet.

Mr. Prior said during the PZC meeting the architect of the 99 Hartford Road application said he changed the design based the Cheney Commission's recommendations and made the case that the application should be approved for this reason. Mr. Prior said the modified design should have been reviewed by the Cheney Commission again prior to the PZC meeting.

Mr. Anderson asked the attendees if they had ideas for additional uses for the mansions that might be appropriately accommodated. The 78 Forest Street property was vacant for ten years before a buyer with the financial resources to repair and restore the property was found and operating the homes as single family households as they historically have been is not as feasible as it once was. Ms. Frey said the use of 99 Hartford Road is not a single family, but it is a dormitory. Mr. Anderson said the parents of the students sign a guardianship agreement with the house managers. Because guardianship is included in the Town's definition of family, the arrangement is considered a single family use. The general definition of family is a changing and he referred to the recent publicized case in Hartford where many unrelated persons are living in a single home.

Ms. Ferrigno said the regulations were modified recently to include home-based businesses such as architects, medical, dental, and other low traffic uses.

In response to a question from Mr. Anderson, Ms. Ferrigno said she would like to maintain the vision of the district as much as possible but understands the economic impact ownership of the mansions requires.

Ms. Dunne said that perhaps conversion to a multi-family unit as long as the exterior is not changed and the owner is an occupant, may be a possible use. Mr. Anderson said that has been brought up in the past, however requiring that an owner to occupy the property could not be required.

Ms. Jacobson said that if there are not some additional changes to uses then she sees a real possibility of the mansions being abandoned and falling into derelict condition. The mansions are not economically feasible for many families today. Ms. Parseliti said Burlington, Vermont has excellent examples of mansions that have been converted to multi-residential use. Mr. Prior agreed that conversions could be a way to preserve the mansions. Ms. Frey said she would rather see small restaurants in the mansions rather than multifamily housing units. Mr. Anderson said that the parking needed for restaurants could prove difficult. A use such as a museum or art gallery would not generate as much traffic. Many of those present agreed that an art gallery would be a good use for one or more of the mansions.

Mr. Anderson said these are challenging issues to work through but thanked everyone for their candor and participation. He said his staff would do its best to enhance communication between the Commissions.