

Town of Chelsea Planning Board

Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2026

Members Present: Joel Alexander (Chair), Sarosh Sher (Vice Chair), Kathryn Temple, John Bennett, and Rachel Gorneau

Absent: Tony Loiko

Staff: Greg Lumbert (CEO) & Natalie Thomsen (Planning Board Assistant) - via phone

Call to Order

The Planning Board meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Business Development Review Ordinance – Discussion

The Planning Board continued discussion of a proposed Business Development Review Ordinance intended to establish reasonable standards for new and expanded business development while remaining business-friendly and appropriate for a rural community. Board members discussed the need to balance protection of neighboring properties from excessive impacts such as traffic, noise, lighting, blasting, and odors, while avoiding unnecessary barriers to small or low-impact businesses.

Threshold-Based Review Concept

The Board discussed establishing threshold-based triggers for Planning Board review rather than requiring all businesses to undergo Planning Board approval. Thresholds discussed included approximately 2,500 square feet of building area or disturbance of approximately one-half acre of land, as well as uses with potential off-site impacts.

Code Enforcement Officer Discretion

The Board discussed allowing the Code Enforcement Officer to administratively review and approve low-impact or de minimis business development, with discretion to refer proposals to the Planning Board when the nature or intensity of the use suggests potential impacts.

Relationship to Other Ordinances

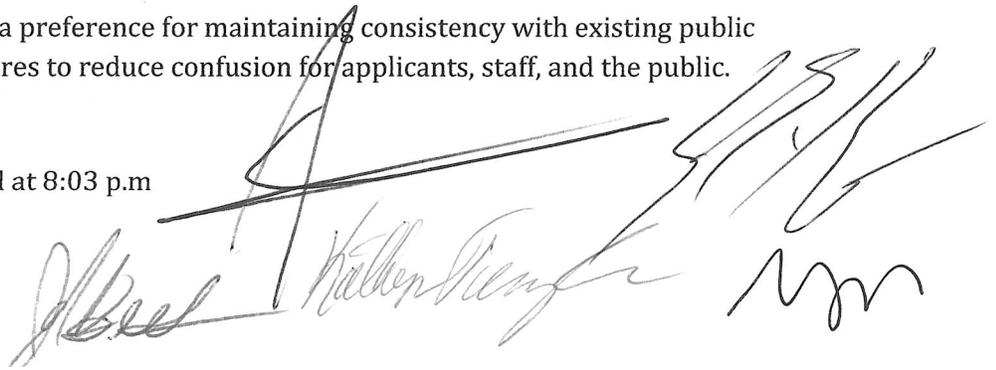
The Board discussed coordination with other ordinances, including a separate noise ordinance drafted by the Town Attorney, state-regulated blasting activities, animal-related ordinances, and compliance with new state lighting standards.

Public Hearings and Process

Board members expressed a preference for maintaining consistency with existing public hearing and notice procedures to reduce confusion for applicants, staff, and the public.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Handwritten signatures of three individuals: Joel Alexander, Kathryn Temple, and John Bennett. The signatures are written in black ink and are positioned below the text of the meeting minutes.