

Town of Chelsea Planning Board ~ Meeting Minutes
September 3, 2025 | 6:00 PM | Chelsea Town Office

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Planning Board Chair Joel Alexander.

Roll Call

Present: Joel Alexander (Chair), Kathryn Temple, Rachel Gorneau (Secretary), Tony Loiko, and John Bennett

Staff: Greg Lumbert (Code Enforcement Officer) and Natalie Thomsen (Planning Board Assistant)

Absent: Sean Spillane and Sarosh Sher

New member Tony was introduced to the Board. Natalie Thomsen clarified her role as Planning Board Assistant.

Approval of Minutes

- **June 4, 2025:** Draft minutes were available; however, corrections are still pending. Action was tabled due to quorum issues with abstentions.
 - **July 2, 2025:** Approval deferred; not included on the agenda for formal action.
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Findings of Fact – Grantwood Heights Subdivision

The Board confirmed that no further action was required. The approval, and a copy will be provided to the applicant and placed in the tax file.

Ordinance/Policy Discussion

LD 1829 (State Housing Implementation & Ordinance Updates):

- Natalie Thomsen summarized new state requirements connected to LD 1829 and LD 2003, including:
 - Smaller lot sizes in designated *growth areas* (minimum 5,000 sq. ft. with sewer/water; otherwise as small as can be supported by septic/well).
 - Allowance of up to 3 additional units in growth areas; 2 additional in rural areas (with 1 attached).
 - Redefinition of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to align with state terminology and requirements (size limits not permitted; sprinklers not required except in specific multi-unit conditions).
 - Affordable housing density bonus (2.5x density if >50% of units deed-restricted affordable for 30 years).
 - Clarification that multi-family projects with fewer than 5 units will no longer require Planning Board review, unless the Town establishes a square-footage trigger for site plan review.
- The Board discussed potential local dimensional standards (road frontage, depth, setbacks) and the possibility of adding a building square-footage threshold for Planning Board review.

- **Action:** Natalie will draft suggested ordinance amendments, focusing first on LD 1829 compliance and ADU terminology. Work will continue in coordination with the Town's Comprehensive Plan Committee (meeting Sept. 24).

Mandatory Training Requirement:

- Noted that Planning Board members must complete state law training within 180 days of appointment. Clarification on delivery (MMA, staff, or external professional) is still pending.

Campground and Private Campsite Regulations:

- The Board discussed an inquiry regarding a resident proposing to operate a bed & breakfast in a manufactured home with three tent sites.
- Review of the ordinance confirmed requirements for campsite size (5,000–10,000 sq. ft.), privy facilities (2 per 4 sites), and septic/wastewater considerations.
- Board consensus: No formal review until the applicant submits a complete plan. Clarification needed on "proper sewage disposal plan."
- Discussion also noted inconsistencies in the current ordinance and the need for future amendments to clarify tent/campsite standards.

CEO Report

Greg Lumbert reported on the above inquiry and other routine enforcement matters.

Other Business

- General discussion about the Planning Board's role in reviewing projects, public participation, and gaps in the current ordinance.
- Recognition that most Board work involves ordinance drafting and updates rather than site review.
- Informal discussion of lighting concerns, potential for a future lighting ordinance, and lessons learned from prior Planning Board dynamics.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Rachel Gorneau and seconded by Kathryn Temple.

Vote: 3-0 (Approved)

Meeting adjourned at 7:21 PM.



