

# TOWN OF CHESHIRE

191 CHURCH STREET | CHESHIRE, MASSACHUSETTS 01225

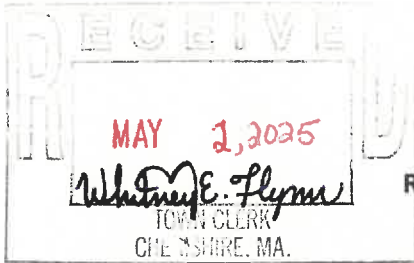
PHONE (413) 743-1690

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## PLANNING BOARD

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

PETITION #: PB003



Record of Proceedings for #PB003  
April 30, 2025

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a public hearing of the Planning Board was held in person at 191 Church Street (Meeting Room) on Wednesday April 30, 2025, at 5:00PM.

**Members Present:** Aaron Singer, Chairman; Amy McCarthy, Member; Francis Griswold, Member; Art Kaufman, Alternate.

**Others Present:** Mia Francesconi, Executive Assistant; Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; Karen M. Drain; Christine B. Emerson; Mary Ellen Baker; John Bianchi.

**A. Singer opened the public hearing for #PB003 ("A Special Permit Application (SPA) for 80-84 Church Street, Parcel ID No. 109-082, submitted by the Town of Cheshire, for a change of use from Municipal or Governmental Use to Office, Bank, Retail Business, or Consumer Service Establishment Use in the Business (B) Zoning District.") at 5:05PM.**

**A. Singer invited J. Morse to speak on behalf of the Town of Cheshire.**

J. Morse explained that the Town of Cheshire has been renting office space on the second floor of the Cheshire Athenaeum (Former Town Hall) to Grace Note Guitars. Unfortunately, Grace Note Guitars terminated their lease and moved out of the building, leaving no tenants in any of the available office spaces. The Board of Selectmen, at the recommendation of legal counsel, decided to apply for a Special Permit to officially change the use of the building to a "blanket" use, therefore allowing anyone wishing to rent office space in the building to do so, without a Special Permit. She stated that anyone looking to operate any sort of retail business, or anything other than office space, would have to apply for their own Special Permit through the Zoning Board of Appeals. There is one space upstairs, consisting of three office spaces, that is available for rent, and two spaces downstairs, plus the former "Annex" building. Currently, the only entities operating out of the building are the Cheshire Library and the Historical Commission. Those spaces are excluded from the available spaces to rent, but with the amount of available space, there are numerous opportunities for revenue.

**A. Singer invited members to comment.**

A. Kaufman asked J. Morse if more space would be granted to the Cheshire Library or the Historical Commission, if either entity were to make a request. J. Morse explained that that decision would be under the purview of the Board of Selectmen.

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A. Singer noted that the property could still be used for a municipal or governmental purpose if the need arises, as the Town of Cheshire continues to own the property.

J. Morse explained that the Town of Cheshire went through a similar process with the former Cheshire Elementary School, changing it from Educational (E) Use to its current use as the Community House & Town Offices, with a rentable section of space.

**A. Singer opened public comment at 5:12PM.**

M. Francesconi explained that she received a written comment the day prior and handed it to A. Singer.

A. Singer read the comment, submitted by John Bianchi, aloud to all present.

K. Drain, C. Emerson, M. Baker, and J. Bianchi explained that they were all in attendance on behalf of the Cheshire Library. They expressed their concerns that a "blanket" change of use would allow for tenants to rent spaces for businesses that would not complement the Cheshire Library and may be offensive to patrons. They explained that their concerns had been addressed when hearing that prospective tenants would be required to apply for a Special Permit to the Zoning Board of Appeals, but then expressed their concern that they, along with other tenants in the building, might not be notified a Special Permit Application was submitted.

A. Singer suggested that conditions be implemented that the Cheshire Library and all current tenants be notified via abutter notifications when Special Permit Application(s) for those spaces are submitted to the Town Clerk. He noted that residents could also voice their concerns during negotiations for lease agreements, based on Massachusetts procurement laws.

*A motion was made by F. Griswold and seconded by A. McCarthy to issue a Special Permit to the Town of Cheshire, for 80-84 Church Street, Parcel ID No. 109-082, for a change of use from Municipal or Governmental Use to Office, Bank, Retail Business, or Consumer Service Establishment Use in the Business (B) Zoning District, with the condition that all current tenants, including the Cheshire Library and the Historical Commission, shall be notified of any Public Hearing(s) for Special Permit Application(s) to the Zoning Board of Appeals, submitted by prospective tenants of 80-84 Church Street, at the time of sending abutter notifications.*

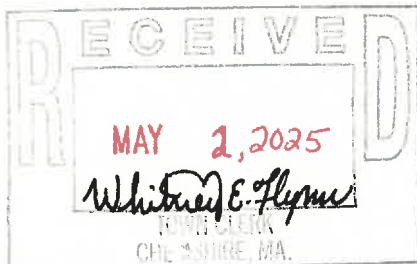
**Vote: Unanimous**

**Motion Carries: 4-0**

**A. Singer closed the public hearing for #PB003 at 5:31PM.**

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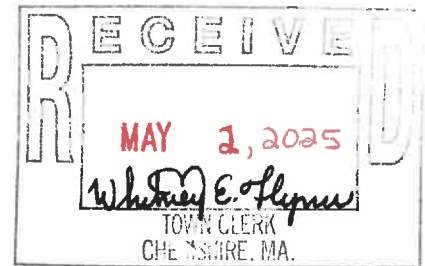
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Respectfully submitted,

  
Mia Francesconi – Executive Assistant

  
Aaron Singer – Planning Board Chairman



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