

APPROVED MINUTES
MAIDSTONE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, June 20, 2024, 7:00 pm, Held by Zoom Video Conference

Members present (via Zoom): Bruce Barker; Bob Champagne-Willis; Ray Lovell

Other members of Town Government present (via Zoom): Town Clerk Amy Pear; Selectboard Vice Chair Brad McVetty

Also present (via Zoom): Paul Kamins, Burt and Carol Kline, Mary von Alt, Kyle Dwyer of Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA)

At 7:00 pm, the meeting was called to order by Bob Champagne-Willis. Bob reminded all that after the recent action of the Selectboard, the Planning Commission now has five positions, with people appointed to three of those positions. Three represents a quorum and a majority of the positions; any action taken by the Commission requires approval of a majority, which means that any action taken at tonight's meeting requires approval by all three members present in order to be valid.

Bob went on to explain that when writing the Agenda, he began with the election of an Acting Chair. He deliberately used the word "Acting" because he has heard that more people have expressed interest and may be appointed to the Commission, and he did not feel it was appropriate to commit to a Chair until these other members are appointed. Bob nominated Bruce Barker to be Acting Chair for this meeting. At that point, Ray Lovell was having difficulty with his audio and requested via the Chat that someone call him. Bob called him and resolved the problem by using his phone for Ray to both hear and speak to the meeting. Bob then made a motion to appoint Bruce Barker the Acting Chair for this meeting; Ray Lovell seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

As the new Acting Chair, Bruce reminded everyone about the Rules of Participation. At this point, Paul Kamins was having trouble with hearing the meeting, saying that his earphones had stopped working. He said he would sign off to fix the problem and return when that was accomplished. (Note: he did not return to the meeting.)

APPROVE MINUTES:

Bob made a motion to accept the minutes for January 17, 2024; Ray seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Bob made a motion to accept the minutes for February 28, 2024; Ray seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

UPDATE ON INTERACTION WITH NVDA:

Bob reported that the Selectboard had approved the contract regarding work on the Town Plan with NVDA. He then introduced Kyle Dwyer, the new NVDA Representative who will work with the Planning Commission on the Town Plan. Kyle said he had joined NVDA in January of this year and is presently working with a couple of other towns on their Town Plans. He is happy to now be working with Maidstone and would like to hear from the Planning Commission about what they have been doing with regard to the Town Plan.

DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS WITH TOWN PLAN

Bob gave an overview of the work conducted by the Commission including the Survey and the public meeting held in January to discuss the survey results. He pointed out that, because the State has revised and increased the elements required in Town Plans, Maidstone cannot simply do a renewal of the 2016 Town Plan, but needs to do a more substantial revision to bring it into compliance with State requirements. All of the documents that the Commission has generated thus far are posted on the Town website as are meeting minutes. Bob continued on, explaining that the Commission's original approach was for each member to take a State Required Element and delve into it, so the Commission would understand what the next step for compliance with that Element would be. He said that the Commission had lost the Chair after the February meeting, and that Ray was newly appointed; after this disruption to the process, this meeting was intended to move the process along.

Kyle said he will take advantage of all that is posted on the Town website to bring himself up to speed. He added that there is no one way to go about an update, but agrees with the approach of each member digging into a

Required Element and with the framework he has seen. The more members, the merrier, is his opinion. He understands the need for the narrative updates by the Commission to address all of the State's Required Elements; he said that he can help with data and making sure all the Elements are there.

Bob said he is willing to continue working on the Education Element, which he was originally assigned. Bruce said he will continue with the Natural Resources Element, which was his original assignment.

Bob asked if Ray would like to come in to Town Hall to use the extra computer there to see what work has been done already by the Commission and to print out what he needs. Ray responded that he would. Bob will show Ray what is posted on the Town website.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Bruce asked if anyone wished to make a comment. Hearing none, the meeting continued.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Bob said that Mary will not be taking minutes at meetings after tonight; he is willing to take on that responsibility. Mary said that while she will no longer be writing the minutes, she is willing to help with typing and proofreading, knowing that there will be a lot of that required to generate the revised Town Plan.

As of July 1, 2024, State law will require that someone be present at Town Hall with the Hall open so members of the public can come there to attend scheduled Town Governmental meetings. Bob and Amy are researching the specifics of this new law. Kyle stated that he believes it is a member of the Commission who must be present at Town Hall for these future meetings. Amy pointed out that it did not need to be a voting member (Selectboard members are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Planning Commission). Brad offered to serve as the member present at Town Hall, as needed. Kyle said that he would like to attend the Commission meetings in person as his schedule allows.

Mary thanked Brad for attending this meeting and the numerous other such meetings that he has attended in the past. She said she was surprised not to see the other Selectboard members, but Bob explained that Scott had a pre-existing conflict as did Bruno. He had told them that this meeting was not expected to be lengthy and was intended to restart the process. Both Scott and Bruno expect to attend future meetings as possible.

SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING:

After a brief discussion, it was decided to schedule monthly meetings on the second Thursday of each month, with the next meeting being scheduled for July 11, 2024, beginning at 7:00 pm.

ADJOURN:

The business of the meeting concluded, Bruce made a motion to adjourn; Bob seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary von Alt