

**MINUTES**  
**MAIDSTONE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Thursday, July 11, 2024, 7:00 pm**  
**Hybrid Meeting, both in person at Town Hall and by Zoom Video**

Members present in person: Bruce Barker; ex-officio members Scott Lovell, Bruno McKenzie, Brad McVetty

Members present via Zoom: Bob Champagne-Willis; Paul Kamins; Ray Lovell (joined meeting at 7:30 pm)

Also present via Zoom: Amy Pear, Sandy Gray, Burton Klein, Kyle Dwyer of Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA)

At 7:00 pm, the meeting was called to order by Bob Champagne-Willis. Bob welcomed the newest member of the Planning Commission, Paul Kamins. Bob reminded all that at the last meeting, the Planning Commission appointed Bruce Barker as Acting Chair. Now that the Commission has a new member, Bob made a motion to appoint Bruce Barker as Chair, Paul Kamins as Vice Chair and Bob Champagne-Willis as Secretary. Bruce seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Bruce reminded all of the rules of participation.

**APPROVE MINUTES:**

Bob made a motion to accept the minutes for June 20, 2024; Bruce seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION RE: UPDATING TOWN PLAN:**

Kyle has reviewed some of the documents from previous meetings that are posted on the website. Kyle shared his screen. He put together some housing data for Maidstone, noting the high number of seasonal housing units. Kyle will share the "Housing Snapshot" document after the meeting. Paul asked for clarification on NVDA's role in formulating Maidstone's Town Plan. NVDA is part of the process in whatever way we want and provides a resource for information that we might need. NVDA does play a role at the end of the process in the regional approval of the Plan. NVDA also makes sure that the Plan reflects current Vermont statutes. As an example, he discussed changes since the last Plan with the adoption of S.100 (the Home Act) and its impact on housing. Kyle will look up other town plans that have included the new language mandated by S.100. Another role that NVDA provides is to help in researching grants.

Paul questioned whether we should start with the state mandates and fill in the plan from there. Kyle said that the only two significant new state mandates are the Home Act and Habitat Blocks; these need to be addressed in the new Town Plan. The Home Act would be addressed in the Housing Required Element. The Habitat Block would be addressed in the Land Use Required Element. Paul asked that Kyle send a copy of what requirements in the end are going to be worked in.

(Raymond entered meeting at this point)

Raymond asked that if farming ever came back, would the Home Act allow for accessory dwelling units for farm staff. Kyle felt that the Home Act would allow that even though that was not the intent of the legislation.

#### REQUIRED ELEMENT: EDUCATION (BOB)

Bob shared his findings and recommendations regarding education in Maidstone. (See the Required Element: Education document on the website). He provided information about the current structure for students in Maidstone and shared his concerns that Maidstone is directly affected by the burden placed on parents who have school age children. He also felt that the unstable education tax system for Vermont places a burden on any future development for Maidstone. Education taxes make up over 80% of the property tax bills. He reviewed the areas of local control components that make up the education tax rate and included recommendations to achieve the most accurate areas of local control. He stressed the importance of supporting the work of the listers as their work generates the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) that directly affects the homestead and non-homestead education tax rates.

#### REQUIRED ELEMENT: NATURAL RESOURCES (BRUCE)

Bruce shared his findings about Maidstone's natural resources and his recommendations. (See the Required Element: Natural Resources documents on the website). Bruno noted that some of our natural resources bullet points are regulated by the state, so why should the town get involved and who would enforce it. Part of the Planning Commission's work is to provide an inventory of the current resources, including those regulated by the State.

Paul asked about the purpose for the recommendations. Is it to direct zoning by-laws? Kyle felt that was one purpose but also gives the town direction for or against development.

The Planning Commission will share the results of the survey with Kyle.

#### REQUIRED ELEMENT: HOUSING (RAYMOND)

Raymond was not ready to present a report but wanted to know more about the State requirements. He feels that there should be designated areas for housing that would not have the large number of acres in Maidstone's current zoning bylaws. He feels that there are areas that could be used to encourage more housing. Kyle feels that the housing section is important and should be explored.

Paul asked if adding additional housing might lead to more students in the NEK School Choice District and what impact would that have on the education tax rate. Bob replied that he did not have enough information to make an educated guess.

Paul asked if we were hopeful that the town would grow. That is the big question. Bob reiterated that the survey results haven't changed that much from the 2016 survey, that the Town desires a small community with limited industry. Kyle thinks both can be true, that we maintain the rural character but encourage additional housing.

Raymond pointed out that the Lake area has added housing over the years, but there have been few additional housing units elsewhere in town.

Bruno asked if there were going to be changes to the town zones. He said that he did not want a development behind or beside his house. Bob said the zoning is derived by the Town Plan, and the Town Plan is whatever the Town wants. Nothing has been determined because we don't have a Town Plan in place. Amy pointed out that several property owners in the town have given up development rights to the Vermont Land Trust. There are also property owners who enroll their land in Current Use which limits development. However, property owners can remove their property from Current Use, but may have to pay a penalty for doing so.

#### ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING:

Paul will investigate Priority Habitat Lots, part of Land Use. He could also investigate Economic Development. Kyle will meet with Paul.

Bruce will investigate Land Use.

Bob will investigate the Energy plan.

Raymond will continue to work on Housing.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no additional public comments.

#### OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.

#### SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING:

We will meet on the second Thursday of each month at 7 pm. The next meeting will be August 8, 2024. These meetings will be hybrid, in person at Town Hall and via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Champagne-Willis