

MINUTES
MAIDSTONE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, October 3, 2024, 7:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting, both in person at Town Hall and by Zoom Video

Members present in person: Bruce Barker, chair; Ex-officio member Bruno McKenzie

Members present via Zoom: Bob Champagne-Willis; Paul Kamins; Ray Lovell, Ex-officio member Scott Lovell

Also present via Zoom: Amy Pear

At 7:06 pm, the meeting was called to order by Bruce Barker.

Bruce reminded all of the rules of participation.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Bob made a motion to accept the minutes as presented for September 10, 2024; Paul seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

REQUIRED ELEMENT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (PAUL)

Paul shared his screen. He reviewed Bruce's prior work on this subject, describing the present conditions, desired development and steps to booster economic development. He showed the U.S. Census bureau data on population and income. For the survey, the majority thought the growth rate was just right. The survey pointed towards the desire for a small residential community with limited business and industry. There was not a desire for commercial or industrial development. Paul reviewed the current status of agriculture in Maidstone. He showed the fertile land along the Connecticut river valley. Currently the crops are mostly corn. He reviewed the current landowners along the river valley.

Several parcels in Maidstone are owned by the Nature Conservancy (TNC). TNC owns large areas of land on the New Hampshire side called the Maidstone Bends Reserve.

Paul shared a hypothetical plan of what could be possible by having a town cooperative to work the land. He felt there might be grants to help, like the Working Lands Coalition. The objective was to increase the agricultural output of Maidstone. He gave an example using the Fay Farm.

Bob shared his screen to show the lands owned by the Nature Conservancy. Using the Vermont Interactive Map Viewer, he worked his way from the Guildhall line to Brunswick, he reviewed the owners and uses of the land along the riverbed.

Bruno shared some history of industry in Maidstone on the McDade (now Lufkin) property. He also shared his concerns about the limitation of use of lands that are owned by the Nature Conservancy.

REQUIRED ELEMENT: ADJACENT COMMUNITIES (BRUCE)

Bruce shared his screen. He did a comparison of Maidstone to Brunswick, Ferdinand, Granby, and Guildhall. He compared Housing Units and Occupancy, Estimate Households.

He reviewed the prior town plans of adjacent communities. He also discussed what the adjacent communities have in their town plans. His conclusion is that Maidstone's objective of maintaining the scale, traditions and its rural character is consistent with the objectives of the adjacent communities. Maidstone's objective of maintaining or protecting agricultural lands and forests is also consistent with the goals of the State, Regional and surrounding communities. Bruce walked the Commission through the other elements, reaching similar conclusions.

Bob shared his screen to show a landowner, Liadsa Investments II, who owns large parcels of land in Maidstone, Granby and Guildhall. Bruno shared that Liadsa has restricted use of the lands that they own.

Paul shared his screen to question Rural Land 1 and 2 on North Rd. Bruno felt that a prior member of a Commission kept their property in Rural Land 1.

REQUIRED ELEMENT: HOUSING (RAYMOND)

Raymond shared his concern about whether our bylaws limit someone from building a cellar on their land and living in it while they acquire additional funds to complete the building. He also felt that the bylaws should allow for CONEX boxes. The prohibition of CONEX boxes was added in the 2016 bylaws, but Bob did not know why this was done. Bruno shared his concern that there should be a limit of one box per property and that the boxes should be placed out of view.

Raymond expressed his concern that zoning restrictions hurt development in Rural Zone 1 and 2. The conversation became devise as Raymond continued to use terms like "lake people" and "you people". Bob objected and explained that he was a resident of Maidstone, not Maidstone Lake.

(Bruno left the meeting around this time.)

Of particular issue was Raymond's misconception that someone could not build a cellar and live in it while they raised funds to complete the house. Amy brought up an instance in town where this was currently occurring, so did not understand what restriction Raymond was addressing.

SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is on Tuesday, November 12 at 6 pm, as was published in the town report.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING:

Bruce will look at the goals from the prior plan and start a basis for the new goals.

Paul will look at the Flood Resilience element.

Bob will continue on the Energy Plan.

Raymond will work on the Utility and Facility Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no additional public comments.

OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business.

Bob made a motion to adjourn. Paul seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Champagne-Willis