

MINUTES
MAIDSTONE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, March 13, 2025, 7:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting, both in person at Town Hall and by Zoom Video

Members present in person: Bruce Barker

Members present via Zoom: Bob Champagne-Willis, Paul Kamins, Raymond Lovell (joined the meeting at 7:38 pm), ex-officio member Scott Lovell

Also present via Zoom: Kyle Dwyer of Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA)(Kyle joined the meeting at 7:08), Amy Pear.

Bruce Barker called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Bob made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2025 meeting. Paul seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All in favor.

Bob shared that he spoke with Alison Low at NVDA about the flood insurance program. Alison stated that she wants clear assurances from the selectboard that they will be proceeding with the program before she puts the effort towards gathering the regulations and application. Bob will ask Alison exactly what she needs from the selectboard.

NVDA UPDATE:

Kyle shared his work for this meeting. He covered the Energy Plan and Utilities/Facilities.

ENERGY PLAN: Kyle worked through the language for an Enhanced Energy Plan which supports the goals of NVDA's Regional Energy Plan. We are not required to adopt an Enhanced Energy Plan, but Kyle would like us to consider it. It gives the town substantial deference when it comes to siting for renewable energy projects. Bob shared that only 20% of Maidstone's land is developable. Property enrolled in Current Use Forest and Current Use Agriculture coupled with State Land and water body acreage makes up for 80% of all the acreage in Maidstone.

In the Northeast Kingdom, Kyle shared that Holland has adopted the Enhanced Energy Plan. Kyle will send the Commission a copy of Holland's Town Plan.

By adopting an Enhanced Energy Plan, it sets high goals for the town. If adopted, then there would need to be follow-through to work towards that goals set in the Town Plan.

The Commission discussed the possibility of harnessing the energy in the spillway at Maidstone Lake.

The Commission needs time to digest the scope of the Enhanced Energy Plan and make a decision about including this in our Town Plan.

Paul shared his concerns about the trend to more electricity usage, which currently has some negative impacts on the environment. For instance, the electric grid is vulnerable. Also, the mining for lithium is bad for the environment. Ray shared his concerns that heat pumps don't work if the

temperature drops before 14 below zero. Kyle felt that people would still have their original source of alternate energy systems if temperatures drop below the range that the heat pumps need to be effective.

UTILITIES AND FACILITIES: Kyle added language regarding broadband access to the plan, but did not change much else.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Amy shared that NVDA provided information, which is available at Town Hall, on current rebates. She also shared that the cold climate heat pumps also help on high humidity days where air conditioning may be needed. Paul wondered if we could add a webpage to our website with the rebate information. Kyle shared that Efficiency Vermont has a search tool for rebate information.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT MEETING:

We will work on sections of the Town Plan as Kyle updates the google docs. Kyle is working on Implementation and Economic Development. That will finish the required elements. Bob felt that we should use the May meeting to finalize the goals of each element. Kyle thinks that we could cover some goal discussions during the April meeting. We need to finish the Energy section, and can discuss goals on Housing, for example.

Paul had further questions about the Enhanced Energy Plan. As an example, our plan could discourage large scale wind farms, and therefore our Town Plan could be protected from this type of development if we had an Enhanced Energy Plan.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 10, 2025 at 7 pm.

There was no other business.

Bob made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:24pm. Paul seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Champagne-Willis