

**MINUTES
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
TOWN OF BOWDOINHAM
13 SCHOOL STREET-KENDALL ROOM
OCTOBER 23, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nate Drummond, Chair
Reeve Wood
Tracy Krueger
Justin Schlawin
Chris Vonderweidt (via Zoom)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Richard Joyce
William Shippen

STAFF PRESENT: Jason Lorrain, Code Enforcement Officer

1. REGULAR MEETING - CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINE QUORUM

On Thursday, October 23, 2025, a meeting of the Bowdoinham Maine Planning Board was held in the Kendall Room at the Town Office. Mr. Drummond called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. It was determined that a quorum was present. Those wishing to attend via Zoom were given passcode: 649558 with a Meeting ID of 812 0965 0859. It was noted that, joining by phone, if a computer was not available, interested parties could call into the public meeting and participate by phone by calling (646) 876-9923 when the meeting begins.

2. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 24, 2025

Mr. Wood noted that he was not present at the meeting and that all references to himself should be credited to Mr. Drummond. The Board agreed that discussion surrounding the Land Use Ordinance be credited to Selectman Hodde, not CEO Lorrain.

Motion was made, seconded, and it was unanimously

VOTED

to approve the Minutes of September 25, 2025, as amended.

OLD BUSINESS:

3. NO OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS:

4. PLANNING BOARD INVITED PEGGY CHRISTIAN, THE CHAIR OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE, TO THIS MEETING TO GIVE A BRIEF UPDATE ON WHEN AND HOW TO ENGAGE WITH THEIR COMMITTEE ON THE DRAFTING OF AN OPEN SPACE PLAN.

Ms. Christian explained that the Committee is in the very beginning stages of discussing the open space plan and has spent most of their time reviewing similar plans from surrounding areas. The Committee is hoping to receive a grant to hire a consultant to assist them in updating the Plan.

Ms. Christian then explained that the role of the Committee is to dream, whereas the Planning Board takes on the role of enforcing the Land Use Ordinance. She confirmed that the Committee will hold numerous Public Hearings in order to gain public input, and clarified that the role of Planning Board may not be as deeply involved in drafting the Open Space Plan as language may have suggested.

Mr. Wood asked if the Committee has discussed a Conservation Commission. Ms. Christian stated that the Committee has not fleshed out the idea yet, but she agreed that the Commission would add significant value to the Town.

Mr. Vonderweidt expressed his opinion that the plan should reflect the opinion of the community. He encouraged the Committee to establish goals and objectives of the Open Space Plan in order to drive public engagement. Ms. Christian agreed that the Committee will be drafting a mission statement in the upcoming meeting. She acknowledged that while open space is important to residents, housing is also an issue that may need to be addressed and balanced with conservation.

Mr. Drummond asked if surrounding towns have a Conservation Commission. Ms. Christian confirmed Brunswick has one, as well as Litchfield, although they act in a mostly advisory role. She stated that it may be beneficial that a commission has more authority.

The Planning Board confirmed with Ms. Christian that the Committee is not seeking to draft changes to the Land Use Ordinance, to which she agreed is outside the scope and ability of the Committee. Mr. Drummond encouraged the Committee to keep the Planning Board informed of any discussions that may impact land use. Ms. Christian noted that there is a large section of the Comprehensive Plan that addresses land use. Mr. Vonderweidt offered his assistance to the Committee in reviewing documents.

5. LAND USE ORDINANCE: REORGANIZATION DISCUSSION OF ARTICLES 1-5, 11, AND 12

CEO Lorrain noted that the main issue that he addressed is to make the Land Use Ordinance consistent with State statute, recommending that either a member of the Board or the Town Attorney double check the statutes to confirm that all edits are correct.

The Board acknowledged that the formatting of the document will need to be updated. Ms. Krueger asked if the effective date should be changed to reflect the most recent update, or rather this addresses shoreland zoning specifically. The Board agreed that the Town Attorney will need to review the document, which will also need to be sent to the State for approval.

CEO Lorrain noted that the Town Attorney has cautioned against a full re-write of the Ordinance, as this may cause difficulty when it comes time for the Town to adopt amendments. The Board observed that typically the Ordinance is voted on in sections to address specific

amendments, which would prove to be difficult in this instance as the entire document will be reformatted.

Mr. Lorrain explained how he reviewed the definitions, and notated which definitions are not used outside of their definition. Ms. Krueger expressed concern about removing definitions as it may raise concerns with the public. Mr. Wood and Mr. Vonderweidt both agreed that unused definitions should be removed to simplify the Ordinance.

The Board then agreed that synonyms should be closely reviewed to create more consistency and clarity within the Ordinance. The Board agreed to remove unnecessary definitions and hold off on substantive changes to the definitions. Mr. Vonderweidt noted that contradictory language should be addressed by removing outdated definitions, which the Board agreed.

The Board agreed to remove “distribution center” from the land use table, remove the definition of “dog kennel”, remove definitions for “Medical Cannabis Establishment” and “Medical Cannabis Registered Caregiver”, change “Net Residential Acreage” to “Net Residential Area”, that Significant River Segments reference state statute rather than Appendix B, and that the language under “Undue Hardship regarding a variance be removed. The Board agreed to keep the definition for “Substantial Damage”.

The Board reviewed language regarding non-conforming buildings and agreed that the procedure for Planning Board review should be referenced in Article 3, Section C. Ms. Krueger noted that setback determinations in Article 11 should be separated for emphasis. Discussion followed on more substantive changes which will need to take place once the reorganization is complete. The Board agreed that all other amendments to Article 3 are acceptable.

CEO Lorrain explained that Article 4 performance standards are used mostly for code enforcement purposes. The Board agreed that an introductory paragraph explaining the purpose of the performance standards would be beneficial. The Board then agreed that farm stands should be removed from the performance standards as they require Tier 1 review, and to postpone amendments to lighting.

Discussion followed on the solar energy system performance standards, with the Board agreeing to move solar standards to site plan review.

The Board discussed windmills and agreed that this language does not need to be addressed at this time and suggested researching what other towns require.

The Board reviewed Table 5.1 under Article 5, agreeing to move the land uses to the right of the district in the table. The Board also agreed to change “PB” to “SUB”. Discussion followed on whether the footnotes should be reduced or eliminated and agreed to leave the footnotes as they are for the time being.

The Board discussed junkyard permitting and whether further clarification is needed as junkyards are reviewed by the Select Board and statutorily mandated. CEO Lorrain will review former iterations of the Land Use Ordinance.

In reviewing commercial kitchen permitting, the Board agreed that superscript 5 is appropriate.

The Board discussed the copy requirements under Article 11 and agreed to make the number uniform for all submissions.

The Board reviewed revisions to Consent Agreements and agreed that the formatting is more easily digested as presented. They thanked CEO Lorrain for his work on the revisions.

CEO Lorrain confirmed that the language for appeals was reviewed by the Board and found to be acceptable as is.

The Board agreed to continue reviewing the ordinance with the understanding that subdivision language should be saved for last.

OTHER BUSINESS:

6. FUTURE MEETING DISCUSSION

None

7. **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned by unanimous acclamation at 8:33 pm.

