

**TOWN OF EATON
PLANNING BOARD
August 21, 2024**

The Planning Board held their regular meeting on August 21, 2024, at 6:00 pm. Present were Chairman Dennis Sullivan, Judy Wilson, and John Hedden. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm.

Meeting Minutes

The board reviewed the Minutes from July 17, 2024, and made an adjustment. **Judy Wilson made a motion to adopt the adjusted Minutes, seconded by John Hedden. The motion carried.** The board reviewed the Minutes from the joint meeting on July 22, 2024. **John Hedden made a motion to adopt the Minutes as written, seconded by Judy Wilson. The motion carried.**

Conservation Commission Report

Dennis Sullivan gave an update on the Conservation Commission. He stated that Marnie Cobbs is resigning as Chair and Paul Nuccio will be replacing her in that position. The Conservation Commission is finalizing their contributions to the Master Plan.

Zoning Board of Adjustment

The Zoning Board of Adjustment recently granted a variance to Philip and Naomi Lavori to change the minimum leach field setbacks on their property so a new and improved septic system can be installed.

Administration

The planning board was presented with a request by Philip and Naomi Lavori to merge their two adjoining properties. John Hedden pointed out that merging the two properties will prevent the second lot from being developed, which could be a good thing, because the second lot consists of a large area classified as wetlands. John Hedden stated that if the second lot stayed separate, it could potentially be built on in the future and that could have a negative impact on the surrounding wetlands. **The Board unanimously agreed to approve the lot merger.**

Master Plan and Questionnaire

The Board discussed the July 22, 2024, joint meeting between the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Selectmen. Dennis Sullivan expressed concern that the point of the joint meeting may have been missed, because people seemed more focused on the contents of the questionnaire than the Master Plan. John Hedden stated that writing the new Master Plan was a significant opportunity to set goals for the community and address key issues in the Town. John Hedden also stated that the “we have always done it this way” sentiment can be a dangerous attitude to have and pointed out that it is important to remember that the Master Plan is not a legally binding document. John Hedden stated that important issues to the town do belong in the Master Plan, as this opens an opportunity for the Plan to be expansive and a look at where we could go as a community. Dennis Sullivan agreed, stating that the Master Plan is supposed to be about where we want the Town to be in ten years.

The Board reviewed samples of Master Plans, questionnaires, and surveys from nearby towns, such as Freedom, Madison, and Conway. The Board also reviewed an email from Barbara Richter, the executive director at NHACC. Barbara Richter suggested using broad questions that lead to more specific topics on our questionnaire and listed several example questions. A copy of this email was placed in the Master Plan folder for future reference. John Hedden stated that the Board should approve any question that someone wants in the questionnaire. Dennis Sullivan agreed but stated that it is important the Questionnaire does not get too long. Judy Wilson stated that it is necessary to make sure people know what a Master Plan is, and that the Questionnaire should direct them to the Town Webpage or a paper copy at Town Hall so they can see the current Master Plan for themselves.

The topic of including a chapter about education in the Master Plan was discussed. In the past, schools and education have not been included in the Master Plan. Dennis Sullivan suggested that there should be a chapter on education included in the Master Plan, because it is a large expense to the town. John Hedden pointed out that education is an essential service and has a large impact on the town with the way it is provided. John Hedden stated that the town should stay aware of the options for providing education, with a focus on the quality of the schools. John Hedden stated that this is also a way to attract young families to the community. Dennis Sullivan stated that he will reach out to the Eaton School Board to see if they want any education-related questions added to the questionnaire.

The Board continued to discuss the questionnaire. Dennis Sullivan suggested making a separate questionnaire for the Selectmen, which would ask them the ten greatest risks to the Town and the ten greatest strengths of the Town. John Hedden suggested a section about cell phone towers be included in the questionnaire. Judy Wilson suggested including the topic of outdoor lighting in the questionnaire. Judy Wilson also suggested changing the Master Plan regarding the Town Hall as the Emergency Center

and possibly having Town Hall accessible to residents during extreme weather events and other situations. Judy Wilson pointed out that in the past, the Town had an attitude of personal independence, but there are now many people in town who do not have friends or family in the area to help if a problem arises. John Hedden suggested adding a section in the questionnaire that asks residents “What three things do you like best about Eaton.” Judy Wilson suggested adding “What town services need investment in the coming decade?” to the questionnaire. The Board also discussed the ways in which to distribute the questionnaire to residents. John Hedden suggested making a QR code in Town Hall that would link to a digital version of the questionnaire. Dennis Sullivan suggested mailing copies of the questionnaire to both the property owners and the registered voters in town and stated that renters who live in Eaton should also be allowed to state their opinions for the vision of the Town.

John Hedden made a motion, seconded by Judy Wilson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Hicks

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