

Master Plan Committee

Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2025

Meeting called to order at 5:00pm

1. Attendance: John Charbonneau Director of Community Development, Rich Preston, Linda Brown, Bob Minarik, Bob Moran, Mike Zwicker, Meg Schlesman, Ross Smith, Carol Gogolinski (Carol left the meeting at 6:15pm), Gordon Larrivee, Rebecca Lavallee, Dan Mascroft and Margaret Bacon. Excused is Rob Leonardi.
2. Reorganization: Linda Brown motions to nominate Richard Preston as Chair. Mike Zwicker seconds the motion. The motion passes. Linda Brown motions to nominate Margaret Bacon as Vice Chair. Meg Schlesman seconds the motion. The motion passes. Bob Moran motions to nominate Linda Brown as Clerk. Meg Schlesman seconds the motion. The motion passes.
3. Minutes of May 21, 2025. Bob Minarik motions to approve the minutes of May 21, 2025 as amended. Carol Gogolinski seconds the motion. Rebecca Lavallee abstains. The motion passes.
4. Discussion: We have 3 Planning Board members sitting on our Master Plan Committee. If another Planning Board member attends our meeting in the audience and verbally participates we may be in violation of open meeting law. All future Master Plan posted meetings will also need to include a posted Planning Board meeting as a precaution. John Charbonneau will post the added Planning Board meetings to coincide with ours as joint meetings.
5. Quarterly Reporting is due July 15, 2025. Bob Minarik will submit this.
6. **Population & Housing Key Findings:** Emily Glaubitz, Sam Carter and Emily Thibault are present from CMRCP to discuss the Population & Housing Chapter. Emily Thibault speaks about key findings from our town wide survey.
  - Community has concerns about overdevelopment. The survey indicates forest and open space are assets to be preserved. Douglas has one of the highest rates of development in the state.
  - Community has concerns about housing affordability for first time home buyers and longtime residents. Concerns with the high cost of taxes and utilities. Single family home costs far exceed the median family income in the last 12 years. We currently have 4.12% subsidized housing inventory that is short of the 10% mandated under M.G.L. Chapter 40B. Mike Zwicker states that the state mandated Stretch Code increases home costs. Sam Carter states we are missing multi-family homes in our Zoning Bylaws. Emily Thibault states we should focus on what is in the town's capacity to control.
  - Growing demand for affordable and accessible housing that meets the needs of older residents. There is a significant increase in the Douglas population of 55 and older in the last decade. More than one third of the Douglas population over the age of 55.

- Strong support for small and mid-sized detached homes and accessory dwelling units (ADU's). The dominant type of housing is single family homes of 86% with 55% as 3 bedroom homes.

**7. Population & Housing Chapter Potential Action Items:**

- Modify our Zoning Bylaws and Use Regulations table to clearly define which districts multi-family dwellings are permitted to be in. Multi-family dwellings consist of 3 or more units.
  - Develop a Housing Production Plan to establish a proactive strategy to address the towns housing goals.
  - Establish a committee dedicated to addressing housing and affordability issues in Douglas. This could be combined with action item above.
  - Establish a municipal affordable housing trust fund with an active board of trustees. These funds would not come out of our towns general budget or be an additional yearly town tax. These funds could be appropriated from donations, tax title or monies in exchange for additional housing in a development. John Charbonneau would like this to be an action item to explore zoning for areas that are on water/sewer that have potential to be rezoned for pocket neighborhoods of smaller scale homes. This could be an area for 55 and older housing. John will speak to our Building Inspector and find out how many new homes have been built and occupancy permits issued for Douglas.
8. High School Survey Results: Emily will email the High School Survey results to John Charbonneau and he will see if he can post them on our town website like we did with our town wide survey results.
9. Linda motions to amend the Master Plan Meeting Schedule and cancel our June 25, 2025 meeting. Bob Moran seconds the motion. The motion passes. Ten members vote yes. One member opposed.
10. Mike Zwicker motions to adjourn at 7:02pm. Bob Moran seconds the motion. The motion passes.

Linda Brown

Master Plan Committee

Secretary