

Meeting Minutes

October 29, 2025

Begin at 5:03pm

1. Attendance: John Charbonneau Town Planner, Richard Preston, Linda Brown, Bob Minarik, Mike Zwicker, Ross Smith, Gordon Larrivee, Rebecca Lavallee, Dan Mascroft and Margaret Bacon. Bob Moran on Zoom. Excused is Rob Leonardi. Not excused are Meg Schlesman and Carol Gogolinski.
2. Minutes from Oct. 15, 2025. Mike Zwicker motions to approve the minutes as written. Ross Smith seconds the motion. The motion passes.
3. Discussion: Right to Farm Bylaw (RTF) petition & Agricultural Commission petition. Lori Colbert and Dallas Keeney make the presentation to the Committee. These are two citizens petition that will be presented as Articles at the Fall Town Meeting on November 17, 2025. Lori speaks in detail about the RTF Bylaw and the creation of the Agricultural Commission. The RTF is written to reflect how the town is doing things now and how it will remain the same in regards to livestock in Douglas if the RTF Bylaw passes. The Agricultural Commission will be made up of a group of volunteers that will have an agricultural background as well as citizens that do not have agricultural experience. There will be no financial impact to the town for either article. Many questions were asked by the committee and answered by the article's presenters. There was not a need for a Public Hearing through the town because it is a citizen's petition and not a zoning change.

Audience member Angela Rice, 829 NW Main Street, speaks about nuisance complaints as written in the RTF Bylaw. The current complaint system is anonymous and is inefficient. Livestock owners are not notified of complaints or who is making the complaint in a timely manner. The creation of the Right to Farm Bylaw and the Agricultural Commission makes people accountable if there are real problems pertaining to complaints. Dan Mascroft notes that the RTF Bylaw establishes a different nuisance protocol that is substantive and changes what already exists.

4. Master Plan Photo Contest discussion. Emily Glaubitz and Gabe Trevor are here from CMRPC. We decide to hold the photo contest open until our Feb. 18, 2026 meeting. Emily hands out the draft photo contest flyer and contest submission form with rules. Emily will look into the legality on using public funds to purchase gift cards for the contest winners. John Charbonneau will also look into the legality of the purchased gift cards and also if gift card donations need special approval/requirements. Photos need to be taken by Douglas residents and also be Douglas subjects. There will be 8 photo subjects including one that will appear on the Master Plan cover. Photos must be digitally submitted. One prize per person. Winning photos will appear in the final Master Plan book. In the first paragraph of the submission form, the last sentence needs to be changed to 'Winning photos will appear in the Master Plan or on respective social media channels.
5. Review of previous meeting discussion: Town signs announcing public events are needed in easily accessible and safe areas in town. The town sign at the Fire Station is at a busy intersection. A better place for the sign would be where traffic has to stop and be able to read it safely. Margaret Bacon, per our last meeting discussion, was tasked with getting a price & preliminary downtown streetscape concept. Margaret has spoken with BSC Group based in Worcester, MA. BSC Group suggested the Master Plan Committee form a subcommittee to meet with them and answer questions on exactly what the town is looking for in the downtown area. The initial meeting with BSC Group would be a Zoom meeting with the subcommittee. Initial meeting topics would be areas for town notices/signage, connectivity, river walk and what businesses are looking for downtown. The Streetscape Study Committee will be comprised of John Charbonneau, Margaret Bacon, Ross Smith and Bob Moran. Margaret will coordinate the subcommittee meeting at the town hall and then the initial Zoom meeting with BSC Group. There is not a funding source or total cost determination for BSC Group's services at this time. CMRPC may be able to help us with a funding source. By consensus we agree to form the Street Scape Subcommittee and go forward with this study.

6. Discussion: Key Findings & Action Items on Land Use Chapter. Gabe Trevor discusses the land use chapter. The handout includes town maps from 2016. One map shows land use and the other shows zoning districts. John Charbonneau suggests combining both maps to show what lots in zones are being used and what lots in zones are vacant. Gabe will look into this and provide another map at our next meeting. The Douglas State Forest area is incorrect on the Land Use map. The state forest does have its own zone called State Forest Open Space (SFOS) that was approved at a town meeting. There are also many state-owned parcels that are not included on these maps. Some of the Industrial Zones are now owned by the state under Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). This should be corrected so we can see how much useable Industrial Zone is actually remaining in Douglas. Gabe will create a map containing all SFOS that has underlying zones and also include other parcels owned by state under DEM and DCR.

Key Findings:

- Residents prioritize open space but also desire diverse housing and commercial activity.
- Industrial Zone in the NW corner of town encompasses the State Forest. Gabe will adjust the maps for our next meeting.
- Zoning Map and bylaws need updating for clarity. Some lots have 2-3 different zones in them. Create water front zoning that encompasses large bodies of water.

Action Items:

- Implement a comprehensive zoning bylaw diagnostic and rewrite. CMRPC can help with this process.
- Create design regulations for use with site plan review and special permits in certain districts.
- Promote and encourage Agricultural Protection Restrictions to preserve open space and rural character. The proposed Agricultural Commission may be able to help.
- Host discussion with developers early in the application process concerning infrastructure extensions, such as water and sewer. The town also needs to update what it has. Water and sewer may already have an Infrastructure Master Plan.
- Review and update Subdivision Rules and Regulations.
- Review and update off street parking.

7. Mike Zwicker motions to accept the 2026 Master Plan Meeting schedule. Rebecca Lavallee seconds the motion. The motion passes.

8. Rebecca Lavallee motions to adjourn at 7:15pm. Ross Smith seconds the motion. The motion passes.

Linda Brown

Master Plan Committee

Secretary