

TOWN OF NEWPORT, NH
Minutes of the Planning Board Meeting
July 22, 2026 – 6:30 P.M.
Board of Selectmen's Room
15 Sunapee Street
Regular Meeting and Public Hearing

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Burnham, Chairman; Ken Merrow, Vice Chairman; Keith Sayer, Anna O'Hara

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: Thomas Sargent, Christian McFarland, Rachel Dilger, BOS Alternate Representative; Jeff North, BOS Representative

VIDEOGRAPHER: NCTV

STAFF PRESENT: Joe Hoppock, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Kyle Harris, Town Manager

GUEST: Tim Josephson, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region Planning Commission (UVLSRPC)

COMMUNITY PRESENT: Glen West, Rochelle Brunet

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Burnham called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm followed by a roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA REVIEW: accepted as presented

MINUTES: June 24, 2026

June 24, 2026

Mr. Merrow made a motion *to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2026 meeting as presented.* It was seconded by Mr. Sayer. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

NEW BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan

The Planning Board members and Mr. Josephson discussed the latest Newport Master Plan draft. It is currently 110 pages. Mr. Josephson and his team were organizing the Plan with Chapter appendixes and updated data for the Master Plan; one example was census data (2025 data).

He thanked Mr. Hoppock for relaying information from Board members. He had received the "Cultural Assets and Arts" Chapter and will be adding it to the Plan.

He opened the meeting to questions/comments/corrections.

In general discussion the following were discussed:

- Aging population
- Types of employment: labor force, weekly wage/comparative wages
- Including correct poverty numbers information
- Tourism
- Promote small businesses in Town (Economic Chapter)
- Strip malls
- Revitalization of downtown area
- Commercialized evaluation tax rates; net rate per capita (in graph for comparison)
- Future Land Use Map (recommended taking it out until update zoning ordinance)
 - Discussed updating future use; the map and ordinance
- Requests from Conservation and Heritage Commissions on maps to include in Master Plan
- Have a "live" link in the Master Plan to Conservation and Heritage Commissions Section
- Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP)

There were suggestions proposed by the Board; including guiding smart infrastructure growth; having new growth be closer to the center of Town.

- Data Centers as opposed to high tech. Should Newport take a stand on whether they want them?

They discussed how wording could be added to state the type of high-tech industry that would be allowed.

Mr. Josephson requested they research towns that have Data Centers (ex. Lowell, MA).

- Of people surveyed the number who responded (254).

Mr. Josephson stated he appreciated the feedback from the Conservation and Heritage Commissions. Mr. Josephson stated potential businesses will look at the Master Plan. There will be a Public Hearing at the end of the Planning Board's process. He explained the Master Plan could be updated earlier than ten years from now.

Include information

Newport's rural character; local control; commercial development in downtown areas; wording for the type of housing to be built in Newport.

ADD information:

- 1) Need goals for all the Chapters (Land Use Goals and Recommendations have been included)
- 2) The Master Plan Vision Section (mandatory by law) was not updated. It is the Planning Board's responsibility to update it and change wording from being generic to being focused on wants and needs of Newport (on II-2).
- 3) Board members will look at and revise the Natural Hazards and Emergency Response Management Section as needed. Will help Newport be eligible for Safety or Disaster Response grants.
- 4) Newport is eligible for new TIF area and grants.

Mr. Merrow stated a target date was needed to complete the Master Plan. He asked for the process to complete it. Chairman Burnham agreed; the Board needed an end date. Mr. Hoppock said the goal was to have their Public Hearing on October 28, 2026. He said after the Public Hearing, the Planning Board could make changes that night. When asked, the Board was told it only had to adopt it. Mr. Josephson concurred; they voted to adopt the Master Plan after the Public Hearing. Mr. Hoppock stated that only one Public Hearing was necessary.

Mr. Josephson stated that his goal was to get the Planning Board a final version of the Master Plan just after Labor Day (2026). They could revise and finalize it in September (meeting September 23, 2026). Board members would then receive a finalized copy. The format will move some images into an appendix (Heritage). They will post for the Public Hearing in mid-October for a Public Hearing on October 28, 2026. The finalized copy will be on the website for the public to read.

Mr. Josephson asked for additional photos to be included in the Master Plan to show community: recreation, contests, manufacturers.

ADMINISTRATION:

Annual Joint Meeting of all Land Use Board and Board of Selectmen scheduled for September 30, 2026 at 6:30 pm in the Bar Harbor Room of the LaValley Family Community Center. Meeting is open to the public.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Merrow stated he and Mr. Hoppock have discussed the change of local zoning ordinances. Any ordinances updated will be at the Town Meeting 2028.

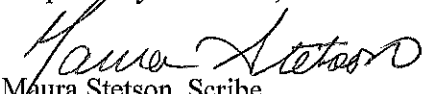
There was a discussion on the procedure to change Newport Zoning Ordinances. Mr. Hoppock will keep the Board up to date.

Mr. Hoppock gave information on ADUs, multiunit buildings and zoning ordinance amendments by the state. There was a brief discussion on state micromanaging towns.

There was a general discussion on local zoning items. It was stated that one Planning Board position was open. Chairman Burnham opened the meeting to the public. There was no comment.

There being no further communications from the Board or public; Mr. Merrow made a motion *to adjourn at 7:37 pm*. It was seconded by Ms. O'Hara. *The motion passed 4-0-0.*

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson, Scribe

Approved: August 26, 2026

The next regular Planning Board meeting will be on Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 6:30 pm in the BOS Room.