

**Town of Baldwin, Maine  
Planning Board  
Meeting Minutes from June 26, 2025**

**Board Members Present**

Jo Pierce, Don Sharp, Merhiella Crawford, Mike Ustin, Matthew Fricker (quorum established)

**Also Present**

Members of the community.

Matthew Fricker led the meeting in the absence of Co-Chair David Strock. He called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

**1. MEETING MINUTES**

Minutes from the June 12th meeting were reviewed.

***VOTE: Jo Pierce moved to accept the minute as written. Merhiella Crawford seconded. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.***

**2. HOUSEKEEPING**

Carry Markovich, Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board, has given her notice. The position is being advertised in the Shoppers Guide. Mrs. Markovich will remain in the position until it is filled or until the second meeting in July, whichever comes first.

Matthew Fricker reminded the board of the Pigeon Brook Road site walk scheduled for Saturday, June 14 at 9:00 am. Andrew Porter, the owner of the property, is expected to attend.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

**Discussion on Planning Board and Code Enforcement Relationship**

Mr. Fricker addressed the strained relationship between the Planning Board and the Code Enforcement Officers (CEOs). He noted that while a new CEO has been hired, former CEO Mike Lee will remain in his role until the new hire becomes certified.

Mr. Fricker recommended that the Planning Board make an effort to rebuild a cooperative working relationship with the CEOs. The CEO's knowledge is useful and important to the workings of the planning board. The Select Board is aware of the ongoing issues and plans to facilitate a meeting between the two parties.

Board member Merhiella Crawford suggested that involving a neutral third party for outside mediation might be more effective. The rest of the Board agreed with this suggestion.

A discussion followed about different options for providing training to the entire planning board body.

### **Summary of Don Sharp's Concerns**

Don Sharp expressed concern that the Planning Board's recent approval of multiple zoning waivers, which allow landowners to build in forested wetlands, is creating a loophole that could lead to ongoing development within the Resource Protection District.

Mr. Sharp reported that he spoke with Jeff Kalinich from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Land Resources office. According to Mr. Kalinich, the DEP considers forested wetlands to be subject to the same restrictions as other freshwater wetlands. However, the Town of Baldwin—under its home rule authority, which can supersede state law—chose to exclude forested wetlands from its definition of freshwater wetlands when drafting the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and creating the current resource protection district maps.

To illustrate his point, Mr. Sharp presented a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map of Baldwin that shows designated wetland areas. He then overlaid this map onto Baldwin's Resource Protection/Shoreland Zoning map. The wetlands shown on both maps aligned, confirming their identification.

Mr. Sharp warned that if the town's ordinance is not revised soon, protected natural areas may be permanently opened up for development. He also expressed concern that the Maine DEP appears to be adjusting its state maps to align with Baldwin's ordinance, effectively excluding forested wetlands from protection.

To help inform the Planning Board, Mr. Sharp offered to prepare a presentation detailing his findings and outlining the potential consequences of the current ordinance. This will be presented at a future meeting.

## **4. NEW BUSINESS**

### **Discussion on Maine Law LD 1829**

Jo Pierce expressed concern regarding Maine Law LD 1829, which is set to take effect in July 2027. He noted that the new law may permit certain types of development to proceed without Planning Board approval. In response, the Board agreed on the importance of becoming more informed about the law's implications and committed to further research and discussion.

### **Planning Board Vacancy Update**

Mr. Pierce reported that he has been actively working to fill the current vacancy on the Planning Board. He has submitted several candidate suggestions to the Select Board and is currently awaiting their response.

***VOTE: At 8:08, Jo Pierce moved to adjourn. Merhiella Crawford seconded. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.***