Rules of Procedure

Middlesex Planning Commission

AUTHORIZATION AND PURPOSE.

The of Middlesex Planning Commission shall be governed by all applicable state statutes, local ordinances and these rules. Planning Commissions are authorized by Title 24 VSA, Chapter 117, Section 4323 to develop rules of operation. The Commission is required by law to conduct its meetings following the Vermont Open Meeting Law. 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314. Meetings of the Middlesex Planning Commission must be always open to the public, except as provided in 1 V.S.A. § 313

POWERS AND DUTIES (as detailed in 24 VSA Section 4325)

The Planning Commission may:

1. Prepare a Town Plan and amendments for consideration by the Selectboard and to review any amendments initiated by others;

2. Prepare and present to the Selectboard proposed bylaws and make recommendations to the Selectboard on proposed amendments to such bylaws;

3. Administer bylaws and other regulatory tools adopted under subchapter 6 of Chapter 117:

(1) Zoning bylaws.

(2) Site plan bylaws.

(3) Subdivision bylaws.

(4) Unified development bylaws.

(5) Official map.

(6) Impact fees.

(7) Phasing.

(8) Transfer of development rights.

(9) Special or freestanding bylaws;

4. Undertake capacity studies and make recommendations on matters of land development, urban renewal, transportation, economic and social development, rural beautification and design improvements, historic and scenic preservation, the conservation of energy and the development of renewable energy resources and wetland protection. Data gathered by the Planning Commission that is relevant to the geographic information system (G.I.S.) established under 3 VSA Section 20 shall be compatible with, useful to, and shared with that system;

5. Prepare and present to the Selectboard recommended building, plumbing, fire, electrical, housing, and related codes and enforcement procedures, and construction specifications for streets and related public improvements;

6. Hold public meetings;

7. Request from other departments and agencies of the town, such available information as related to the work of the Planning Commission;

8. Participate in regional and state agency planning programs;

9. Retain professional staff and consultant assistance in carrying out its duties and powers;

10. Undertake comprehensive planning studies, including related preliminary planning and engineering studies; 11. Perform such other acts or function as it may deem necessary or appropriate to fulfill the duties and obligations imposed by, and the intent and purposes of 24 VSA, Chapter 117.

APPLICATION. This policy setting forth rules of procedure shall apply to the Middlesex Planning Commission, referred to below as "the body." These rules shall apply to all regular, special, and emergency meetings of the body.

ORGANIZATION.

1. The Planning Commission shall consist of five (5) members. The body shall annually elect a chair and a vice-chair at its first meeting after Annual Town Meeting. The chair of the body or, in the chair's absence, the vice-chair shall preside over all meetings. If both the chair and the vice-chair are absent, a member selected by the body shall act as chair for that meeting.

2. The chair shall preserve order in the meeting and shall regulate its proceedings by applying these rules and making determinations about all questions of order or procedure.

3. A majority of the members of the body shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum of the members of the body is not present at a meeting, no meeting shall take place.

4. No single member of the body shall have authority to represent or act on behalf of the body unless, by majority vote, the body has delegated such authority for a specific matter at a duly-

noticed meeting and such delegation is recorded in the meeting minutes. This shall include posting on social media or letter to the editor in local newspapers.

5. Motions made by members of the body do require a second. The chair of the body may make motions and may vote on all questions before the body. A motion will only pass if it receives the votes of a majority of the total membership of the body.

6. There is no limit to the number of times a member of the body may speak to a question. A member may speak or make a motion without being recognized by the chair. Motions to close or limit debate will be entertained.

7. Any member of the body may request a roll call vote. Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 312(a)(2), when one or more members attend a meeting electronically, a roll call vote is required for votes that are not unanimous.

8. Meetings may be recessed to a time and place certain.

9. These rules may be amended by majority vote of the body and must be readopted annually.

AGENDAS.

1. Each regular and special meeting of the body shall have an agenda, with time allotted for each item of business to be considered by the body. Those who wish to be added to the meeting agenda shall contact the chair to request inclusion on the agenda. The chair shall determine the final content of the agenda.

2. At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting, and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda shall be posted in or near the municipal office and at the following designated public places in the municipality: Rumney School and Camp Meade. At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting, and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda shall be posted on one or more of the following: (1) the Town of Middlesex website, (2) Middlesex Front Porch Forum. The agenda must also be made available to any person who requests such agenda prior to the meeting.

3. All business shall be conducted in the same order as it appears on the noticed agenda, except that any addition to or deletion from the noticed agenda must be made as the first act of business at the meeting. No additions to or deletions from the agenda shall be considered once the first act of business at the meeting has commenced. Any other adjustment to the noticed agenda, for example, changing the order of business, postponing or tabling actions, may be made by majority vote of the body.

MEETINGS.

1. Regular meetings shall take place on the third Wednesday of the month at 5 p.m. at Town Hall & by Zoom.

2. Special meetings shall be publicly announced at least 24 hours in advance by giving notice to all members of the body unless previously waived; to an editor, publisher or news director, or radio station serving the area; and to any person who has requested notice of such meetings. In addition, notices shall be posted in the municipal clerk's office and at the following designated places in the municipality: Rumney School and Camp Meade.

3. Emergency meetings may be held without public announcement, without posting of notices, and without 24-hour notice to members, provided some public notice thereof is given as soon as possible before any such meeting. Emergency meetings may be held only when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the public body.

4. A member of the body may attend a regular, special, or emergency meeting by electronic or other means without being physically present at a designated meeting location, so long as the member identifies him or herself when the meeting is convened, and is able to hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Whenever one or more members attend electronically, voting that is not unanimous must be done by roll call. If a quorum or more of the body attend a meeting (regular, special, or emergency) without being physically present at a designated meeting location, the agenda for the meeting shall designate at least one physical location where a member of the public can attend and participate in the meeting. At least one member of the body, or at least one staff or designee of the body, shall be physically present at each designated meeting location.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

1. All meetings of the body are meetings in the public, not of the public. Members of the public shall be afforded reasonable opportunity to express opinions about matters considered by the body, so long as order is maintained according to these rules.

2. At the beginning, end, or conclusion of discussion of each agenda item, but before any action is taken by the public body at each meeting, time will be afforded for open public comment. By majority vote, the body may increase the time for open public comment and its place on the agenda.

3. Comment by the public or members of the body must be addressed to the chair or to the body as a whole, and not to any individual member of the body or public.

4. Members of the public must be acknowledged by the chair before speaking.

5. If a member of the public has already spoken on a topic, he or she may not be recognized again until others have first been given the opportunity to comment.

6. Order and decorum shall be observed by all persons present at the meeting. Neither members of the body, nor the members of the public, shall delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the meeting or interrupt or disturb any member while speaking. Members of the body and members of the public are prohibited from making personal, impertinent, threatening, or profane remarks.

7. Members of the body and members of the public shall obey the orders of the chair or other presiding member. The chair should adhere to the following process to restore order and decorum of a meeting, but may bypass any or all steps when he or she determines in his or her sole discretion that deviation from the process is warranted:

    a. Call the meeting to order and remind the members of the applicable rules of procedure.

    b. Declare a recess or table the issue.

    c. Adjourn the meeting until a time and date certain.

ADOPTED by a unanimous Vote of the Middlesex Planning Commission on April 15, 2026.