**EAST HADDAM PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

**MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX – 1 PLAINS ROAD**

**MEETING ROOM #1 & 2**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**July 8, 2025**

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

## 2. ATTENDANCE

**PRESENT:** Crary Brownell (Chairman), Bernard Gillis (Regular Member), Richard Pettinelli (Regular Member), Deborah Langdon (Regular Member), Toni Dumaine (Regular Member), and Susan Kinsman (Regular Member).

**ABSENT**: James Curtin (Vice Chairman).

## 3. MINUTES

**Minutes of July 8, 2025, were unanimously approved with the following correction(s).**

-Item 4, Bills: remove "for a building letter for somebody with lack of permits" and replace with "for".

-Item 7, 2nd paragraph, second line, replace "Easttown" with "East Haddam".

## 4. BILLS

There were none.

## 5. SITE PLAN REVIEW

### A. Application #25-11-42 Dogwood Road (property location), Nemergut Consulting (applicant), Steven & Susan Hollander (property owners), Map 075, Lot 094. Proposed conversion to year-round.

Mr. Nemergut presented a request to convert an existing seasonal residence at 42 Dogwood Road into a year-round dwelling. The proposed work includes replacing the current non-compliant septic system with a new, fully code-compliant system consisting of a septic tank, pump chamber, and leaching field. The Chatham Health District has approved the system. No other new construction is proposed. Setbacks and building coverage comply. The owner has obtained necessary permits and confirmed code compliance for prior renovations. There was discussion of merging an adjacent parcel formerly used as a community building into the main lot, which the applicant agreed to as a condition.

Michael Hamlin asked whether two pumps could be installed in the septic system as a backup. It was explained that a duplex system with alternating pumps is an option and provides redundancy. This setup can also eliminate the need for 24-hour emergency storage, as each pump acts as a backup to the other.

In response to a question about system failure during weekends or holidays, Mr. Nemergut explained that the septic and pump chambers are watertight, providing 24-hour emergency storage of approximately 450 gallons. In practice, reduced water usage can extend this capacity to 3–4 days. If needed, a pumper can be called to empty the tanks. An alarm system with both sound and light alerts the homeowner to pump failure. A check valve on the building sewer line helps prevent backflow from the leaching system, though if the pump is not repaired, backup could eventually reach the house.

**Motion** by Mr. Pettinelli to approve Application #25-11-42 Dogwood Road (property location), Nemergut Consulting (applicant), Steven & Susan Hollander (property owners), Map 075, Lot 094. Proposed conversion to year-round with the condition that the adjoining lots be merged and the proposed septic system be installed. Second by Ms. Dumaine and unanimously passed.

**B. Application #25-12-6 Paula Road (property location), Nemergut Consulting (applicant), Michael Hamlin (property owners). Map 067, Lot 109. Proposed conversion to year-round.**

Ms. Dumaine recused herself from the discussion and decision on this matter due to her personal connection, as the applicants are her neighbors.

The applicant for 6 Paula Road is seeking approval to convert a seasonal cottage into a year-round residence. The building, constructed in 1955, has been fully gutted inside and will undergo interior renovations only, with no expansion or exterior construction. The project includes installation of a new code-compliant septic system with a 1000-gallon septic tank, 1000-gallon pump chamber, and raised leaching field due to high groundwater. The Chatham Health District has reviewed and approved the revised plan. Existing setbacks are nonconforming but predate zoning regulations.

**Motion** by Mr. Pettinelli to approve Application #25-12-6 Paula Road (property location), Nemergut Consulting (applicant), Michael Hamlin (property owners). Map 067, Lot 109. Proposed conversion to year-round with the condition that the proposed septic system be installed and the appropriate building permits be taken out for interior work. Second by Mr. Gillis.

Favor: Brownell, Pettinelli, Gillis, Langdon, Kinsman.
Oppose: None
Abstain: Dumaine
Motion passed.

**6. DISCUSSION**

In response to questions about minimum lot sizes and septic system reliability, Mr. Ventres explained that while the town once had a half-acre minimum for year-round

conversions, court rulings now allow approval if zoning setbacks and health code requirements are met, regardless of lot size. He noted that newer septic systems are smaller and more effective, with no observed failures over 15 years of use. The Commission now requires not just the ability to install a code-compliant system but that it be installed for seasonal conversions. Additional requirements, such as nitrogen analysis and minimum distance from water bodies, are in place for lakefront properties. Repairs to existing systems are allowed under more lenient standards, but conversions must meet current zoning and health standards. Mr. Ventres also recommended dual pump systems for added reliability, especially in emergency situations.

### A. Moodus Master Plan

The commission reviewed the Moodus Master Plan and agreed that while the introduction is strong, the main body needs to be expanded to better address what went wrong in past development efforts. They discussed the importance of including historical context, referencing reports and archives, and collaborating with local historians like Ken Simon to access photos and detailed records. The group noted ongoing efforts to make the plan accessible to the public, including posting information on the town and school Facebook pages and distributing mailers to parents. They confirmed that the plan will be on display during the July 22nd referendum vote, and signs will be placed to guide voters to the display for viewing and to encourage public comment. Commission members plan to attend and have coordinated times to be present at the display.

## 7. LANDUSE ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

Mr. Ventres shared that he is working on bullet points to help communicate key aspects of the Banner proposal. He is also considering including relevant excerpts from the Plan of Conservation and Development to frame the proposal within the town's long-term planning goals. Copies of the draft were circulated to commission members. The discussion included clarification of details related to the golf course, restaurant lease, development potential, and associated water rights.

The commission discussed growing concerns over the environmental and safety impacts of wakeboard boats, particularly their large wakes which can damage shorelines, docks, and other boats, and pose risks to kayakers and swimmers—especially in shallower lakes like Moodus Reservoir. Mr. Ventres referenced similar regulations in other areas, such as Vermont's sticker-based system limiting wakeboard boats to specific lakes and expressed interest in adopting local controls. Any regulatory changes would require a town ordinance passed by town meeting vote or referendum.

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pettinelli made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Kinsman and the vote passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
E. Ruth Ziobron