

DRAFT: 05-20-2026

APPROVED: 06-11-2026



TOWN OF MILLVILLE – P&Z WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES May 19, 2026 at 1:00 P.M.

P&Z Commissioners Present: Chairperson Pat Plocek, Marshall Gevinson, Timothy Roe, Mike Weglein, and Roxanne Farina; ***Town Council Present:*** Mayor Ronald Belinko, Deputy Mayor Sharon Brienza, Secretary Deborah Sosnoski, Treasurer Joseph Parent, Council Member/Co-Treasurer Robert Wisgirda.

Town/Trade Employees Present: Town Manager Eileen Scerra, GMB Engineer Andrew Lyons, Town Solicitor Seth Thompson, Facilities and Building Administrator James Simpson, and Town Clerk Trish Marcules. ***Absent:*** Code & Building Officer Eric Evans.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / ROLL CALL

Chairperson Pat Plocek called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. with the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

2. NEW BUSINESS – WORKSHOP

A. Planning and Zoning will host a joint workshop with Town Council to discuss a range of planning and zoning topics, including an overview and clarification of zoning classifications. The workshop will be led by Seth Thompson and Andrew Lyons.

Mr. Thompson opened the meeting, expressing it would be a free-flowing discussion and addressing any questions along the way. Mr. Thompson had a presentation packet that was given to everyone in attendance.

Mr. Plocek raised concerns about rezoning and its impact on housing density and traffic. Mr. Thompson acknowledged the issue and suggested addressing it at the policy level rather than through specific applications. Mr. Thompson addressed the limited authority of local governments in traffic control and the role of federal and state governments. Mr. Lyons and Mr. Thompson explained the limitations of local control over town roads and the role of DELDOT in traffic improvements.

Mr. Thompson explained the role of the comprehensive plan in guiding local development and coordinating with state agencies. Mr. Thompson highlighted the state's push for mixed-use developments and the challenges of meeting those requirements. Mr. Roe and Mr. Lyons discussed the R2 zoning district and its implications for development.

DRAFT: 05-20-2026

APPROVED: 06-11-2026

Mr. Thompson and Mr. Roe discussed the parking requirements in different zoning districts and the challenges of meeting them. Mr. Thompson emphasized the importance of adjusting parking standards to address real-world issues. Mr. Lyons explained the development standards for Millville by the Sea and the negotiation process. Mr. Thompson discussed the need for better active open space requirements in the zoning code.

Mr. Thompson explained the DE State Employees Code of Conduct and its application to town officials. Mr. Thompson highlighted the importance of seeking advisory opinions and waivers from the Public Integrity Commission (PIC). Mr. Thompson then discussed the concept of due process and its components: procedural and substantive due process. Mr. Thompson emphasized the need for fair and non-arbitrary application of conditions and exactions in development applications.

Mayor Belinko urged commissioners to review Senate Bill 23, which will significantly impact local zoning and development. Mr. Thompson explained the definition of affordable housing on the bill and its implications for local communities. Mr. Thompson discussed the potential impact of the bill on local control and the need for education and preparation. Mr. Lyons and Mr. Thompson discussed the challenges of meeting the bill's requirements and the potential for legal challenges.

Mr. Thompson explained the process of updating the comprehensive plan and the importance of coordination with state and county agencies. Mr. Lyons discussed the new resiliency section of the comprehensive plan and its implications for local infrastructure. Mr. Thompson emphasized the need for a broad approach to the comprehensive plan, considering economic conditions, community facilities, and other factors. Mr. Thompson highlighted the importance of legislative actions in implementing comprehensive plan goals, such as text amendments to zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Mr. Thompson explained the planning commission can recommend an ordinance amendment to the council or propose its own amendment, which then undergoes a hearing. Mr. Thompson discussed the challenges of maintaining paths of connecting subdivisions. Mr. Thompson shared debates over who is responsible for the maintenance. Mr. Lyons added that existing developments may not connect to new paths, and he provided an example at Bishop's Landing and Millville by the Sea.

Mr. Lyons explained that connecting paths require right-of-way easements and can be complicated by changes in ownership and HOA decisions. Mr. Plocek and Mr. Lyons discussed a specific path that ends at a dead end due to development issues. Mr. Thompson notes that town zone streets are easier to connect than private roads, which can be contentious. The conversation shifted to specifics on subdivision and site plan approvals.

DRAFT: 05-20-2026

APPROVED: 06-11-2026

Mr. Thompson explained that the Board of Adjustment (BOA) handles variance requests, often for setbacks and must show exceptional practical difficulties. Mr. Lyons mentioned a recent variance request for Bay to Beach Builders. Mr. Thompson discussed the role of the BOA in granting variances and the legal standards involved. Mr. Lyons added that administrative variances can be granted for minor adjustments, such as a stake being moved slightly.

Mr. Thompson and Mr. Lyons discussed the administrative variances for minor adjustments, which can be granted without going to the BOA. Mr. Lyons explained that adjustments can affect survey measurements, leading to discrepancies in property lines. Mr. Thompson emphasized the importance of proper information for decision-making and encouraged asking questions from applicants. The conversation touched on the role of engineers in the site plan process and the need for complete applications.

Mr. Lyons explained the difference between preliminary and final subdivision plans, noting that preliminary plans are reviewed for completeness. Mr. Plocek mentioned that preliminary plans often lack final comments from the fire marshal. Mr. Lyons details the requirements for preliminary plans, including utility plans and lot dimensions. Mr. Thompson and Mr. Lyons discuss the importance of meeting all code requirements before moving to final approval.

Mr. Thompson explained that site planning involves how buildings fit on each lot, while subdivision planning creates lot lines. Mr. Lyons noted that Millville by the Sea is a master plan community with pre-approved zoning requirements.

Mr. Plocek and Mr. Lyons discussed the typical reasons for revisiting preliminary plans, such as new ownership or significant agency comments. Mr. Thompson emphasized the importance of having preliminary approval from the town before applying to state agencies.

Mr. Thompson advises conducting professional meetings with a level of formality, treating others courteously, and removing emotion from decisions. Mr. Thompson stressed the importance of making decisions based on facts and information provided, not on applicants' names. Mr. Lyons and Mr. Thompson discussed the need for applicants to present complete information for decision-making. A discussion was held on the importance of understanding why decisions are made, even if applicants disagree.

Mr. Gevinson raised a question about workforce housing development and the impact of Senate Bill 23. Mr. Thompson explained the bill requires town to come up with affordable housing plan, including existing projects in the pipeline and new ones that may be entered. Mr. Plocek and Mr. Thompson discuss the concept of vested rights, where existing applications are governed by rules in place at the time of application. Mr. Lyons provided an example of a hotel project that was grandfathered under the old code.

DRAFT: 05-20-2026

APPROVED: 06-11-2026

Mr. Lyons shared his experience of keeping track of multiple code versions in another jurisdiction due to long application processes. Mr. Lyon and Mr. Thompson discussed the challenges of applying different versions of the code to ongoing projects. Mr. Plocek and Mr. Thompson emphasized the importance of understanding which version of the code applies to each application.

Mr. Thompson concluded that if Commissioners or Council ever has questions to please reach out.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Gevinson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Weglein second the motion. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Commissioner Mr. Plocek closed the meeting at 2:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Marcules
Town Clerk