

Union Planning Board Minutes
Thursday, October 9, 2025, 6:30 p.m.
William L. Pullen Municipal Building Downstairs Meeting Room

Present: Barry Norris, Jesse Thompson, Jerry Brooks (Chair), Mike Johnson, Dale Flint, and John Mountainland

Others Present: CEO Chris Packard,

1. Meeting called to order: at 6:30 p.m. by Jerry Brooks

2. Approve Minutes of July 10, 2025 meeting:

Motion by: Mike Johnson

2nd by: John Mountainland

4-0-2 abstentions (Norris, Thompson)

3. Discussion & Approval to have MCOG Workshop Presentation:

Todd said MCOG contacted Todd. They'd like to come talk to the board about the Land Use book, the chart, all the things you want to do and change and talk about – they want to start that discussion and do a workshop. In answer to John, Chris wasn't sure at the moment who would be leading the meeting.

Motion that we have MCOG come in and lead a workshop by: John Mountainland

2nd by: Barry Norris

6-0

Dale confirmed with Chris that the workshop will include zoning changes.

4. Commercial District Workshop:

5. Old Business:

Chris wanted to revisit a couple of things concerning campers, for the board and for people at home wanting to know why we did certain things (re: former proposed Camper Ordinance).

The first thing was the camper fire in Oxford, which he said was set by a three-year-old. The fire trapped a seven-year-old in the camper. The seven-year-old was life flighted to the hospital. He shared photos with the board.

The second thing was a current local predicament. Chris said a resident in town came to him and took out a septic system permit. The neighbor granted them permission to go through his dooryard to install a septic system. The neighbor was not staying at his home while this was going on. He came back to find the septic system had been installed, and two parked RV's were being installed – that's what that septic system is going to service.

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Chris said he went out and took photos, which he shared. One RV has been installed. The other is supposed to be installed, but the neighbor shut off access to the property. The neighbor is very upset because he has nothing to stand on, and campers can be right up to the property line which is right at the back of his house.

Chris clarified we have no restrictions. A structure has to be 20' from the property line, but a camper does not. They can be right up to the property line. He wanted to let the board and people at home know the effects of having no rules or regulations for any of this. He added this is not about somebody not getting housing, this is: how are you going to feel about somebody living in a camper right beside your house? He has no authority or jurisdiction to change that.

Jesse (Fire/EMS Chief) said he is honestly terrified about safety. He wants to make sure people are safe and protected. What scares him with this is there's no safety in there.

In answer to Barry, Chris said the 120-day restriction is someone can stay in a camper for up to 120 days, and then they have to be hooked to a septic system. That is a state statute and the only thing we have on our books in the Town of Union.

Jesse brought up short term rentals, saying if it's a short term rental, the Fire Marshal's Office has said they must have gas detectors, etc. which falls to him under NFPA 101 Life Safety Code. That is, once again, if it's renting.

Chris confirmed the campers in the aforementioned predicament will be renting, but those units have all that stuff. Jesse said apart from the property dispute.

Jesse said it's very hard, but for people renting we at least have that piece. If people are allowed to live in a camper (not renting) that's totally different.

Chris said it's a Class C RV park model, which Jerry said is a permanent residence. Chris said it came from a camper/RV manufacturer, which is what a camper is in the State of Maine. It's not a structure and it's not a tiny home (anything not stamped by an RV manufacturer).

Dale confirmed that campers are supposed to be registered. Jerry said you could park them in there like nobody's business. Chris said anything over three is considered a campground. It also plays into the Shoreland Zoning campground category.

Chris summarized we have definitions by the State of Maine whether it's a camper, tiny home, on a trailer, or a stick built tiny home. Then we have residences or dwellings, then we have ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units). This doesn't fall under ADU because it's a camper. There are several different ways the Camper Ordinance would have protected people outside of the person living in the camper. It's about the safety and well-being of the people living in the camper, but it's also about the neighbors having some sort of buffer, and we have nothing.

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Jerry said the whole backlash (re: Camper Ordinance) was we were keeping people from housing options, and then this happens. Chris said it's a whole other aspect to the whole thing. It wasn't just about one thing, it was about several different things, and this just happens to be another piece of that.

John said it's not right, but there's nothing we as a board can do about it. Dale said Comp Plan should have a look at it. Jerry said he still thinks if people are living there, it's a residence no matter what it is. He noted the irony of much discussion about Commercial / Residential zoning safeguards for people, and we have this.

Chris noted his first complaint on his new job (as CEO here) was a camper right on a property line, where the camper occupants were looking in the windows of the house. There was nothing he could do. He added that Waldoboro said we need to work on what our definition of a residence is, a MCOG thing Jerry said.

6. New Business: None.

7. Public Comment: None.

8. Adjourn:

Motion by: Barry Norris
2nd by: John Mountainland
6-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo
Secretary