



City of Presque Isle, Maine

Planning Board Minutes

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Administrative Staff:

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Presque Isle City Hall– Council Chambers

November 16, 2023 @ 6:00 PM

Planning Board Members Present: Bruce Roope (Chairman), Ward Gerow (Vice-Chairman), Sean Nordenhold, & Dave Perry

Planning Board Members Absent: Jayne Farrin, Rachel Murchison, Stacey Walton, & Richard Engels (Alternate)

Others Present: Galen Weibley, Director of Economic & Community Development; Tim St. Peter, Code Officer; Miles Jones, UMaine Orono Student/DECD Intern

1. Call to Order at 6:00 P.M.

Chairman Roope called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M. and made Tim Vernon a voting member in the absence of four members. Total members present, five voting members.

2. Agenda Setting: No new items added to the agenda

3. Minutes Approval: Review and approve draft minutes from October 19, 2023.

A motion by *Ward Gerow*, second by *Dave Perry* to approve the October 19, 2023 Planning Board Meeting Minutes. **Vote – unanimous 5-0**

4. Citizen Comment: none

5. Land Use Code Employer Sponsored Housing Amendment

Miles Jones presented an overview of his research and suggested recommendations as an amendment to the Land Use Code which would permit Employer-Sponsored Housing similar to Bar Harbor in the various zones with performance standards that address quality of life of employees within these residential spaces. *Chairman Roope* inquired if this use allows for properties to be rented out? Messrs. Weibley and St. Peter confirmed that would be the case but can also include employers who offer the housing as a fringe benefit for employees. *Chairman Roope* inquired into the justification for the minimal 200 sq. ft. in common space. Mr. Jones stated this is a very low bar and includes kitchen, dining, laundry and living room services which should exist in excess of density requirements.

(Employer Sponsored Housing Land Use Code Amendments Cont.)

Ward Gerow stated concern regarding the density as it could also for clustering of many foreign/migrant workers in residential communities which may detract from the character of the neighborhood. **Mr. Gerow** would like for the workers to be spread throughout the community. **Chairman Roope** refuted the idea sharing his personal experiences with migrant populations who end up improving neighborhoods and properties they acquire after being established in a community. **David Perry** shared his concerns with no parking standards. Messrs. Weibley and St. Peter explained that no requirement doesn't mean some employers will add space for their employees for transportation however an arbitrary requirement for parking spaces may be a barrier for employers to utilize the use since it may be an added cost for the number of rooms when migrant/temporary workers do not all have transportation. No additional direction was given by the Planning Board for Mr. Jones to research or present. The proposed draft will be incorporated

6. Land Use Code Omnibus Amendment Presentation

Mr. Weibley presented an overview of omnibus Land Use Code Changes to include definitions, punctuation corrections, new uses for Manufactured Housing and Mobile Home Parks Defined, changes to where Solar Electric Generation Facilities may be located within the City and new performance standards for sidewalks during site plan reviews and use standards for Solar Electric Generation Facilities (SEGF).

Ward Gerow wanted to understand why staff is proposing a prohibition of SEGF in the Business Zone? Mr. Weibley shared limited commercial properties and policy of directing this use from prime commercial ground to areas less desirable.

Mr. St. Peter shared that the Planning Board will need to offer direction to staff to include wildlife survey in SEGF use standards which is similar to habitat maps currently available online.

Mr. Gerow inquired what dual use is under SEGF standards? Mr. St. Peter shared this is for co-habitable use of agricultural uses within a solar field.

Chairman Roope shared his concerns with deer getting stuck in the SEGF developments in town. Staff asked what he would like added to the standards to address these concerns. Chairman Roope responded that he has not heard back from Fish & Wildlife for recommendations.

Staff recommend that the Planning Board review all proposed changes and bring suggestions to the next meeting before scheduling a public hearing.

Old Business

Mr. Weibley and Mr. St. Peter distributed the Employer-Sponsored Housing Research compiled by DECD Intern, Miles Jones who will be presenting his findings at the November Meeting. Members are to read over the material in preparation for this meeting.

7. Other Business

Chairman Roope brought to the attention of the board that he has received concerns from residents that there are homeless persons sleeping overnight in the second and third floors of the Key Bank Building as part of ACAP's Hope and Prosperity Program. Messrs. St. Peter and Weibley shared they have no knowledge of such activity and would follow up with the Presque Isle Police Chief to verify claims.

8. Department Report

Mr. Weibley remarked that there are no site plans submitted for consideration of the board so December 7th should be a relatively short meeting as a general meeting to end the year. He also shared that Main Street Mania is this Friday and encouraged attendees to support local merchants in the downtown before the holiday season. Mr. Weibley also shared that DECD intern, Miles Jones will begin his project of the Walkability Project for consideration by the Planning Board.

9. Adjournment

A motion by *Dave Perry*, seconded by *Sean Nordenhold* to adjourn the Planning Board Meeting at 8:08 P.M. **Vote – unanimous 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Galen Weibley
Secretary

Planning Board Members
Bruce Roope (Chair), Ward Gerow (Vice-Chair),
Jayne Farrin, Rachel Murchison, Sean Nordenhold, Dave Perry,
Stacey Walton, Richard Engels (Alternate), Tim Vernon (Alternate)