



City of Presque Isle, Maine

Planning Board Minutes

City of Presque Isle, 12 Second Street, Presque Isle, Maine 04769
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Presque Isle City Hall- Council Chambers

August 17, 2023 @ 6:00 PM

Planning Board Members Present: Bruce Roope (Chairman) Ward Gerow (Vice-Chairman), Rachel Murchison, Dave Perry, Stacy Walton & Richard Engels (Alternate)

Planning Board Members Absent: Jayne Farrin, Sean Nordenhold,

Others Present: Galen Weibley, Director of Economic & Community Development; Tim St. Peter, Code Officer; Shawn Pelletier, Property Owner; Shane McDougall, Engineer for applicant.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Roope called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Mr. Engels was made a voting member for the meeting given the absence of two members at the start of the meeting. Total members present five voting members.

Stacy Walton arrived at 6:05 PM. Total of six voting members present

2. Minutes Approval: Review and approve draft minutes from June 15 & August 3, 2023.

A motion by *Richard Engels*, second by *Ward Gerow* to approve the June 15 & August 3, 2023 Planning Board Meeting Minutes. **Vote – unanimous 6-0**

3. Citizen Comment: none

4. Solar Project Site Plan Review (71 & 90 Carmichael Streets)

Shane McDougall and Shawn Pelletier representing the proposed development addressed a proposed solar project previously permitted for 71 & 90 Carmichael Streets. Planning Board members reviewed the proposed plans and there were serious concerns with the lack of screening and buffering which was requested as a waiver by the developer. There was much discussion regarding the proposed screening (written comments by *Ms. Farrin & Mr. Nordenhold* submitted for the record). *Mr. Engels* stated the fabric fencing is a bare minimal on all perimeters and that the two solar sites by the developer are so close to the road and are an eyesore. Mr. Pelletier acknowledge concerns and stated they have tried for years to develop other opportunities on the site with no success. *Mr. Gerow* stated if fabric screening is proposed for the

perimeter fence that it should be green and repaired in a timely manner. This began a compromise was proposed by the board and agreed by the developer to place green fence screening on the perimeter fencing. *Ms. Walton* inquired with the fabric over the fence if children can still climb over the fence. Mr. Pelletier stated it could be a possibility. *Chairman Roope* mentioned concern with lack of seeding of between rows and issues with deer getting stuck in the solar project on State Street also owned by the developer. Mr. Pelletier acknowledge that they will look into the concerns and it is the intention to see the property. The Planning Board also wanted all outstanding items in the deficiency letter addressed before the Planning Board sign the final site plans.

A motion by *Bruce Roope*, second by *Rachel Murchison* to approve Solar Farm Project Site Plan Review of 71 & 90 Carmichael Streets on the condition that the developer provides outstanding items of the staff deficiency letter including the addition to the plans for green fence screening and a note that owner will replace screening when damaged in a timely manner. **Vote – unanimous 6-0.**

5. **Joint Session for City Council on Workforce Housing**

Mr. Weibley and Mr. St. Peter addressed the board regarding recent trends in businesses utilizing workforce housing as an option to fill deficient in labor supply. The current land use code is not addressing this type of housing. Staff support including a use and type within the ordinance but need guidance from the City Council and Planning Board for what should be included. Planning Board agreed to hold a joint session with the City Council if interests exist to pursue this further. *Chairman Roope* also recommend staff research USDA and reach out to Emily Smith (Smith Farms) to see what regulations/rules need to be followed by employers offering housing to temporary workforce.

6. **Walkability/Bikeability Study**

Mr. Weibley addressed the Planning Board with a suggestion to explore development of a connectivity plan for bike path and pedestrian walkways in an effort to connect residential neighborhoods together to downtown and recreational infrastructure. The Planning Board agreed to explore this option further and suggest coordination with the Recreation Department in developing the plan.

7. **Land Use Code Changes LD 2003 & ZBA requests**

Mr. Weibley updated the Board regarding proposed changes in the Land Use Code as it relates to state mandates per LD 2003. Staff is suggesting Jay Kamm with NMDC assist with drafting the amendment since reporting requirements for the City doing it could be cumbersome. *Chairman Roope* expressed his dislike for LD 2003 and believes the City should resist adoption. Mr. Weibley and Mr. St. Peter shared many of the provisions of LD 2003 are good practice that the City already implements however, there could be good conversation for how to minimize the impact in rural parts of the municipality. Mr. St. Peter shared a request by the Zoning Board of Appeals to also update the use table to allow some home occupations to be permitted instead of a special exception for the mixed-use zones. *Mr. Gerow* requested that solar farms be reclassified as a special exception instead of permitted in the Business Zone.

8. Rules of Order/Planning Board BI-Law Adoption

Mr. Weibley notified the Planning Board that the City Council adopted their proposed changes as submitted at the August 2, 2023. The Planning Board can now adopt their draft by-laws as submitted in their meeting packet. These by-laws will be reviewed annually and changed as needed by the board from time to time.

A motion by Rachel Murchison and second by Ward Gerow to approve the propose Planning Board By-Laws. **Vote – unanimous 6-0.**

9. Adjournment

A motion by *Dave Perry*, seconded by *Ward Gerow* to adjourn the Planning Board Meeting at 7:55 P.M. **Vote – unanimous 6-0.**

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)