



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

September 14, 2023 @ 6:00 PM

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

Planning Board Members Absent: none

Others Present: Galen Weibley, Director of Economic & Community Development; Tim St. Peter, Code Officer; & Tim Roix Engineer with BRSA.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Roope called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Seven voting members and one alternate present.

2. Minutes Approval: Review and approve draft minutes from August 17, 2023.

Mr. Gerow shared he would like to mention in the August 17, 2023 minutes that he requested solar farms located within the Business Zone should be listed as a special exception.

A motion by *Ward Gerow*, second by *Dave Perry* to approve the August 17, 2023 Planning Board Meeting Minutes with Mr. Gerow's comments added to the minutes. **Vote – unanimous 7-0**

3. Citizen Comment: none

4. NAPA Site Plan Review (221 Main Street)

Tim Roix with BRSA presented an overview of the site plan for a proposed at 221 Main Street. The board received supplemental staff comments and recommendations from Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) and Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to reduce curb cuts on Main Street by utilizing a neighboring abutter curb cut access and planting recommendations to improve the Kennedy Brook. Mr. Roix shared that he spoke with Scott Belair with Maine DEP regarding shoreland review which is demarked as the 75-foot buffer of no improvements within this area.

(NAPA Site Plan Review 211 Main Street Cont.)

The developer is proposing opposition to both recommendations from the state and instead is requesting a modification to the City's standards waiving the buffering and stormwater improvement standards by staff. The Planning Board proceeded to open the floor for questions by the members.

Ward Gerow inquired if the property was located within a floodplain. Mr. Roix responded that the property is not located within a floodplain.

Chairman Roope and **Ms. Farrin** stated there is no need for trees or plantings as recommended by staff and Maine DEP in their meeting packet citing the history of the city pool would drain directly into the stream as justification that the proposed retail will not have a greater impact than in the past.

Mr. Weibley provided an overview of the City's involvement with the Kennedy Brook study and history of this impaired watershed. He also noted the issue of impairment is regarding Periphyton which are microbes that are a food source for larva that serve an importance source for the local ecosystem. Excessive urbanization including lack of vegetation as a food source and shade reduce the population of Periphyton to unhealthy levels. The addition of a wooded riparian buffer serves as a solution for three problem areas, it provides shade to the steam, vegetative food for the Periphyton and wildlife and retain embankment sentiment from being washed downstream from heavy storm events.

Ms. Walton shared his view that the ecology and environment are important points to consider when reviewing proposed developments.

Ms. Murchison states she likes the idea of meadow and shrub plantings within the 75-foot buffer instead of proposed grass to offer a balance for the environment and development.

Mr. Gerow stated we have received expert opinion from Maine DEP and should listen to their advice.

Ms. Murchison followed up to inquire why the developer is opposed to the City's/Maine DEP's recommendations. Mr. Roix responded the developer has a particular vision in mind of keeping the site tidy with only a cut lawn and good visibility from the road. The developer also does not want additional maintenance from the added plantings within his business model.

Mr. Nordenhold inquired of the applicant if any of the other developer's locations are within a watershed/stream. Mr. Roix responded they are not to the best of his knowledge.

Mr. Gerow inquired if the developer has explored other Best Management Practices (BMP's) for the site? Mr. Roix responded they did not and against any improvement besides a lawn.

After discussion, there was consensus to keep the curb cut access and disregard Maine DOT's recommendation. There was consensus for proposing a 10-foot native planting and berm from the stream and keep the remaining 65-foot within the shoreland zone as lawn not to be shorter than 3.5-inches at length.

(NAPA Site Plan Review 211 Main Street Cont.)

A motion by **Rachel Murchison**, second by **Ward Gerow** to approve NAPA Project Site Plan located at 221 Main Street on the condition that the developer provides outstanding items of the staff deficiency letter and add a 10-foot native planting and berm from the stream and keep the remaining 65-foot within the shoreland zone as lawn not to be shorter than 3.5-inches at length.

Vote – unanimous 7-0.

5. Department Report

Mr. Weibley provided an update to the Board regarding their request for a joint meeting with the City Council to discuss workforce housing. He did not send a letter to the Council since they are focused on finding a replacement for the City Manager vacancy. Mr. Weibley and Mr. St. Peter presented an overview of the research they discovered from the USDA and US Department of Labor rules for employer sponsored housing standards. Chairman Roope requested if other towns could be researched for what standards have been adopted in Maine.

6. Adjournment

A motion by **Jayne Farrin**, seconded by **Sean Nordenhold** to adjourn the Planning Board Meeting at 7:41 P.M. **Vote – unanimous 7-0.**

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)