



## Topsham, Maine

# Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee Meeting

## MINUTES

April 10, 2023

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Start Time: 4:30PM (In Person - Town Office Conference Room + Zoom invite by request)

### I. Welcome and Agenda Review 4:30 - 4:35

#### A. Attendees:

1. Town of Topsham: Mark Waltz, Tom Lister, Julie Erdman
2. CPIC: Susan Rae-Reeves, Joe Feely, Angela Twitchell, Andy Munsey, Rick Schultz, Robin Brooks, Margaret Williams

### II. Public comment 4:35 - 4:45 - no public comment expressed.

### III. Administrative Items 4:45 - 5

- Welcome to new committee members
  - In-depth introduction of Margaret as new member to CPIC Committee will be held until the next meeting once Select Board induction process is complete and additional new member Pete Bono can join the meeting.
- Town Staffing Updates (Julie/Tom)
  - Hap Stelling is no longer employed by the Town so Julie Erdman and Tom Lister will be working more closely with the CPIC process; open posting for Assistant Planner is being filed.
- Minutes of March 13, 2023 meeting - review and approval
  - Approved as presented.
- Next workshop Tuesday, April 18, 4 -5:30 pm
  - Goal to complete comment on Articles related to FBC to Town Center and expectation that after this workshop, revised version will be ready for sharing with the public.

### IV. ReCODE Updates 5 - 5:30

- Planning Department: Elements of the code in need of attention (Tom Lister)
  - Tom had been working closely with Kate prior to staff changes and identified areas of the code that needed attention in the current Zoning Ordinance. These changes were shared with the CPIC committee as a way to transfer this

institutional knowledge and bring the committee up to speed on what Tom had identified for attention.

- The primary reason for Zoning Ordinance changes identified by Tom is the need for clear and precise language to eliminate ambiguity or inconsistency in the code.
  - Tom provided a list of items with section number and description, but highlighted a few of the key points as follows:
    - Shoreland Zoning definitions should move from the general section to Shoreland Zoning specific section to ensure certain language is not applied to all zones.
    - Clarification of how code is written fundamentally as “Can’t do unless ordinance says it’s okay” versus “Can do as long as the ordinance doesn’t say you can’t”
    - Direction on Non-Conforming to clarify if we want to allow non-conforming structures to remain or is the intent to bring non-conforming properties into compliance as uses or ownership changes.
    - Density - we have a residential density but not a commercial density - - should we have commercial?
    - Need to incorporate historic resource map.
    - Variance - Zoning Board has limits on what it can address by the Board of Appeals, if the subject matter is restricted, any request goes straight to legal process.
    - Would like to add performance standards to new and expanded commercial uses.
  - Ultimately Tom was unclear on how this information would get conveyed to the Consultants (Kirk) but this information validates why reformatting is needed. There is a meeting scheduled with Kirk and Town staff this coming Thursday which is when Tom can confirm lines of communication with Kirk.
  - Clarity was provided through this discussion of “Administrative Changes” versus “Policy Changes”. “Administrative Changes” are best handled between Kirk and Town Staff and Planning Board as part of code cleanup. “Policy Changes” are the items which CPIC should be focused on in conjunction with Planning Board, Select Board, and Planning Department Staff.
  - Tom will distribute updated list Zoning Ordinance Changes to highlight those items considered to be “Policy Change”
- Update on consultant process with the Planning Board
    - In lieu of 2nd meeting focus on recode section(s), the Planning Board wants to work with “smaller chunks” at each meeting. The information should be provided in the form of Executive Summary without the need for Kirk to present the material at each meeting.
    - The Planning Board did not receive information from Kirk in advance of the last meeting other than revised Articles 1,2,3 so only received “executive summary” in the form of Kirk presentation during the meeting.

- At this time Kirk is 95% complete with code cleanup, does not have “crosswalk” comparison of existing to proposed, and does need Julie/Tom to assist with preparation of Executive Summary for Planning Board meetings.
- Milestone Schedule Discussion
  - Who is on point to prepare smaller chunks of information and executive summary for each Planning Board meeting? Julie/Tom/Kirk will address this during a meeting scheduled for this Thursday.
  - Milestone schedule recommended, “smaller chunk” rollout of code update to Planning Board may extend schedule, time is running short if intent is to engage with public input in Fall 2023 in order to address comments and prepare material in Feb 2024 for Town Meeting in May 2024.

#### **V. Community Engagement/Communication 5:30-5:40**

- Update in The Cryer
  - Article about Recode will be published in the May Issue along with the Town Warrant. The article will include a map of the growth area as a visual aide.
- Realistic priorities for the next 12 months - this item was not discussed.

#### **VI. Liaison updates 5:40-6**

- Update on TDI Strategic Plan (Andy Sturgeon)
  - For next meeting agenda as Andy was unable to attend today
- Assignment shifts to come
  - Plan to readjust once two new members are onboard.
  - Sill have (1) Vacancy on Committee so hoping to find one additional member.
  - Susan asked for volunteer spearhead compilation and maintenance of FAQ’s file. Silence indicative of nobody willing to volunteer. Margaret said she would consider, but as a new member without background, wanted to read the current draft before committing.

#### **VII. Miscellaneous**

- **Expect FBC Stakeholder and Public Comment in May/June 2023 in parallel to “code cleanup” being performed by the Planning Board. The two components are anticipated to merge this fall.**

**MEETING ADJOURNED ~5:45**