

**TOWN OF ORONO  
COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING  
THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2020 AT 4:00 P.M.**

**WATCH ONLINE AT  
<https://zoom.us/j/94353519419>  
(LINK AVAILABLE AT [ORONO.ORG](http://ORONO.ORG))**

*Comments can be submitted via email prior to the meeting start time  
at [info@orono.org](mailto:info@orono.org) and during the meeting by using Zoom comment features.*

**MINUTES**

**1. Roll Call**

Present: Sam Kunz (Community Development Chair), Tom Perry, Cindy Mehnert, Laurie Osher, Cheryl Robertson, Terry Greenier, Town Manager Sophie Wilson.

**2. Commercial Solar Overview & Discussion of Local Regulatory Goals**

Kyle Drexler reviewed the benefits of having solar as a specific Land Use. He noted it will help to create standards relevant to solar projects to make sure the right issues are addressed. He defined roof-mounted versus ground-mounted and the 3 scale levels (small, medium and large) and how they would be reviewed by the Code Officer and/or Planning Board depending on the project size and zoning district. Mr. Drexler also reviewed the major performance standards: height, setbacks, screening/buffering, vegetation management, lot coverage, decommissioning, glare. Mr. Drexler will also look at commercial solar uses in other communities.

Economic Development Director Dave Milan stated solar panels do not affect home values. He noted with commercial solar operations it is usually leased land with access to three-phase transmission lines. Medium size projects would be self-contained high electricity uses. Mr. Milan explained that large scale solar projects are tax exempt.

**Council commented Mr. Drexler was on the right track. They suggested requiring performance bonds for large scale projects.**

**3. Citizen Request: Ordinance Revision to Allow Expansion of Existing Self-Storage Units East of I-95**

Ms. Wilson stated staff has received a request from a resident who currently owns self-storage units located in the C-2 District east of I-95 to revise the ordinance to allow the expansion of an additional structure to the site. The current land use ordinance language defines self-storage units as follows:

*Self-storage facility means a facility that provides secure, fully enclosed spaces, rented or leased to clients or tenants for the storage and retrieval of clients' goods. A self-storage facility, which may also be referred to as a "mini-warehouse," involves primarily the*

*storage of goods for the client's or tenant's own use, although there may be some small-scale distribution of commercial items out of the facility; does not provide for large-scale warehousing, trucking and distribution of commercial merchandise; does not serve as a retail sales facility or location for a client or tenant; does not involve outdoor storage or handling; and is distinct from "warehousing" and "wholesale business," which are separately defined.*

She noted the ordinance further restricts the use of self-storage facilities to the C1 and EDZ districts west of I-95.

Mr. Drexler presented three options with the anticipated results and issues for Council to consider: 1) change the zoning; 2) make self-storage facilities an allowable use in the C-2 district, or 3) amend the standard in the ordinance relating to the interstate, and then do a conditional zoning change to change the lot to C-1 district.

Mr. Drexler recommended option 3 due to the support of the Comprehensive Plan and that it would only impact the specific lot and standards that could be put in place to limit the impact on the surrounding C-2 area.

**Council discussed the options and supported Mr. Drexler's recommendation of option 3. It was noted that the public hearing process would apply to these changes.**

Mr. Milan spoke very highly of Mr. Drexler's professional growth as an excellent town planner.

#### **4. Community Development Update**

**General Economic Overview** - Mr. Milan spoke of the Covid effect on businesses, some economically positive and some negative. He noted the student housing complexes and apartments are full for fall. Overall, Orono is doing well, people are not afraid to invest.

**Revolving Loan Program** - Mr. Milan spoke of other alternatives to this program. Round two of the federal PPE program came out, 50% of funds used for payroll and 50% for business without payback requirements. People have not needed the revolving loan program at this time.

**Envisionet TIF Renewal** - Conditional approval has been received from the Department of Economic and Community Development for the 10-year extension. One of the projects to be funded from the TIF will be the repaving of Godfrey Drive.

**Penobscot Street Property Disposal** - Mr. Milan provided an update on reaching out to businesses regarding the redevelopment of the former Public Works Garage. He noted there has not been interest based on Council's desired uses. He was encouraged to bring any options to Council.

**Code Enforcement Actions/Investigations** - Mr. Milan reviewed several code enforcement issues his department has been addressing.

**Project Updates** - New University of Maine engineering building inspections.

## **5. Brief Town Manager's Update**

Ms. Wilson provided a brief update on the following items:

- Town Office closed Friday due to the cabling project.
- The Planning Board approved the antenna within the United Methodist Church steeple.
- UMaine and housing complexes meeting regarding students coming back.
- Agendas for next week are posted on the website.
- Emails and questions about the Town's LGBTQ initiatives.
- Covid-19 awareness information.

Terry Greenier said he and Meghan Gardner met with staff regarding painting the Main Street/Pine Street sidewalk. Ms. Wilson stated staff will be looking at thermoplastics. Sam Kunz acknowledged the entire Pride group for their efforts with Pride awareness.

## **6. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 5:56pm.

Minutes are summary only. An audio recording of the meeting is available on the Town's website at [www.orono.org](http://www.orono.org) under Agendas and Minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward  
Executive Assistant