

**TOWN OF ORONO  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING  
COMP PLAN IMPLEMENTATION  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2020 AT 4:30 P.M.**

**WATCH ONLINE AT**  
<https://zoom.us/j/99565145133>

**(LINK AVAILABLE AT 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, Tom Perry, Meghan Gardner, Laurie Osher, Cheryl Robertson, Terry Greenier, Town Manager Sophie Wilson, Public Works Director Rob Yerxa and Town Planner Kyle Drexler.

**2. Main Street Sidewalk Project Goals, Scope and Timeline**

Public Works Director Rob Yerxa stated the Main Street sidewalk project has been in the wings for some time. Along with striving to address the crumbling sidewalk infrastructure, this project seeks to implement some new design features aimed at improving pedestrian and cyclist safety in the Main Street corridor. He described the extent of the project on Route 2 from the bridge to Dirigo Pines. Mr. Yerxa stated he finalized an RFQ for engineering services today and intends to bring the contract to Council at its October meeting. Mr. Yerxa provided an overview of the general goals, scope, and timeline for this project. He spoke of having the design work done during the winter months with construction in the spring. He noted he intends to invite a few members of the public to serve on an advisory committee for the design elements.

Ms. Wilson stated the Town will apply for MDOT grant funds to offset a portion of the project costs along with money from the proposed infrastructure bond as the required matching funds.

Mr. Yerxa stated the 2017 Downtown Traffic Study recommendations will be part of the project. He noted MDOT is aware of the project and will assist with funding.

**3. Legal Opinion Regarding Proposed MDR Lot Size**

Ms. Wilson stated that after the discussion of reducing the minimum allowed lot size in the Medium Density Residential Zone at last month's Committee meeting, staff reached out for guidance from the Town Attorney to better evaluate the feasibility of reducing the lot size to 5,000 sq ft. The Attorney noted that the Comp Plan does not support a lower lot size and that it would have a dramatic impact on the neighborhoods.

Councilors spoke of supporting the current minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet as recommended in the Comp Plan and not reducing it to 5,000 square feet. They noted it would be too much of a reduction and the infrastructure was not there to support it. Cheryl Robertson noted she was looking forward to the neighborhood groups input.

Mr. Drexler stated he would create models based on the Comp Plan and minimum lot size for the neighborhood meetings. Mr. Kunz noted the overlay district would allow for more density.

**The Committee agreed to stick with the Comp Plan's minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet in the MDR district.**

#### **4. Official Map Process**

Town Planner Kyle Drexler stated that during the Comprehensive Planning process, the former Town Planner discussed the concept of an official map with both the Comp Plan Committee and Town Council. While official maps can relate to many different planning elements, the map proposed in Orono's Comp Plan would address connectivity issues.

Mr. Drexler provided a general overview of official planning maps, how they are used, and the process for developing one. He noted the pros (providing a clear vision for the town) and cons (some won't like it) of developing a map.

He stated an official map is a long in-depth process that can be a useful tool in providing information that is advisory or ordinance driven. He noted the process will involve legal requirements, a review of prior transportation documents, consulting with staff (departments), the Orono-Veazie Water District and neighborhoods. A draft map with ideas and options would be created, open ended public meetings would be held to gather information and a draft map would be brought to Council for further review.

Ms. Wilson commented it can be a wonderful planning tool, but will not be embraced by everyone.

Councilors commented it would be a great advisory tool for the future and provides a good reason to look at future connections. It may create anxiety, but would be a great tool for possible development. It fits the planning goals and future connectivity. **Councilors agreed with moving forward with the official map process.**

Ms. Wilson stated the next step will be to reach out to the Town Attorney.

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

- Reminder the Town Offices will be closed for the Labor Day Holiday (9/7)
- Code Enforcement Officer out on medical leave and anticipated CEO vacancy posted. Assessor and Life Safety Inspector/Deputy Fire Chief (both certified code officers) are covering much of the workload with assistance from the City of Old Town.
- Recapped the 9/2 Community Town Hall on Public Health and Safety with officials from

UMaine, Town of Orono, and City of Old Town. Outlined public and business notification efforts as well as plan for enforcement efforts. Plans have been received from all required residential housing complexes and are under review by the Fire Chief with the expectation that they will all be approved shortly. Also discussed departmental duties (assignments) regarding emergency ordinance administration and enforcement.

- Postcards have been sent to every postal customer with information about the emergency ordinance and upcoming marijuana referendum.
- Tax bills will be mailed by Friday, so the community will be receiving them over the next few days.
- There is a new ballot box affixed near the entrance to Town Hall. Currently this is being used to collect absentee ballot request applications; however, once the ballots are able to be issued, it will serve as an outdoor collection option. The Town purchased two ballot boxes with the intent to place one on the UMaine campus adjacent to the Memorial Union; however, currently, the Secretary of State will only allow these boxes on municipal property in proximity to the Town Clerk/Registrar of Voters. The Town continues to advocate and will reach out for support from other groups if necessary.

## **6. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:23pm.

Minutes are summary only. A video 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