



**TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2022 AT 5:00 P.M.**

COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Council Chair Tom Perry, Meghan Gardner, Cheryl Robertson, Geoffrey Wingard, Sonja Birthisel, Leo Kenney, Robert Laraway, and Town Manager Sophie Wilson.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

a. Presentation by Orono Public Library Foundation related to a Proposed Expansion of the Orono Public Library *(Video record time 0:00:40 - 0:39:00)*

Ms. Wilson stated that the Orono Public Library Foundation (OPLF) is an independent 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2002 by citizens to build a free-standing public library for the town of Orono and provide for its on-going support. The OPLF raised a significant portion of the funds used to build the current Orono Public Library (OPL) which opened in 2009. The group also led a very successful campaign that raised approximately \$345,000 needed to construct the Orono Village Green located adjacent to the OPL.

James Sanborn, President of OPLF, provided information on the public survey they conducted to show the need for a library expansion, and the seed fund campaign which raised \$137,000 to secure funds to cover early campaign costs for the proposed library building expansion. Mr. Sanborn provided details of the space issues with the current library and the expansion goals of adding an additional 7,400 sq. ft. to the library. Mr. Sanborn stated the Foundation would be working with a fundraising consultant and the timeline was about 3.5 years. Mr. Perry asked if the Foundation was prepared to make modifications if necessary. Mr. Sanborn confirmed that it was.

Councilors supported the fundraising efforts and their desire to continue the conversation.

Ms. Wilson noted the Town is currently looking at the uses for a few other spaces also.

3. COMP PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

a. Proposed Contract Zone for 74 Mill Street (Map Lot 027-012-35) *(Video record time 0:39:20 - 1:05:40)*

Town Planner Kyle Drexler stated staff has been working with Zach Pine who is interested in redeveloping 74 Mill Street (also referred to as the Byer of Maine building). He noted Mr. Pike proposes creating multi-family residential units and commercial units. This parcel is currently located within the medium residential (MDR) zoning district which does not allow this proposed use. He noted the proposed contract seeks to change the underlying zone to Village Commercial

with certain restrictions to mitigate impact to the surrounding MDR. The Committee reviewed the details with the owner and specifically the dimensional requirements.

Ms. Wilson stated this a preliminary look at the proposed redevelopment that would be referred to the Planning Board for its Public Hearing and review. **The Committee referred this item to the Planning Board for its review, knowing that the dimensional requirements would change.**

- b. Revisiting the Definition of Owner Occupancy related to the Proposed Land Use Ordinance Amendments to Chapter 18 Land Use, Sec. 18-31, Definitions, Sec. 18-106, Schedule of uses, and Sec. 18-131, Home occupations, to amend zoning and performance standards for Homestays. (Video record time 1:05:45 - 1:10:35)**

Ms. Gardner recapped that this ordinance language has been through a lengthy review process over the last several years. The last time the ordinance language was discussed, Council provided direction to look at the definition of owner-occupied which was broken into two parts. The first part looks at the definition of “permanent residence,” and the second part looks at the definition of “owner-occupied.” The changes do not require new review by the Planning Board or Town Council in a public hearing. Council also agreed this is an incremental change to the ordinance.

Councilors agreed with the new language that is being proposed. They referred the ordinance amendment to the October 17th Council Meeting for adoption.

4. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

- a. Request to the Town to Sell a 0.13 acre lot described as Map Lot 006-004-059 (Previously Tax Acquired) to the Abutting Property Owner at 2547 Essex Street (Video record time 1:12:00 - 1:40:40)**

Ms. Wilson provided background on a very small parcel of land described as Map Lot 006-004-059 for non-payment of property taxes. The Town provided an opportunity for the owner to repurchase the foreclosed property; however, there was no interest in repurchasing at that time. The current owners of 2547 Essex Street have contacted staff requesting that the Town sell the tax acquired parcel. She noted the Town has no interest in the 0.23 acre parcel.

The Town Council holds the sole authority to sell Town owned property and is required to hold a public hearing to ensure that the community is aware of the potential sale, determine that it is in the best interest of the Town to sell the property; and identify the method of sale (i.e. sale to abutters or negotiated sale).

Councilors discussed details of the property and whether a portion of the abutter’s garage and driveway are on the parcel. **The Council agreed to hold a public hearing at the October 17th Council Meeting to consider disposal of the property, and if so, the method of disposal.**

- b. Proposed Ordinance Amendment, Chapter 2, Article V Finance, Division 2 Purchasing**
This item was postponed to another Council Committees meeting.

5. Town Manager's Report *(Video record time 1:41:09 - 2:10:25)*

Ms. Wilson reported on the following items:

- Electric Vehicles charging stations grant approved (2 plugs/2 stations) Town Office and Library
- Parks and Recreation Afterschool Program (25-30 students)
- Community Facilities Meeting, 9/20/2022 (Virtual), Library Community Room Available
- No meeting next Monday due to the holiday
- Community Conversation Meeting, 9/29/2022
- Police Department staffing update
- SAFER grant awarded
- Forest Avenue property for sale - Town has no interest in property
- Kelley Road junkyard permit request (already issued license)
- Brookfield Energy, property tax abatement request

6. Public Comment *(Video record time 2:10:26 - 2:12:25)*

Leo Kenney asked about the status of the lights on the Brandon Silk Memorial Bridge. Ms. Wilson stated the Public Works crew is waiting for the electrical connections.

Sonja Birthisel asked about the public's process to apply to be on the DEI Committee. Ms. Wilson stated the information in on the Town's website homepage at www.orono.org.

Cheryl Robertson reminded people of the Orono Efficiency Fair to be held on October 22, 2022.

7. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Cheryl Robertson and seconded by Sonja Birthisel. All unanimously agreed. The Council Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Minutes are not verbatim. A video-recorded version is available on the Town's website at www.orono.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward,
Executive Assistant