



**TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2022 AT 5:00 P.M.**

COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

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

Council Chair Tom Perry added the discussion of H.R. 6707 to the agenda (A bill to allow the Wabanaki Nations in Maine to access future federal laws that are passed by Congress for the benefit of Indian tribes).

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- a. Proposed Amendment to the Town of Orono Code of Ordinances Chapter 34 Section 34-94 to Allow for Discretion in the Dates the Overnight Parking Ban Begins and Ends** (*Video record time 0:00:42 - 0:13:45*)

Ms. Wilson stated that earlier this year, after fielding concerns regarding the Town's winter parking ban, Councilors discussed whether the current overnight street parking ban dates of November 1 - April 15 should be altered given the apparent seasonal shifts experienced as a result of climate change.

Given the high temperatures and long range weather forecast, staff suggested the Council consider amending the ordinance to endow the Town Manager, in consultation with the Chief of Police and Public Works Director, to suspend enforcement of the Section 34-94 at the beginning or end of the winter parking ban period.

This would maintain the ban from November 1 to April 15 of each year; however, during the education of the ban (Orono Observer, social media, Town digital sign, pre-ban educational flyers on cars parking on the street overnight, etc.) the public would be directed to watch media (social, signage, text messaging service, Penobscot Times, etc.) for when enforcement would begin and end. Ms. Wilson noted that management suspended the issuance of tickets for winter parking ban violations pending the results of the discussion.

The Committee members spoke in support of the flexibility and common sense approach to the parking ban and ordinance amendment. Public Works Director Rob Yerxa noted that once enforcement has started, it will be in force for the season.

The Committee agreed to call the public hearing for the amendment in November and hold the public hearing at the December 12, 2022 Council Meeting.

b. Discussion of H.R.6707 (A bill to allow the Wabanaki Nations in Maine to access future federal laws that are passed by Congress for the benefit of Indian tribes)
(Video record time 0:13:46 - 0:31:40)

Councilor Laraway stated he drafted a letter of support for Council's consideration to send to Maine's congressional delegation to support a bill to allow the Wabanaki Nation in Maine to access future federal laws that are passed by Congress for the benefit of Indian Tribes.

Ms. Wilson stated she reached out to Representative Golden regarding the timing to receive a letter of support, and they noted November 15th would be soon enough. She noted that Senator King is not in support of this legislation. Mr. Laraway stated the Penobscot Nation is in support of this legislation. Mr. Laraway noted this legislation would be proactive and not affect the past. Sonja Birthisel supported the legislation. Geoff Wingard asked about past procedures. Ms. Wilson spoke of Council's voice in the community and that it should be about how it impacts Orono. Meghan Gardner stated that the letter should speak to a strong tie to the community.

Ms. Wilson suggested that the letter of support should tie to the Town's Land Acknowledgement Resolution which speaks for the Penobscot Nation's sovereignty. Mr. Laraway will redraft the letter to include this information. **Council will review the revision of the letter of support at their next Council meeting.**

3. COMP PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

a. Review of Planning Board Report of Contract Zone Request for 74 Mill Street
(Video record time 0:31:41 - 1:15:50)

Town Planner Kyle Drexler stated the Planning Board held its public hearing and reviewed the Contract Zone regarding the redevelopment of 74 Mill Street (Byer of Maine building) and specifically the zone change. He stated the Planning Board supported the zone change, knowing they would review the site plan at a future meeting. Mr. Drexler said that most of the public comments related to concerns regarding the scale of the project; noting that 30 units seems like a lot, they had traffic concerns, and concerns about creating student housing. Mr. Drexler noted that the Planning Board's site plan review will address these concerns.

Mr. Drexler said the next step would be for the Council to schedule its public hearing on the Contract Zone. He noted the Planning Board will hold a separate public hearing on site plan development at a later date. Councilors discussed the details with the Town Manager and Town Planner.

Chris Bates of 94 Mill Street, expressed concerns about public and neighborhood safety due to adding to the density, and allowing 50-60 parking spaces off Spring Street. Ms. Wilson said these concerns will be addressed during the Planning Board's site plan review.

Lisa Feldman of 33 Mill Street, suggested redeveloping the property in a mixed use, responsible way. She asked whether the Town has studied climate change and its effect on the river and the proposed parking lot. She spoke of the changes to the University student population.

Ms. Wilson stated the Comprehensive Plan and the Contract Zone process guide the process.

The Committee agreed to refer the Contract Zone Request to the Council for its public hearing.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

- a. Recommendation to Consider Changing the Service Delivery Methods for and Upcoming Request for Proposals for Curbside Municipal Solid Waste and Recycling Collection Contracts (Current Contracts Expire 06/30/23) (Video record time 1:15:51 - 1:46:40)**

Ms. Wilson stated that the current (5-year) contract for these collection services is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2023. Public Works Director Rob Yerxa spoke of a significant increase in collection costs, service market shifts, and described a way to reduce those costs through an automated collection process. He noted the new process will help reduce the cost of collection and reduce the risk of personal injury. He noted that Pine Tree would own the bins and provide them to residents. Councilors discussed details of the proposed change. A video was shown.

Ms. Wilson noted it is a first step in encouraging residents to reduce, reuse, recycle. Councilors discussed different ways to collect trash where there isn't curbside recycling (i.e. transfer station, recycling containers at the landfill, etc).

Ms. Wilson suggested putting together a request for proposals with bid alternates for a Curbside Municipal Solid Waste and Recycling Collection Contract, provide data from the past, and have staff work on cardboard waste collection. **The Committee agreed.**

- b. Proposal to Allocate the Remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds for a Combined Storm and Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure Project in the area of Hillside, Pond, and Crosby Streets (Video record time 1:46:41 - 2:32:33)**

Ms. Wilson provided an overview of the total ARPA funds received (\$1,141,870), the funds used (\$400,331), expected overruns (\$32,991) and the remaining balance (\$708,549). She presented a proposal to use these funds to address significant infrastructure needs in the area of Hillside, Pond, and Crosby Streets. These needs include: lack of storm sewer infrastructure causing flooding and impacting developed property; old, offset, and cracked clay sanitary sewer pipe that allows water infiltration and poses a high risk for collapse; and constraints on future Park Street development due to an undersized section of sanitary sewer main.

The Committee agreed to call a Council public hearing in November to be held December 12th to gather information on the public's thoughts on the use of the remaining ARPA funds.

- c. Acceptance of Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant and Use of Police Asset Forfeiture Funds to Purchase Police Technology Equipment (Video record time 2:32:34 - 2:40:05)**

Ms. Wilson stated that each year, Penobscot County receives an allotment of Byrne JAG grant funds that is allocated to each law enforcement agency within the county to supplement law enforcement operational purchases. Staff is recommending that the Town use these funds (approximately \$2,000) along with approximately \$1,750 of received State Asset Forfeiture Funds towards the purchase of a Toughbook laptop for the Police Department. Deputy Police Chief Dan Merrill provided an overview of the Toughbook laptop.

Ms. Birthisel asked about the purchase of a refurbished system. Assistant Town Manager Belle Ryder explained that reliability is critical and the Town's policy to purchase new.

The Committee agreed to forward acceptance of the grant funds and Toughbook purchase to the next Council Meeting.

4. Town Manager's Report (*Video record time 2:40:06 - 2:53:38*)

Ms. Wilson reported on the following items:

- DEI Workshop update
- DEEMI's request to purchase a portion of Public Works land.
- Contract pulled with Port City Architects
- Harold Alfond Grant in the amount of \$8,200 for supervisory training
- Fire Union agreement for Life Safety Specialist
- Fire Department SAFER Grant, three positions over three years
- The new Fire Truck will arrive soon
- New staffing for the Police and Fire Departments
- Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO), 1 large and one small
- WPCF Discharge Permit renewal process
- WPCF is down one position
- Construction season is wrapping up
- Brush pick up has started
- Voting tomorrow, November 8th
- Foreclosure of property, 3 Water Street
- Dangerous building, 39 Margin Street
- Mountain View neighborhood being fixed up

5. Public Comment (*Video record time 2:53:40 - 2:57:45*)

Catherine Thibodeau spoke in appreciation of Ms. Wilson's initiative to find alternative ways to handle the winter parking ban. She noted that parking is a huge issue in the Tough End.

6. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Leo Kenney and seconded by Rob Laraway. All unanimously agreed. The Council Meeting adjourned at 8:00 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