

**TOWN OF ORONO  
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING  
COMP PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

**MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2020 AT 6:00 P.M.  
COUNCIL CHAMBER - MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**MINUTES**

**1. Roll Call**

Present: Meghan Gardner (Comp Plan Chair), Tom Perry, Laurie Osher, Cheryl Robertson, Terry Greenier, Town Manager Sophie Wilson and Fire Chief Geoff Low.

**2. Review and discussion of a proposed update to the existing Code of Ordinances, Chapter 14 - Fire Prevention and Protection**

Town Manager briefly recapped purpose and previous discussions on this item. The Comprehensive Plan revision most recently adopted by Town Council included the Town's adoption of NFPA 1 and 101 as well as a more robust rental inspection program. While the Town ordinance has incorporated state law that adopted NFPA 1 and 101 by reference, it is not a clear adoption of these NFPA regulations. In an effort to improve transparency and adopt standards in keeping with local needs and Council vision, staff is recommending a revision to Chapter 14 of the Orono Code of Ordinances. Staff had previously provided draft ordinance language that represents the highest degree of safety requirements that could reasonably be supported by staff. The intent of this process is for the Town Council to determine the balance between life safety and cost to property owners.

Fire Chief Low distributed and reviewed the Summary of Proposed Changes to Chapter 14 Fire Prevention and Protection in the Orono Code of Ordinances (attached). The Committee briefly discussed the scope and impact of including one and two unit rentals. Members requested more specific data about the number of rental units this would add and details of the potential inspection schedule. Staff confirmed that the intent would be to maintain a multi-year inspection cycle (every three years is proposed) and to utilize existing personnel to complete the inspections. Discussed water supply for rural areas. Chief Low described several options from extension of public water supply (which is cost prohibited) and cisterns to NFPA 13D residential sprinkler systems. He advocated for the NFPA 13D residential sprinkler systems for the protection of life given the level of response resources and time in this region. The Committee expressed support for requiring private water supply, but specifically allowing for the alternative of the installation of an NFPA 13D sprinkler systems.

The Committee discussed rooming and rental unit inspection as having a different impact on the community as it would impact all rental uses (not just new construction). Discussed the need for Council to look at rental regulations as a whole and articulate a consistent approach and objectives. Members expressed a need for discussions about rentals to include the consideration

of the impacts on the department (Town operations), property owners, and tenants.

**3. Brief Town Manager's Report**

Ms. Wilson provided a brief update about plans and timeline related to the Main Street pedestrian project. Councilor Robertson expressed concern that Iraqi and Iranian residents may not feel welcome and safe in Orono given recent global events.

**4. Adjourned at 7:43pm.**

Councilor Perry made a motion to adjourn at 7:43pm. The motion was seconded by Councilor Kunz and passed by unanimous vote.

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

## Summary of Proposed Changes to Chapter 14 *Fire Prevention and Protection* in the Orono Code of Ordinances.

1. Action - Creation of a new article (Article III) Under Chapter 14 *Fire Prevention and Protection* in the Orono Code of Ordinances.

Rationale - This takes fire prevention language out of other areas in Chapter 14 and consolidates it under one Article making it easier for the reader to locate information and provides a cleaner way to amend or insert future code language

2. Action – Placing a copy of National Fire Protection (NFPA) 1 and 101 in the Town Clerks Office.

Rationale – By keeping a copy of each text available in the Clerks Office it enhances transparency and provides the public with an opportunity to review the documents on their own.

3. Action – Affirming that the Fire Department is part of the plans review process under the provisions of the Land Use Ordinance.

Rationale – This ensures that site and construction plans meet specific needs of the Fire Code and are in compliance with sections under this article before construction is undertaken. This will help to avoid delays and potentially costly changes after the project gets started.

4. Action – Formalized appeals process.

Rationale – Specifically outlines the steps in the appeals process and what benchmarks must be met for an appeal to be heard.

5. Action – Include amendments section

Rationale – This section is included to identify known amendments to the code that the AHJ has already approved or may approve.

6. Action – Inclusion of “special hazard dwelling units”.

Rationale – Because these are high occupancy dwelling units emergencies occurring within them have the potential to impact a significant number of people. Having additional knowledge of the property, access to all areas and current responsible party contact information will aid in obtaining better incident outcomes especially if the occupancy has a high senior or handicap population.

7. Action – Inclusion of language on occupancy inspection.

Rationale – Definitively states that the Fire Department will conduct periodic inspections on all non-residential structures or dwellings for compliance with the Code unless otherwise required the code.

8. Action – Required inspection of all rental and rooming units as defined in Chapter 8 of the Orono Town Ordinance.

Rationale – To ensure that all rental properties are meeting minimum safety requirements.

**9. Action – Inclusion of language for alarm systems.**

Rationale – To establish requirements for reporting when alarm systems are out of service, how long they can remain out of service, and set requirements for returning an alarm system to service. This section also establishes a standard for who will be allowed to deactivate or restore an alarm. Use of fire watches are also addressed in this section.

**10. Action – Inclusion of language for key boxes.**

Rationale – To establish a requirement for the installation of key boxes on certain occupancies. Installation of key boxes will provide for faster access into locked buildings, apartments, or other areas. Key boxes will also prevent damage to doors or windows when firefighters need to make entry into locations when a keyholder or property representative is not present.

**11. Action – Inclusion of rural water cistern rules.**

Rationale – To establish fire protection water supply cistern standards in accordance with NFPA 1 and referenced standards.

This change also allows for alternatives to cistern installation.