

**TOWN OF ORONO
COUNCIL COMP PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2021 AT 5:00 PM**

WATCH ONLINE AT
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Comments can be submitted via email prior to the meeting start time at info@orono.org and during the meeting by using Zoom comment features.

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Meghan Gardner (Comp Plan Chair), Tom Perry, Laurie Osher, Cheryl Robertson, Sam Kunz, Town Manager Sophie Wilson and Town Planner Kyle Drexler.

2. Review of Final Ordinance Draft Language related to MDR Lot Size Reduction and the Implementation of the Village Residential Overlay District

Town Planner Kyle Drexler reviewed the proposed updates to the Land Use Ordinance aimed at decreasing the minimum lot size in the Medium Density Residential Zoning District as well as establishing an overlay in the village to provide voluntary options to increase residential unit density. He reviewed the comments received from the Town Attorney as part of the legal review process.

Mr. Drexler stated the next step is to refer the Ordinance to the Planning Board for its review. Ms. Osher spoke in support of smaller lot sizes for a more walkable town and higher density housing near the schools. Ms. Gardner supported the 15,000 square feet minimum and noted it is the Comp Plan's recommendation. Ms. Osher commented 15,000 square feet is not consistent with the other goals of the Comp Plan. Mr. Perry supported 15,000 square feet at this time, with consideration of reducing it in the future. Mr. Drexler explained that the Village Residential Overlay District reduces the minimum lot size to 7,500 square feet. He noted there is more to walkability beyond lot size that can be discussed in the future. Ms. Wilson noted the Comp Plan discussions will start again in 2024. Ms. Robertson said it is definitely a larger conversation which will include a discussion about vegetation and trees as well.

The Committee agreed to refer the Ordinance to the Planning Board for its review.

3. DISCUSSION: Initial Contract Zone Request for 163 Forest Avenue

Mr. Drexler stated that staff has been working with the owners of 163 Forest Avenue to develop a proposal for a contract zone that would allow use of the property for a counseling office. The owners would utilize the present structure and preserve the natural conditions of the lot and are proposing to have four therapists. The owners are professional clinicians whose dream is to have their own business. The Committee spoke in support of their contract zone request.

Ms. Wilson stated the next step is for the applicants to work with the Town Planner on their application which would be reviewed by the Planning Board and the Town Attorney before proceeding to Council. The Committee agreed.

4. Formalizing Internal Staff and Council Process for Considering Contract Zone Requests

Ms. Wilson stated the Town Planner has expressed concern over the number of contract zones that have come in and the lack of a formal process to deal with them. She noted right now anyone gets a pre-meet with the Council Committee even if staff knows it will not be allowed. In an effort to bring some efficiencies to this process, staff is recommending that the Committee consider developing a more formal process that involves a pre-application that is formally reviewed by staff. This would result in a formal recommendation that would be referred to the Committee to review, or a denial that could be appealed first in writing and then, if the majority of Committee members agree, a meeting with the proposer. The Committee supported the new process.

Ms. Wilson stated staff would get the process documented and bring it back to Committee for review. The Committee agreed.

Ms. Osher suggested creating a list of requests and decisions so there is a history of contract zone requests.

5. Brief Town Manager's Report

Ms. Wilson updated the Committee on the following items:

- Both ice skating rinks (the one near the high school and the pop-up rink for smaller skaters and families) are open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mr. Stone will take care of mask signage.
- Staff shortage in WPCF. Public Works has been assisting.

- Staff is preparing for a major winter storm. Non-essential workers will work from home.
- Review of upcoming meeting schedule.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 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