

TOWN OF ORONO
COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 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: Terry Greenier (Community Development Chair), Tom Perry, Cheryl Robertson, Laurie Osher, Town Manager Sophie Wilson, Community Development Director Dave Milan, Town Planner Kyle Drexler and Public Works Director Rob Yerxa.

2. Continued Discussion on Draft Ordinance Language for Solar Energy Systems
(01:15-14:20)

Town Planner Kyle Drexler spoke of two main changes since the last meeting: continued research on classification of small/medium/large solar energy systems (with adjustments made to reduce the square footage of small and medium solar energy systems), and the second change was to require financial guarantees for potential system removals with inflation cost adjustments every five years for what that cost would be.

The Committee asked questions regarding the impact of the changes. Mr. Drexler said the next step is to refer the ordinance to the Planning Board for its review.

The Committee agreed to refer the Solar Energy Systems Ordinance to the Planning Board for its review and public hearing.

3. The State of the Local Economy - An Update from Economic Development Staff
(14:21-54:45)

Community Development Director Dave Milan provided a general overview of the status of the local economy and the Economic Development Department activity over the last several months. He reviewed the unemployment monthly rates for 2020, the monthly sales tax generation (2018-2020) and annual sales tax generation (2009-2019) and 5 year comparison of town value FY2017-FY2021). The Committee asked questions regarding the information provided.

4. FY22 Recycling Program Service Level Guidance for Staff (54:46-1:27:40)

Ms. Wilson noted that staff received notice earlier this month that its waste diversion grant application was not funded. When staff met with Councilor Robertson about next steps for this effort, the question of expanding the Town's recycling program arose. Ms. Wilson stated staff is

seeking guidance from the Committee about whether the FY22 Operating Budget should include an expansion of this program or represent the status quo.

Ms. Robertson commented that about a third of the community's population does not have curbside recycling or recycling bins outside their complexes. She noted the cost of placing recycling containers at the landfill would be approximately \$16,000 and would help solve the need.

Ms. Wilson spoke of the difference between residential, commercial and University of Maine waste and the added cost. She stated one solution would be to mandate (through Ordinance) that everyone must participate in a recycling program. She did not support having a recycling dumpster program because of the issues it would create. She noted that any change will take time, effort and a lot of education.

Councilors discussed not staying with the status quo and looking at a mandatory ordinance that is not solely funded through the tax rate with interim steps. They spoke of the importance of recycling. Ms. Wilson suggested increasing the fee schedule for commercial entities and giving a fee reduction for having a recycling program.

Mr. Greenier was not in favor of increasing the town's costs for commercial entities to provide recycling programs. Ms. Robertson noted there will be pushback from landlords for any recycling dumpster program, because they do not want to take up a parking space for a recycling dumpster and felt people would throw everything in it. She spoke of easing into a commercial recycling program over two years.

Ms. Wilson summarized that Council would be in favor of a commercial recycling program if staff could come up with some options that do not raise the tax rate and the cost can be offset with a grant. She suggested looking at raising the commercial waste fees as part of the budget process.

5. Brief Town Manager's Report (1:27:45-1:52:30)

Ms. Wilson provided a brief update on the following items:

- State Budget Hearings will be held next week. Items of interest will be State Revenue Sharing and Homestead Exemption discussions. Ms. Wilson has been asked to speak in support of the University of Maine's budget.
- Staff will continue to work on creating ice for the ice skating rink.
- Expanding Diversity and Inclusion information for the Town's website. She will be contacting the Penobscot Nation for background and information.
- Participate with the City of Bangor on a Regional Climate Action Plan and their AARP Livable Cities work.
- A classified ad for an Assessor position is now running and the former Assessor has agreed to work on a case by case basis.

- The FY20 Audit and investment reports will arrive next week.
- Fire Chief Geoff Low provided an update on the State's dissemination of the Covid vaccinations.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 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