



**COUNCIL COMMITTEES MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2023 AT 5:00 P.M.**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE**

**MINUTES**

**1. Roll Call**

Present: Council Chair Pro Tem Geoffrey Wingard, Leo Kenney, Robert Laraway, Sonja Birthisel, and Town Manager Sopie Wilson.

**2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**a. Update on Community Facilities Assessment Project and Initial Findings by Haley Ward (Video record time 0:24:50 - 0:48:30)**

Members of the Haley Ward team (Chris Snowdeal, Jessamie Pottle and Matt Carter) provided a brief overview of the project and their initial findings from the public meetings and meeting with the stakeholders. Haley Ward led a significant effort to obtain feedback from residents and other community stakeholders about priorities and vision of the Town's historic, current, and future community facility needs. They also conducted initial surveys of the condition of four currently Town-owned buildings (facilities) that are or could be used to support community programming and events.

The Haley Ward team presented a matrix of the four buildings (Fire Station, Keith Anderson Community House, Birch Street School, and the former Public Works facility) and maintaining the status quo, fix minimum, fix maximum, sell, build new, and change the use.

While the report is nearly complete, in order to provide actionable guidance and scenarios to assist Town Council in developing a reasonable plan regarding the future use and investment in these facilities, the team sought feedback regarding priorities and future programming.

Councilors provided feedback that they would like more details about the condition of the buildings, the current inventory and use, the costs, and the investment needs for each of the buildings.

Members of the public commented on the following: For a public elevator to the Thrift Shop in the Birch Street School; the need to make long term investments to the buildings because they are part of the Town's heritage; the need to expand the library; and the need for the Orono Historical Society to have a permanent space.

### **3. COMP PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**

#### **a. Initial Discussion of Draft Traffic Calming Assessment, Prioritization, and Implementation Guidelines** *(Video record time 0:48:31 - 1:27:05)*

Ms. Wilson stated staff members met with the Forest Avenue residents to discuss traffic calming measures. One of the actions underway was to link with the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) to establish criteria for prioritizing and implementing traffic calming measures on public travel ways.

Mr. Yerxa stated he has been working with the Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System (BACTS) to develop a draft plan for traffic calming measures throughout the town. He stated MDOT wants the local jurisdiction to have an adopted policy (or plan) that guides a consistent evaluation and implementation of traffic calming measures. He described the citizen initiated process of gathering at least five signatures on a petition. Mr. Yerxa described staff's process of doing a study, developing a scope system, gathering data, and scoring the location.

He noted the next steps would be to take the Committee and public comments and make changes to bring to Council. The Committee agreed.

Members of the public provided comments and concerns about traffic near the Stillwater/Forest Avenue roundabout, high traffic speeds on Forest Avenue, increase in traffic and increase in speeding. It was noted that many people on Forest Avenue signed a petition about the traffic issues. Concerns were also raised about pedestrian and bike safety.

Ms. Wilson confirmed that the Forest Avenue information was sent to Council.

#### **4. Town Manager's Report** *(Video record time 1:27:06 - 1:30:22)*

Ms. Wilson provided a brief overview of the following items:

- Written Manager's report provided to Council
- Absentee ballots are available
- Public Library opened a warming shelter during the cold spell
- Board of Assessment Review hearing with CD/Park 7 on April 13, 2023 at 6 p.m.
- Tax acquired property public hearing on the April 10th Council agenda.

#### **5. Public Comment** *(Video record time 1:30:23 - 1:32:25)*

Debbie Averill commented on Town employees joining a union. She noted the employees are the most important resource and Council should make sure they are healthy and happy.

## **6. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn by Rob Laraway and seconded by Leo Kenney. All unanimously agreed. The Council Meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Minutes are not verbatim. A video-recorded version is available on the Town's website at [www.orono.org](http://www.orono.org).

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward,  
Executive Assistant