



TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES MEETING MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2022 AT 5:00 P.M.

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE
WATCH ONLINE AT: <https://zoom.us/j/98316414740>
For Dial in Only Call 1(312) 626-6799 ID: 983 1641 4740**

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: (In person) Comp Plan Chair Meghan Gardner, Cheryl Robertson, Geoffrey Wingard, Leo Kenney, Robert Laraway, Sonja Birthisel, and Town Manager Sophie Wilson. (Remote) Council Chair Tom Perry.

2. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

- a. Proposed Revision to Land Use Ordinance to Define the Fraternities/Sororities Use** (*Video record time 0:01:10 - 0:20:26*)

Staff explained it has been the long standing practice of the fraternity/sorority houses to rent to non-members during the summer months (pre-dating the adoption of the ordinance that prohibits non-members from living in fraternities). Given the historic use, code enforcement, life safety, and planning staff worked to develop a proposed ordinance revision that would allow this practice to continue in a safe and regulated manner. Staff is recommending that the Town Council consider revising the Land Use Ordinance to define “Fraternity/Sorority House”.

Staff offered the following language:

Fraternity/sorority house means a building used to provide lodging facilities for a group of University of Maine students and support staff who are associated together in a fraternity or sorority recognized by the University of Maine. When the University of Maine is not in session, the building may also be used to provide lodging facilities for groups of people taking part of in University-sponsored events or programs so long as the groups serves a common interest, a lease is signed, and the structure passes an inspection by the Code Enforcement Officer and Life Safety Inspector prior to the group occupying the building.

Councilors spoke in support of the ordinance language change.

The Committee agreed to forward the definition of Fraternity and Sorority Houses to the Planning Board for its public hearing and recommendations.

b. Update on State Legislative Efforts Related to Implementing the Housing Commission Report *(Video record time 0:20:27 - 1:16:56)*

Town Planner Kyle Drexler provided details of the potential impact the proposed legislative amendment (LD 2003 - To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions) will have on the Town of Orono. He noted increasing housing opportunities is a positive thing, if expansion is done correctly and in the correct zones.

Mr. Perry noted that any changes in the amendment will only happen by reaching out to the State Legislators before the bill passes. Ms. Wilson noted that staff has taken action to oppose elements of the bill, although staff supports increasing housing but in a responsible way.

3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

a. Update on Town Climate Action Planning Efforts *(Video record time 1:16:58 - 1:29:55)*

Assistant Town Manager Belle Ryder stated that staff has been working with the Environment Committee and regional municipal/planning representatives to develop a planning and partnering framework, as well as engaging a consultant to assist with the formulation of a regional climate action plan. Ms. Ryder spoke of phase one, greenhouse gas assessments, to be done by each community. She noted that phase two will be mitigation strategies and public outreach. Ms. Ryder stated the Community Resilience Partnership Community Grant application was submitted by the Town earlier this month which will help to develop a baseline and provide educational outreach.

b. Reviewing June Proclamations Recognizing Pride Month and Juneteenth *(Video record time 1:29:56 - 1:36:28)*

Mr. Wingard stated the Town Council has previously adopted proclamations recognizing Pride Month and Juneteenth. In accordance with the guidelines, Council reviews the proclamations and resolutions each year for any revisions.

Ms. Gardner stated she prepared the last Juneteenth proclamation and would like to make a stronger connection to the Orono community due to the DEI work, and such.

The Committee agreed to have Ms. Gardner add language to the Juneteenth proclamation and bring it forward to the May Council Meeting. The Committee also supported the Pride Month proclamation and desire to review these documents each year.

c. Municipal Review Committee - Notice of Fundamental Matter *(Video record time 1:36:30 - 2:00:36)*

Ms. Wilson stated the Town has a contractual relationship with the Municipal Review Committee (MRC) for services related to the disposal of its municipal solid waste (MSW). MRC has been working to re-open the Coastal Resources of Maine processing plant in Hampden. She stated

there appears to be some genuine effort on the part of the new receiver to effect a sale. In order to start this process, the MRC offered a base bid to purchase the property as a going concern with several caveats (one being that it would go through a process in its bylaws that allowed its membership to overturn the Board of Directors action). This base bid acts as the floor and requires that the entity be put out to bid for sale on similar or better terms.

The offer to purchase the plant trips a provision of the bylaws that allows a sufficient number of members to join together and call a membership meeting to overturn the Board's action. In order to call a meeting, municipalities controlling at least 60,000 tons of annual estimated MSW tonnage (as codified in their MRC Joinder Agreement) need to provide notice to the MRC within 30 days of receiving a Notice of Fundamental Matter. No other community has called for a membership meeting as the deadline of 3/30/22 approaches.

Ms. Wilson noted the question for the Committee is whether it directs staff to send a request for a membership meeting. **The Committee did not request for a meeting, at this time.**

4. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

a. Determining Whether to Move Forward with the Process of Amending the Town Personnel Ordinance to Observe Juneteenth as a Town Holiday *(Video record time 2:00:37 - 2:19:48)*

Ms. Wilson stated, based upon current wage scales, each holiday costs the Town approximately \$10,000 in additional payroll expense. Given the adoption of Juneteenth as both a state and federal holiday, an informal survey on the Maine Town, City, and County Managers' listserv indicated the following: 51 responded to the survey; 31 adopted the holiday; 9 were considering adoption; 9 not considering; 9 not observing, and 2 had decisions pending.

Councilors discussed whether or not to move forward in amending the Town Personnel Ordinance to observe Juneteenth as a Town holiday. They noted they have passed a Juneteenth proclamation and the Library would be hosting an Orono Pride Fest on June 19th. Councilors expressed concerns about spending \$10,000 of taxpayer's money, and whether that money could be better used for DEI work. Councilors discussed waiting another year to make a decision on the Juneteenth holiday after obtaining more information.

Council agreed to wait another year to make a decision on the Juneteenth holiday; to hear back from the JEDI Committee; to see what other communities are doing; and to revisit this discussion another time with more information.

b. Pre-Budget Discussion Related to Expected Service Levels in FY2023 *(Video record time 2:19:46 - 2:22:36)*

Ms. Wilson suggested sending out a survey to Councilors (similar to last year) to seek feedback on expected service levels for FY23. The Committee agreed.

5. Town Manager's Report (*Video record time 2:22:38 - 2:27:55*)

Ms. Wilson reported on the following items:

- Preliminary award received regarding the Penobscot Emergency Management Agency regarding the Hazmat Monitoring Grant in the amount of \$66,125.41, with a match from the Hazmat Reserves.
- MDEP has accepted the WPCF Climate Adaptation Plan, and she will work with the engineer to get the final drawdown request for the \$20,000 grant funds.
- Insurance company's request for formal agreements with groups that use our buildings and facilities.
- Fire Department's grant request to Firehouse Subs for \$35,000 (with a possible match of \$10,000 from the Hazmat Reserve) for Jaws of Life equipment.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:28 p.m.

Minutes are summary only. A video-recorded version is available on the Town's website at www.orono.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward
Executive Assistant