



COUNCIL COMMITTEES MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2023 AT 5:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Council Chair Pro Tem Geoffrey Wingard, Sonja Birthisel, Leo Kenney, Rob Laraway, Sarah Marx, Dan Demeritt (remote), and Town Manager Sophie Wilson. Absent: Cheryl Robertson.

2. Community Development Committee

a. Request to Resolve or Proclaim the Town's Support for University of Maine System Graduate Student Efforts to Unionize *(Video record time 0:0:23 - 0:53:32)*

Mr. Wingard noted this item is in response to an email request from a resident and from Council members, to consider issuing a response to University of Maine System graduate students' efforts to unionize.

Graduate Student Harrison spoke of the UMaine graduate students' efforts to unionize. He spoke of the demands on graduate students' time beyond the 20-hour work week, the low income, lack of good health insurance, and the lack of a voice with the University. Councilors asked questions.

Councilors discussed the language for a resolution. Mr. Kenney commented he did not feel it was Council's role to weigh in on the University of Maine's business. Mr. Laraway felt it was appropriate to offer support to Orono residents. Ms. Marx noted that equity rights for Orono residents are important.

Ms. Wilson provided background information on Council resolutions or proclamations.

The Committee agreed to have Ms. Birthisel draft language for a Council resolution of support for the next Committee meeting.

3. Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee

a. Initial Discussion of Comp Plan Recommendation to Increase Density in the Commercial-2 Zoning District *(Video record time 0:53:33 - 1:34:28)*

Town Planner Kyle Drexler reviewed the Comprehensive Plan recommendation to decrease the density in the Commercial-2 (C2) Zoning District (primarily on Park Street). He noted the

proposed recommendation is to reduce the minimum dimension requirement from 40,000 sq. ft. or more, to 20,000 sq. feet. Mr. Drexler stated the intent of reducing the minimum dimension requirements is to make an incremental change, while still having good size lots, and allowing for more development in the C-2 area. Councilors asked questions for clarification and understanding of the development impact. Ms. Wilson stated the next step is for this to go to the Planning Board. Mr. Demeritt asked Mr. Drexler for visuals of this type of development.

The Committee agreed to forward this item to the Planning Board for its public hearing and review.

4. Finance and Operations Committee

a. Review of Town Council Policies and Procedure Manual *(Video record time 1:34:29 - 1:45:40)*

Mr. Wingard stated that Council usually reviews the Town Council Policies and Procedures Manual for any changes. The proposed changes include an addition on page 17 that states that the Town Council follows Robert's Rules of Order for Town Council Meetings, and an addition to page 26 that includes the first day of Hanukkah to the list of Religious Holidays to be considered for Town planning purposes.

Ms. Marx stated she has several corrections/changes to discuss regarding the manual. She also wanted to make sure the charter/ordinance supports Robert's Rules of Order. Ms. Birthisel wanted the new public comment processes to be reflected in the manual.

Ms. Wilson asked Councilors to submit email changes and suggestions to her. The Committee agreed to have Mr. Wingard included in the emails as another point of contact. Ms. Wilson encouraged Councilors to let her know of any inconsistencies between the manual and ordinances.

b. Plan to Complete Town Council Orientation, Required Training, and Work Plan Development *(Video record time 1:45:41 - 1:58:23)*

Ms. Wilson noted the payroll and training documents that are required for Council to complete. She reviewed the upcoming workshops regarding executive session training, work plan development, stormwater training, and implicit bias training.

c. FY24 Municipal Budget Process: Distribution of Budget Books and General Overview of Town Manager's Draft Budget

Ms. Wilson stated she will have the annual municipal budget workbooks available to Council.

5. Town Manager's Report *(Video record time 1:58:24 - 2:08:25)*

Ms. Wilson reported on the following items:

- Floodplain Management reviewed by the Planning Board on April 19th.
- June proclamations for Pride Month and Juneteenth for Council review.

- Committee/Board appointments for April. Council Chair appointments for May. Discussion of Council Committee/Workshops/Meeting in July or September. Council time off during the month of August.

6. Public Comment - None

7. Adjourn

The Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 7:29 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