

**TOWN OF ORONO
COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2021 AT 4:30 PM**

**IN-PERSON: COUNCIL CHAMBER – MUNICIPAL BUILDING
59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, ME 04473**

**ONLINE: <https://zoom.us/j/92233224653>
DIAL IN TO ZOOM WEBINAR 1 (312) 626-6799
Webinar ID: 922 3322 4653**

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Terry Greenier (Community Development Committee Chair), Tom Perry, Cheryl Robertson, Laura Mitchell, and Town Manager Sophie Wilson.

2. Police Cruiser Purchases *(Video record time 00:35 - 14:02)*

Ms. Wilson requested guidance from the Committee in considering purchasing two hybrid police cruisers and moving \$3,500 from the fuel line to the capital budget line. Police Chief Josh Ewing and Ms. Robertson spoke in support of the hybrid cruisers. Mr. Greenier spoke of Council supporting the decision even if it doesn't work out perfectly. Ms. Wilson will make that notation in the background materials.

The Committee members agreed to support the purchase of two hybrid cruisers and refer it to Council for formal consideration.

3. Resolution Recognizing a Climate Emergency and Committing to a Municipal Climate Action Planning Process *(Video record time 14:05 - 17:58)*

Ms. Robertson noted the first step in this process is for the Town to formally recognize that there is a climate emergency and commit the Town to climate action planning by entering into a regional climate action planning process with the City of Bangor. Ms. Wilson stated the resolution language aligns with that of the State. She noted the Council Environment Committee will be working on issues with the Regional Climate Action Planning Committee.

The Committee agreed to refer this resolution to Council for its consideration. Ms. Wilson stated it will be presented to Council at its September 13th Council Meeting.

4. Discussion of Caribou Bog Trail Center Project (Guest: Bob Bass, Orono Economic Development Corporation Representative) *(Video record time 18:00 - 46:00)*

OEDC Representative Bob Bass presented the plans for the Caribou Bog Trail Center project. He noted the Orono Economic Development Corporation (OEDC) purchased the "Taylor Bait" parcel on the Taylor Road several years ago and has been working to develop an outdoor

recreation center. Mr. Bass provided information about the 3-year three-way agreement between OEDC, the Penobscot Valley Ski Club, and the Orono Land Trust.

Ms. Wilson spoke of OEDC's request to waive some of the permit fees associated with this project. Mr. Greenier expressed that he was reluctant to waive the fees.

The Committee requested more information about the permit fees amount.

5. Continued Discussion of Marijuana Ordinance Revision *(Video record time 46:02 - 1:25:48)*

Town Planner Kyle Drexler summarized last month's discussion related to setbacks from University entrances in the C-2 zone on Park Street and provided more detail about the impact of potential regulatory options.

Mr. Drexler provided other setback measurements to consider if Council wants to open up some lots along Park Street to be eligible to have marijuana retail stores.

Councilors discussed whether or not to allow marijuana retail stores in the C-2 even though there would be limited locations, or should marijuana retail stores simply not be allowed in the C-2 along Park Street. It was noted the University considers the bike trail an entrance and would require setbacks.

The Committee agreed to have staff bring back language that eliminates marijuana retail stores from the C-2 District. Ms. Wilson also requested bringing back language changes regarding marijuana nurseries.

6. Priorities for 2020 General Obligation Bond Proceeds related to Fiber Optics Project *(Video record time 1:25:49 - 1:56:50)*

Ms. Wilson stated last October the Town issued \$2.25M in new general obligations bonds for infrastructure improvements (\$2M) and to support the next phase of OTO Fiber's ultra high speed fiber buildout (\$250,000). The plan was for the Town to loan OTO Fiber the funds and be repaid over 20 years; however, OTO executed an agreement with OTELCO to provide for a regional buildout of the fiber system. While OTO will be foregoing revenue under this agreement, it also avoids the initial capital expenditures. This means that OTO requires the financial support for the regional project and will not have revenue to repay the bond. She noted the Town is restricted to using these funds for public works infrastructure investments, including deploying municipal fiber infrastructure. Staff identified priorities and potential options for allowable investments.

Assistant Town Manager Belle Ryder presented the proposed buildout of Orono's fiber network infrastructure with OTELCO. She noted the \$250,000 could fund fiber buildout in the area between Stillwater Avenue and I-95 and a portion of Forest Avenue. She explained that OTELCO will be building out a greater area than OTO Fiber would have been able to do.

Mr. Yerxa proposed using the funds (approximately \$230,000 for mill and fill) for further public works infrastructure improvements on outer Park Street, from the American Legion to Old Town, or three drainage issues on Hillside Road (\$400,000), or Bennoch Road infrastructure (\$400,000-\$500,000), or design work for a fourth lane on the Route 2 roundabout (\$100,000), or choose a project from the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan.

Ms. Wilson stated staff will need guidance from Council in the near future on the direction to move forward. She spoke of fiber infrastructure equity needs for residents on Stillwater Avenue and outer Forest Avenue. Ms. Ryder noted there may be grants and other opportunities for fiber in the future. The Committee discussed the different projects.

The Committee agreed to use the \$250,000 funds for public works infrastructure projects.

7. General Overview and Timeline for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds *(Video record time 1:56:52 - 1:59:20)*

Ms. Wilson stated the Town of Orono will be receiving a little over \$1M from the American Rescue Plan Act funds. She stated MMA and communities are working together to maximize the funds. She noted a survey is being sent out to discuss the funding needs, and for now, we need to wait to see what unfolds.

8. Leadership Transition for Office of Community Development and Economic Development Initiatives *(Video record time 1:59:21 - 2:05:20)*

Ms. Wilson stated Mitch Stone has assumed the Community Development Director role. She noted this transition offers an opportunity to capitalize on the foundation that has been built over the last six years and focus on a few new areas. As part of this transition, staff plans to provide more formal, regular updates on the Town's economic development efforts, strategies, and priorities, including economic development regionally, with the State and the University.

9. Town Manager's Report *(Video record time 2:05:21 - 2:06:30)*

The Town Council will meet August 2, 2021 to focus on revising the rental and student housing ordinances. There will also be a Special Council Meeting.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:02 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