



TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES MEETING

MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 2022 AT 5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Council Chair Tom Perry, Meghan Gardner, Geoffrey Wingard, Leo Kenney, Sonja Birthisel, Robert Laraway, and Town Manager Sophie Wilson (via Zoom).

2. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

a. **Discussion of Low Impact Development Model Ordinance Guidelines in Preparation for Submittal to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection for Approval Prior to Local Land Use Ordinance Revisions** *(Video record time 0:00:40 - 0:34:25)*

Town Planner Kyle Drexler stated the Town is required to meet requirements of its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. He noted that regulated municipalities are required to adopt ordinance standards related to low impact development (LID). The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) is requiring that municipalities provide the model or overview of the ordinance that it will work to adopt over the next 18 months. He noted that since the final ordinance must be at least as strict as the model presented to MDEP for review, staff is looking for feedback from the Committee regarding the model submission (box) that is due on or before September 1, 2022. Ms. Wilson suggested being open and least restrictive as the Town can and tighten it up later if needed.

Councilors discussed their grievances about providing the model submission (box) before drafting an ordinance with feedback and public input.

Mr. Drexler discussed information about the model ordinance regarding stormwater, open space, reducing impervious areas, reducing parking spaces (promoting low impact development). He suggested removing the options stated.

Ms. Gardner noted the Town agrees with the MS4 program, it is the process that is unfolding that is not allowing flexibility that is not comfortable.

Mr. Drexler suggested drawing up the model, putting in the required standards, and tweaking the language a little. The Committee agreed.

b. **Review of the Proposed Homestay Ordinance Revision (Post Council Public Hearing)** *(Video record time 0:34:27 - 1:21:10)*

Mr. Drexler noted the regulation of short-term rental properties has been a topic of discussions to find a balance that would add short-term rentals as an allowed use on the table of uses while not unduly regulating or restricting the use. He described short-term rentals, such as homestays,

under the traveler's accommodations definition (transient occupancy). He described the reason for developing the two tiers of homestay: homestay-1 (owner occupied) and homestay-2 (non owner-occupied) accommodations.

Mr. Kenney suggested having homestays go through the rental registration program versus land use. Ms. Wilson noted the overarching issue is transient use, which creates a different risk profile. She suggested going back to committee for more discussion, if this is the path the committee wants to take.

Committee members had a long discussion about the neighborhood impact of short-term versus long-term rentals and owner occupied versus local agents (Homestay 1 and Homestay 2).

All of the Committee members, except Leo Kenney, were in favor of moving forward to the August 8, 2022 Council Meeting for a vote.

c. Review of Proposed Contract Zone for Tyler Technology, 5 College Avenue (Post Planning Board Public Hearing) *(Video record time 1:21:11 - 1:41:23)*

Mr. Drexler stated the Planning Board reviewed the project. The site plan was approved with a few conditions and the contract zone was referred back to Town Council for its formal consideration. A few public comments were made relating to concerns about noise, lighting and traffic. The Planning Board made a condition of approval that the application will work with staff to create a larger buffer along the property lines. The Planning Board recommended the Contract Zone go forward to Council with no changes recommended.

Mr. Drexler reviewed the renderings with the Committee. Councilors requested that the applicant work with the neighbors as much as possible. Mr. Stone stated Tyler Technology's goal is to work with neighbors.

John Jemison, of 8 University Place, asked about the construction process and the impact on the neighbors. Ms. Wilson stated Mr. Jemison's concerns will be discussed with the Code Enforcement Officer and taken up at the pre-construction meeting.

The Council agreed to move forward with a public hearing at the August 8, 2022 Council Meeting.

d. Review of Draft Proposed Ordinance Revisions to Reduce Minimum Parking Standards *(Video record time 1:41:24 - 1:49:30)*

Mr. Drexler stated the current parking standard requires three parking spaces per new residential dwelling even if they are efficiency units. He noted the required number of parking spaces conflicts with the Town's goals related to green space, low impact development, and prioritizing alternative transportation (walking, biking, public transit, etc). He explained the reason for reducing the required number of parking spaces, for efficiency units and 1-2 bedroom units. The Committee supported the change.

Mr. Kenney expressed concern for people parking on the street. Mr. Drexler stated this ordinance also addresses current non-conforming uses. Parking on the street can be addressed through enforcement.

The Committee agreed to refer the ordinance revision to the Planning Board for its review in September.

3. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

a. Review Draft Town Ordinance Chapter 2 Revision related to Procurement Procedures

This item was postponed.

b. Update on Implementation of LD 290 (Adopted Legislation that Freezes Property Taxes for Senior Citizens) (Video record time 1:49:25 - 2:12:45)

Ms. Wilson provided an overview of the newly created senior property tax stabilization program. She described the eligibility as: Being a permanent Maine resident, being at least 65 years old by the following April 1st, is eligible for homestead exemption, and has owed a homestead in Maine for at least 10 years. Ms. Wilson stated the intent of the legislation is to freeze/stabilize property taxes for senior citizens. She noted the applications must be submitted by December 1st each year.

Ms. Wilson noted some concerns with the program regarding state funding, staff time tracking and reporting data. She noted that information will be available on the Town's website and information will be sent to residents.

Councilors commented that it is a shame there is no income requirement for the program to be sustainable, and that it isn't taking into consideration other housing situations.

4. Town Manager's Report (Video record time 2:12:46 - 2:19:30)

Ms. Wilson reported on the following items:

- MRC held their quarterly meeting and introduced Revere Capital as the equity partner to get the plant going.
- Ms. Wilson was asked to serve on the Diversity Hiring Coalition of Maine. Council agreed.
- Demolition on Ayers Island and the deed requirements.

5. Public Comment - None

6. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Geoffrey Wingard and seconded by Sonja Birthisel. 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward,
Executive Assistant