

Parking Solutions Task Force

Agenda

Via video conference

May 13, 2020 at 3:00 pm

1. Public Comment
2. Approval of the minutes March 12, 2020
3. Bike Racks update
4. Policy Changes Discussion:
 - a. Request to reduce the B & B parking permit fee
 - b. Request to close streets to traffic
 - c. Other
5. Parking Season Update- Cornell

Parking Solution Task Force
Minutes
March 12, 2020 at 4:30 pm

Attending: Eben Salavatore, Ron Greeberg, Mary Booher, Erin Cough, Jeff Miller, Heather Sorokin and Sherry Rasmussen by phone. Staff: Cornell Knight, Stan Harmon, Chief Willis, Scott Pinkham.
Public Comment- no comments

Motion by Miller Seconded by Greenberg to accept the minutes of February 13, 2020. Vote unanimous.

Bike Racks- Ron Greenberg reviewed the Parks & Rec Committee's recommendations. The town manager will order 6 racks to be placed in approved locations.

Kiosks- the task force will recommend the policy be amended to allow extending time from any kiosk in town.

RV Policy- the Task Force wants to limit RV parking to the ballfield and Kids Corner lot. The Chief will put up signs to direct RV owners to the proper locations.

Guest Permit- The task force will recommend the policy be amended to allow permits to be valid for 3 days.

Smart Card Implementation- Stan has begun the process but the price increased substantially from the August quote. Smart cards can be used for committee, board members to attend meetings without an out of pocket expense for parking. There was a discussion about offering cards at a discount to island residents, but no action taken.

Parking Season- The Task Force will recommend that parking season be May 15 to October 30th. The email from Rebecca Richardson was reviewed but no action taken.

Parking fee on cruise ship days- there will be a package of improvements to coincide with the park's transportation requirements in 2021 and would include parking costs.

Municipal meeting zone- no action see how the Smart Cards work.

Painting Kiosk covers- Sherry agreed to work on that project.

Other – Employee permit was charged \$150, should be \$30. The Chief will look into it.

Motion by Cough Seconded by Sorokin to recommend the non resident fee be set at \$75 per year. Vote all in favor, Miller opposed.

Mary Booher brought up the stencils on the pedestrian path. The town manager said the highway crew is looking for stencils.

Heather Sorokin asked for stencil at crosswalks, stop look wave. Town Manager will ask PW Director to look into.

No meeting was scheduled.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Cornell Knight

Cornell Knight

From: The Maples Inn Bar Harbor <info@maplesinn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 11:52 AM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Two Requests Re: Paid Parking Policy Amendments

Dear Friends on the Bar Harbor Town Council:

Good morning and we hope you are doing well and hanging in there with the many extraordinary challenges facing our community. We want you to know how much we appreciate your service.

We are the owners of The Maples Inn Bed & Breakfast on Roberts Avenue. We are a seven-room bed and breakfast/inn (not a weekly rental or AirBnB) with four off-street parking spaces. When paid parking on residential streets was instituted last season, we had to purchase three parking permits for on-street guest parking.

While we appreciate the Parking Task Force's hard work on helping to shape policy, we were stunned when we learned that permits for our B&B would cost \$750 each. We participated in task force meetings and we spoke last spring at a town council meeting on this issue.

Last season our guests had to compete with other permit holders for parking on Roberts Avenue. These included out-of-town employees (\$30 permits) who park on our street to avoid the meters on Cottage and Main Streets. They also included guests staying at weekly rentals (\$150 permits). Many times last season, even with our \$750 permits, our guests could not find parking. We're fine with juggling the parking puzzle on our street - we've been doing it for years - but it doesn't seem right that we're paying so much more than others to do so.

We still don't understand the thinking or rationale behind the pricing of our permits. Why are the B&B permits so disproportionately expensive?

When this all transpired last year, we honestly felt very hurt and confused. We felt like we were being punished for simply working hard to run a quality small business that brings happy people to town to enjoy the island, patronize shops and restaurants, and put their dollars into our local economy.

We can't believe that your objective was to hurt us or our business. We recognize that you're all well-intentioned people doing your best to navigate a very complicated issue.

In today's meeting, we understand that you will be reviewing the paid parking policy. We see there are proposals to amend it, including reducing the cost of some types of permits.

We have two requests:

1) Would you consider waiving the parking permit fee this year as our business faces the devastating (and potentially ruinous) financial consequences of COVID-19?

2) Would you consider permanently reducing the fee for our permits to be more equitable and aligned with the costs of other kinds of permits, such as those purchased by weekly rentals for their guests?

In the best of times, coming up with \$2,250 annually for three parking permits is a hardship for our small mom-and-pop business. In the year of COVID, with no money coming in and the season's future so uncertain, we are struggling like many others just to keep our business alive. A reduced or waived permit fee this year would help us so much.

I believe our neighbor inns The Hearthside Inn Bed & Breakfast and Aysgarth Station Bed & Breakfast (and perhaps others?) may also require these permits and would also be helped.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this and for your consideration of our requests. Please reach out if you have any questions or need clarification.

Thank you for all you do.

Warm wishes, Leigh and Matt

--
Leigh and Matthew Lauck
The Maples Inn Bed & Breakfast

Owners & Innkeepers
16 Roberts Avenue
Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

207-288-3443
maplesinn.com



Cornell Knight

From: The Maples Inn Bar Harbor <info@maplesinn.com>
Sent: Friday, May 8, 2020 9:58 AM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Re: Two Requests Re: Paid Parking Policy Amendments

Good Morning, Friends!

I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing to follow up with you about the requests we submitted regarding the recently amended Paid Parking Policy. We watched Tuesday's meeting in its entirety and saw that our comments were mentioned at the end and then referred to "the committee."

Is the committee Cornell referenced the Parking Task Force? If so, we discussed our concerns with them at great length over a series of meetings last year. Other affected B&Bs participated, too. After all that discussion, and assurances that the plan was flexible and might later be changed, we were surprised that the Bed and Breakfast Parking Permit fee was not among those reviewed and amended this week.

I also apologize that I was late to the game with my comments to the council. As is the case with so many of us in town, Matt and I have been pretty overwhelmed as we try to shepherd our small hospitality business through these difficult times. I didn't read the full packet until the morning of the meeting. I should have been more on the ball and done so sooner. Again, given that the Task Force is aware of our concerns, I was surprised to see that the plan is still to charge us \$750 each for our permits. I was especially dismayed to see that this is still the plan this year, when COVID is causing unprecedented financial damage to our small business.

If anyone from the council or task force would like to reach out with questions or to discuss our concerns further, we are here!

We'd also like to express our appreciation to Chief Willis, Steve Cornell, and Rick (now retired) at parking enforcement. They both went above and beyond last year to help us with the problems we encountered with the IPS system. There were significant delays with IPS updating plate information to the officers' scanning devices, which resulted in our guests getting ticketed even when they were "in the system." Jim, Steve, and Rick were incredibly sympathetic and creative in making it work for us. You know how awesome they are, but we just wanted to share our very positive experience.

We look forward to hearing what next steps will be regarding our requests to 1) waive the permit fees this year due to COVID, and 2) revisit the reasonableness of the fee. Thank you again for your consideration and please do let me know how we can help on our end.

Again, our thanks to the council and the task force for all your good work, for listening to us, and for considering our requests.

Warm wishes, Leigh

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Cornell Knight

From: Leon hubbard <leonhubbard@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 7, 2020 7:09 AM
To: jwillis@barharbormaine.gov; mbarlett@barharbormaine.gov
Cc: Sonja Hubbard; manager@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Cottage Street Closure

Dear Sirs,

Firstly, thank you all for everything you're doing and have done for our community in these trying times. It's unprecedented and the extra burden certainly can not be easy for you and your families. Thank you.

With regards to to the potential closure of cottage street, I understand that the Town Council voted in favor of the closure, without a public hearing, and has turned over the potential logistical issues to the fire and police Chiefs to sort out.

As the owner of the largest parcel in the affected area, (Walgreens), that supplies its own parking, relies upon vehicular access and services many elderly and handicap members of the community who are considered high risk individuals for COVID-19, I would like to formally request to be involved in the decision making process.

Please let me know whenever a discussion will be held and I can represent our position on the matter. I'd like to be able to contribute to a solution that works for all downtown business owners, not only Cottage street from Rodick to Main.

There are 2 urgent points that I would like to remind everyone involved in this discussion about.

- 1.) Everard Ct is privately owned and is 1 way (away from Cottage street).
- 2.) ADA compliance requires us to maintain handicap accessible parking at the closest possible distance to the entrance of the facility.

Thank you again for all your efforts in helping our community.

Kind Regards,
Leon Hubbard

Leon Hubbard
LeonHubbard@Hotmail.com
+1 207 266 7678

Cornell Knight

From: Leary's Landing Irish Pub <info@learyslanding.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 4:46 PM
To: manager@barharbormaine.gov; council@barharbormaine.gov
Cc: Alf Anderson
Subject: Pedestrian zones / outdoor dining and shopping

Good Afternoon,

We own and operate Leary's Landing Irish Pub (156 Main Street) and Project Social Kitchen & Bar (20 Mount Desert Street).

We wanted to express our support for the proposed closure of some downtown streets and their conversion into pedestrian zones for the upcoming summer season. We further support the possibility to set up tables for restaurant use and retail displays on sidewalks and in town parks.

We certainly hope that any such plans can expand beyond the originally proposed Cottage Street area so that more businesses (including ours) can take advantage of this great opportunity.

We propose that the closure includes Main Street from West St. to as far "down" as possible; Mount Desert St. from Main St. to School St. (or at least Kennebec St.).

We recognize that such closures would pose a significant challenge logistically, with delivery trucks, utility vehicles and, most importantly, emergency vehicles not being able to access. Perhaps the roads could be open overnight and in the early morning hours, to allow for deliveries and utility maintenance. And tables or retail displays should only be placed on sidewalks, to allow for road use in the event of an emergency.

We further recognize that serving/consumption of alcohol outside of our licensed premises poses additional challenges and requires close collaboration with the Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages. The Bureau has been extremely helpful and understanding in the current situation, so we are very hopeful that such collaboration can be achieved.

Each restaurant / store could have a designated area for their tables / displays that they are responsible for maintaining clean and sanitized. We are personally prepared to source and maintain any tables and chairs that we may be allowed to place on sidewalks or in/around the Village Green.

Such pedestrian zones and outdoor dining / shopping areas would create a festive, lively vacation town feel that would benefit the local economy and help local businesses who are facing mounting challenges.

We are confident that, along with fellow small business owners and the Chamber of Commerce, we can work together with town officials by following their guidance, while providing industry specific recommendations. Such a joint effort would give the small businesses of Bar Harbor a chance to survive, while keeping residents and visitors safe.

We are still awaiting industry specific guidelines / checklists from the Governor's office, but we anticipate that such guidelines will make it very difficult (if not impossible) for our two small, family owned restaurants to operate. We truly hope that the town of Bar Harbor can consider this proposal. We believe that its benefits outweigh the challenges it may carry.

Thank you for your consideration!

Respectfully,

Cody and Lina Gordon
Owners
Leary's Landing Irish Pub
Project Social Kitchen & Bar



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207.288.9899 office
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To: Bar Harbor Town Council

In this unprecedented time of uncertainty of how tourism will be effected during Bar Harbor's 2020 season, we believe agenda item E, on May 5 2020, restricting vehicular traffic on a portion of downtown streets in order to promote pedestrian distancing, sidewalk retail sales and restaurant dining opportunities is not a decision to be made lightly or quickly in any downtown area.

With respect to the creation of an internal task force exploring ideas and options to expand retail and restaurant opportunities on certain streets of downtown Bar Harbor we urge extreme caution.

It is fair to say all businesses this season will see a sharp downturn economically and also experience a downturn of patrons. All business entities will have to reduce capacity in order to comply with pandemic regulations and community safety. This includes our enterprise as well.

By eliminating access to Cottage Street, or that matter any other additional streets, your approval will eliminate our downtown Bar Harbor tour entirely and impose a debilitating restriction on how we operate our ANP tours. This idea, if implemented, will also create traffic bottlenecks at all street intersections adjacent to any street closure creating transit havoc for all users.

We contribute a significant amount of money in vehicle excise tax to the town of Bar Harbor with a reasonable expectation of our ability to transit all accessible streets.

As a community, all of us will suffer great economic harm this season. To promote an idea that will clearly benefit some business entities at the expense of others is not a role a town councilor should assume without careful consideration of real unintended consequences.

Who among us can realistically predict the need for additional pedestrian, retail and restaurant space, taken for common community property, considering how little we can currently comprehend real tourism numbers not to mention additional town staff time and effort and headache?

We think it is important and applaud thinking outside of the box during this highly stressful time, all with the hope of community safety and salvaging a portion of the season. There are many other ideas councilors can implement that more fairly distributes help to our businesses and community than street closures.

Rushing to a significantly different solution from current traffic flow has a much broader implication than simply "making it so", which provides some and certainly not all a means to survive.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns,
Respectfully,

Larry Sweet
Denise Morgan

Cornell Knight

From: Christopher White <chrisw@rlwhiteandson.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2020 4:15 AM
To: cknight@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Close off downtown

Good morning Cornell,

I am writing you in support of closing the downtown district (Rodick st. to Main st.) to allow open air seating for the restaurants and retail space for the shops.

This will allow our smaller establishments an opportunity to adhere to the social separation with minimal disruption to traffic.

We all seem to agree the tourist season is going to be lite this year so why not create something fun for us locals to enjoy?

Both my rental houses are near zero for bookings (one was at 12 weeks, the other at 22) so I too feel the economic sting of this situation.

Yes, this is a risky move by the town but what do we have to lose? Give all businesses equal available space (allowing the restaurants to be full service, including bar service) with roped off areas for each.

Allow pop up retailers on both the Village Green and Agamont, with preference given to established businesses.

Possibly speak with the owner of the lot across from the Post Office to allow parking?

We as a town need to do something to give our retail and restaurant friends a fighting chance this year.

Thanks,
Chris White

Cornell Knight

From: Erica Brooks <barharborrealestate@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 7:37 PM
To: jwillis@barharbormaine.gov; rjamison@barharbormaine.gov;
mbartlett@barharbormaine.gov; jlennon@barharbormaine.gov;
manager@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Opposed to closing any streets in Bar Harbor

Hello all,

I sent a detailed email to the Town Council earlier today expressing my opposition of closing down any portion of any street this summer AKA agenda item 7 E from the 5/5 Town Council meeting. The Chair of the Council mentioned they only got one letter in opposition to this concept which I find unlikely I was the only one. Seeing that a task force or workgroup will be formed per the 5/5 meeting I thought it would be most accurate to express my concerns directly to you all who may be members of the workgroup or task force; please share with anyone else that would be considered for this task force.

Here is what I sent to the Town Council and I would like you all to consider too. Thank you.

7E) I am very much opposed to the idea of road closure anywhere in town regardless of pandemic or not. Not only is this proposal completely unfair to the majority of our business community it creates congestion and confusion in general for delivery drivers, service vehicles, emergency personnel and visitors. Every one of our businesses that can and will open this season will need the full support of any and all locals and visitors and to direct people to once specific area is a bad idea and doesn't seem to be well thought out. The idea of our business community (I'm thinking restaurant patrons in this case) spilling out onto the streets legally would create a nightmare for our police force as well. With restaurants being able to offer "to-go" alcoholic beverages I see this to become a major issue. We are not New Orleans. We are not Burlington VT. It would be very hard to enforce open container rules and public intoxication issues for one. Also, how to decide where the pedestrian cutoff starts exactly? How could that be done in a fair manor? I also am concerned that rerouting traffic up small side streets versus the wider Main/Cottage streets would create another safety issue for our residents (kids and pets too). I live on Kennebec street which is barely wide enough to drive through in "normal" times - it would be a constant stream of traffic and speeding speed limit is 15, no one goes 15 and often people are found driving down Kennebec the wrong way. What about people with disabilities how would they access certain places that have no road access? This Town already has liabilities with lack of handicap accessible parking - closing down a stretch of road would add to that. I appreciate that people are trying to get creative and adapt their business models but this particular idea has many more negatives than positives. I am very much opposed to this concept, thank you for hearing my opinion.

Thank you,
Erica Brooks
11 Kennebec Street

Erica Brooks
The Swan Agency Sotheby's International Realty -The Erica Brooks Group erica.brooks@swanagency.com
barharborrealestate@gmail.com
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Cornell Knight

From: mick majka <mickmajka@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 3:07 PM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Cc: manager@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Closing Cottage street

Hi my name is Mick Majka and I own Epi's Pizza. A couple more thoughts on the suggestion to close Cottage street this summer. Perhaps the road could be made 1 way to free up outdoor room for social distancing. Maybe the 2 parking spaces in front of a restaurant could be reserved for outdoor seating. None of these ideas may be possible, but I'm sure if we all keep tossing ideas around we will find a way to get Maine back to work! Thank you

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Cornell Knight

From: Tom St. Germain <tomst@barharbormaine.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 3:06 PM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: opinion on closing streets

Councilors,

Please carefully consider your possible decision to close certain roads in response to this pandemic. I just suffered through two years of the road in front of our business being closed, and while I admit there were different circumstances, the results were not good, and the negative effects were inequitably borne by those businesses within the closure.

In all likelihood, the opposite effect would emerge under most of the proposed scenarios, along with many other unknown and unintended consequences.

I agreed with your decision from just over a year ago regarding closing the road for the winter event was also inequitable and inappropriate. I hope you apply the same standards on this subject.

Sincerely,
Tom St.Germain

Cornell Knight

From: Heather Sorokin <hsorokin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 11:20 AM
To: Cornell Knight; Jeff Dobbs; Erin C. Cough; Jill Goldthwait; Joe Minutolo; Gary Friedmann; Matthew Hochman; Stephen Coston
Subject: Fwd: Potential summer options

I am forwarding some ideas with the laws that they fall under as additional information. Maybe we need to involve our town planner to assist in coming up with a town wide strategy?

Best Regards,
Heather

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Alf Anderson <alf@barharborinfo.com>
Date: Tue, May 5, 2020 at 10:53 AM
Subject: Fwd: Potential summer options
To: Nina St Germain <barharborjewel@gmail.com>, Heather Sorokin <hsorokin@gmail.com>

Alf Anderson
Executive Director
Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce
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www.VisitBarHarbor.com
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Luchini, Louis <Louis.Luchini@legislature.maine.gov>
Date: Mon, May 4, 2020 at 4:42 PM
Subject: Potential summer options
To: alf@barharborinfo.com <alf@barharborinfo.com>

Hi Alf,

Good to see you on the zoom call a little while ago. It would be great if we can find a way to safely help businesses this summer.

I just wanted to put a couple of laws on your radar, since it appears both from our group's discussions, as well as actions by other states like NH, that outdoor seating is far preferred over indoor (I saw NH will open restaurants to outdoor seating only on 5/18, subject to social distancing).

These two laws relate to licensees' ability to sell liquor, which obviously helps their bottom lines. I think both may allow restaurants to expand their outdoor capacity, since the indoor social distancing requirements will significantly reduce it indoors.

Here's a [link to the first law](#) (MRSA 28-A, §1051(9), I'll copy text below), which relates to noncontiguous property owned by the municipality. This may be helpful if the town is willing to open up some of their property for outside food and drinks. We developed this in part with the city of Augusta, among other cities, to allow municipalities to provide additional seating in areas like parks, parking lots and parking spaces, where a customer may have to cross a street to get there. The restaurant would still be able to serve alcohol as part of its offerings with municipal approval.

Second, and a larger undertaking by the town, could be the creation of an "entertainment district" ([MRSA 28-A, §221](#)). We worked closely with Westbrook's new Rock Row development on this. The law would allow a town to create a district with a central area for common consumption. Essentially, people could buy food and drinks from everyone within the district, and bring it to a central area to consume.

Just wanted to flag this for you in case it interests your members. It seems like outdoor activities will be big this summer, and hopefully the weather cooperates... There may also be options with catering type permits, too.

If you're interested in moving ahead and need help with the state Bureau of Alcohol on any of this, just let me know and I'm happy to assist.

Take care,

Louie

To: Bar Harbor Town Council

From: Two Hub's Inc

Subject: Potential closing of cottage street

Date: 4-May-2020

Dear Town Council,

As the owner of the largest parcel of property within the proposed affected area, I am opposed to the prospect of closing cottage street without an independent 3rd party study conducted to understand the health, community and property owner impact. We can not let fear (imagined or real) drive and change our defined decision-making processes.

My property and tenants rely upon vehicular access. In particular; the pharmacy which supports handicap accessibility for necessary individuals and several year-round and seasonal housing units.

If the town is seriously considering the closure of cottage street, it is necessary to conduct a 3rd party study to understand the impacts to all community members and businesses in town, positive and negative. There are many questions that would need to be answered.

- Could this potentially create a COVID-19 hotspot?
- What sanitation methods would be implemented for the high turnover area proposed?
- How will social distancing be enforced in such a small area?
- How will emergency services be maintained? Fire and ambulance access?
- How would the "public" land be divided? By ownership and road frontage on cottage street? Lot square footage? Open to all on first come first served basis?
- How will citizens who rely on essential services in the proposed area be able to access without increasing their exposure? This is directly related to the pharmacy in which many high-risk individuals need to access.
- How will properties "land locked" to cottage street accept deliveries?
- What are the health implications of serving food where garbage is stored for removal (restaurants that bring their garbage through cottage street access)?
- Will this negatively impact businesses on Main Street with the same issue?
- Should consideration be given to defining a separate area for all business to utilize? Baseball field?
- How will liability of private use of public lands be managed? A server rolls an ankle on a curb delivering food. Is it an employer problem of Town of Bar Harbor?
- If implemented, what guidelines will be followed to remove the closure? State guidelines of businesses opening?
- What will prevent this from becoming a permanent change that would only benefit a small percentage of tax paying business owners?

There is much we do not know or understand about this proposal. To act without full knowledge of the impact and community approval could potentially endanger the health and well being of people affected by this decision.

In closing – a 3rd party study would need to be conducted. Pros and Cons would need to be presented to the public for review and approval. Taking a decision with such a major impact to the entire community and future of Bar Harbor while in self isolation due to a worldwide pandemic would be an abuse of power that benefits a select few individuals and business and ignores the will of the people.

Kind Regards,

Leon Hubbard Jr

President – Two Hub's Inc

Cornell Knight

From: milja=mdimaine.us@mailgun.mdimaine.us on behalf of Milja Brecher-DeMuro
<milja@mdimaine.us>
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 7:23 AM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Cottage Street Road Closure

Dear Council members,

I support the closing of Cottage Street from Rodick Street to Main Street. This would be a creative and wonderful way to allow for safe social distancing and restaurants on that side of town to operate under the current recommendations from Governor Mills. These are unprecedented times. We must find creative solutions to protect our residents and our visitors and most importantly, do all that we can to aid our medical facilities to manage the impending increase in COVID-19 cases. The more we can do to creatively address the medical and economic needs of our community, the better.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Milja Brecher-DeMuro, LCSW

Bar Harbor

Cornell Knight

From: Jena Young <jenayoungmdi@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2020 8:18 PM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: The Heart of Bar Harbor

Hello Councilors,

I have always been a proponent of letting the State make decisions on how we should stay safe and reopen in the COVID-19 crisis. I am STILL a fan of that approach, as the State has access to the scientists, experts and other resources that are not available to us on a town level.

I would ask that you turn your focus instead to helping the small businesses in this town of feeling supported. Any temporary/permanent measures to allow outdoor shopping/dining in spaces that aren't otherwise allowed would go a long way to supporting business, creating a sense of community joy and keeping people safe. I would also love to see more picnic tables available for outside take out dining. Our business (SSC) would gladly supply them to the town if they we're permitted (at no cost to the Town of BH.)

The Governor's measures and plan are sufficiently strict to keep us safe. Now is the time to get creative to keep as many businesses afloat as possible while also adhering to the State guidance.

Thank you,
Jena Young
Side Street Cafe
Owner

Cornell Knight

From: Amy Schwartz <schwartzamym@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2020 8:08 PM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: May 5th agenda - item E Regular Business

Good Evening Council members,

I appreciate your work to ensure the safety and health of our community during these times.

In regard to tomorrow's council agenda item regarding road closure. Much of the discussion I have read online states only Cottage Street from Rodick to Main is being proposed for closure. I understand this is to allow for social distancing in this area. However, how would this help with distancing measures in other areas? Also if you then allow restaurants & shops to move their business outside onto the sidewalks, how would these measures be fair to other businesses?

I have also seen suggestions to remove parking spaces to allow restaurants to serve out in the parking spaces.

I feel if every business on that street incorporates outdoor dining or retail displays that we will not be really gaining any additional distancing. Also, this will make that area a hub and not help divert people to shops/restaurants in other areas.

Closing off streets does lead to concerns with deliveries, traffic movement to avoid congestion, emergency services.

How would alcoholic beverages be taken into consideration for outside dining on sidewalks or streets if we closed roads for dining?

I know whatever decision you make not all of the citizens will agree. I hope you take these inquiries into consideration when making your decision regarding closing streets.

One thing that I would like to see incorporated is handwashing stations. Another thing that might be helpful is leaving off the chains off the bollards on Main St. I know this has been to control the flow of pedestrian traffic, but it would be good to allow the ability to move easier and allow social distancing in those areas.

Another suggestion I have heard online is having picnic tables added to the parks for dining. This worries me about sanitation as we have been warned about the virus living on surfaces. If we are closing playgrounds, how could we promote picnic tables?

Again, I thank you all for your service to the town and island community. I understand people are urgent to re-open but I agree in following the phased approach laid out by our governor.

Thank you,
Amy Schwartz
Bar Harbor resident

Cornell Knight

From: The Yarboroughs <theyarboroughs@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2020 11:56 AM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Feedback on temporary pedestrian area downtown: Regular Business Letter E

Dear Council,

Thank you for continuing to work through these complex issues in trying times. My husband Kyle and I own CIAO at 135 Cottage St and in reading the agenda for the week, I have some concerns about the proposal labeled Item E.

To start, I have always liked the idea of a more pedestrian-friendly downtown—there are many ways to do that and I would be in support of a well-thought-out, carefully crafted plan to do that. However, I am concerned about this particular proposal. Although I do love any ideas we can come up with to help our downtown Bar Harbor businesses and keep our customers and staff safe, I am concerned: this may positively impact those restaurants and businesses in that centralized area (that already has the most foot traffic) but I fear it will be at the expense of those restaurants and businesses just outside of that small, localized area. To use our restaurant at the other end of “quieter side” of Cottage as an example: since the meters, people can now actually find a place to park in front of our restaurant when they want to come to eat with us! It’s great! But, with the other end of the street closed off, instead of us having this “one” perk of being able to park in front of my now (potentially) 50% reduced capacity seat restaurant to come to eat at one of our (potential 4) tables, they will have to park somewhere else because people will be parked there so they can walk into the pedestrian zone to go to a restaurant that now, in addition, has the ability to increase their seating by putting their tables on the street in parking spots. Also, with “curb-side pick-up” and “take out” being one of the only ways that restaurants are going to be able to try to make up for the loss of seating and dining-room revenue, if I have a “parking lot” outside my business now how will I ever be able to offer an easy take-out experience? Again, I agree these are the times we think outside of the box and that is how we will survive-but I would caution that this proposal may benefit the few, while at the same time impacting many others negatively.

I would also caution the town against making any drastic changes to potentially "help" restaurants and businesses before we hear more from the Governor about how restaurants and businesses will be required to operate in the coming months.

Respectfully,

Marie Yarborough

Cornell Knight

From: Amanda Link <mandylink373@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 2, 2020 3:07 PM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Cc: mandylink373@gmail.com
Subject: Agenda Item: Closure of Cottage Street from Rodick to Main Streets

Dear Council:

I am writing in support of the proposal on the May 5 Agenda that some downtown streets temporarily be closed to vehicular traffic, i.e. Cottage from Rodick to Main, etc. This would be a great way to allow businesses to open up tables on the sidewalks for shopping and eating. I also support a proposal to allow tables in Agamont Park for businesses to sell their wares. All of these ideas will help business to generate foot traffic while maintaining social distance requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposals.

Amanda Link

Cornell Knight

From: Kay Stevens Rosa <kay@a4architects.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 2, 2020 2:43 PM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Safe Streets

Esteemed Councilors,

As our town, and the local businesses that give it life, struggle to adjust to the realities of our present situation, a nimble response from town leaders is critical to our survival, in all relevant senses of the word.

More than ever, this requires creative solutions.

I am writing to you today, wearing my citizen hat as well as my community planner/urban designer hat, to encourage you to enact limited pedestrian-only street segments for part or all of this summer season.

We know that proper social distancing will prove to be difficult on our relatively narrow downtown sidewalks. Not only is this unhealthy, it is anxiety inducing and will not help locals or visitors feel comfortable.

Bar Harbor would benefit in numerous ways from such a simple and low cost temporary solution. These include:

1. The obvious benefit of opening up space to allow for better social distancing.
2. The ability to allow businesses to "de-densify" their operations through limited street spillover, street tables, and/or "pop-up" shops in open areas. It is believed that we are safer outside than inside, and many kinds of businesses are being required to reduce their densities by 50% or more, which likely pushes them into further economic peril.
3. It is proven that pedestrians spend more money than do people using cars to get to stores.
4. It also allows for easier window shopping and curbside pickup, benefiting businesses electing these modes of operation.
5. It is a more sustainable and healthier model.
6. It will surely be a more pleasant experience for all, and what better opportunity for us to "try it on" to see how it might perform, informing future discussions with real data and experience.

A possible scenario might be to close lower Cottage (from Rodick to Main, allowing vehicular passage to the parking lots on Rodick), and to close Main Street from "park to park", which is a recommended point of connectivity in most Open Streets and New Urbanism models. This could be from Agamont to the Village Green, allowing us to spread limited consumer activities into open areas. This area encompasses most of the typically crowded area during summer.

Parking would still be as accessible as it normally is, with the exception of the limited number of street parking spots within that zone, bearing in mind that our visitor numbers will be lower, requiring less parking.

The restriction on vehicular traffic could be limited to certain hours of the day, allowing for deliveries and drive-to arrival for those that need that during hours that tend to be less busy, such as early morning. It could also be opened at night. Similarly, it could happen on weekends, and perhaps expanded for busier weeks.

Emergency vehicles would have access at any time.

As it is, this proposed zone of downtown Bar Harbor is virtually impassable to vehicular traffic during busy summer days, as people treat this area, particularly the intersection of Cottage and Main Streets, as a pedestrian zone anyway, crossing first one street, then the other, sometimes stopping in the middle, and rarely in a predictable fashion.

This seems like one of those rare “win-win” situations, especially in a moment where everything feels limiting and disheartening. It is easy to enact, costs little, and is highly beneficial to many.

In fact, this is happening as an emergency action in towns and cities across the country in light of this unique circumstance. Rockland is considering closing their Main Street to traffic while social distancing measures are restrictive. New York, Boston, and most major cities have already done it. Surely, as this idea catches on, we will see other towns doing the same. Let’s continue to lead by example in Bar Harbor, while keeping our community safer as we allow for some economic activity to sustain us this summer.

Again, I thank you for your service, especially in this challenging time, and am grateful for the opportunity to provide citizen input.

Kay Stevens Rosa, AIA, NCARB
Maine Licensed Architect
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Cornell Knight

From: mick majka <mickmajka@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 2, 2020 8:46 AM
To: council@barharbormaine.gov
Cc: manager@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Cottage street dining

Good morning. My name name is Mick and I own Epi's pizza along with Des. Here is a proposal offered up by Heather Sorokin, owner of The Thirsty Whale. I think it is a great idea

Hi Desiree. I will be contacting the town council with an email today requesting that Cottage Street from Rodick to Main be closed this season and the town or restaurants put tables outside for anyone to use. It would provide a safe eating space for people with take out to dine. If this is something that you think would benefit us, please send an email in support to the town council. We have 10 restaurants on this end of the street. The majority of spaces are small and removing tables for social distancing will severely limit capacity.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

To the Town Council,

Thank you, all, for your hard work during this crisis. We are grateful for your time and thoughtful consideration to the health and well-being of our community. Our purpose in writing to you is to add our voices in support of Governor Mill's plan to re-open our economy and to offer some ideas to move our community forward.

In an effort to try to reimagine the season and how it would be possible to conduct business in a safe and logical way, we would like to propose the idea of closing down Cottage Street from Rodick Street to Main Street. It's our understanding that Gary Freedman has suggested possible street closures as well. We thought that this would be an opportune time to discuss this in more detail.

There are 10 restaurants located from Mid-Town Burger to Subway Sandwich Shop along Cottage Street. All of them have a small footprint and removing tables and/or bar seating to accommodate social distancing will have a significant impact in our capacity to do business. The smaller capacity of each restaurant will naturally create an increase in customers taking out food and a need for a safe place to eat it. There is a precedent for the temporary closure of Cottage Street and this is what we are requesting to happen once again, a temporary closure for the season as the weather improves. This closure would allow the town or individual restaurants to put tables in the street allowing a safe place for customers to enjoy their take out while also allowing extra room for pedestrian traffic. We suggest these tables would be available for anyone to use not just the restaurants. Naturally, there would be a need for someone to maintain and sanitize the area as well as the need for additional trash receptacles. The new outdoor space could be maintained in several ways, perhaps by a town employee or by a division of labor between restaurants.

Along with this we are also suggesting that the town look into adding tables in the Village Green and Agamont Park or the Agamont parking area to provide accommodations for diners in those areas. Both parks, along with Barker Park would also be ideal locations for the town to allow pop up shops for local stores to utilize since they too will be impacted.

Implementing these strategies would provide comfort to our residents and visitors by providing them with open air spaces to enjoy our town and patronize local businesses. It would also create an outdoor market feel throughout the town.

With these recommendations, we are also asking the town to petition Governor Mills to allow towns to temporarily loosen land use ordinances to accommodate such activities.

If we can be of further assistance in any way, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you for your time,

Heather Sorokin and Basil Eleftheriou Jr. , Thirsty Whale Tavern

Cornell Knight

From: Peter Hastings <hastings.peter@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 8:35 AM
To: alf@barharborinfo.com; Elizabeth Bunker; council@barharbormaine.gov
Subject: Pedestrian Boardwalks

In light of recent events, I would ask the Town Council to strongly consider closing down large sections of Mount Desert Street, Main Street, Rodick street, and Cottage Street to auto traffic, and convert them to pedestrian walkways between 11am and 9pm this summer. This would allow our restaurants and smaller retail stores to set up shop in an open air environment that is better suited for the social distancing regulations that will be released shortly, and will ultimately limit their ability of operate indoors. Additionally, it would create a festive village feel, good press for the town, and give Bar Harbor some much needed notoriety among other coastal towns.

I understand that this will create some logistic issues, but desperate times call for desperate measures. These issues are all easily addressed with some creative thinking.

Bar Harbor is the tourism industry leader in Maine, we should continue to adapt and show other communities a path forward.

Thank you for your consideration,
Peter D. Hastings

Henry Hotels Inc.
PO Box 551 Bar Harbor, Maine 04609