

TOWN OF BAR HARBOR
Comprehensive Planning Committee
June 8, 2022 — 6:00 PM — Via Zoom

MINUTES

The meeting was held via Zoom, under the provisions of the committee's Remote Participation Policy.

Comprehensive Planning Committee members present were Elissa Chesler, Jacquie Colburn, Greg Cox, Kevin DesVeaux, Cherie Galyean, John Kelly, Jim Mahoney, Calistra Martinez, Michael McKernan, Misha Mytar, Val Peacock, Kristin Murphy, Kyle Shank, and David Woodside. Allison Sasner joined at 6:35 PM.

Staff present were Planning Director Michele Gagnon and Assistant Planner Steve Fuller.

Consultants present were Steve Whitman and Liz Kelly.

1. Call to order

Chairperson Kyle Shank called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

2. Excused absences

None.

3. Zoom logistics, review of meeting agenda and adoption

On a motion by John Kelly, seconded by Kevin DesVeaux, the agenda was adopted on a roll-call vote (14-0).

4. Adoption of May 16, 2022 minutes

On a motion by John Kelly, seconded by Kevin Desveaux, the May 16, 2022 minutes were adopted, as amended (page 3, paragraph 3, line 2 - is it), on a roll-call vote (14-0).

5. Public comment period

No one from the public offered any comments.

6. Other Related Efforts

There were no updates to share.

7. Public Engagement

Kyle Skank started with an update on tabling efforts to date, and the delivery of fliers to area businesses. These efforts also included some conversations with residents, and attendance at the Corvette event at the ball field. Michele Gagnon added that she, Kyle Shank, and Steve Fuller met to discuss how to use social media advertising to reach additional people. The town will begin using Facebook ads for this effort and may also advertise on Instagram and other social media platforms.

Liz Kelly provided an overview of the outreach activities that have been completed to date and some ongoing efforts as identified in the meeting memo. This included an update on the tabling effort and additional locations identified. These include the Village Green and Farmers Market. The June newsletter was created and distributed. The Polco survey was extended until the end of June. Ms. Kelly added that some key age groups appear to be missing from the Polco responses. Mr. Shank asked if the responses reflect the demographics. John Kelly clarified that Polco is not intended to be a scientific survey, and we should note this when sharing the results.

Liz Kelly then explained the need to promote the fall community forum over the coming summer months. This can happen once the location, date, and format are set. Ms. Kelly also requested that a sub-committee be formed to assist with material development. Greg Cox asked what type of input is needed. Ms. Kelly then explained that the volunteers will be involved in the drafting of materials and questions outside the regular monthly Comprehensive Planning Committee meetings. Kyle Shank asked if all of the existing conditions topics will be addressed. John Kelly expressed concern about a sub-committee approach. Kevin DesVeaux asked how many people we should expect at the forum, and Ms. Kelly suggested 100 to 200 people potentially and an online and paper version that will capture additional people. Val Peacock suggested having a station for kids, and Mike McKernan then suggested involving teachers and others to help with a kid's station(s).

Jim Mahoney asked for sample questions to be shared as examples of what might be asked. Misha Mytar then suggested the open house format is a wise decision and it has worked for similar events on the island. Ms. Mytar then suggested that background information should be made available ahead of the event, and asked about staffing stations and having notetakers. Steve Whitman further explained the format and suggested having committee members circulating around the room and available would work well, and that participants are charged with providing their own feedback through topic specific forms and activities.

John Kelly expressed support for the format and noted the size of the school facilities as a concern. He suggested the cafeteria, gym, and library might be needed. Having food was also suggested.

There was a discussion about if a sub-committee could be formed, and under what rules it would operate. Mr. Fuller clarified that a three-day notice is required for committee meetings. It was determined that a sub-committee meeting should take place before July. The following people volunteered: Calistra Martinez, Misha Mytar, Val Peacock, Elissa Chesler, John Kelly, Cherie Galyean, Kristen Murphy, and Kyle Shank.

8. Discussion of Existing Conditions Report

Steve Whitman provided an overview of the draft Existing Conditions Report that has been circulated, and the nature of the edits received to date. Jim Mahoney asked if the edits will be tracked in the document so they can be easily viewed. Michele Gagnon responded that it may be too much for this version, but possibly in the next version. Kyle Shank added that from his review of the report, the biggest feedback was the tone of the document. In some cases, prescribed solutions are mentioned but it is unclear where they came from. Steve Whitman explained why some of these issues and actions were included, and suggested that the language

used be revisited to ensure it is identifying instead of suggesting final actions. Misha Mytar and Cherie Galyean suggested we do what we can to explain where these items came from.

Steve Whitman provided an update on the Census data and referred to the write-up in the meeting packet. Michele Gagnon added that she understood Eric Halvorsen's position and concerns about revising the data, and she does not feel it is worth changing. Ms. Gagnon explained that in the event there are major discrepancies found as new Census data is released during the project, it will be addressed in the Plan. Val Peacock added that the Census does not tell us what we really know about the population, and as a tool it is not designed to capture this.

Michele Gagnon suggested that for the forum we take a step back and pull information from the various sections to inform a meaningful conversation. While this data helps meet the mandate, in the end we are seeking a much more integrated conversation. Steve Whitman suggested that edits to the document be addressed carefully and that it is important for everyone to remember the comprehensive plan is still to come. Kyle Shank suggested that some terms need to be defined within the document to assist the reader.

Michele Gagnon then shared an overview of her feedback on the report. The park is mentioned in every section and yet has no jurisdiction. She asked if a park section should be created. The vocational school (HCTC) needs to be included somewhere in the plan. In the section on Northeast Creek the concept of a watershed should be defined and explained. Also, there are 40 zoning districts not 41 and the park is not within a district.

John Kelly reacted to the comment on the park and noted that the last comprehensive plan did not address the park at all. While the park does not have jurisdiction, it does have influence on many aspects of the community. Mr. Kelly prefers that the park be fully integrated in the document. Ms. Gagnon added that the park should also be listed as a major employer.

Elissa Chesler stated that there is bias and missing data in a document like this one, based on the nature of the community, and suggested calling out this fact in the document to be clear. Jim Mahoney added that the document needs to capture the flavor of who lives here and be sure people are not left out.

Kyle Shank shared that the document has to represent the best data we have so we can create a plan later on. The data is all here, but some is in text and some in tables and graphics. The document is already at 200 pages so some additional data may need to be pursued later on. Val Peacock recognized that there may be limited time available to refine this document, but suggested it be "Town Forward" and address how tourism and other issues impact the community.

Steve Whitman expressed his concern related to the existing level of detail in the document, and the time needed to address the edits and suggestions submitted between now and the forum. Michele Gagnon also expressed concern over the time until the forum, and suggested moving it to October to get more people engaged. Kevin DesVeaux agreed and shared that he is uncomfortable with the September forum date. He also added that the group is in analysis paralysis currently.

Misha Mytar agreed that the project needs to be shared more in the months ahead, and that we might be asking too much of this one document. The biggest feedback is on the tone of the document, and the need to add a few clarifying sentences where identified. Not a full rewrite. The conversation about the forum date then continued.

Kyle Shank added that the analysis paralysis discussion related to sources of data seems to be the focus, but further discussion may not improve the document. Postponing will not alleviate some of the concerns about the report because the data cannot get changed, just addressed.

Val Peacock then suggested using the forum to ask the public if the Existing Conditions sections reflect the community as they see it, and the issues. Does this capture it? What is missing? What should we know?

9. Public comment period

No one from the public offered any comments.

10. Next Steps

Steve Fuller offered to send a Doodle poll to those interested in serving on the sub-committee.

11. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM on a motion by Kevin DesVeaux, seconded by John Kelly and approved on a roll-call vote (15-0).

Minutes approved by the Comprehensive Planning Committee on July 13, 2022:



Kyle Shank
Chair, Comprehensive Planning Committee



Date