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## MEMORANDUM

To: Bar Harbor Town Council  
cc: Department Heads  
From: Kevin Sutherland, Town Manager  
Date: March 15, 2022  
**Re: March 15, 2022 Manager's Comments**

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### Excused Absences

The original Manager's Memo had no known absences, an oversight on my part. There are two absences this evening. Council Chair Dobbs is on vacation and Councilor Vice Chair Hochman will be stepping in the role of chair.

In addition, I too will be missing the meeting. I am on my way to Washington DC to meet with our congressional delegates tomorrow on a host of items that impact State of Maine municipalities (through MMA) and to some extent, Bar Harbor. Tourism and sustainable tourism are on that list, along with solid waste and PFAs. I want to thank the Council for giving me the opportunity to attend, to represent us, and build meaningful relationships.

### Council Retreat

We are fortunate to have such a passionate, enlightened, and driven community paired with a team of municipal employees with 'can do' attitudes that exceed every expectation. This combination should be celebrated, but eventually without more resources, it becomes unsustainable. Some of these needs will be met as part of the FY23 budget (thank you to the Council and Warrant Committee for working through a new process this year), but there are additional ways to address our capacity challenges.

Last week (3/8/2022), Councilors, Chairs of Boards, Committees, and Task Forces, along with staff came together to identify the challenges facing Bar Harbor and prioritize where our focus and efforts should lie.

From this, we've identified three top priority areas: Housing, Infrastructure, and Tourism.

The next tier – Balancing a Year-Round Community, Recruitment and Retention, Alternative Revenue Streams, Climate Change, and Schools/Childcare.

This is a top-level overview of what came of the retreat – we still need some more time to unpack the information collected, and provide a presentation/report to the Council.

Once we have Council support to move forward (ideally at the April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting), we will be holding additional stakeholder meetings /sessions involving the committees and individuals identified during the second breakout session.

I want to publicly thank everyone who participated. Based on the evaluation, it seems this was a success (see attached). We could not have done this without your willingness to share your thoughts and provide input from your perspective as a community leader, to Department Heads and our Facilitation Leaders for helping to design and implement a meaningful process, and especially to Liz Graves for making sure the event went so smoothly.

### **LD 2003 – An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions**

I've been asked by a few Councilors as to the status and impact this legislation would have on Bar Harbor.

The bill has many good ideas that can make a real difference in Maine's housing crisis, such as the bill's provisions that establish funding for municipal technical assistance, implementation grants, and financial incentives based on successful changes to local housing policies will be most beneficial to smaller communities who do not have the staff or resources to make meaningful change.

Another real positive is the accessory dwelling unit requirement, but our Planning Department already had the foresight to get that on the books for Bar Harbor.

The density bonus provisions in Section 9 are also a step in the right direction but it doesn't address infrastructure capacity concerns (transit, roads, etc.) or local growth plans. Future building should occur where infrastructure already exists because we can barely afford the infrastructure we already have.

I've been very supportive of Priority Development Zones and have been involved in several regional and state workshops to explore their benefits. While all municipalities would benefit from having Priority Development Zones, they shouldn't be mandated for every community in Maine, as is proposed in this legislation.

Any way this goes, I am certain Bar Harbor will be ready to assess and address the changes it will have for our Land Use.

Status of the bill?

Last Monday was a public hearing with a lot of feedback. The Committee on Labor and Housing will be meeting tomorrow at 10am for another work session.

### **On Vacation**

Just a reminder. I will be on vacation and out of town 3/23 – 3/29.