

FY 2024, section 4, PL3 Staff Planner

Reason for Request:

The need for additional staffing in the Planning Department was first identified in the September 15, 2022 Examination of Bar Harbor's Development Process. The Examination of Bar Harbor's Development Process was an independent audit of the Planning and Code Department conducted by the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce with the help of a facilitator. The examination's report, and a response to that report, was presented by the Planning Director to the Chamber on September 27, 2022, to the Town Council on October 2, 2022, and subsequently to the town's three quasi-judicial boards. The examination process and a multitude of follow-up consultations led to the attached Planning & Code Enforcement Department Strategic Workplan. Following is a list of documents and consultations that supported the creation of the workplan:

1. Town of Bar Harbor Open Space Plan (2014-2020)
2. Town of Bar Harbor Housing Policy Framework (October 1, 2019)
3. Town of Bar Harbor Climate Action Plan (November 2021)
4. Bar Harbor Town Council Priorities (July 19, 2022)
5. An Examination of Bar Harbor Development Process (September 15, 2022)
6. Framework to Improve the Development Process in Bar Harbor (September 23, 2022)
7. Meeting with the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors (September 2, 2022)
8. Meeting with the Planning & Code Enforcement Department staff (October 3 and 17, and December 12, 2022)
9. Town Council meeting on October 3, 2022
10. Planning Board meeting on October 5, 2022
11. Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting on October 12, 2022
12. One-on-one meetings with three downtown business people during the month of October 2022
13. Design Review Board meeting on November 10, 2022
14. Town of Bar Harbor Climate Emergency Task Force meeting on December 12, 2022
15. Town of Bar Harbor Conservation Commission meeting on December 12, 2022
16. The list of possible Land Use Ordinance Amendments that is maintained by the Planning & Code Department

This staff planner position will give us the time to work on projects, above and beyond the daily work, such as the ones listed in the attached Strategic Workplan which include, but are not limited to, much needed Land Use Ordinance amendments and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, it will:

- Build redundancy (which is sorely needed), providing employees the ability to take sick time and vacation time without feeling guilty.
- Reduce over-time. For example, in FY 2022 – there was a total of 469 hours of overtime of which 239 hours (\$10,100) were taken as cash compensation and 265 hours were taken as comp time. This does not include any of the Planning Director's overtime
- Decrease the risk of making mistakes (right now we are always under deadline and feeling rushed, and this can lead to mistakes because adequate time to process project applications is hard to come by at times).
- Provide for better work products such as, but not limited to, staff reports, decisions, warrant articles, outreach material, etc.

Impact if not funded:

- If not funded, we will continue spending much of our time playing Whac-A-Mole with the administrative checklists, processes, emails, and extinguishing fires instead of assiduously being able to take deeper dives into matters that will improve the Land Use Ordinance to a degree that people will notice and to the degree that the issues deserve.