

NUMBER: 2025-01-07

TITLE: ORDER, ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT TASK
FORCE

Filed January 15, 2025
Amended on the floor January 21, 2025

WHEREAS, the Town of Bar Harbor recognizes the importance of tourism to the entire community; and

WHEREAS, thoughtful collaboration and a shared vision are essential to addressing tourism challenges and identifying actionable solutions; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Bar Harbor seeks to balance the economic, cultural, and social benefits of tourism with the need to mitigate potential negative impacts, including environmental degradation, strain on local resources, and quality-of-life concerns for residents; and

WHEREAS, the Town wants to conduct an evaluation of Bar Harbor's tourism management practices and identify actionable solutions to promote sustainable tourism; and

WHEREAS, the Bar Harbor 2035 Comprehensive Plan calls for sustainable tourism management; and

WHEREAS, primary tourism management objectives are equity, sustainability, efficiency, and resilience: ensuring that all are engaged in tourism management in a mutually beneficial way and with a shared vision; and

WHEREAS, convening a task force is an effective way to provide the Town Council with focused, actionable recommendations based on broad stakeholder input;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED that Bar Harbor Town Council hereby establishes a Sustainable Tourism Management Task Force and adopts bylaws as presented below.

Sustainable Tourism Management Task Force

January 21, 2025

Town of Bar Harbor

Section 1. Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Management Task Force

A Sustainable Tourism Management Task Force is hereby established to evaluate tourism management challenges, develop proposed solutions, and provide findings and recommendations to the Town Council for approval.

Section 2. Purpose and Objective

Statement of Fact: Establishes Sustainable Tourism Management Task Force.

The Task Force will work on unifying perspectives to create a clear vision for Bar Harbor's future with tourism. It shall focus on identifying tourism challenges and recommending actionable solutions while ensuring Bar Harbor's tourism activities are equitable, sustainable, efficient, and resilient, as identified in the Bar Harbor 2035 Comprehensive Plan. Upon completing this objective, the Task Force shall present its findings and recommendations in a final report to the Town Council for acceptance.

Section 3. Composition

The Task Force shall consist of no more than 13 Bar Harbor year-round residents appointed by the Town Council. The membership should include a broad representation of the diverse interests that make up Bar Harbor. For example, it could include residents and workers in the following categories: retirees, hoteliers, restaurateurs, retailers, attraction and tour operators, Chamber of Commerce, bankers, realtors, professional and research sector, construction, farmers, fishers, Island Explorer, Climate Emergency Task Force, Comprehensive Planning Committee, Planning Board, as well as other boards and committees. An inclusive and balanced representation of diverse interests will ensure that a wide range of viewpoints, perspectives and background are considered and included in the decision-making process and that all voices are heard.

Furthermore, members shall be selected based on their ability to contribute strategically, collaborate effectively, and commit to the Task Force's purpose and objective. Desirable characteristics include:

- Strategic and forward-thinking mindset
- Effective communication skills
- Collaborative and open approach
- Commitment to equity and sustainability

Section 4. Responsibilities

The Task Force will place a major emphasis on providing meaningful community engagement to involve and actively listen to the community. The community will be engaged through various means such as listening sessions, information meetings, public hearings, focus groups, social media, surveys, and workshops. The community engagement process will be present throughout the duration of the Task Force's work.

Through this community engagement, the Task Force will:

- Act as facilitators and learners, focusing on understanding and exploring innovative tourism management ideas and strategies.
- Serve as a unifying body, fostering constructive dialogue and avoiding divisiveness in both process and outcomes.

Section 5: Guiding Principles

To achieve its purpose and objective, the Task Force shall adhere to the following principles:

- **Collaboration and Inclusivity:** Foster an environment of mutual respect and open dialogue to unite the community.
- **Transparency:** Ensure all actions and decisions are communicated clearly to the community.

- **Adaptability:** Incorporate lessons learned throughout the process, remaining open to course corrections as needed.
- **Pacing for Effectiveness:** Recognize the importance of a thoughtful and deliberate approach to achieve lasting outcomes.
- **Focus on Outcomes:** Maintain a consistent focus on actionable, forward-thinking solutions that benefit the entire community.

Section 6. General Scope of Work and Management

One of the ways for the Task Force to meet its purpose and objective will be to develop a Sustainable Tourism Management Strategy. To assist the Task Force with the development of the strategy, the Town will hire a consultant(s) to work collaboratively with the Task Force to develop the strategy.

Some of the major components of this strategy will be to:

- a) Define Bar Harbor's overall economic vision and define the supporting sustainable tourism management vision.
- b) Define quality of life for residents, quality of experience for visitors, and sustainable tourism management.
- c) Create a situational analysis describing the current tourism conditions to include trends such as carrying capacity, tourism operations, quality of life, and tourism related initiatives.
- d) Identify tourism indicator standards and benchmarks.
- e) Develop a wide range of economic- and community-development actionable solutions and land use strategies to address challenges and meet benchmarks.
- f) Establish a continual monitoring process to ensure that management strategies are alleviating impacts.

This work will be driven by a clear timeline to guide and keep track of progress, balancing thoroughness with timely delivery.

The Planning Director will serve as the primary contact and coordinator between the consultant(s), Task Force, community, and Manager.

Section 7. Authority and Duration

The Task Force is a temporary advisory body with a focused mandate. It shall dissolve upon submission and acceptance of its final report by the Town Council. The Town Council retains final decision-making authority over the recommendations provided by the Task Force.

The Town Manager, or designee, is authorized to take all necessary steps to implement the Council Order establishing the Task Force and to support the work of the Task Force.