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3 **TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH**
4 **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE**
5 **October 18, 2023 – 6:00 PM**
6 **Police Department Community Room**
7 **Draft MEETING MINUTES**

8 **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

9 Chair Lou Valentine
10 Win Winch
11 Mary Pat
12 Sarah Petrin
13 Peter Guidi

14
15 **GUEST:**

16 Steve Trask

17
18 **STAFF PRESENT:**

19 Jeffrey Hinderliter
20 Michael Foster

21
22 **1. Open Meeting**

23 Lou opened the meeting at 6PM

24
25 Planner Hinderliter said they haven't elected officers yet and he will put election of officers on the next agenda.
26 Lou responded they can let that go until next time, lets get going, and find the errors or corrections they should
27 make.

28 Planner Hinderliter continued with the items in the packet. Agenda, and document with structure for meeting.
29 First, is introduction of new members Sarah and Peter. Sarah just appointed last night and Peter was appointed a
30 couple months ago. Mike the associate town planner, and him. Steve Trask who is not a member but is a
31 special guest. He has talked with Jeffrey and is a developer of Little River Road project. During planning for
32 that they discussed interesting ideas for the town and thought this was a good opportunity to talk about overall
33 vision. Win is long term planning board member and was on the committee that hired him. We have Lou who is
34 long term committee member who lives in Ocean Park and Massachusetts. Mary Pat who is a new member with
35 a background in business. Peter a hotel owner. And Sarah our new member who wrote a book and recently
36 came here from Washington DC with a public policy background at our capital. Gene is not here tonight. Also,
37 in the audience tonight, are people who are interested. He is happy for these initial sessions so they can
38 concentrate on their specific work because with folks in the audience they can send you in an entirely different
39 direction.

40
41 **2. Future Land Use Plan: District Exercise**

42 Number two on agenda is future land use plan discussion. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to review the
43 future land use plan overall goals and then each future land use plan district. Including the district location,
44 which is reflected on the map, the purpose for the district, suggested uses, and the vision. With the purpose they
45 are trying to see if it is decent as is or if they need to take another look and reconsider. The future land use goals
46 might be the smaller piece but could be considered the most critical piece. The way this is modeled is there
47 would be a few primary land use goals for Old Orchard Beach for the next ten years. 2035. There are the big
48 picture, overall goals and then each individual district. For each district they have a location on the future land
49 use map, a purpose for each district, which is the overall guide for development in that particular area of town.
50 There is a vision that provides more specific guidance on more specific areas of a district, and then suggested

1 uses, for what could be allowed in that particular district. The documents are the first, the actual worksheet
2 splitting each district and has our questions.
3 The second, the primary document with overall goals, which was filtered down to six that were reasonable to
4 achieve. Then in each district they have the purpose, the vision, and suggested uses. And then the last in the
5 packet is three maps. One is the future land use map. Second is the map showing general area of neighborhoods.
6 And the third, which they haven't seen, that is the actual current zoning map, the district right now, what is
7 adopted.
8

9 For the exercise they will begin with the future land use goals. Two primary questions. The first is do you
10 believe the goals support our land use vision for the town and any changes, additions, or deletions. After that the
11 future land use districts so we will go through them one by one. He tried to put them in some order. We will
12 then ask what do we think of the location of the district, should they change the boundaries. This is all draft and
13 you can question or change what is here. Things have changed, one being the recent state changes around the
14 housing opportunity ordinance and allowing higher density in all district ranging from affordable housing,
15 market rate, to accessory dwelling units. Home occupations could be more popular.

16 To begin with the exercise we will begin with the future land use goals. Think of the 30,000-foot view, the big
17 view. This is what we are seeking to achieve, the overall goals for the next ten years and we decided on six.
18 First we will hear from Steve to hear a different perspective that you may not have heard.
19

20 Steve introduced himself and he has met with Jeffrey and discussed ideas. He likes to think outside the box and
21 solve problems while developing. He explained the location of the Little River Road project on the map. They
22 picked up all five of the parcels to develop on the one side of the street. Across the street is an isolated wetland.
23 While looking in the area he noticed there is a junkyard on the other side in the same area on Ross Road. The
24 junkyard is through the wetland on the other side. If you look there are buses, vehicles, and standing water,
25 which could contaminate the water. He was thinking how do they solve some problems while also maybe
26 creating some more density because they have a housing shortage. The Eastern Trail is further up in the same
27 line. His thought is to try to connect the Eastern Trail to the beach. In connecting to the beach you would go
28 past the junkyard and wetlands. Hopefully add some housing. With the grandfathered use you would likely be
29 able to exchange with another use that isn't typically allowed in that zoning.
30

31 Peter asked if in the junkyard and if he owns it?

32 Steve responded in the junkyard and he doesn't own it. The goal would be to connect the Eastern Trail. When
33 he travels there are usually a lot of walking trails. If you can connect a trail that is more difficult to access
34 directly to a beach where there is a lot of foot traffic you will increase the usage of said trail. Another jump is
35 that in 1908 an asteroid hit in Russia and flattened 834 square miles. As you can see right now we are traveling
36 through the taurid stream area with extra activity like asteroids and meteoroids. His thought, is there a way to
37 incorporate an aerospace type of use in this area? The state of Maine has an initiative to push aerospace because
38 of our location and proximity to reach outer space due to the angle. Is there a better stage for people the watch a
39 space launch? You have seven mile beach. This is in Saco Bay with lots of access. The highway, Pine Point
40 Road connecting to Boradturn Road, Cascade Road that leads to Flag Pond Road. And from the church in Saco
41 to the Scarborough Town line is an economic opportunity zone with tax benefits for developers to invest in that
42 area. He assumes there will be a lot of capitol in the next ten years injected into that area. He sees future
43 development coming their way.

44 His thought is because of the veins leading to the beach and the stage they have there, with islands not used
45 although it would negatively impact them, would those be good launce sites. Bringing in a SpaceX or a NASA,
46 which would bring jobs and other businesses. Just scratching the surface and thinking of the possibilities with
47 what they have. Is this something someone could do or something the town would have no interest in. Earth is
48 violent and there are things they can't control. Could they be cutting edge with bringing something like that
49 there?
50

1 Win mentioned Stratton Island and other islands out there are in Saco. The Old Orchard line used to be the high
2 tide mark but the legislature extended the border two miles out but Saco wanted to keep the islands.
3 Mary Pat added she thinks it is owned by the Audubon, and there is a project to save endangered birds, so you
4 can't even walk out there.

5
6 The committee likes the idea of connecting the Eastern Trail to the beach and developing around trails. Trails
7 can be a hub of activity.

8
9 Planner Foster mentioned it is interesting with thinking about how they are addressing technology in the
10 comprehensive plan and where that has been considered, thinking about science and technology.

11 Lou said so many engineers are leaving the state for work.

12 Steve mentioned with Amtrak they can easily get people there. He thanked the committee.

13 Planner Hinderliter looked at small scale and large-scale impacts. What if there are impacts to one specific area
14 but the bigger function is to save humanity? Lets focus that type of out of the box thinking over here but
15 preserve this area.

16 Sarah mentioned there is limited landmass on the islands.

17 Peter asked about the Little River Road development.

18 Steve provided updates on foundations going in.

19
20 Planner Hinderliter continued with the future land use goals, which are meant to be broad. The comprehensive
21 plan is not an ordinance but it is the foundation. A lot of this is intended to be broad and these goals are
22 probably the broadest. Each district should tie into the overall land use vision. What do you think of the six
23 goals we have here?

24 Peter responded he is a little confused by the use of the word goals and vision. He spent most his time in sales
25 and goals mean you will do two million in sales this year. For the town today you have x number of residential
26 units and in 10 years we want x number of residential. Vision would be how all that would look. For him a goal
27 needs to be specific. Example, 25,000 people living in Old Orchard and in 2033 we would like there to be
28 50,000 people. The vision needs to meet the goal. Whether it is roads, industrial buildings, or locating
29 businesses in town. How much, how big, and be specific.

30 Planner Hinderliter explained the exercise was difficult because of previous steps taken leading up to this.

31 Comp plans typically have goals, policies, and strategies. Comp plans have numerous sections from land use, to
32 natural resources, population, and the economy. For the comp plan use, goals are the overall statement of what
33 you are trying to achieve. Then you have the strategy, which is the approach to how you are going to reach the
34 goal, and then the policies that support the strategies.

35 If you have the first goal, maintain, improve, and invest in utilities and infrastructure. A strategy could be within
36 each district all developments of a certain size will be required to camera utilities and replace as needed. A
37 policy to do that would be to amend ordinance standards to have requirement to ensure developments of a
38 certain size camera lines to confirm utilities are sound.

39 It is confusing. It happens when working on the plan. There could be other ways to do it too. What is the vision
40 for the town? We talked about this because we couldn't find a vision for the town. An important part of this will
41 be to make sure it doesn't sit on a desk they will have an implementation committee. That committee could be
42 responsible for the vision, or they could, which is what he thinks they should do.

43
44 Mary Pat thought they were missing the economic approach. Whether tourism focus or bringing industry in,
45 there should be a point of view.

46 Planner Hinderliter agreed economy is related to land use. Encourage business where appropriate or make sure
47 tourism industry remains intact. Any other thoughts?

48 Sarah mentioned the housing one could be more specific. One thing is for people with older properties to have
49 an incentive program to be able to upgrade. State incentive programs aren't well known.

1 Planner Hinderliter mentioned those with fixed incomes or those who inherit property. We will change that a
2 little bit and add something about the economy. We will also come back to this again.

3 Planner Foster mentioned he was surprised there was nothing with transportation, and maybe that falls under
4 accessibility. Maybe it is a separate item. Multimodal, all transportation. Making sure there a paths connected
5 for people and other opportunities besides cars.

6
7 Sarah added increasing bike lanes is a great goal.

8 Planner Hinderliter asked about bike lanes and if they are used. Does it encourage bicycling?

9 Win saw Portland is number two in the change in the percentage of people using bicycles. Bangor just put in
10 bike lanes. You need a wide street or you kill parking. People visiting bring cars. Better bus service and the
11 trolley helps. In the 40's on a Sunday night that platform was full, it took probably 10 rail car lengths. The
12 platform went from Old Orchard Street to Heath Street. It was cost effective. It is so close to the beach.

13 Lou mentioned accessibility to West Grand Ave could be improved.

14 Peter added that is where his motel is and people coming up from Boston have to walk all the way around to the
15 square.

16 Sarah added improving walking areas and sidewalks. First Street where people are always walking.

17
18 Planner Hinderliter hopes something will be done before the comp plan because they have been working on that
19 for a while.

20 Planer Foster mentioned it is important to reference the beach but in referencing the beach he felt there was no
21 other recreation, but there are lots of other recreation opportunities in Old Orchard. There is preserving the
22 beach while continuing to utilize it. Maybe we should have recreation opportunities including the beach.

23
24 Planner Hinderliter asked about tying recreation to a land use. What if recreation is more walking, pedestrians,
25 bicycling, encouraging more public parks. This is broad and we get into more details goals, with the strategies
26 and policies.

27 Mary Pat liked the idea of having more opportunities for recreation; in the winter they could have a skating rink.

28 Planner Foster responded he was thinking things to do in the winter or things that are more year round.

29 Peter mentioned the work OOB365 did back in 2019 and all the local activities. 2020 happened and short term
30 rentals came. That has had a huge impact. The moratorium might not be the right answer but the problem is
31 real.

32 Steve confirmed if it was because of short term rentals. He has three and they are packed with and everyone eats
33 out.

34 Peter responded he was talking about January, the off-season. If they lost 1,000 residences to short term rental
35 in the greater beach area, how do we create 1,000 new homes so people can move in?

36 The number of licenses for rentals was discussed. Neighborhood experiences were discussed and empty homes
37 in the winter.

38
39 Sarah thought a goal could be create a thriving community for year round residents, or growing the number of
40 year round residents. Also, diversifying the options for recreation while maintain and preserving the ecology.

41 Mary Pat added there is a tension in the year round versus seasonal aspect.

42 Peter added AirBnb opened the technology up giving the individual homeowner access to the international
43 travel market. The days of motel owners attending trade shows in Canada are over. It is online booking. They
44 don't even have a vacancy sign.

45
46 Planner Hinderliter asked Steve if visitors to his properties say there are things they like or they wish the area
47 had more of?

48 Steve responded most people have positive feedback. They like the beach and proximity to Portland. He agrees
49 if there were more options with indoor activities for rainy days it would be good.

50 The group discussed all the work the recreation department does.

1 Steve added the red algae is a thing people complain about.

2 Sarah added they need a nice spa.

3 Peter thinks the planner and planning board should be enabled to get things approved without a long process.

4 They should be open for business.

6 Steve asked about the ballpark?

7 Planner Hinderliter responded there are lots of thoughts on that. This has been referenced but in Wiscasset with
8 the comp plan an issue was a traffic light. He warned the committee not to be specific because if people don't
9 agree with it the plan will be canned. With the ballpark when you get into the conversations it is important to
10 not be too direct. A goal could be encourage exploration of uses to the ballpark that are agreeable to a majority
11 of the town's citizens. If the town should seek redevelopment of the ballpark, what, blank.

12 Planner Foster added the rec department does a lot. The community gardens are down there. The rec department
13 has adult programs. GA office used to be there before moving to PD.

14 Peter mentioned restrictive heights that limit development.

16 Planner Hindeliter said these are all good thoughts that are strategies and policies. Look at the height, and
17 streamline the process.

18 Lou referenced properties with maintenance issues and blight needing to be cleaned up or redeveloped.

19 Sarah added it would be good to expand the goals but limit it to ten and not go too long.

20 Planner Foster mentioned increasing the arts in general and that could be more of a land use.

21 Mary Pat referenced the work Biddeford has done with arts.

22 Sarah mentioned it would be good to have consistent aesthetic character across town.

24 Planner Foster mentioned that to get that consistent look it might be worth discussing form based code. Where
25 you have specific forms and setbacks and layouts. Then the uses are almost secondary. The ordinances I have
26 seen is more of a guide showing what you can do and then uses are what is allowed in the district.

27 Planner Hinderliter responded they have ordinance structure based on old Euclidean type of zoning format. It is
28 more black and white, but when it comes to creativity it does nothing. Something they may look at is a different
29 approach to zoning. Maybe form based codes or floor area ratios to get higher heights. They will list all goals
30 and revisit to narrow the list. These conversations are critical.

31 Peter recommended the group use Google Docs to communicate together.

32 Planner Hinderliter responded the difficulty is with being a formal committee. With tland use there could be a
33 FOAA request where it now involves your computer. This was on reason why he though day meetings might be
34 helpful.

36 Planner Hinderliter continued with review of future land use map. This will eventually look like the zoning map
37 that will be used by us to look at the recommended areas of town. The future land use map (FLUP) is similar to
38 a zoning map and some areas haven't changed, like General Business 1, but up by Town Hall and Landry's this
39 would be the Portland Ave district. What used to be all rural, one district is more residential and then larger
40 undeveloped area is rural. The Homewood Park area was expanded to include new developments that were once
41 rural. The PMUD has changed to more of a planned residential use development. New zoning districts like
42 municipal district and Ocean Park district. Downtown districts are changed and expanded in some cases. East
43 Grand Ave district, another new one. The two most parts of a zoning ordinance are what is the purpose the
44 district is seeking to achieve and what are the uses in that district.

45 The third are space and bulk requirements for height, setback, impervious coverage, and density for number of
46 units per acre. For this they wanted to concentrate on the overall purpose for the district, the suggested uses for
47 the district, and the vision. His original focus was on zoning district but then there are areas within the district,
48 more neighborhoods. GB-1 for example, an important area is the halfway intersection. For vision he was
49 focusing on neighborhoods, more specific areas, as opposed to the whole district.

50 The committee discussed map colors and that they should be improved.

1 Mary Pat asked if the roads on the map are all in existence today.

2 Planner Hinderliter responded in most cases yes, but Homewood Park off Cascade Road has a portion of about
3 100 lots [with roads] that only exist on paper. These aren't physical roads with infrastructure. In some cases the
4 roads don't exist, like areas of Ocean Park, there are paper streets that will never be built because of a wetland
5 or something like that.

6 Win mentioned Homewood Park dates to the New York Worlds Fair in 1965. That is where it was marketed.
7 This was before zoning and someone took a ruler and it is a bunch of small lots. There has been a lot of recent
8 building.

9 Planner Hinderliter added it is a complicated area for our purposes and one reason there is grandfathering aspect
10 out there is it was designed and approved before laws were enacted that control this type of development. One
11 thing that changed is lot size no longer meets minimal lot area requirements. In 2001 the Town required
12 contiguous nonconforming lots to be combined so the owner made all kinds of business entities and attached
13 them to all the lots so they weren't under contiguous ownership.

14 Peter mentioned that some communities have eliminated lot size requirements all together.
15

16 Planner Hinderliter continued with the R-1 district, and this is one area that they may not go down into too
17 often. This is out by Ross Road and part of the Ross Road corridor. This is dangerous for pedestrians and bikes.
18 This is also a shortcut to go from the highway to Baileys Campground in Scarborough. This is primary
19 residential with recent subdivisions. It is currently rural but it has transformed to more of a residential district.
20 Rural has larger lot sizes and agricultural uses. The district purpose establishes it with principal use of land for
21 low density, single and two family residences, and limited compatible nonresidential uses that contribute to a
22 wholesome residential neighborhood environment.

23 Mary Pat has questions about route one development and if only residential is something missed in that, or if
24 there could be a commercial aspect along the corridor and they could be in it.

25 Planner Hinderliter responded they may want to change the purpose to allow for commercial along Cascade.

26 Mary Pat clarified she was talking more on the other side by route one.
27

28 Peter has questions about density. What does low density mean, and it might be different for each person? Low
29 density today is not going to be low density in ten years. Density will increase because of the demand on
30 properties, population growth, and need to increase tax base. Services are not getting cheaper. To pay for it
31 taxes need to go up or we need more people.

32 Planner Hinderliter responded that the best way to pay for that is nonresidential, commercial development.

33 Peter doesn't know what low density means. If they have 75,000 square feet of land that is big enough to have a
34 farm on. Low density to him is 1/3 acre.
35

36 Planner Foster mentioned he had something about why not allow for multifamily?

37 Planner Hinderliter responded what if they have areas they want to remain low density where you have larger
38 lot development and that more traditional country feel

39 Peter responded he sees it as a form of redlining or snob zoning. It says we want to make sure middle-income
40 people cant live hear. We are going to create zoning that drives the cost of development so high only rich
41 people can buy something. We talk about affordable housing, he isn't talking about affordable housing from
42 certain governmental prospective, he is talking about where developers can come in and build houses that are
43 competitive to other houses in other communities and compete for that business. To be specific to the document
44 he doesn't know what low density means.

45 Planner Hinderliter responded low density is more of a larger lot size requirement where you wouldn't have
46 multifamily dwellings, similar to what is out there now.

47 Planner Foster added that he thought about this a lot. He was thinking it is rural now so going to R-1 is higher
48 density than rural. He had to ask is any part of Old Orchard really rural?

49 Win added that there are big developments being built out on Ross Road. There isn't much land.

50 Planner Hinderliter responded they will review that purpose some more.

1 Mary Pat asked about the suggested use list.

2 Planner Hinderliter said the suggested uses on the last pages can be changed. For each they need a definition.
3 For the ones listed it is just what is in parenthesis. Or it would say except for. We can conclude at R-1 for
4 tonight.

5
6 Peter asked if he should type his thoughts up and send them.

7 Planner Hinderliter was looking for discussion points to hash out together. They can write their thoughts at
8 home and come in with them.

9 Mary Pat asked if there was any place for large-scale industry on the map. They talked about it but is there
10 anywhere for it?

11 Planner Hinderliter pointed out the Industrial area on the map.

12 Mary Pat added with thinking about the economic purpose, realistically they are limited.

13 Lou said years back they wanted to get to Ross Road from that area.

14 Planner Hinderliter added they now have the large solar farm on the other side. You might want to change this
15 if you say we are talking about technology and all these things but the whole area is zoned is residential. Look
16 at the aerial map with the amount of trees removed for solar.

17 Planner Foster added preserving trees. More and more trees are gone and they are important for many reasons
18 from stormwater, to shade, to habitat.

19 Steve mentioned TDRs, transfer of development rights, referenced in last comprehensive plan. That would be
20 one way to keep some land relatively untouched, but bigger density along areas of public investment with
21 public water and public sewer. You buy two parcels and you can trade for higher density.

22 Win referenced all the large campgrounds.

23 Mary Pat mentioned the Eastern Trail.

24
25 Planner Hinderliter continued with what they will do at the next meeting. They will look at some revised overall
26 goals. They will continue to work form the list. This can all change before we are done.

27 Peter asked if there is a protocol they have to go through to communicate with each other? They can't email
28 each other? It can only be in this forum.

29 Planner Hinderliter said they shouldn't communicate outside. Look at Lewiston where it was council, but we are
30 appointed to the committee. We need to uphold the public meeting. Two of you could get together but no more.
31 Sarah said it would be helpful to familiarize with the town areas and uses.

32 Planner Hinderliter thanked Steve for coming and thanked the new members. For the next meeting he is
33 available the 27th through the 30th. That is an open week if Wednesday the 29th works, 29th of November.

34 Planner Hinderliter thanked everyone.

35
36 3. Good & Welfare

37
38 **4. Adjourn**

39 The meeting ended at 6:57PM