



City of Auburn, Maine

Planning & Permitting Department

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PLANNING BOARD Draft Minutes
April 9th 2024 – 6:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 60 Court Street

- 1. ROLL CALL:** Paul Jacques, Stacey LeBlanc, Dave Trask, Bob Hayes, Tim DeRoche, Darren Finnegan. Stacey LeBlanc Elevates Bob Hayes to a full member. Riley Bergeron arrived after roll call, but attended and participated in the meeting.
- 2. MINUTES:** Review March 12th, 2024, meeting minutes. All meetings are available live and after airing on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/c/CityofAuburnMaine>. Motion to Approve the Draft Minutes: Paul Jacques; Second: Dave Trask; Vote: 7-0-0; Motion Carries
- 3. PLANNING BOARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:** Review and adopt amended policies and procedures.

Stacey LeBlanc requests step-by-step text changes/versions in the Policies and Procedures text as well as whether the policies are in-line or more stringent than state laws.

Eric Cousens offers to go through the policies item by item to determine whether it's legally required or recommended as best practice.

Dave Trask asks for clarification on the text of the Opening Remarks regarding a second vote on items. Staff explains that the purpose of a second vote is to provide clarification on the individual findings and where the board stands on each finding and provides a safeguard to support the votes of the board.

Dave Trask asks for four updates/points of clarification: adding the word "full" to the opening remarks regarding the fact that "full members" must cast a vote rather than "associate members"; gaining insight into the recommendation that the planning board takes 2 votes on items – the first to vote on the item as a whole and the second to vote on each finding to provide more clarity in the voting process; to provide clarity on when an agenda item can be revisited and who can bring that back up for discussion; and lastly clarification on the procedural documents that were provided to Bob Hayes as part of his new Planning Board member binder which talks about Roberts Rules of Motions chart and Rules of Order in order to attach these to the Procedures document.

Riley Bergeron makes a motion to approve the updated Planning Board policies and procedures; Second: Paul Jacques.

Bob Hays makes a motion to amend the original motion to include 2 documents as supplemental reference documents to the Policies and Procedures (Rules of Order and Robert's Rules Motions chart); Second: Tim DeRoche; Vote: 4-0-3; Amendment Motion Carries.

Stacey LeBlanc makes a motion to amend the original motion to ask for staff or legal counsel to provide in writing which policies in the document are in-line with state law and which policies are above-and-beyond what is required by law as well as updates mentioned by Dave Trask during the discussion period; Second: Tim DeRoche; Board discusses. Vote: 0-7-0; Motion Does Not Carry

Dave Trask makes a motion for an amendment to include the incorporation of the word "full" to clarify full member rather than associate member voting responsibilities. Also requests that the policies relating to two-votes for each agenda item and the ability to bring a topic back to discussion at a future meeting from the Opening Remarks, be included and clarified in the Policies and Procedures document. Vote: 7-0-0; Motion Carries.

Vote on original motion with the approved two amendments: 6-0-1; Motion Carries

0:44:01

4. **PUBLIC HEARING/ TEXT AMENDMENT:** City Council initiated text amendment to Chapter 60 Article IV, Division 12 General Business District by including "manufacture, compounding and assembling of articles using Maine derived forest products, agricultural products, or other natural resource inputs" as a Special Exception use with a condition that the site must be located within the Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District.

Staff Report presented by Eric Cousens. The City of Auburn is considering applying a Tech Hub overlay near the Airport and Turnpike areas which are currently zoned as Industrial and General Business. Jay Brenchick, Economic Development Director, explained that this Tech Hub would allow for Bio-Forest and Plant-based fiber manufacturing industries to be established within this area. University of Maine offers programs and funding for these technologies and establishing this Tech Hub overlay would provide Auburn the opportunity to attract some of these industries to the area and set our community apart from others in the state and country. There is also a desire and push for commerce center-style campuses which may include more comprehensive resources like a restaurant or dining hall as well as child-care facilities and this overlay would allow for those type of campuses to be developed within the overlay district.

Planning board members questioned whether this overlay would present any downfalls or limitations for the area if the industries do not come to Auburn and staff clarified that the overlay is the best option so that we do not need to consider a more comprehensive zone change but provides more consistency and flexibility in the area. It was also pointed out that if an

industry wants to develop in this overlay, it may require special exception review and require a Planning Board public hearing.

Motion to Open Public Comment: Dave Trask; Second by Tim DeRoche. Vote: 7-0-0 Motion Carries

Public Comment:

Pam Russeau – 745 West Auburn rd – Was curious to know what sort of pollutants or by-products are created when manufacturing these bio-products.

Scott Riccio – 2760 Hotel rd – Voiced concerns about traffic patterns and issues around Kittyhawk and Hotel Rd intersection. He is in support of this overlay but urged the Planning Board to consider traffic as part of any proposed development.

Pete Creaser – 75 Charter Way – Voiced concern over attracting a large factory/manufacturing plant to be built right next to his home and concerns over pollutants that are released as part of the manufacturing process. Concerned about his property value as a result if something large is built next to his home and neighborhood.

Motion to Close Public Comment: Dave Trask, Second; Tim DeRoche, Vote: 7-0-0 Motion Carries

Planning Board discussed the questions and concerns raised by the public and mentioned that any plan submitted to the city within the GB zone or above 10,000 sq ft would require special exception which would involve public notice and Planning Board review. In that process, pollution and traffic would be examined closely and considered for each individual application, so there are no details at this time as to what those impacts may be.

Dave Trask makes a motion to recommend that the City Council amend Chapter 60 Article IV, Division 12 General Business District by including “manufacture, compounding and assembling of articles using Maine derived forest products, agricultural products, or other natural resource inputs” as a Special Exception use with a condition that the site must be located within the Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District; Second: Tim DeRoche; Vote: 7-0-0; Motion Carries

1:17:30

- 5. PUBLIC HEARING/ MAP AMENDMENT:** City Council initiated zoning map amendment to create the Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District.

This zoning map overlay is generally located near Lewiston Junction Road, Kittyhawk Ave, and the southerly half of Washington Street.

Staff Report presented by Eric Cousens.

Motion to Open Public Comment: Tim DeRoche; Second: Dave Trask; Vote: 7-0-0; Motion Carries

Public Comment:

Scott Riccio – 2760 Hotel Rd – voiced concerns over traffic, noise, impacts for any development in the area.

Pete Creaser – 75 Charter Way – voiced concerns over detrimental effects of building these manufacturing plants near residences.

Pam Rousseau – 745 West Auburn Rd – Asks for the City to push off the decision in order to consider all of the impacts on Auburn residents and taxpayers.

Motion to Close Public Comment: Tim DeRoche; Second: Dave Trask; Vote: 7-0-0 Motion Carries.

Tim DeRoche makes a motion to recommend that the City Council amend the Official Zoning Map of the City of Auburn to create the Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District. This zoning map overlay is generally located near Lewiston Junction Road, Kittyhawk Ave, and the southerly half of Washington Street; Second: Bob Hayes; Vote: 7-0-0; Motion Carries

6. WORKSHOP: Review and give feedback on Lake Auburn Watershed Stakeholders Group recommendations in response to Order 04-01022024

Staff updates the Planning Board on the progress of the Lake Auburn Watershed Stakeholders Group and the recommendations that they are putting in place related to property uses and septic systems within the watershed overlay district. Paul Jacques voiced concerns that these recommendations place a lot of restrictions on residential property owners whose impact on the water quality of Lake Auburn is minimal compared to some of the larger commercial properties in the watershed and has concerns that this will negatively affect property values.

In regard to septic system maintenance, the city and LAWPC would put a heavy emphasis on education and outreach for property owners and hold property owners responsible for turning in property septic inspection documentation. These policies would affect about 325 properties. The city is exploring sources of funding that could assist with the financial burden for property owners if a system is deemed as failing.

The board also asks about the restrictions to allowing ADUs within the watershed district. Staff says it is prohibited because ADUs creates more run off and more water usage in the watershed.

7. **WORKSHOP:** Brief on the City's accomplishments and progress related to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan (Update in 2021).

Katherine Cook provides an update on accomplishments of the city related to the Comprehensive Plan. Highlights watershed protections. Auburn is working to expand the network of recreational trails along the Little Androscoggin River.

Auburn has not yet focused on site and preservation of historic properties. There is a need for education surrounding historic sites and resources as well as creating a list of site standards for historic sites.

Housing and community development has seen many updates with Form Based code and Accessory dwelling unit policies.

Planning Board staff asks – in the interest of time - for the opportunity to review the presentation outside of the meeting rather than go through the whole presentation at the meeting and asks for time to review presentation and discuss at the next meeting.

8. **WORKSHOP:** LD 2003 Ad Hoc Committee Update

Stacey, Riley and staff have been working on this topic to try and draft something for the whole board to review. Where Auburn does not currently fall in line with LD 2003 is that 4-units must be allowable in single-family and two-family zoning districts.

There needs to be differentiation between in-town versus lower density rural residential zoning areas. The ad-hoc committee is discussing how much additional space would be required for a 3rd or 4th unit in suburban and rural residential areas and making that ½ of the required amount as for the area requirements for adding a second unit. This option presented is a middle-of-the-road approach to allow some flexibility. Areas where we would want to see more protection would be in the watershed zoning areas and the ad-hoc committee recommends going with the most restrictive lot size requirements that LD 2003 will allow in those areas.

The adhoc-committee also wants the board to consider whether they want to allow staff-level review for subdivisions of 3-4 dwelling units inside the growth zone or whether it should go to site plan review.

Planning board asked staff their opinion on this question. Staff explained that they are capable of performing the plan review for these types of requests and in the time it would normally take for the staff to prepare the topic for Planning Board review, they could use that time to conduct the review and that would allow planning board to focus their efforts elsewhere. Planning Board expressed interest in having these items come back to Planning Board for review.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT: No Public Comments

10. MISCELLANEOUS:

a. Upcoming Agenda Items

Riley Bergeron requests that the Planning Board holds a workshop to discuss Opening Remarks and edits at the next meeting as well as clarification around which policies are recommended by legal counsel or required by law. Stacey Leblanc adds the request to outline which other municipalities read through opening remarks at the start of each meeting.

Katherine Cook mentions a workshop on the Lake Auburn watershed topic which will likely come back to Planning Board in the upcoming months.

Eric mentions that there is an application for 80 Lake Street (Academy Street Apartments) which will come before the board at the next meeting.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Dave Trask makes a motion to adjourn; Second, Tim DeRoche; Vote: 7-0. Meeting Adjourned.

1:34:00

Auburn Planning Board meetings can be viewed live on the City of Auburn YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/CityofAuburnMaine>), and on Great Falls Television (Spectrum Cable Channel 11).

Following live broadcasts, Planning Board meetings are *rebroadcast* at 7:00AM, noon, and 7:00PM on Tuesdays on GFTV and are available anytime on our YouTube channel.