

Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC)
Jan. 5, 2017
Minutes

In attendance: Chairman Sandy Guay, Don Girouard, Rick Milliard, Peg Poulin, Alyssa Bouthot, Nathan Johnston, Dave Precourt, Tim Leary, Bette Brunswick. Also Bill Mann, Kathy Connor, Lee Jay Feldman, Fire Chief John Duross, Bob Hamblen.

1. Announcements

There is a Jan. 31 joint meeting of the Saco and Biddeford City Councils, and Planning Boards, from 6-8 p.m. at the People's Choice Credit Union, 23 Industrial Park Road, Saco. Members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee are cordially invited.

Economic Development Director, William Mann distributed copies of an amended 'Downtown Development District' map, expanded to include the neighborhood along Ocean Park Road, from Main Street to Cumberland Avenue. This had been suggested at the City of Saco's Economic Development Commission (EDC) meeting on January 4, 2017.

Motion by: Don Girouard, Second: Bette Brunswick Vote: Unanimous

That the Downtown Focus Area map be amended in order to include the Ocean Park Road neighborhood, described in more detail as follows

- 1.) Continuing north-easterly along the westerly side of Cumberland Avenue from Mable Avenue northerly to Ocean Park Road and including the land on the northerly side of said Ocean Park Road, but not including the land of the Maine Turnpike Authority, and
- 2.) Then proceeding westerly on the north side of Ocean Park Road to Main Street, and
- 3.) Then proceeding southerly along Main Street westerly.

1.a – Minutes of Dec. 15, 2016 meeting. Sandy – how shall we handle minutes? Bob – a vote to accept, as done by Planning Board and Council? An item to accept minutes of future meetings will be added to the agenda.

Don: if no Aging Friendly meeting with the CPC on the 19th, should we arrange for another time? Mayor Michaud: what they're up to is not really at the Comp Plan level. The goals are how to enable seniors to stay in Saco, transportation issues, health care issues. There should be an interface on common items, such as transportation and housing, and others.

2. Land Use presentation

- a. Discussion on draft section – Lee Jay Feldman, Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission, presented a PowerPoint on zoning issues in the downtown focus area. Eleven existing zones, plus 15 contract zones, are in the focus

area. The existing comp plan (CP) is still relevant in the downtown area, but, there is a perception that there may be too many zones downtown. Auburn has adopted a Form Based Codes (FBC) approach to its downtown. An FBC approach could allow as few as four zones, or transects, as referred to in FBC—speak. Form based codes regulate development “...by focusing on the scale, design, and placement of buildings, paying particular attention to their relationships with the street (or other public spaces). Communities that implement form-based zoning codes tend to believe that both the look and arrangement of buildings more strongly define a community’s character than do the actual uses that take place within these buildings.” Examples of FBC are distinguished by the use of graphics, and are not as use-heavy, or use-driven as Saco’s existing Euclidean zoning model. Nor does FBC get down to the detail of design guidelines.

Auburn’s FBC includes uses, but other FBC do not. Walkability of neighborhoods is promoted as desirable, as is density. If 100 units could be built in a given project, why limit to 25?

Don: cites the CIA café example, in South Portland. Such a use could be established, but the building doesn’t have to change. A health and fitness gym is proposed off Cascade Road, currently under review by the planning board. The proposed building is single level with a flat roof. Under a FBC, such a building doesn’t visually fit. Lee Jay: my intent is just an introduction to FBC. Saco could start in one area and see how it goes.

Peg: how does FBC work with historic preservation?

Lee Jay: it’s all in the language.

Bill: how did FBC adoption go in Auburn?

Lee Jay: they’ve widened the uses allowed, which must meet performance criteria.

Other communities that have adopted FBC include Dover, N.H., York and Yarmouth, Maine. They’re finding that is allows developers to know what to expect.

Rick: does this simplify the process?

Lee Jay: it can. Have there been disasters? Not that we’ve heard of.

Don: Saco Island and Downtown should be considered as one.

Lee Jay displayed a paper map with suggested transects in the downtown focus area, which would reduce the number of zones in that area from eleven to four. He has included the Saco Valley Shopping Center. He cited the Mill Creek neighborhood of South Portland, with its higher density and mixed uses, as an example both desirable and possible to emulate for the shopping center. Such a recommendation would be included in the Goals, Policies and Strategies section of the CP, or, could be included as an appendix.

Don: do you have suggestions beyond the focus area to lessen the number of zones?

Lee Jay will take a look.

Don: a recent contract zone amendment has prompted discussion of Thornton Academy ‘creep’, as the campus expands via the acquisition of new properties.

Bill: should TA have its own transect?

Is “Dormitory” a defined term in the Ordinance?

Kathy: South Berwick is considering a zone for Berwick Academy.
Don and Sandy each cited potential edits to the draft chapter “Appendix L: Land Use,” to which Bob replied that revisions are continuing. The updated draft will be circulated in near future.

3. **Next Meeting:** Saco Main Street had a 4:30 meeting scheduled for Jan. 19, which was to move the CPC meeting to a 6:15 start time. That meeting has been rescheduled the meeting on the 19th will begin at 5:00 p.m. and go until 7:00 p.m. Topic: housing.
4. **Adjourned** at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Next meeting: Jan. 19, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.