



TOWN OF WELLS, MAINE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 17, 2022, 6:00 P.M.
Town Hall
208 Sanford Road

6:00 PM CALL TO ORDER & DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. on Thursday, March 17, 2022, from the Littlefield Room at Town Hall.

Those present were Committee Members Chris Chase, Carol DesJardins, Hunter Edwards, Tim Gowen, Linda Grenfell, Jon Moody, Martin Morse, Chris Pugsley, James Smith and Jason Vennard. Also in attendance were Larissa Crockett, Town Manager; Mike Livingston, Town Engineer; and John McLeod, Selectman Liaison.

Steve Whitman and Rich Breerton were present representing Resilience Planning and Design.

MINUTES

February 17, 2022 – Review and consider for approval.

MOTION

Motion made by Martin Morse to approve the February 17, 2022, minutes, seconded by Jason Vennard. Motion accepted.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Beth Widmayer spoke on behalf of the Energy Advisory Committee. Their goal is to develop a sustainable energy practice in the Town of Wells and promote renewable energy. She addressed solar energy and better technology for energy storage. Reducing carbon emissions will save the town money, noting the LED streetlights have been cost reducing for the town. Her committee recommends establishing a Sustainability Committee, which the town does not presently have, and she advocated for the inclusion of this Sustainability Committee in the Plan. This would ensure that the town can use state and federal funds that are available. The Plan presently doesn't include energy sustainability. Energy efficiency comes into play largely in transportation so there is a need for policies that encourage electric vehicles, mass transit, etc. Public education is very important, and buildings will need to be retrofitted if compliance is not put in place at the time of construction. They ask for leadership to be provided to residents to encourage these changes.

1 Chris Chase asked about the disposing of these solar systems and batteries. Beth Widmayer
2 answered they must tackle carbon in the air first. People are working on recycling the
3 components now.

4
5 Chris Pugsley added with end of life management for batteries, it looks like there's a
6 management plan. Beth Widmayer responded it is up to society to establish rules on disposing.
7 Solar panels are good for 25 years, and there are ways to break them down into components for
8 reuse. Not all have batteries, and energy can be stored and used at future times. Recycling the
9 lithium batteries is a problem currently.

10
11 Tim Gowen asked if there has been much correction in the carbon emissions, with cars being
12 more efficient in reducing carbon in the air. Beth Widmayer stated that the CMP grid in years to
13 come will be 100% renewable. Wind, solar, hydro, and nuclear are all carbon-free, and that is
14 the direction we are headed. All towns need to do their part, driving an electric vehicle now is
15 reducing the emissions, and it will come down as time goes on. The batteries in the future will
16 be reusable to supply power to our homes.

17
18 Linda Grenfell noted the Laudholm Reserve is the first in the state that is 100% carbon free, and
19 Jim Smith added that solar panels will protect asphalt shingles. They significantly extend the life
20 of the shingles.

21 22 **CPUC BUSINESS**

23 24 • Update on the Planning Process, Remaining Tasks, and Timeline

25
26 Steve Whitman told the Committee that we are on time for a May delivery to the State, but it will
27 be close. Next month they will be working with department heads for Part Four. Mike
28 Livingston has flagged the old Part Four, and a lot of things have been done. Martin Morse feels
29 it is unrealistic in getting this done.

30 31 • Update on Focus Groups

32
33 Updated versions of the outreach forums have been distributed, and a summary is on Page 28.

34 35 • Feedback on Drafts, and Discussion of Edits/Additions.

36 37 ○ Part 2:

38 39 ■ Chapter 6 Land Use

40 41 ♦ *Future Land Use Plan Discussion*

42
43 Rich Brereton presented the Land Use Map, which puts all the ideas together which Chapter Six
44 is addressing, such as protected critical rural areas, designated growth areas, etc. There is a
45 definition of the categories in the Table on Page Five of Chapter Six.

46
47 Non-growth and growth areas are the big categories. There have been no changes to any of these
48 on the map, but there are questions on moving areas from one category to another or removing

1 categories altogether. Existing growth areas and transitional growth areas are those that should
2 be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan vision of growth, and where there needs to be a
3 change in policy or ordinance. Jason Vennard described the definition of a transitional area.

4
5 Martin Morse asked how much area is left in existing transitional areas. It is unrealistic to think
6 no growth west of 95 will take place. There should be one or two transitional areas west of the
7 turnpike. Are the transitional areas adequate for growth in the anticipated next ten years? On
8 T5, the large solar farm, Martin questions how much land is left, as well as the sand and gravel
9 areas how much land is left. In addition, he wants to see a specific area for a town center, not
10 just an arrow to a spot as shown on the map. The Committee needs to define where that will be.

11
12 Rich Brereton told the Committee that they could draw intended boundaries of an area for a
13 future downtown area. To answer Martin's questions, they can take transitional areas on the map
14 and find out how much is developed and how much remains, or they could use the GIS approach
15 from 2005 files and go parcel by parcel that outlines T1-T6.

16
17 Linda Grenfell expressed her vision of the downtown area. The consensus is to centralize the
18 development where it is already happening. The community has said it wants to keep the
19 semblance of what a New England Wells should look like. We can do things with blending and
20 mixing resources. She described how much better Routes One and 109 could look. She noted
21 the traffic problem. She asked if most people are on private wells and how to protect the water
22 supply in the town. We should look at consolidating new building and development, and
23 calming traffic. She would like to see a greenway from the Eastern Trail to Mile Road accessing
24 the beach area.

25
26 Chris Chase noted the effect that would have on the tax bill, and Tim Gowen added we have to
27 be realistic. The town would be spending millions of dollars on these ideas. Chris Pugsley
28 suggested focusing resources on building a town center away from Route One.

29
30 Chris Chase doesn't think we should use our resources for a downtown development, but rather
31 encourage development by a developer, addressing the zoning to accommodate a developer who
32 might want to come in. Jason Vennard doesn't agree with that being the right way to move
33 forward.

34
35 Larissa Crockett described how Scarborough put in their plan their zoning goals for a
36 development area, implemented them, and then a developer bought the land and developed it
37 starting with light industrial and then continued with apartments, duplexes, and small houses. It
38 is a TIF district for the project, and there is a credit enhancement agreement. Developers had to
39 promise in five years they would work with the town to form a Downtown Committee and invest
40 in creating a downtown with a town greenway and trails connecting to the schools. This project
41 encompasses 500 acres.

42
43 Larissa Crockett presented the idea of submitting to the voters in the Plan the suggestion of a
44 goal of having a downtown area, identifying areas that might make sense, putting zoning goals in
45 the Plan, and then send it to the Implementation Committee to make zoning changes. Then
46 developers will see the possibility of development.

1 Tim Gowen added that zoning would have to be changed for housing and businesses for a town
2 center to spread the growth. We should put something in the Plan for the Implementation
3 Committee to work with.

4
5 Martin Morse stated he will not compromise and will never vote for a tax TIF, because the local
6 people get left out. He feels a downtown center isn't feasible. There are no necessities in Wells,
7 as the trend is big box stores and online. Overhead is consuming small Mom and Pop
8 businesses, and it is difficult for people to make a long-term living.

9
10 Linda Grenfell feels part of the vision for a downtown may not meet commercial needs, but
11 community building is very important. People need relationships and support, and we need to
12 take seriously changes happening because of the climate crisis we are in.

13
14 Chris Chase proposed boundaries for a town center to include the library, post office, town hall
15 and the school on Route One, and then on 109 to the other school and to the railroad bridge. And
16 maybe Chapel Road. It needs to be incorporated with the historical buildings there.

17
18 **MOTION**

19 Motion made by Hunter Edwards allowing the described boundaries for a downtown area
20 designation. Chris Pugsley seconded. Motion accepted. Martin Morse and Tim Gowen
21 opposed. Jason Vennard abstained.

22
23 Jason Vennard is more comfortable saying encouraging a group to establish a downtown area.

24
25 Martin Morse asked that when using "central area" and "downtown area" the wording should
26 have consistency throughout.

27
28 Rich Brereton told the Committee that greenways were suggested to be put on the maps, such as
29 the Eastern Trail. He asked if the Committee wants to see that included on the map with a
30 current or proposed status. The Committee wants them designated as "proposed".

31
32 Rich Brereton continued with the Hall property being identified as a critical natural area. It is
33 already in conservation agreement and is continuous with other designated critical rural areas.
34 Conserved lands since the 2005 files are not on this map. This is because they use this map to
35 see what changes need to be made. Both Jon Moody and Jason Vennard expressed it is
36 important to see what changes have occurred in the different areas since the 2005 plan. Martin
37 Morse believes there should be a map that is as up-to-date as possible. Jason Vennard questions
38 how we look at exactly what has changed from Point A to Point B and recommended including
39 all property purchased since 2005.

40
41 **MOTION**

42 Motion made by Jason Vennard to include on maps all conserved, private and public land, open
43 space and developed subdivisions. Seconded by Hunter Edwards.

44
45 **MOTION**

46 Jason Vennard amended the original motion to identify all town-held or other fully conserved
47 land as CR7, and open space land and existing developments as CR8. Seconded by Hunter
48 Edwards. Motion accepted as amended.

1 Jason Vennard wants to know what's left to be developed. A discussion on T4 ensued. Mike
2 Livingston explained the golf course is still approved and housing has changed from 85 units to
3 174 units. Open space of about 66% will be conserved.

4
5 **MOTION**

6 Motion made by Hunter Edwards to remove T4 and change to G1. Seconded by Martin Morse.

7
8 **MOTION**

9 Hunter Edwards made a motion to amend the original motion to change T4 to G1, previously
10 developed. Martin Morse seconded. Motion approved as amended.

11
12 Martin Morse again recommends there be at least one more transition area west of the turnpike.
13 It would still be with 2.5 acre lots and still could be clustered, but we need to have something
14 west of the turnpike for growth. To think there will not be any growth west of the turnpike is not
15 realistic.

16
17 A discussion on transitional areas ensued. Specifically, T5 and T6. Rich Brereton said there are
18 no changes to T1,2, and 3 because they are not in areas identified as developable west of the
19 turnpike. A transitional zone encourages development. T5 doesn't have a lot of property for
20 development. To comply with State regulations, we need to have T5 and T6.

21
22 Rich Brereton continued with coastal flood hazard areas. Most are in neighborhoods defined as
23 developed growth areas. Where there is an increased flood risk, new development is
24 discouraged. Martin Morse added there is not a lot of area left to build new homes,
25 and he doesn't want to limit building so that it might discourage the buying of houses, tearing
26 them down, and rebuilding to be compliant with flood regulations. Jon Moody also added it is
27 important to the town because the number of buildings that are flood compliant affects the town
28 tax rate and insurance rates.

29
30 **MOTION**

31 Motion made by Jason Vennard to not make any changes with coastal areas. Seconded by
32 Martin Morse.

33
34 **MOTION**

35 With not enough new ground to be broken for more to be done, motion amended by Jason
36 Vennard to not make any changes with coastal areas since existing development is increasing
37 flood resiliency of the properties. Martin Morse seconded. Motion accepted as amended.

38
39 There was a discussion on getting through the remaining chapters on time.

40
41 **MOTION**

42 Jason Vennard made a motion to add a meeting to the agenda for March 31, 2022, from 5:00
43 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Linda Grenfell seconded. Motion accepted.

- 44
45
 - Chapter 7 Town Character and Appearance
 - Chapter 8 Transportation and Circulation
 - Chapter 9 Economic Development
 - Chapter 10 Housing

- 1 ■ Chapter 11 Public Facilities
- 2 ■ Chapter 12 Open Space
- 3 ■ Chapter 13 Public Utilities
- 4 ■ Chapter 14 Fiscal Capacity
- 5 ■ Chapter 15 Flood Hazard Mitigation
- 6 ■ Chapter 16 Planning and Management
- 7 ■ Chapter 17 Regional Coordination

8
9 Not discussed.

- 10
- 11 • Feedback received from other Board and Committees
- 12 ○ Energy Committee Matrices Received

13
14 Not discussed.

- 15
- 16 • Next Month
- 17 ○ Part 3, Implementation Program
- 18 ○ Part 4, Capital Investment Strategy

19
20 To be discussed next month.

21
22 **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

23
24 None.

25
26 **OTHER BUSINESS**

27
28 None.

29
30 **ADJOURN**

31
32 **MOTION**

33 Jon Moody motioned to adjourn. Motion seconded by Hunter Edwards. Motion accepted.

34
35 Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

36
37 MINUTES APPROVED _____, 2022

38
39
40 ACCEPTED BY:

41
42
43 _____
44 Carol DesJardins, Recording Secretary

Chris Chase, Chairman