



TOWN OF WELLS, MAINE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 31, 2022, 5:00 P.M.
Town Hall
208 Sanford Road

5:00 PM CALL TO ORDER & DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 31, 2022, from the Littlefield Room at Town Hall.

Those present were Committee Members Chris Chase, Carol DesJardins, Tim Gowen, Linda Grenfell, Jon Moody (arrived at 5:55 p.m.), Martin Morse, Chris Pugsley, James Smith and Jason Vennard. Also in attendance were Larissa Crockett, Town Manager; Mike Livingston, Town Engineer; Jodine Adams, Code Enforcement Officer; and John McLeod, Selectman Liaison.

Steve Whitman was present representing Resilience Planning and Design.

MINUTES

March 17, 2022 – Review and consider for approval.

MOTION

Motion made by Jason Vennard to approve the March 17, 2022, minutes, seconded by Jim Smith. Motion accepted.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

None.

CPUC BUSINESS

- Update on the Planning Process, Remaining Tasks, and Time Line

Steve Whitman told the Committee that it can't do Parts Three and Four until all the Chapters have been reviewed. Chris Chase doesn't want to push the schedule; wants it to be done correctly. The Committee feels comfortable at this point moving forward from Chapter Six.

- Update on Focus Groups

1 Not Discussed.

- 2
- 3 • Feedback on Drafts, and Discussion of Edits/Additions
- 4

5 PART 2:

6

7 CHAPTER 7: Town Character and Appearance

8

9 Page 1, Introduction: In paragraph two, Chris Pugsley asked about the term “Context Sensitive”
10 and Steve Whitman responded it means looking at the surroundings of the area and use that
11 context, looking at all the attributes that are in place. Form base code is more about building size
12 and placement rather than usage. It’s based on form, not function. Buildings have to look like
13 the other buildings around the area.

14

15 Martin Morse would like to see these definitions added to the Plan. There is a difference
16 between goals and mandates and some in the community may not like what is coming down
17 from Augusta. He opposes town control of appearances. The town is a community of
18 individuals. This is for the business districts, not residential.

19

20 Linda Grenfell feels some communities might want to have a coffee shop or yoga studio. She
21 added it is up to the Implementation Committee to have flexibility within the New England style
22 and coastal look, but not tell the people what their houses should look like. Martin Morse would
23 like the paragraph less restrictive, have goals that are not carved in stone. Jason Vennard has
24 concern that the wording could be interpreted as a statement. Larissa Crockett suggested adding
25 future zoning discussions will encourage new developments to comply.

26

27 Page One, Wells Goals, #1: Chris Chase questioned what is the distinct character of the
28 community to be preserved and restored, and what is it west of the turnpike and the coastal areas
29 east of the turnpike. He would prefer a small town character. The Town needs direction on what
30 we want to come up with. Larissa Crockett added it is rural to the west and coastal easterly. We
31 should define rural feels by cluster zoning or maintaining farmland. Jim Smith is worried about
32 the design element. We can’t go back and forth. Tim Gowen would like more description and
33 have it less wide open. Steve Whitman told the Committee that no one goal can capture
34 everything. It is encompassed in the whole plan. Chris Chase wants the character to be what the
35 town has been following for the past ten years. Larissa Crockett stated the rural feel is created
36 through wider open spaces, and trees along the streets, or defined by its classic coastal
37 architecture with walkable sidewalks. Chris Chase noted the town is almost built out on the east
38 side of Route One and west of turnpike opens up a little bit.

39

40 Martin Morse asked if there is character change depending on the section of town. We shouldn’t
41 generalize character as it changes in different sections of Wells. He asks for a better description
42 for the use of the word “character”. Larissa Crockett asked if there should be a paragraph
43 describing each of those areas. High Pine feels different from Wells Branch, which is different
44 from Tatnic. The town could create nice signs that highlight what is described in that section of
45 town. Jason Vennard likes the thought of aspiring to that, and honoring the different areas is a
46 good start. Jim Smith asked about defining the form base areas. Larissa Crockett will meet with
47 Martin Morse for suggestions, leaving this section open on how the community differs from area
48 to area.

1 Page 4, Rural Areas and Neighborhoods, #3: Martin Morse stated that the incentive program is
2 old language because the town never came up with an incentive plan. Do we still want to do
3 that. Chris Chase added that as a taxpayer he doesn't want to be in the loan business. The town
4 hasn't done it yet but might do it.

5
6 *Committee wants it left in the Plan.*
7

8 Page 4, Landscape Architecture, #6(a): Martin Morse has heard comments from the
9 handicapped on the New England Cobble sidewalks. He wonders if there is any discussion on
10 this ordinance as far as plowing and ease for the handicapped. Mike Livingston answered that
11 the town has a smart street plan, and those are included as a standard in the ordinance. Linda
12 Grenfell added we need to consider accessibility for people with disability challenges. Chris
13 Chase added the pavement is not as appealing, and the cobble lasts a lot longer.

14
15 *Wording will be added that sidewalks are "designed for maximum accessibility and with the use
16 of a product material that is sustainable and aesthetically appealing."*
17

18 Page 5, Route One Corridor, #1: Tim Gowen expressed that being a "Post Road Antique and
19 Arts Corridor" isn't the case anymore and Route One shouldn't be tied into that. Linda Grenfell
20 feels it is not promoting the antiquing and arts business; it's the character of the buildings. Tim
21 Gowen added there needs to be a description of the type of buildings. Larissa Crockett feels we
22 should want to invest in that developmental directive. Take the promotion piece out and keep the
23 character. Jim Smith feels it would be nice to categorize the area. Keep the appearance and
24 character pieces in that section. Mike Livingston told the Committee that the interpretation in
25 the past was appearance based, that it has to be of colonial appearance. Chris Pugsley mentions
26 an architecture character definition.

27
28 *Committee wants to delete "Post Road Antique and Arts Corridor" wording and take out the
29 promotion piece.*
30

31 Page 5, Route One Corridor, #1(g): Regarding the trolley service, if not making changes Martin
32 Morse does not want a study done. Need to have someone study what the trolley system does
33 because it is now on a plateau and the town needs a plan on where to go from here to make it
34 better, but if not willing to change it, don't study it. Larissa Crockett replied that a study is
35 underway with traffic engineers and the trolley coordinator, and there is some money to study
36 alternative transit here as well. How do we better connect the transportation center to areas
37 people want to get to. Transportation from train station to hotel, for example, not needing a car.
38 Want to know how we can better connect with the trolley system, and have everybody in sync
39 with the trolley system when looking at ways to get to places.

40
41 Page 6, Wells Transportation Center, #1: Mike Livingston suggested a goal be added to
42 eliminate the water and sewer requirement from the ordinance.
43

44 Page 6, Implementation Strategies, #2: Martin Morse noted that with planting trees we need to
45 take into consideration trucks not being able to see under the trees because of the low canopy, so
46 shouldn't position trees close to entrances. This would be a Planning Board discussion.
47

1 Page 7, Implementation Strategies, #10: With placing merchandise in building setbacks, the
2 town never did prohibit this.

3
4 *Committee agrees it should be left in.*

5
6 CHAPTER 8: Transportation and Circulation Policies and Strategies
7

8 In answer to Chris Chase, Mike Livingston stated there has been no Route One corridor study
9 done, and he explained there is a requirement for developers to do traffic studies regarding new
10 traffic generation, and the developer has to pay for any improvements that are required from the
11 creation of additional traffic.

12
13 Larissa Crockett told of a proposed corridor study from Kimball up to Port Road, and the need to
14 assess what the timing of the lights impact is at Route 9 and Mile Road, and assess from a land
15 use prospective. She said the proposed budget has been reviewed and has received committee
16 support.

17
18 There was a discussion on the land by Hannaford's, which the DOT and DEP refuses to give
19 permits. Nothing but the grocery can be developed down there. Mike Livingston doesn't know
20 of any restrictions on that land. The traffic can be re-evaluated.

21
22 Page 2, Wells Goals, #4: Chris Chase questioned the word "resolve", asking if this was realistic.
23 Larissa Crockett responded yes, it is, that they can streamline more than they have now and
24 technology exists to make the lights more coordinated. Need to adopt an ordinance to make the
25 changes moving forward.

26
27 Page 2, Wells Goals, #5: Martin Morse stated the whole section on Route One is a growth area.
28 The townspeople do not want Route One to become four lanes, and it should be mentioned that
29 Route One will not be four lanes.

30
31 Steve Whitman identified a "green street" as being for pedestrians, biking, shuttle stops and cars.
32 Larissa Crockett gave Furbish Rd. as an example. No additional land is being taken. There will
33 be a sidewalk on one side by narrowing lanes, which will slow traffic. The other side will be a
34 bike path. The lanes will be 10 feet. If rehabilitating Route One for green street space there is
35 not enough land to do it, but when building a new road we need to see if there is room to build a
36 green street. In the State of Maine bicycles are allowed on sidewalks and they can share the
37 roadway. It's not the ideal, but better than what we have.

38
39 Page 3, Policies, #5: Regarding a bike share program, Tim Gowen questions if we want to aspire
40 to this, that there would have to be green streets, and we are not prepared to do that yet. Larissa
41 Crockett agreed it wouldn't be within the next 10 years, but it should be kept in the Plan for
42 when a program is in place. Linda Grenfell wants it kept before us. Chris Chase stated it is
43 investing money on something that won't be happening for ten or fifteen years. Jim Smith noted
44 that of the comments from the community, bike travel was the number two concern.

45
46 Page 4, Policies, #15: *Add the word "Continue" to "Ensure".*
47

1 Page 4, Policies, #16: With regard to transportation between the Harbor and Wells Beach, the
2 Harbor Master doesn't think it's a viable option.

3
4 *Committee wants #16 taken out.*

5
6 Page 5, Implementation Strategies, #5: Chris Chase stated it is not practical to think that animals
7 will travel that close to humans. Larissa Crockett suggests adding wording "to explore
8 possibility of". Martin Morse feels there are a number of avenues for animals to cross the
9 turnpike now. Tim Gowen expressed that it's a great idea, but we need to be realistic. Jim
10 Smith told the Committee about a town that has bicycle trails and sidewalks on either side of the
11 road and it is putting in a bicycle bridge going over the road. He noted the advent of the e-bike
12 has changed things. Communities that have established bicycle routes see an economic benefit.
13 Tim Gowen added the town's population is getting older, and there are only six months of good
14 weather. Linda Grenfell stated that wildlife corridors are supported by the Conservation
15 Commission. The adaptation of the animals is fascinating. We are pushing wildlife into less and
16 less space. Combining this with humans and bicycles would be interesting. We have to be
17 realistic, and part of the Committee's role is envisioning and dreaming. Martin Morse added
18 there is a need for two bridges; one over the turnpike and one over the railroad.

19
20 **MOTION**

21 Motion made by Linda Grenfell, seconded by Jim Smith, to leave #5 on Page 5 in the Plan,
22 adding the words "Explore the possibility of" to the paragraph. Motion passes, 5-4.

23
24 Page 5, Regional Transportation Planning, #2: *Committee wants #2 taken out.*

25
26 Page 6, Roadway Improvement Program, #5: The town will accept new town roads developed
27 by developers and approved, with the connecting of two town roads. Chris Chase has some
28 concerns regarding accepting roads in developments, as the town will go broke plowing those
29 streets and the town can't afford to maintain them. Martin Morse noted the Fire Chief expresses
30 concern about getting equipment into the roads if they are not in good condition or not plowed.

31
32 *Committee wants #5 taken out.*

33
34 Page 7, Alternative and Multi-modal Transportation, #7: Martin Morse expressed the concern of
35 there being too many committees, and he suggests this should go to just the Planning Board.
36 There is a limit to the number of committees the town can have. Jim Smith expressed frustration
37 on putting "Trails and Pathways" to only the Planning Board. It won't ever get considered.
38 There needs to be an advocate. Larissa Crockett suggested a subcommittee for Trails and
39 Pathways by the Conservation Commission. Linda Grenfell explained that the Conservation
40 Commission focuses on conserving land, and presents ideas for maintaining trails, but not on
41 trails that aren't on conservation land. Tim Gowen gave the Town of Sanford as a model for a
42 trail system. Jim Smith added that with cluster zoning there are established trails on private
43 property. This enhances the value of the property. Mike Livingston added there is a density
44 bonus if the development establishes a trail that is open to the public.

45
46 *Wording of "at the Selectmen's discretion to have a committee for Trails and Pathways" is to be*
47 *added to #7.*

1 CHAPTER 9: Economic Development Policies and Strategies

2
3 Page 1, Paragraph 2: Martin Morse opposes higher density on any space beyond 20,000 square
4 feet. There is too much development on Route One already. Chris Chase noted that Wells is a
5 tourist community, that is the town's industry. It never has been a community for economic
6 business. We need to concentrate on people coming here for the beaches. The statement doesn't
7 define what kind of density. Lot coverage includes the amount of green space. Density is what
8 is put on the lot. Density and setbacks have to come into consideration. Jon Moody explained
9 that with a town center development, the town needs to take density, lot coverage, setbacks and
10 mixed use into consideration, and these need to be in an ordinance.

11
12 Larissa Crockett explained that changes are coming from the State which will take away our
13 density requirements. Where there is a single family house, there can be three units, and every
14 unit will require accessibility. It will encourage growth in Wells. Economic development
15 doesn't have any density regulations. It will prohibit parking requirements for the properties,
16 and it is expected to pass. The State is providing financial and technical support for adoption of
17 the new language. They are trying to do something about the shortage of housing.

18
19 Page 1, Regional Goals, #1: There are questions about marketing the region. Jason Vennard
20 noted the town doesn't have families moving to Wells. Larissa Crockett expressed that having
21 people move into the town would help with the workforce. Chris Chase noted that the value of
22 property in Wells is too high for the average working person. Jason Vennard added that
23 affordable housing is now taking on a different perspective, and it's hard to find a house for
24 under \$600,000. Martin Morse added the cost to build a home is staggering.

25
26 *Committee suggested changing "market the region" to some other words.*

27
28 Page 2, Wells Goals, #2: Martin disagrees with higher density.

29
30 Page 2, Wells Goals, #4: There is zoning that takes care of this as a neighborhood convenience
31 store. Define "small-scale". Mike Livingston gave the definition as 2500 square feet and sells
32 no gas.

33
34 *Committee wants to leave this in, adding "in a village area" and changing the word*
35 *"encourage" to "allow".*

36
37 Page 2, Wells Goals, #5: Martin Morse supports this, and asked how many HOAs have rules
38 that allow this. Mike Livingston answered half allow home business, half do not.

39
40 Page 2, Wells Goals, #6: Linda Grenfell wants to discourage motorized entertainment and water
41 parks. Typical amusement park rides are prohibited. Larissa Crockett added there could be a
42 high-end bowling alley as an example.

43
44 Chris Pugsley wanted added somewhere to design public space to maximize appeal and access
45 for recreation, picnicking, vistas, etc. Larissa added these could be different places throughout
46 the town.

47
48 *Committee wants to take out "non-amusement".*

1
2 Page 3, Implementation Strategies, #1: Martin Morse sees no need for this. Larissa Crockett
3 suggests an economic development person to promote the town's resources. Sponsored by the
4 town, but a separate entity. Martin Morse wants to take it out. If the town owned the land it
5 would be different. There are not a lot of lots left in the industrial park. Jason Vennard added
6 that town development goes beyond those areas. Chris Chase feels the town needs a purpose
7 other than tourism.

8
9 *Committee would like to keep it in.*

10
11 Page 3, Implementation Strategies, #6: *Take out the reference to antiques.*

12
13 Page 4, Implementation Strategies, #9: *Committee wants to take #9 out.*

14
15 CHAPTER 10: Housing Policies and Strategies

16
17 Chris Chase stated that given the State's pending legislation, the Committee should not go over
18 this chapter at this time. Larissa Crockett told the Committee that the timeline is April 23rd. At
19 that time we can review this chapter. Linda Grenfell noted our plan does take into account
20 housing and affordable housing, and Martin Morse pointed out that it appears a lot of people are
21 buying homes not to live in, but to rent out.

22
23 Larissa Crockett told the Committee of good data received from the Lodging Committee. Short-
24 term rentals is a growing challenge. 800 units are available for the month of July. Other months
25 can have more. Jodine Adams doesn't know if they are three season. It was what was advertised
26 for the month of July. Chris Chase added at 800 a month times three, if the State legislation goes
27 through, this number can be expected to be affected.

28
29 Page 10-2, Wells Goals, #1: Chris Chase questions meeting the 10 percent of homes constructed
30 in future as being affordable. Larissa Crockett stated the Implementation Committee can decide
31 if they want to present it to the community. It should say there is a goal for developers to meet
32 the affordable housing criteria, or contribute into an affordable housing fund for the town to use
33 to create affordable housing. There could be a developer that might say he or she is interested in
34 creating 20 units 55 and older that are affordable housing units and could ask for the funds for
35 assisting with the cost of that. Jason Vennard doesn't feel comfortable with defining the goal.
36 Steve Whitman added this target gives flexibility. Martin Morse wants to take out the word
37 "ensure" and add wording as a "goal" we want to reach.

38
39 *Committee wants to leave #1 in, changing the word "ensure" to "work toward a goal to".*

40
41 Page 10-2, Wells Goals, #4: Mike Livingston explained there are restrictive ordinances on
42 mobile home parks, and overlay areas have special provisions. Larissa Crockett explained that
43 mobile home parks can be affordable housing, but manufactured homes as being affordable is
44 based on the total cost of living in that home, with heating, cooling, electricity and lot rents,
45 which increases the costs which challenge them being affordable housing. Jason Vennard wants
46 to leave the mobile home setup as it is. Tim Gowen added the parks do well when interest rates
47 are high, and he suggests leaving it as it is. This is the same for a park or just a single home on a
48 single lot. It is both scenarios.

1
2 Page 10-2, Wells Goals, #5: Martin Morse asked if this is specific to roads or does it include
3 water and sewer, because we can't control the water and sewer. Larissa Crockett answered it
4 refers to transportation infrastructure.

5
6 *Committee wants to delete #5.*
7

8 Page 10-2, Wells Goals, New #6. Jim Smith asked to add an additional rule, #6, upon listening
9 to the Energy Committee's presentation, that the town be energy efficient by the year 2035. He
10 wants there to be a goal to have 100% of the Town's electricity being used from renewable
11 resources by the year 2035. Chris Chase noted that implementation will be by the Energy
12 Committee. He is not interested. He does not want there to be a concrete goal or number. Jason
13 Vennard would like to eliminate the percentage. Jim Smith would like to have developed an
14 education campaign including public education forums about renewable energy options. He
15 doesn't want the Plan to fail because of a couple of items.

16
17 Linda Grenfell stated we need to have the public get familiar with this and putting #6 in is an
18 important piece. There will be more pressure to use less fossil fuel. Tim Gowen doesn't see a
19 lot of community discussion on this issue. Chris Chase has talked to at least 50 people in Wells
20 who are against electric cars 100%, expense being the main item. He does not want a 2035
21 deadline. It should be stated the town will continue to work towards these goals. Larissa
22 Crockett stated the goal of the town should be to make education available on how to pursue
23 renewable energy. The Implementation Committee can direct the town toward educational
24 resources. Jim Smith wants it clear to the public where the Committee stands. Tim Gowen
25 stated he would rather have it fail than do the wrong thing.

26
27 **MOTION**

28 Jim Smith made a motion to have a positive goal with respect to renewable energy resources.
29 Seconded by Linda Grenfell. Motion fails, 6-3. Jim Smith wanted it noted that he voted for the
30 motion.

31
32 Page 10-4, Implementation Strategies, #5: Martin Morse noted the failed policies of York
33 County Community Action, regarding the people who have been placed in the town. Larissa
34 Crockett explained that the YCCA doesn't place anyone anywhere. Until YCCA takes a
35 different view, Martin Morse wants #5 taken out. Chris Chase stated that they actually do more
36 good than bad,

37
38 *Committee wants the reference to YCCA eliminated.*
39

40 Page 10-4, Implementation Strategies, #9: Regarding the York County Community College,
41 Jodine Adams told the Committee they are doing some housing this winter to see how it works
42 out, and then may add some dorms.

43
44 Page 10-4, Implementation Strategies, #10: Martin Morse questioned the reference to the town
45 working on cluster subdivision provisions. It was proposed to go to the voters so the
46 Implementation Committee knows we are aware of it. The Comprehensive Plan can still have a
47 goal of 40,000 square feet.
48

1 *Add wording "minimum of one acre".*

2
3 **MOTION**

4 Martin Morse made a motion to recommend to the Selectmen 40,000 square feet. No second.

5
6 Jason Vennard feels we shouldn't at this time be making a recommendation to the Board of
7 Selectmen. Motion withdrawn.

8
9 Larissa Crockett demonstrated to the Committee the lot maps of two subdivisions to show the
10 difference between 40,000 square feet and 30,000 square feet with the different subdivisions.
11 One had an expansion in size of lots with no change in number of the lots and one with a
12 decrease in the number of lots. The Selectmen have a difference of opinion because of the shift
13 in the number of lots possible, giving an opportunity to limit growth. Chris Chase asked about
14 the value of a property having a larger lot. Mike Livingston answered that most people don't
15 take that into consideration.

16
17 The Committee approved extending the meeting to 10 minutes.

18
19 Steve Whitman distributed a packet of an updated Chapter Six. The next meeting will begin
20 with going back to Chapter Six.

21
22 Next meetings will be from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on April 21st and 28th.

23
24 Steve Whitman asked for clarification of the proposed designated town center area with regard to
25 Chapel Road.

- 26
27 Chapter 6 Remainder of Land Use
28 Chapter 11 Public Facilities
29 Chapter 12 Open Space
30 Chapter 13 Public Utilities
31 Chapter 14 Fiscal Capacity
32 Chapter 15 Flood Hazard Mitigation
33 Chapter 16 Planning and Management
34 Chapter 17 Regional coordination

35
36 Chapters 6 and 11 through 17 were not discussed.

- 37
38 • Feedback Received from Other Boards and Committees
39 Energy committee Matrices Received

40
41 Not discussed.

- 42
43 • Next Month

44
45 Chapter Six and Chapters 11 – 17

46
47 Part 3, Implementation Program
48 Part 4, Capital Investment Strategy

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OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

MOTION

Jason Vennard made a motion to adjourn. Jim Smith seconded. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED _____, 2022

ACCEPTED BY:

Carol DesJardins, Recording Secretary

Chris Chase, Chairman