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3 **TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH**  
4 **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE**  
5 **September 21, 2023 – 6:00 PM**  
6 **Police Department Community Room**  
7 **Draft MEETING MINUTES**

8 **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

9 Chair Lou Valentine  
10 Win Winch  
11 Gene LeClerc  
12 Mary Pat

13  
14 **STAFF PRESENT:**

15 Jeffrey Hinderliter  
16 Michael Foster

17  
18 **1. Open Meeting at 6PM**

19 Planner Hinderliter thanked committee members for continuing to be with them over the years and for joining.  
20 New member Mary Pat was introduced. They met during work on the condo lodging ordinance and was  
21 interested in the comp plan committee. A recommendation was provided to council and now Mary Pat is with  
22 us.

23  
24 **2. Introductions and Update**

25 Mary Pat introduced herself. She lives in Old Orchard Beach in old family vacation home that they renovated to  
26 year round residence and moved here to help family. Professionally has worked in software world. More recent  
27 focus was on sales and marketing. Now retired. Interested in contributing what she can.

28  
29 Lou introduced himself. He is from Massachusetts and is Old Orchard Beach resident. He splits his time and  
30 comes up for the meetings. He owns a business finding engineering candidates for positions. This is a great  
31 group and they hope to accomplish something this time.

32  
33 Win introduced himself. He has been a committee member for 18 years. He is a retired systems manager and  
34 knows all about software.

35  
36 Gene introduced himself. He has lived here since 1987. He was a semiconductor engineer for 17 years. He  
37 referees ice hockey. He likes what is happening in Old Orchard and wants and say on what happens.

38  
39 Planner Hinderliter talked about the comp plan. Every time they get going something comes up that stalls his  
40 work on the plan. Other work causes him to get pulled away from it. One thing that is different is the Town  
41 Manager Diana understands the importance of getting this done and was willing to reschedule other meetings so  
42 work on the plan can continue. We also have money in the budget to help us. This budget period it was  
43 increased and it has rolled over from other budget periods. This comes into play with the inventory and analysis.

44  
45 The purpose of this meeting is to get into comp plan mindset, provide a brief overview of steps, update on what  
46 is near completion and not completed at all, next steps and schedule towards completion, and finally the future  
47 land use exercise, the 9 questions.

48  
49 First, a brief overview of the comprehensive plan, which is the official binding, document that addresses a wide  
50 range of topics. This plan analyzes conditions and trends, creates a vision for the physical, social, and

1 economical characteristics of the municipality. And the part he is excited for, the fun piece that outlines the  
2 goals, policies, and strategies.

3 The biggest part of the comp plan is the future land use plan. This is the part that everyone looks at. This would  
4 deal with things like short term rentals, or what we think a vision of the downtown might be. It creates a  
5 foundation for so many things that impact shed placement to multifamily housing. This often comes up with  
6 planning board meetings. When you have the comp plan and future land use plan that is the foundation for  
7 zoning. Whenever you change zoning you have to check the plan to make sure it is consistent. The 1993 plan is  
8 the adopted plan and it takes creativity for zoning changes to meet that. A lot has changed since then. The  
9 future land use plan is the big topic. We will look at housing, economic development, public infrastructure,  
10 services, natural resources, demographics, local history, recreation.

11  
12 The most important function is to provide policy guidance for both the public and private sector. There are three  
13 primary sections of a comp plan. One section is the inventory and analysis. This section is where you document  
14 and evaluate existing conditions for each section of the comp plan, like transportation that wasn't mentioned.  
15 The second primary component is the goals, policies, and strategies. This is where the true action of the comp  
16 plan is. This takes the future land use, transportation, all the sections, and it creates goals. What are we seeking  
17 to achieve? The policies that will help support that goal, and strategies to get to that goal. We are not writing  
18 ordinances we are creating the policy to be able to do that. With other comp plans he has done it as its own  
19 section as bullet points that breakdown the vision for each section, the goal to reach the vision, and how we are  
20 going to reach that vision to the point that specific time frames are applied.

21  
22 The third section is the future land use plan. This is the overall guide of future land use and zoning in any  
23 municipality. It is the foundation for the creation of the zoning map. At the October meeting he will be able to  
24 show Mary Pat and Peter the current map they have been working on. The future land use plan also takes most  
25 of the time. Near completion, not complete. The comp plan is over 50% in the near completion stage. He says  
26 near completion because they will revisit a number of inventory sections when they get to goals, policies, and  
27 strategies. Items near completion include future land use plan, future land use map, and about half the inventory  
28 sections. Items not complete include the goals, policies, and strategies, and half of the inventory sections.  
29 For next steps and schedule. Over the next couple months our focus will be the future land use plan and map.  
30 Considerable work has been done but with our new members and longstanding members it is wise to consider  
31 and look at what we have done. The world has changed. COVID was a big change and we had no idea to  
32 consider some of the things that resulted. We will begin this work at the October meeting.

33  
34 For the schedule we have estimated timeframes. A majority of work from October to May will be the future  
35 land use plan and map; and goals, policies, and strategies. This is the fun creative part. The inventory and  
36 analysis will be worked on but this is where the money will be going. SMPDC will be assisting with that. This  
37 is more research and data gathering. Hopefully the first complete draft will be done by June then the summer  
38 2024 will be public, planning board, and council review process.

39 There was an email that went around recently where people may have thought they were further along and  
40 moving into that draft public process.

41 They previously did public outreach with survey mailings and neighborhood meetings. They will do something  
42 similar. One reason why this will take so long is they didn't want to have a final draft, but a good solid working  
43 draft to take comments into considerations.

44  
45 Lou asked if any tweaking was needed do to time changes through the plan work.

46 Gene added that is why they should review it anyway. They did the survey monkey and the info on the ballpark  
47 from the charrettes. A lot of work was done on that and people will want to know what is the future of the  
48 ballpark and some other areas that have been points of contention. More could be done. Different sports could  
49 be brought in.

50 Planner Hinderliter pointed out that is not just land use but also public facilities and the economy.

1 Win remembered the concerts 30 years ago and the traffic. He was in Scarborough 8 miles away and could see  
2 the lights and hear it.

3 Mary Pat asked how often they would get together and can they set up a regular time.  
4

5 Planner Hinderliter would like to have them meet once a month in the beginning unless they meet during the  
6 day. With council meeting and workshops, and planning board they have a lot of evening meetings already.  
7 Even if just meeting an hour once a month is important. We will probably meet the third or fourth week and on  
8 Wednesday or Thursday.  
9

### 11 3. Future Land Use Plan: Exercise Discussion

12 Now to the future land use plan exercise. There are questions in the memo that have to do with land use to get  
13 you in the mindset. What is your first thought? One thing to note, you may ask why didn't we look at the map  
14 tonight? With the time that passed and new members, he wanted them to think in a new fresh way. Remember  
15 responses so when this future land use plan is sent to you so when you look at the plan you can see if these are  
16 addressed.

17 Beginning with number one. OOB doesn't have much land area. How do you think we should plan for future in  
18 regard to environment that is already built?

19 The committee discussed how the Town is mostly established.

20 Committee responses:

- 21 • Ross Road used to be woods but is built up now. The downtown and coastal area has been the same  
22 forever. Areas have their own character.
- 23 • They may have to start to actually "build up" and allow higher buildings.
- 24 • Reuse of existing spaces will be important. Housing is also needed.
- 25 • The center of Town and iconic structures need better upkeep. What happens if ownership of large  
26 properties changes? What do we want there? What happens and will they stay the same? It is really  
27 family oriented, how do you keep it that way? It would be great to extend the season. It is important to  
28 think about how the main strip and main streets evolve overtime.
- 29 • The main strip needs help. The buildings need to be maintained. Why can't road be reduced to single  
30 lanes with wider sidewalks? Make space for sidewalk dining.
- 31 • Sidewalks are important. First Street needs a sidewalk with everyone in the streets. Current sidewalks  
32 need to be maintained. Public Works used to be more tentative.
- 33 • They could have one-way streets with sidewalks on one side and parking on the other.  
34

35 Planner Hinderliter continued. This is very good and how this will relate to the exercise is the Town will be  
36 broken into districts. We will have the areas or districts, and then there are the uses attached. Then there is the  
37 vision for those specific areas of Town.

38 The committee discussed the importance of the beach and what surrounds it. It is a beautiful beach. The main  
39 strips are the centers that the rest of the Town stems from. The beach is an important resource. We could have a  
40 nice large hotel chain and support year round restaurants.  
41

42 Planner Hinderliter continued with number two. When thinking of future development, within the next ten  
43 years, what do you think we will see, what will be in demand?

44 Committee responses:

- 45 • Short term rentals. Houses have been getting bought off the market to be rented short term.
- 46 • Some commercial. Maybe offices.
- 47 • They are more of a destination, not a place you drive through.
- 48 • Office and medical.
- 49 • If there is a place for housing, there needs to be more housing. Smart housing.

- ADUs and what that type of infill looks like.
- Amtrak/transportation expansion. Year round stop.
- Small scale. Maybe commercial. Childcare.
- Recreational; fitness facilities, climbing, aquatic center, pool.
- Business school. Hospitality.
- Solar panels

Planner Hinderliter continued with second part to question. What could negatively impact the Town?

Committee responses:

- Stormwater runoff from development.
- Rising seas.
- Wastewater treatment plant.
- Going back to what we were. Partying and fighting. Regressing.
- Environmental pollution.
- High bacteria levels from Goosefare Brook and contributors.
- This was high priority but no longer seems to be.

Planner Foster updated committee that they have been doing sewer smoke testing in Ocean Park again recently to try to find any sources of contamination.

Planner Hinderliter continued with number three. Future technology changes, climate change, what do you think the town should do to address that? Things you could see happening in the next ten years, that aren't necessarily a structure, like remote work.

Committee responses:

- Environmental
- Climate change is a big one.
- It is so hot in some places down south there are times they have to close the beaches.
- Look what has happened in Camp Ellis with erosion and losing streets.
- Local level, right hand needs to talk to the right.
- Planning for electric vehicles and charging and solar panels

Planner Foster added climate related, marsh health, preserving open space, worth having conversion on coastal properties and rebuilding versus retreating, sea level rise, and protecting dunes.

Planner Hinderliter added scenario planning. We could be there in a relatively short period of time. It may not be within the next ten years, but you could prepare for the future during that timeframe.

Lou asked about lightning strikes and risks to buildings. There could be systems added to help block surges.

Planner Hinderliter added building structures for severe weather events. He went on to item four. What is OOB's current image, identity?

Planner Foster mentioned coastal beach community, tourist, resort, small town feel, and recreation.

Committee responses:

- Fun spot
- Honky tonk
- Gritty

A couple committee members mentioned all the campgrounds being bought and changing the name to Sun.

1  
2 Planner Hinderliter mentioned conversation with a campground owner where they were talking about people  
3 not knowing what was going on behind the scenes down here but someone was buying all this land in Old  
4 Orchard Beach, which was part of some plan.  
5 Campgrounds are and important piece because of the significant land and potential benefits and impacts they  
6 oppose to Old Orchard Beach.  
7 He thought they would have more positive stuff. When you think of land use and zoning as a tool, taking coastal  
8 beach community for example, how would we use zoning and land use to help protect that coastal beach  
9 community feel?  
10 Win mentioned giving some incentive or bonus for preserving open space. The old hotel era had a lot of open  
11 space and they were more vertical. It preserved the views of the ocean. Now there are a lot of low cut two to  
12 three story hotels.  
13  
14 Planner Hinderliter asked what type of incentives? More relaxed zoning, financial?  
15 Win added permitted uses; more open space and you can go up higher. Limited by DEP. Bonus for creating  
16 open space.  
17 Mary Pat added building maintenance and paint. Cosmetic things. Clean and welcome. Not rundown looking.  
18 Gene mentioned the storage facility coming into town.  
19 Planner Hinderliter thought the planning board did a great job since there are no aesthetic standards and  
20 referenced Dunkin Donuts.  
21 Gene added there is no general guidance to say if you want to build you can build like this.  
22 Win mentioned The Ocean House on West Grand where they tore down a few units and opened it up with  
23 parking where you can see the hotel now.  
24 Planner Foster said it was a combination of administrative site plan review, admin design review, and design  
25 review committee review to create a main entrance. One of the earlier topics was family oriented and with  
26 zoning making sure there is housing available for families would fall under these. Hopefully with the  
27 discussions on short term rentals and work the state is doing we will see if short terms rentals are actually a  
28 problem or not. School graduating class size hasn't changed. Is there no housing available for families or do we  
29 just have all the families we are ever going to have?  
30  
31 Gene asked if we need a high school?  
32 Planner Hinderliter responded that every municipality has hot button issues and what he always recommends,  
33 the committee can do what they want, but for things like that they are important to consider. They should be  
34 included but push them aside and for goals, policies, and strategies reframe to "reconsider schooling in Old  
35 Orchard Beach". An example in Wiscasset was route one traffic light and Maine Yankee the former nuclear  
36 power plant were two huge issues. A couple comp plan committee members in Wiscasset wanted to take strong  
37 opinions on the subjects, but just those issues could bring down that plan. So, his suggestion is tread lightly.  
38 Planner Foster mentioned he thinks that the school is part of the fabric of the community. Sports seem to be big  
39 here. Council seems too often be recognizing a sports team or some group. With Jeffrey's comment is this  
40 something you recommend a study of it and say "study the blank term of the local schools".  
41 Gene mentioned if they do have a school shouldn't they work to make it a magnet school. Let's make it better if  
42 the people want it.  
43 Planner Foster mentioned how crazy budgets are for building new schools, it makes me wonder where they are  
44 at here with the old buildings. They would make great housing but he doesn't want to say that until they are  
45 done with it. How does the RSU work with the town where it seems separate but not?  
46 Planner Hinderliter responded he thinks it is some statutory law thing. He was also curious. Wiscasset was  
47 blessed with Maine Yankee money for a long time and when they dried up tax bills went from literally \$400 a  
48 year to \$3,000. They then also had to support a fire station, a public sewer, public water, and a school system.  
49 They looked at the transportation system routes and looking at the longest bus route it was the equivalent of

1 driving from Wiscasset to Boston. So, when you come to budgets this is the economic and public facilities  
2 portion of the comp plan, these are very important and schools would definitely be a part of the discussion.  
3

4 Planner Hinderliter continued with number five, if you were to leave today and come back in ten years what  
5 would you like to see?

6 Planner Foster responded with more arts such as galleries or creator space, and more music and variety, not just  
7 at drinking establishments.

8 Planner Hinderliter asked what you would not like to see?

9 Planner Foster responded all high-end luxury housing, condos, and single family, and not so many parking lots.  
10 Gene wants to see more traffic control, bigger hotels, and taking care of the strip. He doesn't want it to be the  
11 same honky tonk town.

12 Win would like a lot more sidewalks, which help dress up the street with the curb.  
13

14 Planner Hinderliter asked what would you not like to see in ten years?

15 Win said the deterioration of Old Orchard Street. Way back it used to be two streets.

16 Mary Pat added she would like to see it more year round, and wouldn't like regression or status quo. They  
17 should challenge themselves to make it better.

18 Lou said clean up of deplorable property. They finally did something on Saco Ave where there is an above  
19 ground pool next to the road.

20 Planner Hinderliter said the property has changed hands because the previous owner died and it looks better  
21 than it used to. Did we answer number six, for what type of land use?

22 Planner Foster said uses that give a sense of place and community, even roadside sales that add to fabric and  
23 feel of community like flowers, local foods, and arts. We have talked about roadside sales internally with wood  
24 being a popular one. There is flowers, local, art, food from lobster to jellies and jams. This could overlap with  
25 undesirable because of potential impacts.  
26

27 Planer Hinderliter continued with number seven. Over the past ten years what is a trend for land use you have  
28 seen?

29 Win responded with upgrading. They see a lot with the planning board. The Grand Victorian, which was built  
30 15 years or so ago. Also, there are the cabins on East Grand where they put condos in.

31 Planner Foster mentioned Ross Road and comments earlier where this is in the rural area, which is interesting  
32 because it is rural for Old Orchard Beach, but being on this side of 95 and route one it isn't super rural. With  
33 stormwater we are considered an urbanized area. With that if rural were to be developed what will be acceptable  
34 versus not. Right now, it isn't development friendly with large lot sizes. Open space will be important.

35 Gene has seen people refurbishing houses and Airbnb/short term rentals. In his Fern Park Ave neighborhood  
36 ownership changes and now it is someone different every weekend. Several houses have changed this way on  
37 his street.  
38

39 Mary Pat saw motel rooms going away and becoming something else. Do they have the hotel rooms to meet  
40 demand?

41 Planner Foster was curious about this because there were comments at the short term rental public hearing that  
42 they were needed because there are less hotels and nowhere for people to stay.

43 Lou heard people couldn't find rooms. What he has seen is the little shacks changing to McMansions. They  
44 build on top of each other with no open space for a border.  
45

46 Planner Hinderliter continued with number eight. If you were to choose one land use goal related to land use or  
47 zoning for the next ten years what would it be?

48 Planner Foster responded to increase all housing opportunities.

49 Gene said transportation and traffic flow. Exploit the ballpark.

1 Win said the town is settled, he doesn't know what land use goal. It's hard to ask for more open space than  
2 exists. More upgrades to quality and higher density near downtown like Milliken Heights.  
3 Planner Foster said to consider parking garage but costs are absurd.  
4 Mary Pat added that the work is important and this all highlights it.  
5 Lou said tighter controls are needed.

6  
7 Planner Hinderliter continued with final question, number nine. What is working or not working?  
8 Mary Pat said enforcement. Her impression of Old Orchard Beach seems to be you can do things through the  
9 front door or you can go through the back door to get things done. It's like there is a whole side gig, or at least  
10 that is the vibe.

11 Planner Hinderliter responded that is never good to hear.

12 Mary Pat added they need to be more transparent and have standards and consistent application of standards.

13 Planner Hinderliter explained code enforcement officer requirements. Any last comments? With land use  
14 conversations it can be exhausting where you are saturated and the conversation is no longer constructive. That  
15 is one reason he limits meeting length. Absentee ballots start in Town Hall and take up meeting space there so  
16 we will probably meet at the PD again. The next third or fourth week of October?

17 The committee discussed dates and Wednesday being best.

18 Planner Hinderliter said 6PM October 18. Thank you all.

19  
20 4. Good & Welfare

21  
22 **5. Adjourn**

23 Meeting close at 7:49PM