

TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE
February 27, 2025 – 6:00 PM
Council Chambers
(Draft)

In attendance:

Lou Valentine
Win Winch
Mary Pat Donnellon
Peter Guidi
Marc Guimont
Jean Leclerc
George Kerr
Planner Michael Foster
Planner Jeffrey Hinderliter
Jamel Torres – SMPDC
Malia Cordero – SMPDC

Open Meeting

Meeting opened at 6:06PM

Planner Hinderliter Welcome, everyone. I have Peter, one of our members on the phone, and we just adopted a remote policy five years after COVID, but thank you, everyone for coming. And Peter, I'm just going to set you down and I hope you can hear here, okay? All right.

So, this is a good step in our whole comprehensive plan process. One we haven't really quite achieved in all the years and all the time that we've been doing this on and off. So, what that step is, is the beginning of our work on the inventory sessions and we have Malia who is a southern Maine regional planning we have Malia from southern Maine regional planning, and we have Jamel from southern Maine regional planning, they're kind of, there's a couple folks that they work with that are all working on these inventories but Malia and Jamal are our primary contacts.

And we'll go around and introduce ourselves in a second, but Malia is a relatively recent graduate and lives here in town.

Malia I do, yeah. I live the new development that's going off of Little River Road right by the Scarborough town line.

Planner Hinderliter Jamel has been a longtime planner really in this area. In fact, we worked in the same municipality. Not together but kind of back to back at one time and you know well known. Was in Scarborough and in Scarborough for a lot of their really what how you see Scarborough developing right now Jamel was part of that on the ground at the beginning. So I've worked with Jamel on other things before and feel very fortunate that we have Malia and Jamel working with us. Another bit of new news, especially for some of our members, we have two new members. One member who was never really a member and just kind of came and hung out. Marc, so Marc's actually an official member right now. And George Kerr is kind enough to join us and I think you all know a bit about Marc's background. George Kerr, lifelong resident and has served on everything from planning board to council to the legislature. Currently does all kinds of different things including helping, a big help with his daughter, and her very successful clothing line which is kind of cool they have their own factory right in Scarborough. George owns Surf Six and a number of different properties and I've worked with George ever since I've been here and we've been occasionally go out to Lucky's Log Cabin and by Renys for lunch together. And I asked George if he was interested I knew he had good ties with the business community and had a good opinion to broaden all the other opinions that we have on our committee so I thought that he would be a

good member. And we'll just go around real quick and so everyone can introduce themselves and then we'll get off with what should be a relatively easy meeting tonight. And really what this meeting is about. As you've all seen, you've received some updates in the emails. We're switching gears from the future land use plan to the inventory sections. And we have Southern Maine Regional Planning to assist us with the inventory sections. And it seemed like a good idea to put faces behind that work so they could introduce themselves and explain a bit what the inventory is. That's really pretty much what we're here tonight and anything else anyone would like to share. So Marc?

Marc Well, I'm Mark Guimont. I'm a retired civil engineer. I spend most of my career doing municipal work. Lou Okay. Lou Valentine been around here since day one when we started, ancient history. Background, originally from engineering and design but I am now have been for the last 50 years an engineering headhunter and also resident of Ocean Park for property owner for since 64 so been around for a while.

George Kerr live in Old Orchard Beach, own a lot of property in downtown area. I also had the pleasure of working with Jamel. I did a big project, 56 lot subdivision in Scarborough on Jasper Street. We worked well with Jamel back then, and was going to do another big project in Scarborough on Route 1, but just didn't work out. Ended up building a 20,000 square foot building in the Saco industrial park for my daughter's worldwide clothing line and it's gone very well. I've got a big project I'm doing in Kennebunk, a large single-family homes in Kennebunk. I finished up in one here in Dunegrass and really just feel like an honor to be back with Jim Winch when I served on the planning board 100 years ago with him and looking forward to just help them get to the point where we can have a comprehensive plan and looking forward to working with the both of you.

Mary Pat Hi, I'm Mary Pat Donnellon. I am a retired Chief Revenue Officer for a software company which means sales and marketing basically but I now retired to our vacation spot in Old Orchard Beach and doing my third winter here so far so good. So yeah it's been, I'm learning a lot as a part of this and glad to be here with all of you.

Mike Foster associate town planner here with the town.

Jean Leclerc I've been here since late 80s in Old Orchard Beach. Electrical engineer, University of New Hampshire, go cats. Worked in semi-conductors and now I'm working for Abbott Labs.

Hi, I'm Win Winch. I just finished 20 years on the Old Orchard planning board. Before that, I was 15 years on the Scarborough planning board. I'm retired vice president of systems a company in Portland, and I've been on this maybe since day one, which is what, 15 years at this point?

Planner Hinderliter No, it's 13, you're right. And Then we have one more person on the phone.

Peter Guidi Thank you for that, Jeffery. My name is Peter Guidi. I'm the owner of The Segrass Inn down on West Grand Avenue. I first came to Old Orchard in the late 70's as a lifeguard in town, and I'm proud to say the second job I picked up was from George Kerr and I remember, remember those days kindly and fondly, that's for sure. And I joined the Comprehensive Plan Committee to help get it over the line. We could have a comprehensive plan and get on with the next 10 years.

Planner Hinderliter Yeah. Thank you, Peter. And I'm gonna put you kind of close to Jamel just so you can hear Jamel and Jamel also emailed the presentation that we're looking at. We have a presentation on our screen up here in the council chambers. I can email that to you so you can take a look at it. Thank you.

Comprehensive Plan Inventory Sections Presentation by Southern Maine Regional Planning

Jamel Thanks. I think we'll introduce ourselves as well. Jamel Torres, land use division director at SMPDC. We're, as Jeffery said, we're working on the inventory sections for your comprehensive plan, so you'll see us over the next six, four months, three months. I think we're going to attend the next three meetings, so we're going to introduce the inventory sections that we're going to review tonight. And then later on, as you see in the slideshow, we'll dive into the different topic areas and what that means for older communities. And I grew up in Western Maine.

My name's Malia Cordero. I moved here somewhat recently in November from Vermont where I was doing planning work there. And now I'm doing even more interesting planning work here and doing some really cool mapping stuff. And I live right here in Old Orchard Beach and I think this is one of the best ways to get to know your town.

Jamel And I will say, before we start, that growing up in Maine, obviously have familiar with the Old Orchard Beach. And it's been pretty fascinating to really dive into the data and get to know the town a little better than what you hear and what you see in the summer.

Mary Pat What are you hearing? No, don't answer that.

Jamel It's just been very interesting. And it's been really, really cool to work with staff. So, I'm just gonna jump in. We did prepare a few slides, nothing not super long. We are going to talk about, we did have an ice breaker, so we'll kind of modify that since we know your names now. But we are going to talk about introduction to the chapters and the maps. I'm managing the project at the commission and Malia is doing the majority of the mapping. So you have like the two folks who are working on the most, I would say, in the room. So we'll talk about the chapters. We are going to review chapters as a group later on in the spring. So we'll talk about some guidelines to keep us on track. We'll also talk about some content that you'll see in the chapters. and then we'll get into the spring schedule at the end. Any questions?

I think Malia is going to take over from here for a little while.

Malia So next up we've got the team and that's us. So we've got our committee here, we've got our great town staff, and then we've got me and Jamal and like six other planners in our office. So we have a lot of great people working on this. We already did names, but I would love to hear everyone's favorite place in Old Orchard Beach if you want to do a quick round.

Planner Hinderliter I'll start. I like the ball park.

Marc I'm biased, but Ocean Park, as a few of us.

Lou I agree. Ocean Park.

George I like the community itself as a whole. I think it's a good mixture of business, residential, commercial. We've got a great mix in this community and the ballpark is an asset. You know, naturally the most valuable resource we have is our oceanfront. We were fortunate enough in the 80s to bring the ballpark in. Had triple A believe it or not, baseball here. I just think it's a good community and I look at the community as a whole Ocean Park, Old Orchard, where you and I live on East Grand Avenue. I mean it's just a great community and I think the comprehensive plan can only enhance that community way that we want it to look 10, 15 years from now.

Mary Pat I love all the outdoor aspects obviously the beach is so amazing and walking, I walk that thing from end to end almost every day. Well not in the winter but in almost every other time and go in the water every day. And then this past winter we've really been enjoying, in December we could skate on the marsh and there's stuff behind it, so it's like really, then the Eastern Trail. It's just really accessible to a lot of great outdoor things even if you only think of the beach it's that and more.

Planner Foster I'd say probably the downtown area and specifically like the walkability of most of the downtown.

Jean I would think I don't know I like the ballpark myself too because I've seen some games there, saw Doc Gooden pitch out of rehab. But I just I think that's a great venue that, I mean it can be a huge asset to this town, huge.

Win Yeah being at the planning board I've watched the town developed and have some concern about the summertime. I think now we're more in a suburb of Portland, and I think we have to recognize that. So I'd like to see more and more emphasis on our year-round people. I think the summertime pretty much takes care of itself. But I think it's very substantial. What's the year-round population now? It's almost approaching 10,000 year-round. I mean, a lot of that's commuters to Portland.

Jean What's your favorite place in Old Orchard?

Win Probably right now, home and bed. Which is in Ocean Park.

Marc You talked about being a suburb of Portland. But aren't we also becoming a suburb of Boston? And really because the state is so expensive and Amtrak's opened up that opportunity.
Jean Let's stay on track, please.

Planner Hinderliter Peter, how about you? We're just wondering if you think of one thing that you like best about the town of Old Orchard Beach.

Peter Well, it's gonna be the beach. I do my best to get there everyday.

Jamel I think we'll go too.

Malia I like the marsh. I went ice skating here this winter too.

Jamel I think for me, it's also the downtown walkability. I think it's really interesting just to have a really dense core and I think it's also cool that it's served by Amtrak. It's really neat that you can just walk to the train in the summer and go to Boston without getting in your car. Thank you. We'll keep going.

Malia So the next up on the inventory chapters, the whole intention with the chapters is to go over the existing conditions and sort of give a snapshot of time of where things are with the town and with the community. And inventory chapters also assist with the plan's goals, policies, and strategies. Another thing with the Comp plan is it sort of informs all the other towns ordinances and regulations, and that sort of thing. It can kind of act as your compass document, so to speak.

We're also going to be going over where we've been, and that'll help inform us of where we're going. So it's really kind of an overview of where things are at, where we like to see things grow into the future. There are 12 state required topics that are governed by the Maine Growth Management Act, and then special this year, we're adding a new topic. So as you see here, we have the required topic areas.

We're doing your population, housing, economy, agriculture, forestry, quite a comprehensive list. And then the new one that we're adding this year is climate change and sea level rise, which I'm sure is a particular concern in this community, if not all of Maine, especially as we have become one of those what are they called--

Jamel Migration.

Malia Yeah, like a migration state. Let's see, next slide. Here's a sneak peek of One of our maps that we've been putting together, our maps are gonna be a series of existing conditions related to the chapter topic areas. Each of the chapters has at least one or two maps, if not a few more. The Natural Resources one particularly has a lot of maps. The maps will depict interesting features and elements in the community. They are embedded in the inventory chapters and they also provide a great overview of the community. And what I think about the maps is that they can be really custom to your community too. We have a big checklist of what the state requires, but then there's also a lot of wiggle room to add more and sort of arrange things how you like.

Jamel Thanks, Malia. So we wanted to just go over the expectations for reviewing the content that's going to come your way in the next three months. It's going to be a lot of inventory data and analysis. So we just kind of wanted to go over that, just so you're all on the same page as we dive into the next month. So the idea is that we're developing drafts in batches rather than one at a time. So we're planning on reviewing 13 chapters in three meetings, so it's going to be really important that we keep, at the meeting, that we keep the discussion is high level. Talking about highlights, themes, and trends more so than potential like errors or grammatical issues in the text which you'll obviously have time to do in the comfort of your own home. But we really want to spend the meeting time talking about the high level issues. The question that I always ask myself when I'm writing them is are they complete and accurate? Like that's the most important thing to help inform the work. Is there enough of the data, and are they, is it accurate enough based on your local knowledge?

It's not the intention, like I said, to discuss grammatical or wordsmithing at the meetings, but you will have time to do that on your own, and I think you could probably pass those comments along to your staff, and then you pass them along to us, and we can make changes at the end. And finally, start thinking about specific stakeholders or organizations who would be interested in the content in each chapter, and who would help us

with, who are experts, and who could help inform the work. So our plan is to send the draft chapters and maps approximately one week before the meeting. So you guys will have a chance to take them home, read them on your computer or your phone, and just be familiar with the content before we all review them together as a group.

Mary Pat When you send out, like say, you're going to send chapter one before our next meeting, or chapters one through whatever, is it going to be just the current state and the maps, or are you going to do current state, maps, future.

Jamel It's just existing conditions.

Mary Pat Okay, so just existing. That's what I was wondering because I think it's important that we align on that before you go in. Okay, perfect. We're aligned.

Jamel So we just want to remind everybody that the state requirements do guide the content and the information in the chapters. We're not just pulling it out of thin air, pulling stuff that we like or want to talk about. It's based on the state checklists. We go through each check and make sure that each chapter has what it has.

The data won't always match up with current conditions, but it's the best, the census and state data is the best that we have. So we're working with existing data sets. But it generally provides a good snapshot in time and a good baseline for your planning purposes as you start to discuss goals, policies, and strategies. And there's two questions that we really want you all to think about as we review the chapters. The first one is what is important and valuable for the average citizen to know on each of these topics? And what is important and valuable for current or future decision makers on the planning board, select board, other committees to know on each of these topics as they make decisions about the community?

Planner Hinderliter I'll email this PowerPoint to everyone just.

Jamel So this is our last slide for the evening, other than an awesome picture of all of us. So, it's just a schedule of what we're going to do this spring, it has the three meetings that we're going to attend, approximately the dates might change. But in March, we're going to review population demographics, historic archaeological resources and transportation. So, we'll be sending those to you the week before and they'll be in draft form, they're not going to be finalized, I think they but pretty good as drafts. So they're not just outweighs or they are in good shape. And we'll spend the time here going through each chapter, maybe like 20 or 30 minutes on each, talking about the trends and content and some of the interesting maps and such. In April, we'll do the topics that are on the screen there, natural resources, agriculture and forestry, housing, economy, marine resources, and then in May we'll finish off with a final batch. So that's the work that we've been doing for the town. We've been busy drafting over the winter and we're excited to share our work with you all and discuss it.

Jean So, I'm just a quick question, I'm assuming that the batch three, when you say climate change and sea level rise, is that going to be more of like what the future may look like as far as the impact?

Jamel That's a really good point. Yeah, I think it'll have some more predictions of the different levels of sea level rise and impacts of the climate. So it's very future oriented to help plan for those significant events. And then this is the team. We went, Jeffrey and Mike led us on a tour in December and it was actually a really fun time for us to get to know the town actually get on the ground look around. We had a really good itinerary which we got mostly through. We spent two or three hours together just learning about OOB and I think it was when we had like Malia's second week or something. So it was nice to get out here. I think it's a good useful exercise for folks who are working with the community. Now we understand like important areas and features, and we got to see the ballpark and some really cool trails that we didn't know about.

George And Jamel, you know the town is committed already to about \$1.2 million to revamp the park here in Memorial Park which will be starting very shortly.

Jamel Really?

George Yeah, and I mean that's gonna be a big improvement. We've been working on that for about four or five years.

Jamel Will that be over the summer?

George Yes, correct. Hope to have it done July 27th. I think the final date was but the contract has already been awarded. So that whole Memorial Park is gonna have a big face lift. There will be underground lighting and overhead lighting to light it up a lot nicer and the walk up to memorial will be handicap accessible where it's not now. But it's about 1.2-1.4 million dollar project.

Marc is that town money or...

George town money and there's 16 lights that I've been selling for \$5 ,000 lights so people can put a plaque on or whatever they want. You know, it's nice to get people to commit to that type of stuff. So that's been working out pretty well. I think I have maybe five or six to sell that are left to sell. You know, it's a great area. You know, I built the basketball courts 25 years ago. We donated them and then just everybody getting together and say, "Hey, look, we're gonna do this in the park." And it's really good for Memorial Park so that people that serve, pretty old, they can't go up there and walk up there, so now it'll be handicapped accessible. That's a long overdue.

Jamel Check that out when its done.

George Yeah. And you know, in the summertime, a lot of kids and family, they take their children in the park, they eat their pizza, we have bands out there, we have the car show, we have the different events that go on out there, so now rather than have an extension cords all over the place, they'll be electrical boxes and stuff like that they can plug right into. So, you know, it's just something that we can do to bring people into town and enjoy the community that we all love.

Jeffrey It's a good picture.

Jamel I like that picture. Yeah, that was the, I think it was nice to include it.

Jean Is that a flock of birds in the back?

Malia I was gonna say that's a lot of seagulls.

Planner Foster You wouldn't believe how long we had to stand there waiting for those birds.

Jamel And it just snowed too, it was a really beautiful day. So that's all we have to share in terms of what we're going to tackle in the next few months. We're obviously here to answer questions or discussing.

Mar Pat I have a question for you. This will be a real life use case and it could probably apply to other topics. So I'm on the conservation commission and as we're looking at things were talking about like what Old Orchard Beach is doing regarding climate resilience and especially like as a response to last year's storms and you know what our point of view etc, etc. And then the question came to me because I was on this committee and I did not know the answer but I will know it in just a second. How much of our work here will, like how detailed would you get, or is it gonna be pretty high level? Just like say on the topic of climate, you know climate resilience, what, we're not gonna get into specific recommendations, or at some point would they be specific or we'll say high level we want the town to consider these things? Like what level of detail do we go?

Jamel I think Jeffrey could also probably answer that. But I'll just jump in and I think it depends. Yeah Comprehensive plans are generally pretty high-level and suggest further study in certain topics sometimes., but I think there is an opportunity to get as detailed as you want. It's really up to you guys. Planner Hinderliter Yeah, I expect it'll be, it will be high level and which will be one of the reasons why we spoke about the implementation of the comprehensive plan. It's one of the reasons why we're going to have a specific goals, policies and strategies section associated with implementation. So I think keeping it high level also keeps it more accessible for those who are ultimately responsible for doing the making of the specifics.

Marc Does the state specify what this should look like, what needs to be included in the law?

Jamel It does. It has a state checklist for the inventory chapters and a general checklist for the sections that need to be in the plan.

Marc Would it be wise to include that either in the report or in the appendix? So people will understand why it's taking this format.

Jamel You can.

Marc Yeah, we can, but is it wise to do it?

Jamel I've seen both. I don't really have a specific answer, it depends on if you are interested in concluding that. But it's available and easily placed in there.

Planner Hinderliter Peter, do you have any questions?

I don't have the document in front of me but I will be able to put it into perspective when I see everything tomorrow.

Planner Hinderliter Okay, so the one thing to remember our meetings we tried to schedule them like I think it was around the last Thursday of each month and they will certainly become more work related more than this introduction over the next couple of months. Jamel, Malia will be in touch, communication with me and Mike, and then you'll see information coming from the inventory sections and documents coming from Me and Mike. And I know they're very open, they're a bit excellent to work with. I know they would be open to any questions that you have, if there's anything you'd like me to do, to Malia and Jamel. I'm happy to do that too. So we don't have them that long. That's why, you know, everything with budgeting, everything was structured like this for our ultimate goal to have that first draft complete during the summer of this year, which we're on track.

Mary Pat So we've contracted for you to do the existing conditions and maps, not the future?

Jamel correct.

Mary Pat Okay, so got it. So we'll be doing the future piece that's why I'll ask you. Got it. Okay.

Jamel We're always available.

Mary Pat Okay understanding your scope of work got it.

Jamel Yeah, We're just existing conditions and maps, and these meetings.

Planner Hinderliter It's just a lot of heavy workload that is, you know, I've seen the three chapters at the drafts of the three chapters that you'll see in March. And they look great, they really do, the font, everything. It's just not like a black, like the stuff that I provide you guys. And you know, it's very professional, it looks very good. I think you'll be very happy with what you're seeing.

Marc Do you have to create a lot of this, or is it a lot available on a county wide basis?

Jamel We have templates, we help other communities, and most of the information is available in like the census, Maine DOT, where do you get a lot of the mapping from?

Malia A lot of it comes from the state or the county, but then there's certain things like Mike's been really great about helping me out with local sites and getting those mapped out too. So depending on what the topic is we can get more detailed as needed.

Jamel Yeah, but we do have a general template from working on these in the past. So it really makes the work a lot more efficient.

Planner Hinderliter But then they have to add the narrative that's more custom for Old Orchard Beach, especially like the history section. I think you'll find that section really interesting.

Jamel It was fascinating to me. There was a lot of that.

Planner Hinderliter Even population and demographics, you kind of hear about this stuff, but when you see it. George we used to have the largest congregate, congregate housing for the elderly in Old Orchard Beach, I don't know if we still do, throughout the state. Because at the time, I mean, you're going back 20, 25 years, we had Ocean Pines, Pleasant Wood, Centennial Plaza where the school used to be up on School Street. All that was turned into housing for the elderly so at one time we were, we led the way for that. I mean we're pretty aggressive and a lot of things we did way back then I mean you know Mr. Winch you were there. Even when AAA baseball everybody thought we were crazy when Jordan Colbert came in and we ended up landing AAA baseball up here with Cleveland Indians. They're AAA team. First year we had 187,000 people attend that

stadium. And then Jordan Colbert's didn't allow the kids in with their little cups to raise some money and the next year only like 90,000 people showed up. He caused his own demise.

Planner Hinderliter the history you don't see in the books.

George That land was owned by the angel property where the school is now. Then they built the chicken coop, which I call a chicken coop is a school. But the angel, that property was donated to the town of Old Orchard Beach when he just passed away, Jerry Plant was the town manager. That land was donated. And then our dump used to be over here where the Milliken Street parking lot was. That was our dump. And then Memorial Park was a parking lot. It used to park like 600 cars 25, 30 years ago. And Little River was always the best place to be. I mean, that's where I live right out over there. And they used to do a lot of hunting out there and stuff.

George Well, they built Dunegrass when he built Dunegrass in 1970, and then he actually had his own DEP permit for a stump, and it was supposed to be a stump area, and then he had to build them houses, and they had nothing for problems there. I mean, it was a vision way back then, even when I was on a planning board, that kind of knew what the town wanted to be, a mixed-use community. It would be great for the summer and then gradually move into the winter but winter's always been tough to open up. Even when we tried with different businesses staying open it's just difficult. But it's a great community for everybody I mean couldn't ask for anything better.

Marc We have a closed landfill in front of public works and behind then up above and up above where the brush dump is. I hope that we also map all of that too. I don't know what we can do with the solar panels.

George They've all been monitored. Most recently I was going to do a project over there and I did the gasses and everything came back very good. It was done, maybe, I guess when they put the sewer line from the golf course out to Smithwheel Road, where they put the gas company, I guess Casellas was over there? Yeah, they did that work over there, but yeah, but the original landfill was right here on Milliken Street when I was growing up.

Planner Hinderliter A high valley wetland right there.

Malia The dog loves it. Nice and stinky.

Jamel Well, thanks guys.

Planner Hinderliter Thank you.

Mary Pat Yeah, I'm looking forward to it.

Planner Hinderliter Thank you Peter. I'll get that stuff out.

George It is a pleasure meeting everybody too.

Mary Pat Yeah, nice to meet you.

Peter Thank you.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 6:42PM