

TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MINUTES
June 26, 2024 – 6:00 PM
Council Chambers
(Draft)

In attendance:

Lou Valentine
Win Winch
Jean Leclerc
Peter Guidi
Planner Michael Foster
Planner Jeffrey Hinderliter

Open Meeting

Meeting opened at 6:23PM

Discussion: Public process

Jeffrey The purpose of the meeting tonight is a couple of different things. Really the primary purpose is to discuss and to get some agreement on what we should do with the public process. So what the second sheet does is it goes over the pieces for this public process. And it's split into several different sections.

The first thing is what should we do?

Then the second piece is how will we do what we should do?

Then the third piece is the topics. They're all pretty broad right now.

And then a couple of key points to keep in mind. And then we'll conclude with my thoughts on this. So we'll start right up at the top. And really what I'd like is to try to get some agreement from you all to give us direction so we can refine our approach to you all preparation of our public process meetings so this doesn't have to be really a long meeting tonight there there's we just need to get that direction from you before we take those steps. A lot of this information in here is here to, based on the feedback that you've already provided us, and some of that feedback that you already provided us will be included in these pieces. It just wasn't necessary to include it for tonight.

So, the first piece is we'd like to get some agreement on what we'll do. So right now we have a survey identified and also public info sessions /workshops. What my thoughts are on that is, Again, this is also based on the feedback that you provided is we'll do a survey and then maybe one to two workshops at Town Hall right here in the council chambers so we can have a video camera so they can be on TV and then something, then an open house. And as I was explaining before, I haven't fleshed out this open house thought fully yet, but what I'm thinking of is that we'll all kind of gather and have an opportunity for people to just come in on their own time, to chat about what they like to do, what they're thinking about doing, and then that'll have kind of more of an intimate contact and allow us to have some one -on -one times. So that's what I was thinking about for what we'll do. What are your thoughts on that?

Win What's going to my mind is we almost keep sound like we're starting at the beginning. I think we need to present where we are, what we've really come up with for recommendations, I would think, you know, and then get some feedback on that. Hopefully that's what you're gonna, you know, I mean, people are really concerned about how it affects them and that comes down to zoning land use, as you mentioned. So I think we really need to that really have to get that out there early on I think and that's that'll provide the feedback no doubt about that but to do that Win do you think the survey and a couple of public info workshop sessions will

Win but they need something to comment on say I'm saying they're throwing out the stuff what are they gonna what are they gonna you Well, they need something to chew on, I would think.

Lou In other words, you need a rough draft out there. Call it a rough draft.

Jean Yeah, what we're thinking about, what we're looking at, I mean, infrastructure, you know, ballpark, basically we're gonna identify some certain things that we definitely need to go after. We need to take care of, sort of in the survey and then have it.

Jeffrey in the survey so we'll get to that and we'll get to that under the topics so I just I just want to be sure that you know how that how we do it like the survey or the, if you're okay with going with these public meetings these workshops

Lou I think that would work out really especially if we work it out here with hopefully at least six people so that we can have hate to say an oldie and a new and kind of explain what we've been talking about.

Jean even so though I mean you're gonna have more people that are gonna be willing to just take the survey and fill it out read it through see what we are I'm directing our focus on and they didn't make their comments and as well as include comments of what they think the good plan should be working on too because I mean the workshops are a good idea and stuff I mean we did that with the charettes and everything else when the ballpark became a big issue but it wasn't successful until the ballpark really became an issue You know what I mean? So we've got to put this stuff and say this is what we're going after this is the direction we're going What do you think? We can't just say hey, what do you think? We've got to put some topics and some direction that we're going in front of people for them to find me. Yeah, okay. Oh, we're looking at infrastructure. We're looking at sewerage looking at wastewater treatment plan. We're looking at roads and everything, looking at the ballpark, because to me this is a tourist town. And we've got to keep that in mind too. I mean there's a small population that is year -round here and we're always talking about going year -round and everything else, but we've got to have the infrastructure. We've got to take care of things in town and get a solid base. I mean we need to take care of ourselves here first and make sure the towns take care of and then the tourist area and the tourist time and everything else will take care of itself. But we've got to get something in front of people because to me I mean I think we've been spinning our wheels for quite a long time.

Jeffrey Well we're going to get to that. I just want to know how to get in front of people through the survey, through the workshop, are you okay with that?

Lou It's okay, but I think your public forum is a good stat, and then get into the survey. And for example, when you did it before up there in Wisconsin, which did you use most? The survey showed the most response or not? Because I'm going by a couple other towns that I know pretty well and people just didn't show up?

Peter People aren't going to show up and people aren't interested in paper surveys either. We don't need to print a survey at no point. Okay, the entire process needs to be online. Okay, we can distribute the information through various distribution channels online. We can create a QR code every retail in the city. We can put stickers everywhere that people can pull it up on their phone and fill it out. Nobody wants paper. And by the way, if you've got a bunch of paper back, what are you supposed to do with it? You're going to take all that information, put it into a spreadsheet, put it into a database, try to try to get something smart out of it. It's too much trouble. Survey monkey, get a survey monkey account, built it, I think we should put together three or four different surveys, each section in comprehensive, they should have a different survey, people can fill it out all at once or different periods of time, they can click into it, they can start it, they can stop it, they can finish it later, they don't have to finish it if they don't want to finish it. At the end of it, you know, you go in your control panel and survey monkey and all the data will be aggregated, it will give you all the information you need on the way people have responded and the only thing as I said my email I just think we there's no point in asking questions like so when did you stop you know beating your wife okay, do you care about natural resources, of course everybody cares about natural resources we know that, but do they know that if it's a frog on your property it's going to take three extra is to develop your land. And so I think that you know we let's not design a survey that that's a purpose is to validate you know what we want people to think because people are smart enough to figure out what we're trying to think because they don't know why you design the survey. Let's get to

the heart of what we're trying to ask them. Ask them simple questions. Make it so people can do it in 10 minutes and be done with it and distributed through the tower website distributed through the Chamber of Commerce website distributed through email distributed through QR codes and stores and you know. As far as the meetings are concerned I would do strictly Zoom meetings all online.

Jean As far as survey monkey, that's the way we did last time. We didn't use paper or anything like that, it's just stupid.

Planner Foster I think it should still be an option for anyone who doesn't have access or doesn't use a computer.

Peter You'll end up going into survey, monkey, and putting all the information in that they sent on the paper that's what you end up doing. So as far as the meetings are concerned discrete meetings covering specific subjects, so that you're not trying to the subject matters are damn broad. Yeah, you know, I mean we've been through this. I'm new to it but still it's so broad. I don't feel like I know 10 % of what I need to know

Jean Well, I mean to me we've got to get specific topics right break it up. I mean you know this town needs water treatment and we know we need to separate rainwater from sewer water I mean

Peter you can actually you know you can actually create the meeting online as a video so people could watch a 10 -minute presentation and then there'll be a survey at the end of it. You know and here it is you know ten-minute meetings by Jeff. You know different things you put the map up, and then you ask 15 questions about it and people click it off, it's done. If a hundred people see it, you're going to do way better than put them at the library and maybe get them back 15. That's my take. If I was doing it, that's how I'd do it.

Jeffrey Okay, that's good feedback, yeah. So that gives us something to work with for the preparation.

Peter That way you don't just get to the rooms, you don't have to count on people showing up, you don't have to just put it out there and for people who care, people who care can look, you know, if you want to, you could do like one, you could do like one presentation per zone, you know, and then say, here are the 15 questions that we're, you know, we want, you or areas that we want to discuss that we want you to click, click, click. It would be really great if it was all true or false. True, true, false, true, false. People's attention span is this big.

Planner Foster I could be good to have a combination not necessarily just strictly zoom but definitely offer it as an option for people who can't make it.

Peter Again, it's too big. I don't think anybody, how many people in town really have enough interest in the overall comprehensive plan. Most people just kind of want to know how it's impacted their piece. Yeah, make it easy for them to, you know, I want to see what's going on in the yard. I want to see what's going on in the commercial zone. So I want to make it short, make it sweet.

Jean Make sure to get a ballpark and, utilize landfills. - Just produce them and then tell people what you'd like to know from

Planner Foster I think that's actually an important point because I don't think everyone recognizes how important the Comp plan is and the potential impacts. And maybe that's a part of it, is making sure people understand that.

Peter Everybody's at home watching TV with Facebook on. And that's how they're gonna find this thing.

They're gonna be watching, somebody's watching TV and they're flying through Facebook and it's gonna come up and they'll watch it. We'll open the OS and we'll have some money. Give Postage service was at 65 cents a letter now, half of it gets thrown away and then it gets opened up, maybe even more than half. So, I mean to me, if I was doing that, that's how I would do it. I can't imagine, you know, trying to build it on printed paper and meetings.

Jeffrey So how do you all feel about that approach?

Jean Yeah, I mean, it's the approach we were using before. It was survey monkey and everything. I mean, to me, it's something they used before they should still use it.

Lou You have to have a good intro. Tell them what everybody... Why? How is the rough draft stage? Is it... How far away is it from the completion?

Jeffrey Well, it depends which draft you're talking about?

Lou No, the final rough draft?

Jeffrey The one that we were working on before things changed, we got some new members. That's in pretty good shape for its first complete draft. But the problem now is just recently we basically redid the entire future land use plan so that's going to change a bit some things and you all put a lot of thought and work into that and to just throw away those months I think is in my opinion is not a good idea. Once we get through these pieces, the speed will begin to pick up over the fall and winter months, but it's just getting this public process down, then finishing up a couple of the future land use pieces that will allow us to then get into the each individual sections of the comprehensive, of the inventory.

So okay that's good that gives me a good idea of what we'll do and also a good idea of how we'll do it. And pretty much what you've all commented on is really associated with what we do and how we'll do it. So if you're okay, let's just switch to the topics real real quick. And based on the feedback that I got from you all, these are the five kind of broad topics right now that stuck out the most to me.

And that's land use, infrastructure, road sidewalk sewer, public lands such as the ballpark, natural resources, and then quality of life.

So they're very broad.

Peter Affordability has slipped off the list.

Jean What about climate change and rising tide?

Jeffrey We could certainly include more topics. This is just what I got from that seemed to be the consensus among everyone, but we can certainly include more. Are there other topics you'd like to include? Affordability? Climate change?

Peter I think the biggest issue for me is I came through this process was that all of these various subjects affect affordability. People particularly lay people don't necessarily understand the connection between do you want houses to be safer? Yeah, I want houses to be safer. Good, we'll have, everybody's got to have a house sprinkled, yay, 30 grand more on your house. You know, I don't think people, there's no connection to that. I think we got to be careful that we don't leave people down the trail that simply increases the costs of doing everything. I mean, they don't understand the implications, the ramifications of asking them questions. So you can say, well, you know, 90 % of the people want a safer house. Well, of course they want a safer house.

Jeffrey The one thing is that there are some things that we just can't control, you know, when the federal government -- FEMA. Jean a lot of that's taken care of if somebody sells the house or whatever, then you gotta bring it up to code or whatever. I mean, that's a lot of that stuff. I mean, you want to save house in the house, but that's, if somebody owns a house, they don't need to upgrade or anything else. I mean, it's out of our control. I mean, the only thing we can do is we'll say, when properties are turned over, that needs certain requirements.

Peter But my point is we ask a series of questions that create a foundational approach to the way people are thinking. We shouldn't have preconceived notions of what those answers are going to be and what they're going to lead to. And I think that, you know, it's like I said, when did you start beating your wife? Well, I never beat my wife. Well, it's the way it was stopped.

Jeffrey that's critical for the survey.

Peter I feel like there are a lot of questions on things that I read, there's been a lot of questions I've seen come through, that's what I feel about it, it's like, you know, these questions are just leading, okay, and they're preconceived, you know, they've got preconceived notions and answers already built into the question. I don't think that we want to do that, I think it's a bad idea. People should understand, we should give people simple

questions they would trap you into creating a set of narrative, okay, and then that creates a degenerate for you, for us, and then for the future. That's all. It's just simple black and white questions that are easy to answer, and for somebody who doesn't have a ton of information in their hands that you can make a rational call for. That's it.

Jeffrey Okay, So when we, let's take a couple of these topics and think of a couple of specific subjects under these topics. So land use, what are, anything specific come to mind when you think of land use that we should ask folks?

Win Density. Density is tied into affordability here.

Peter if you ask people, you know, if you want, you know, do you want houses to be really crowded together?

Well, of course we don't want houses to be really crowded together. You know, do you want, you know, you want to have I left at 150 feet of ground sidewalk and we didn't go off, so I don't want to do that either. You know, so it's how you ask that question is kind of key, you know, and that's all. I mean, I think we have to, and I think affordability is at the top of the list for me. Should we guide all of our decisions on making sure that houses are affordable?

Jean Yeah, but you gotta remember this is a tourist town.

Peter I'm in the business. I own a hotel. I'm not the speaker. I get it.

Jean You gotta remember this is a tourist town.

Peter they just put the Local Restaurant on the market for \$650,000.

Jean That's out of our hands. That's market forces. That's out of our hands.

Planner Foster I think there are ways to help drive it or encourage it though definitely. Yeah, whatever the answer is I'm not sure. I think if we had it we'd be working on it now. Are we doing the, are you putting the surveys together are we?

Jeffrey yeah at least for our initial. Okay so density, affordability, how about aesthetics, any thoughts on that?
Lou that was brought up quite often in every topic that we had

Jeffrey How about things like setbacks and building stuff?

Planner Foster I think that kind of falls under density or with that topic, I guess.

Peter People don't, most people don't get it anyway.

Jean Yeah, I mean, we've got setbacks, we've got things like 20 feet. Back and out, 15 from the sides. There's a house that just went up right off Fern Park Ave that is two feet behind the house to the next property and the guy's fence on the next property. I mean, seriously? Why do we even have setbacks then? That house was just built.

Peter In the DD2, we have zero setback points. I didn't go right up to the property.

Jean It doesn't It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. It's supposed to be a 20, in my zone, in the first half area, it's supposed to be a 20 -foot setback in the back and 15 on the sides. Well, the guy's got like two feet. He can barely even open the back door without hitting the fence to the neighbor. I mean, why? Why even have these setbacks? I mean, that's part of the problem there. We've got rules, we've got setbacks, we've got this, we've got witnesses or whatever, but half the time we don't follow them. It's just It's a tourist town, it's a hockey tent town, and we're not doing anything to get out of it. Sorry, I'm just. I mean, we do have rules and stuff, but we we don't follow.

Marc Did you report that to codes? It still matters and there can be consequences.

Jean The house is built.

Win Was that a ZBA item then? Is that what happened? It got approved?

Jean I have no idea because it's there where the plumber, it's the plumber's little lot that is right next to a huge lot that borders Fern Park. He's on the other side and he parked his plumbing trucks there to start with. He wouldn't sell it to the woman that owned the big part of that lot.

Jeffrey I'm familiar with that. Just so you know. This is a whole other thing. Codes permitted that as a shed.

Jean It's not a shed, it's a house.

Jeffrey It's a whole separate topic, yeah, a whole separate thing, but, yeah. They're dragging me into that now. But nonetheless, Gene, you have a good point. I mean, you can create all these rules, but if people aren't following them what the hell is the use of the rules, so maybe part of land use is reconsidering that enforcement that code enforcement provision.

Marc historically I don't feel that our town wants to enforce because they don't like any controversy. We have rules regarding driveways. Nobody pays attention to that. You're allowed one driveway per road frontage. Let's put in two, you're required to up to a maximum width. That gets ignored. So he's got a good point. We don't follow our own rules. And I think it is because it becomes political and we are very concerned about any ill will.

Jean Any bad publicity.

Planner Foster So that could partly overlap with aesthetics because I was thinking design review and working with that committee how I feel like some of these comments kind of reiterate things I've heard them say about well what are we doing this for if there's no enforcement who's going to make sure it was done right or what happens when it wasn't done as approved.

Jeffrey And you know if we keep that in mind when it comes to our overall recommendations of the plan that might be something that we that we include as part of one of those big primary goals.

Lou Direction for following?

Jeffrey Okay. So public infrastructure, when we think of public infrastructure, I know this is definitely something Jean has. What specifically about that?

Jean Well, I mean, Like I mentioned, the separation of sewer and water so we don't overload the wastewater treatment plan, the upgrades to the wastewater treatment plan. Then you've got the roads, how everybody wants parking, we want sidewalks. Yeah, sidewalks is a big topic. Yeah, that was a big topic. So why don't we start looking at that, stop looking at going one way roads and putting a sidewalk on one side and parking on the other.

Planner Foster aren't the water treatment upgrades happening already?

Jean yeah well we've been harping on it long enough but things of that nature I mean the downtown do we need two lanes going down and two lanes coming up and parking on both sides? You know with the with the pandemic and everything else the the sidewalk cafes everything boomed. Outdoors, why don't we do that here? You know We've got a whole Milliken mills parking lot and we've got these buses that will bus people around for like nothing basically. Why don't we do that? Why don't we open up those sidewalks, make them inviting and have people want to come down and hang out on the area and watch things happen. I mean if you get more people to come in and hang out, you're gonna get more spending, you're gonna get more people that want to be around you, you're gonna get more business for the hotels, You're gonna get more business for restaurants.

Peter the 30-minute parking is a disaster. Yeah, it's been an absolute frigin disaster. I can't even tell you how many of my guests Okay, I've gone downtown and find themselves in the parking ticket Okay, you know, I'm carrying a damn piece of pizza You know, it's just that whole situation is absurd.

Planner Foster It costs a lot too to provide free parking

Peter Yeah, you've got you've got to believe me those guys the guys They're on a mission now to have those guys, you know. God love them, I guess, it's what they've been told to do. But, you know, that whole thing is a cluster. In 30 minutes, you'll be able to do, crap.

Marc It's also a very tough debate because the town certainly is looking for revenue. But if you do provide the parking, does that not enhance the value of the buildings? So you've got to get it one way or another because it costs to operate a town. The other thing on utilities, I think we need to remember how we developed. We developed at the shore and then back up the hill. So a lot of the infrastructure we have, sewer, water, whatever, was designed for being next to the shore. Now we're a couple of miles up, and we're connecting into it. We need

to look at the capacity of when a development goes in. Will what is downstream handle it? Whatever that utility is.

Jean I mean, the other part of that, too, we're talking about utilities, in the town looking for revenue, we need to start looking at landfills and using the ballpark to our advantage.

Jeffrey So we'll get into that next. Yeah.

Jean That's part of it though, with the utilities, I mean why don't we use the landfills with solar panels and draw up a couple of wind turbines and then hire somebody permanently to run the ballpark and run it correctly and use it every day of the week and every weekend. God knows that parking lot and hold a ton of cars.

Jeffrey Okay, so public land so ballpark and remember these are questions that were posing to the public. So and it's very important its not bias, that you don't build in bias in the questions. So like with the ballpark, what type of question do you think should be asked?

Jean Do you want to settle the ballpark? You'll get a ton of responses. Because that's what brought everybody into the town hall and we had what 13 different teams with the charettes and everything else because nobody wanted to sell that ballpark. That was what Jim Thomas who tried to sell that out from underneath the town. But I mean you gotta get some questions, a bunch of controversial questions that'll get people riled up If you ask me, it did passion going.

Peter I just felt it was a little schizophrenic of the town that, you know, want to see a vibrant tourist community and have a ballpark that used to have 20, 30 major concerts a year.

Jean Oh, yeah. CPAC with Frank J. Russo was running the place. I loved it.

Peter It's great shows. You know, lots of revenue came in at a time. Lots of people downtown. Exactly. And all of a sudden, you know, and, you know, we need to develop, you know, more business, well shit, let's use this stuff we have in front of us.

Jean Exactly. Use our assets that we have.

Peter I don't see the problem with it. Oh, it's noise. Traffic,

Jean Yeah, but you know what though, when we had concerts with Frank J. Russo's in another place, they made the road, leaving the ballpark, two lanes going out of town. And they shuffle people right out.

Peter Can be done. We just said, we were just friendly at the business in general.

Jean Exactly. So you can have like discounts or something if you come to the ballpark stay here for the night Planner Foster I think that's one of the problems here is instead of like thinking forward people are still stuck and are focused on things like the ballpark like what's the future of Old Orchard? It might not even include the ballpark at all, right? So how do you incorporate that but look beyond it at the same time? Like maybe there's another asset to use beyond that. There's other properties. The other assets, the beach. You know what happens when the school consolidates and moves with that land? Things like that. Thinking bigger.

Jean Yeah, I mean that's a whole another thing. Do we really need a high school? Can't we consolidate with somebody else?

Jeffrey So, when you think of the beach, again, a controversial type of question could be development associated with the beach. Do you think a question like that might be a good one too?

Peter Access to the beaches is a real big issue. When the railroad came through this town, it cut this town in half, it hurt the town. It continues to hurt the town. And I spoke with George Kerr at great length about his efforts to try to get extra, extra controlled access across the tracks. And he was like, you know, we had Olympia snow, we had everything lined up, we could not get through, you know, the time Pan Am, CSX on the land, you know, I've been in touch with those guys and they're tough. But the only suggestion that I've heard, you know, since I've been a part of this is, you know, something to do with maybe buying an indoor, you know, train station that is a part of that, and kind of walk over, you know, for podash trains, and you know, I don't love that idea, but at this point, you know, I take anything, okay, that opened up pathways across the railroad tracks, at

least one or two other spots. It would set the bottom of the Heath Street, it would certainly be the right spot for it. I mean, I didn't even leave a piece of my property, okay, to open it up.

Jean Well, he's across the street from, you know, the Brunswick..

Peter Right, I mean, I'm right there. I'm right there, you know, it could happen. It's the railroad, you know, workbook, but I mean, the bottom, I can't tell you, I mean, every night I sit in front of my property and I see 20, 30 people try to figure out where to cross. You know, occasionally I've got kids who run through my property to jump the fence, you know, because they've got no clue how to get through. So, I mean, my point being that if you're talking about the beach, access to the so called plant, you know, shouldn't it be better access to the beach, yes or no? People would say yes. Yeah, Yeah, I would think so too.

Jean The beach is the big asset we have. That's why people come here.

Peter More access to the beach. More use of the beach.

Planner Foster What does that mean though? More parking, more...

Peter Parking is a real big issue, you know, and whether a shuttle from a lot like at the ballpark or something can make it to anybody's guess who is actually going to pay for it, the town. People are going to pay for it.

How's that going to work? Parking is a real issue. I mean, people who own parking lots in this town, want to see the city raise their parking prices, not drop their parking prices.

Jean If we've got a shuttle coming out of the ballpark, we can have a shot down and bring people everywhere.

Marc It's interesting to watch. The prices vary on how nice the day is, but yeah, it should be parked. We only have Milliken Street, and that's not much. Oh, excuse me, on -street parking, but there's not a lot.

Jean In the worst case, you can always build a garage, build more floors on the beach. Right, there's

Marc But also remember the usage. I think a parking garage is great, but you're going to have nine months where it's not going to be used and that makes it very difficult to pay for.

Jean It would be used a lot more if we take away a lot of parking spaces just make the parking garage a prime parking area.

Jeffrey Okay, any more on public land?

Peter more use. More use people there's the unique pieces of property we have in the one that comes to mind is the big little river area around the back of East Grand Avenue I mean that should develop nicely for public use. This should be access. There should be good parking. There should be the ability for people to run canoes down there. That's a beautiful fantastic area.

Jean mentioned the kite track in that area. Can we develop that with the rise in tides and everything else?

Peter I was a lifeguard, 40 years ago. I sit on the beach every day, that beach is still in the same god damn place as it was 40 years ago. I'm not worried about it. 40 years from now, the beach is still in the same place.

Jeffrey I think one of the things, when we say what's in our control, what's not in our control, there are state regulations that we may want to do that and may be a great idea, but it's totally out of our control because the state can say, you know, that's a protective wetland, you're doing nothing in there. But still, it's for a question, for a question purpose. We can put that out there. And then when it gets to the implementation of our plan, they can.

Peter That could be such a change. Somebody said the other day we need another draw on that. Use the natural resources, natural land, more public use of it. To me, that would be awesome. The ballpark should be vibrant, thriving, as hard as it should be. It should be rocking and rolling up there all summer long, and there should be no slow down on it. And with development, no bars help development. And I owe you an apology because I said once you shouldn't get tied up in the planning department. You said which planning department you working with. And you guys have done a great job of seeing sure of the things get done around this town. I don't see people getting held up, but I'd give their office even more discretion, okay? Let's get it done. Let's put people to work, let's put people into old origin, let's double the population of this town. Period. Do it quickly while we're still alive.

Planner Foster Maybe that's a good question for the survey around like population or growth and I don't know how, what the question would even be, do you want to double the population is probably not a good way to put it but I'm sure there's a way to formulate a question around population growth and what's appropriate.

Peter well there's certainly some third rails I mean you know we all know what happened when people tried to address the short -term rental issue, which I don't think is part of the comp plan issue anyway, but we don't want to wander into, you know, we don't want to wander into the third rails.

Jean Yeah, everything comes back to this is a tourist town, so that's going to be a natural thing to be. Peter Actually, I see it comes back to more of a what you said that the code's been abused. As a hotel owner, by the way, the numbers that have been produced, I think they're a little faulty.

Jeffrey What number?

Peter On how many Airbnb's are in town. The company that did the research. I think they've overlooked two significant points. Number one, a lot of hotels use Airbnb as a form of distribution in their rooms to begin with. Even if they use in GDS, like Bookings and Expedia, they're also on Airbnb. So if you were just to count those rooms, you might be double counting hotel rooms. Number two, a lot of the hotels that turned over to condos, okay, even though they're condos, they're still essentially about hotels, okay, and they're on Airbnb. So those are really the units we care about. That company needs to be more discreet in terms of, you know, figuring out what we're trying to understand is how many single -family homes, okay, have got short -term rental licenses, have left the residential marketplace and that are now in the short term premises. That is the piece of information.

Jean Typically condos, you can't do it because of the bylaws and the home owners association.

Peter But a lot of the motels that turn over as hotels, as motels, to condos, that's exactly, that was the whole sale. You buy a condo, you get to stay down here three or four to four weeks a year, and then you rent it for the rest of the year, and you make enough money to pay your mortgage, that's the whole plan. So if you're from Massachusetts, You want to come here for three weeks and you want to you want to rent it the rest of the time making money to pay for it That's the play and then the hotel owner gets to start a couple hundred or you know four five hundred thousand dollars out of it. He gets to go off to Florida. No, we're going to get so that's the whole play. So but that's not necessarily when we ask Airbnb in short term rental. That's not necessarily the unit we're considering. What we're trying to understand is how many single -family homes that we lost to short term rental? That's what we're trying to understand. And I think that plays into the comp plan a little bit with density and some of the overlays we talked about because my argument's been, unless we change the economics of the building of the development property, then we're not going to compete with that commercial use, so we've kind of gone through that.

Planner Foster Is that what they're trying to get out of the short -term rental stuff or is it more maximizing revenue by ensuring that everyone who's renting is licensed.

Jeffrey That's why they did the study. All right, can we just move on. All right natural resources the next topic if we think of a question to ask for you know natural resources our biggest ones the ocean.

Jean How do we protect the beach and the dunes, because I went out on the day of caring, we went to Cape Elizabeth, Crescent Beach, and they had dunes, like three quarters of them were gone, and you've got to realize that we're going to be getting storms, bigger and bigger storms as time goes on, so.

Win I mean, somehow we're going to have to address that too.

Jeffrey Yeah, Yeah, I think that's really a very important part of this comp plan.

Marc Yesterday, Portland Press, the front page story is what's going to be happening with flooding. So it's got to be part of this as.

Jean the maps are already out.

Planner Foster Does that mean you try to direct growth out of those areas or encourage growth out of those areas?

Jean That or start looking to beef up things down in the beach so that they don't erode so bad. Somehow some way to fight off the storms.

Peter Well, there's five feet of sand missing, okay, at low tide. The high tide, the dunes, and the dunes, and the high sand is exactly where it was last year. It hasn't changed a damn bit. I can tell you that for sure but we've lost about five feet of sand at low tide. If you go down around the pier, You don't want to go, I don't know how deep those are in the sand anymore You know, and if it were me, I'd dump 200 tons of rock underneath that pier right now.

Marc Isn't the Army Corps of Engineers addressing the breakwaters at Camp Ellis? Literal drift is north, so whatever they do could pull sand out of here.

Peter In 1978, those pipes were right where they are right now. And I stepped over everyday when I went out on the beach. Those pipes are exactly where they were when I was 18 years old. And then when I was 18 years old, you can see them. I haven't seen them. You know, 35, 40 years. But I've seen them before. I've never seen the rock the ledge under the pier, first time I've ever seen that, so that's it.

Win Oh, that's right, I was amazed when I saw those pictures.

Peter Yeah, I've never seen it. Yeah. And, you know, there's a lot of sand gone.

Marc And it's heading north. It needs to be sensitive to what our neighbors are doing.

Peter All the sand is 600 yards off 600 yards off the coast, it's all sitting out there, it's come back in, but that's where it all is right now and you can see it when people are walking out, 150 -200 yards and they're still waist deep, that's the same as we know it, pulled up, it's coming back, it'll all be back.

Marc I think you have more confidence than I do.

Peter You've seen it happen before, it'll happen again.

Jeffrey what do we think about natural resources and land use, like for example right now we're one of the only towns in Maine that regulates, that has shoreland zoning standards based on an elevation, not based on where water actually exists. It's where water could potentially exist. It's the highest annual tide. So, planning board members know very well. I mean, we have two items up on our agenda this month where if you could walk right outside, Marc knows very well too, you could walk right outside and not see water. But because there is a certain elevation attached to a point in the ground, it's regulated as if that water could be there. And then what that does is it places a pretty restrictive set of standards on development, additions, redevelopment, tear down, rebuild of homes. When we think of protection of natural resources, that's I'll just say because not many municipalities or I think only one other does that. Should we go to extreme more extreme types of methods like that in order to ensure there is protection for natural resources or?

Jean Yes, I think so.

Marc We are somewhat unique. We're pretty, as a community, we're pretty low. Until you get to this building, everything is lower. We exacerbated the problem because people don't understand the wetlands? They get filled in. Hey, I can put a house here. I just have, give me 10 loads, and I'll build a house. What's the consequence? They don't get it. Every time you fill something in, there's less capacity. And that's got to be controlled. Maybe education is a big piece of that. But everybody, I want a garden. I'm gonna fill it in. Every darn shovel's impacts are flooding.

Planner Foster I think even the planning board might be guilty of playing into that at times, 'cause there seems to be things that get permitted for fill that sometimes is, I don't think there's anything to prevent it in the ordinance but I wonder if it should be and it just seems like the way for them to get around it with DEP is just to pay whatever the fee is which for some people that's doesn't really matter.

Marc yeah we've got to prevent it because everybody's going so yeah I think we should enjoy and we should legislate.

Peter Where is this flooding here.

Marc Ocean Park.

Peter Ocean Park's been flooding for a thousand years. - Well, I don't think it's for a thousand, but yes, it does, it does, but

Planner Foster I think that might be under infrastructure. Should we tie that in the infrastructure?

Jean Maybe that's part of the climate change. So you start thinking about East and West Grand.

Win There's nobody here probably in the 80s when all the high rises or mid rises are going up. The condos, yeah. And it's of course the market, it's saturating the market, but the state came along and said no more. You can only build if it can be moved, picked up and moved back in case of a hundred -year storm. This was back in the 80s, and that was our first taste of what, you know, the change that was going on. I mean, you know, people get in the limbed anyways, but the state came along and said, "No more. Unless you can pick it up and move it." So, I mean, that was, that's back in the 80s. So here we are, 50 years.

Peter Incidentally, my house in Fort Myers Beach was the fourth one back from the ocean. All that's left in that house is a slag. If you want to rebuild, if you want to rebuild the house, it has to be 18 feet in the air. The entire time I live there everybody I was talking I wonder if the big ones coming I wonder if the big ones coming I wonder if the big ones coming you're gonna leave the island you know guess what the big one finally came all right and I knew it was coming.

Marc But our action is kind of exacerbated the problem.

Jean It's just it, I mean moving forward we've got to stop thinking about that the past is the past.

Jeffrey Yeah. Okay. Quality of life, it could be that it could be just one question you know what is what does quality of life mean to you and that's because I think anything else injects bias or has a potential.

If we add anything I would say what is quality of life in Old Orchard Beach to you?

Jean what do you think would improve your quality of life

Planner Foster should we try to tie it into comp plan topics or have it be an open question like that?

Jeffrey It's up to you guys.

Lou yeah just to be cynical the quality of life on east ground and west ground would be great if it were quiet down about just all the motorcycles. There's a house down near us, I almost bought it, but the damn house was on West Grand, no way in hell. You can't hear yourself talk. You know which one it is,

Win Yeah, I know, I know. My wife complains all the time. - I'm straight out.

Jeffrey I really think you don't add anything else to that question. You just let people's thoughts run as radical as they want. Once we start poking in things then for that particular question because the insight that we could get from that question could then be plugged into a lot of the other sections.

Peter If we do all this online you know none of this is static you know you get it online you get some results and it reveals some issues and you feel like you need to dig a little deeper put in other pieces and put another piece in, fire out another one for people. If you make it quick enough and you make it easy enough, so people literally don't have to click on it, 30 seconds of you saying something about something that you're looking for, six questions, they go click, click, click, click, click. You'll get a lot of replies. People's attention span is about this big.

Marc But it's where you get people in the room to feed off each other.

Jean are we going to be talking about natural resources or whatever development, like Ross Road other areas behind the ballpark, like next to me, you know, 'cause there's a few lots and stuff that are pretty big lots next to me, we've also got some other open areas that can be developed.

Jeffrey What I see with this where we are right now with this because it's going to be more of a town wide and we're trying to keep it short and simple and direct and you know a 10 -minute survey, when we begin to that begins to get it at a micro more of a micro level which is stuff what we're going to talk about internally but for the survey purposes I would recommend that we avoid it just yet.

Peter the other question is this survey really just the technicality that we're trying to get through so we can submit the whole thing to the council you know if that's the point okay then we should really get it done quickly and get and they'll just get this thing to the council.

Jeffrey The statute that controls Comp Plan requires a public process. And how you do it as a state's a little flexible is flexible, like it doesn't say you must do a survey. But a survey seemed like a good idea in this age, especially with electronic.

Peter Yeah, and you can make, I think the idea that it's static isn't necessary, that it can change and you can, if we develop a new communication with the community, you know, so that there's a story that you're telling over a period of time that's reaching, you know, people who care. You know, we should probably even just have a Facebook group, you know, a page that you can start posting to, so people who are interested. But I think we keep it to screen questions, specific short presentations, you know short number of questions, you know that way you can get people's attention for short periods of time and if you can people don't have to invest more than five-ten minutes on an issue they might do it. They have to do more than that.

Jean what else is on the list?

Jeffrey So really that's all unless you guys want to add something you can of course you might think of something between now and our next meeting but what I wanted to do was to get your feedback so like we could create something so you could look at it and say yeah you're going in the right direction we recommend you do this this and this, add this, take away that so for our next meeting we're gonna stick to that the third Wednesday of the month so whatever the third is.

Peter You use chat GPT?

Jeffrey I don't.

Peter Give it a shot and do the survey for you real quick.

Jeffrey I don't want it, I don't, that's just artificial.

Peter No, that's great.

Jeffrey I need to keep my brain thinking too, okay, Peter? So what I'll do is, and Mike and I, we'll put a survey together with questions, or just maybe a list of questions, a general structure, get your thoughts on, you give us feedback. Also, we're gonna think about more about an electronic meeting, an open house, and have a little more structure for that so you can all decide on that at the next meeting. But really, the purpose of this meeting, this is a very good meeting, so I appreciate it, was to get this feedback, so.

Good & Welfare

Lou You know what I'm just thinking? I ran into something today with the registry of Motor Vehicles on the thing I had to fill out. But it actually had a thing on the bottom, okay? Would shock the hell out of me that they would do this. Do you have any comments? Actually, okay? And I'm just saying maybe everybody might put in something general, you might get more response out of that stupid comment section than you do on the survey.

Jeffrey Yeah, yeah, absolutely. That's a good idea and what we could do is.

Marc If we don't keep this plan alive, then we've wasted our time, and I think that is a problem because the council, they're busy, they pass it, they forget it, we I have got to keep this alive, and it's no way for me to do it. What's our plan of 25 years old? Yeah, so that's unreasonable. Oh, my gosh, that's crazy. So we have got to ask the public, how do we keep this alive? Is this why you're doing it? I'm trying. And keep it part of the process.

Jeffrey We are, towards the conclusion of this. We're writing an implementation chapter. That would be a good time for feedback from the public because that's the chapter will include that information. So keep that in the back of your mind. So thank you everyone. Thank you.

Peter Thanks Jeffrey.

Jeffrey Thank you.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:29PM