



City of Presque Isle, Maine

Planning Board Minutes

City of Presque Isle, 12 Second Street, Presque Isle, Maine 04769
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Sargent Family Community Center

February 16, 2023 @ 6:00 PM

Planning Board Members Present: Bruce Roope (Chairman), Ward Gerow (Vice-Chairman), Jayne Farrin, Rachel Murchison, David Perry, Stacey Walton, & Richard Engels (Alternate),

Planning Board Members Absent: Sean Nordenhold

Others Present: Galen Weibley, Director of Economic & Community Development, Tim St. Peter, Code Enforcement Officer; Tim Roix, BRSA; Carolyn Lyford, Jim Lyford, & Becky Martinez

1. Call to Order

Chairman Roope called the meeting to order at 5:58 PM. Mr. Engels was made a voting member for the meeting given the absence of Mr. Nordenhold. Total members present seven voting members.

2. Minutes Approval: Review and approve draft minutes from January 19, 2023.

A motion by *Ward Gerow*, second by *David Perry* to approve the January 19, 2023 Planning Board Meeting Minutes. **Vote – unanimous 7-0**

Jayne Farrin stated she would like paper applications for all meeting material for future meetings.

3. Public Hearing for Proposed Changes to Chapter 16 of the City's Land Use Code

Before this item began, *Rachel Murchison* recused herself from the Board and discussion citing her personal conflict with owning livestock in a residential zone. Mr. Weibley offered an overview of the final changes that have not been reviewed by the Planning Board as well as options available during and after the hearing.

Chairman Roope opened the floor for public comment regarding the proposed changes to the City's Land Use Code.

Ms. Carolyn Lyford (30 Braden Street): Inquired into the definition of non-commercial keeping of livestock. Mr. Weibley answered with an overview of the Maine’s Right to Food Constitutional Amendment and the vagueness of the current Code’s definition for “Agriculture” which only pertains to lease or sale of agriculture and not non-commercial or personal sustenance uses of livestock.

Ms. Dawn Daniels: Addressed the Board inquiring about the provisions of the ordinance (what is allowed, what are the standards, etc.). She generally supports keeping of livestock but wants more information. Mr. Weibley offered a detail overview of the regulations and how the process would play out in the current proposed changes.

Mr. Scott Carter (57 Fleetwood Street): Mr. Carter inquired into what species will be allowed in residential areas vs. rural zones.

Mr. Jeremiah Donovan (14 Hillside Street): Mr. Donovan performed a piano solo number for the planning board regarding chickens to lighten the mood of the hearing.

Mr. Lewis Cousins (City Assessor): Mr. Cousins addressed the board and submitted a memo detailing the concerns of Assessing of potential economic obsolescence for properties in residential areas.

Mr. Jim Lyford (30 Braden Street): Mr. Lyford addressed the board with his concerns of the unknown of opening up residential areas for chickens and animals.

Chairman Roope closed the public hearing after receiving no more public comments.

A motion by **Richard Engels**, second by **Stacey Walton** to send the proposed changes to the City’s Chapter 16 Land Use Code Ordinance to Council for adoption.

Discussion took place of Planning Board members regarding the proposed changes:

Jayne Farrin: Ms. Farrin mention she is not opposed to all the site plan changes made by the board throughout the ordinance but is concerned with the provisions related to keeping of livestock in residential areas. She cited the desire of her family to move to the city life of Presque Isle for its public services (Police, Fire, Utilities) and quality of life of not being surrounded by livestock odors and noise as the reason for moving to Presque Isle. She believes keeping of livestock in residential areas will be a detriment to the quality life for neighborhoods in the residential zones.

Vice-Chairman Gerow: Considered during the drafting process how the keeping of chickens will be any different from the current keeping of cats and dogs in residential areas. He believes we have added hearing components to address concerns of neighbors regarding noise, smell and number of animals to lessen an impact greater than we currently have for other domestic pets. Mr. Gerow disagreed with the speculative concerns regarding declined assessed values of surrounding properties citing no evidence submitted.

David Perry: He agreed with the fully enclosed for barn structures that was suggested during public comment.

Stacey Walton: She mentioned the provision of a public hearing for residential areas alleviates her concerns with the future impact of non-commercial keeping of livestock by allowing abutters their due process of demonstrating evidence to the Zoning Board of Appeals members why all submitted plans will cause a detriment to their quality of life.

Chairman Bruce Roope: Believes with the change in Maine's Constitutional Amendment we need to strike a balance between Home Rule Authority in lessening the impact on neighbors while honoring the new rights granted under the constitution. **Chairman Roope** also shared his opposition to the fully enclosed barn structure during public hearing given his experience in agriculture this will only intensify odor.

Mr. Gerow mentioned some of the provisions in the Land Use Code were not updated from the January meeting. Citing Animal Equivalent Unit instead of Animal Unit in Use Standards and species prohibited to include turkey and geese.

A motion by **Richard Engels** and second by **David Perry** to amend the original motion to include Mr. Gerow's changes. **Vote – unanimous 6-0-1 (Murchison abstaining)**

Amended Motion: A motion to send the proposed changes to the City's Chapter 16 Land Use Code Ordinance to Council for adoption with the suggested changes added by Mr. Gerow. **Vote - Passed – 4 support (Roope, Gerow, Engels, & Walton) – 2 opposed (Farrin & Perry) -1 abstention (Murchison).**

4. Citizen Comments:

Mr. Arthur Moreau (133 Parkhurst Siding Road): Applauded the Board for their professionalism and demeanor in deliberations during the meeting and also wanted to thank the Recreation Department for opening the facilities for this meeting.

5. Other Business

Mr. Weibley shared an overview of what a Land Bank is and how it will be an important economic development tool for tax-acquired and city-owned properties back into productive reuse. Mr. Weibley requested a letter of support addressed to the City Council should the Planning Board agree this is a good project to explore.

A motion by David Perry and second by Stacey Walton to authorize a letter of support for exploring a City Land Bank Authority by the Planning Board Chairman to the City Council. **Vote – unanimous 7-0**

MSAD#1 Broadband discussion was kept for the next meeting given the technology limitations in the meeting room.

Other Business (Continued)

Mr. Gerow inquired what the emergency plan is for the City for when a power outage occurs in the dead of winter. Specifically, he is concerned not knowing the location of our emergency shelter when communication lines are down. Chairman Roope agreed that an inquiry should be suggested to the City Council to look into this for future planning efforts.

A motion by *Chairman Roope* and second by *Ward Gerow* to authorize signed correspondence from the Planning Board Chair to the City Council. **Vote – unanimous 7-0**

6. Adjournment of the Planning Board Meeting

A motion by *David Perry*, second by *Jayne Farrin* to adjourn the Planning Board Meeting at 6:57 PM. **Vote – unanimous 7-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Galen Weibley

Planning Board Members
Bruce Roope, Chair, Ward Gerow, Vice-Chair
Jayne Farrin, Dave Perry, Sean Nordenhold,
Stacey Walton, Rachel Murchison, & Richard Engels, Alternate