



# TOWN OF BAR HARBOR

93 Cottage Street

Bar Harbor Maine 04609

## Comprehensive Planning Committee

### Meeting Agenda

**April 13, 2022, 6:00 – 8:00 PM**

### Via Zoom Meeting Platform

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Members of the public may view the proceeding by joining the Zoom webinar. Instructions on how to join the Zoom webinar and to offer comment during the public hearing portion of the meeting are posted online at: <https://www.barharmoraine.gov/517/Comprehensive-Planning-Committee>.

In order to assure your full participation in this meeting, please contact Tammy DesJardin in the Planning & Code Enforcement Department to inform her of any special requirements you might have due to a disability. Please call 288-3329.

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|---|-------------|
| 1. Call to order  | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 2. Excused absences   | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 3. Zoom logistic, review of meeting agenda and adoption   | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 4. Adoption of March 9, 2022 minutes  | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 5. Public comment period  | 6:05 – 6:15 |
| 6. Update on other related efforts  | 6:05 – 6:20 |
| 7. Public engagement:   | 6:20 – 6:30 |
| a. Review outreach tasks underway and discuss upcoming tasks  |             |
| b. Identify events/opportunities for committee members to help with staffing table on June 14/July/August |             |
| c. Review draft Polco questions   |             |
| 8. Existing conditions:   | 6:30 – 6:40 |
| a. Overall update   |             |
| b. Housing Needs Assessment   |             |
| 9. Parks, open space and recreation Discussion  | 6:40 - 7:10 |
| 10. Community facilities Discussion   | 7:10 – 7:40 |
| 11. Next steps  | 7:40 – 7:45 |
| — Reminder: next month's meeting is on May 16   |             |
| 12. Public comment period   | 7:45 – 7:55 |
| 13. Adjourn   | By 8:00 PM  |

# TOWN OF BAR HARBOR

## Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting

### March 9, 2022, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

### MINUTES

The meeting was held via Zoom.

Comprehensive Planning Committee members present were Elissa Chesler, Greg Cox, Kevin DesVeaux, Cherie Galyean, John Kelly, Jim Mahoney, Calistra Martinez, Michael McKernan, Kristin Murphy, Misha Mytar, Val Peacock, Allison Sasner, Kyle Shank, and David Woodside. Jacquie Colburn was absent.

Staff present were Planning Director Michele Gagnon, Assistant Planner Steve Fuller, Code Enforcement Officer Angie Chamberlain, and Deputy Code Enforcement Officer Mike Gurtler.

Consultants present were Steve Whitman, Liz Kelly and Eric Halvorsen.

**1. Call to order**

Chairperson Shank called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

**2. Excused absences.** Jacquie Colburn as excused.

**3. Zoom logistic, review of meeting agenda and adoption.**

On a motion by Elissa Chesler, seconded Kevin DesVeaux, the agenda was adopted (14-0)

**4. Adoption of February 9, 2022 minutes**

On a motion by Greg Cox and a second from Elissa Chesler, the minutes were adopted (14-0).

**5. Public comment period**

No comments were made.

**6. Public Engagement**

Liz Kelly provided an update on the flyer, website, and other outreach related tasks. Additional photos are still being sought, and materials are being migrated from the town website to the new project website to avoid confusion. The flyer now reflects the feedback received by Committee members and is ready for distribution as a print and digital outreach strategy. Kyle Shank and Michele Gagnon agreed to coordinate flyer distribution with the Committee members. Liz Kelly will coordinate with staff and Val Peacock on the idea of crowdsourcing additional images.

Steve Whitman explained that the first Polco question will be circulated in April. After a short discussion it was decided that the first batch of Polco questions should include a combination of open-ended questions that relate to what people love about Bar Harbor, topics of concern, questions the plan should address, and could include a request for ideas on what the initiative should be named.

Steve Whitman and Michele Gagnon are working on a short project announcement video that will be ready for circulation by early April.

## **7. Existing Conditions**

Steve Whitman provided an update on the status and timeline of the existing conditions work being completed by the consulting team. The draft report will be delivered to the Committee in May, and the goal is to have a revised report for the public in June. The online form is still available for Committee members to use if topic specific information or ideas come to mind. On March 7 and 8, both Steve Whitman and Eric Halvorsen visited Bar Harbor and conducted interviews to inform the work of the consulting team.

## **8. Economy Discussion**

Eric Halvorsen provided a short introduction to the topic of the local economy and economic development. This included an overview of the goals and analysis suggested by the State of Maine. Mr. Halvorsen also explained that he will begin to address these and other items while completing the analysis that is underway for Bar Harbor. The goal is to identify and communicate that the local economy functions as a distinct ecosystem and is dependent on many other topics being explored during this comprehensive planning process.

The following feedback and ideas were offered by Committee members during this discussion of Bar Harbor's economy:

- Affordable housing for mid-scale working people is the most pressing economic issue.
- Desire for more year-round businesses, especially by College of the Atlantic students, including coffee shops and restaurants - but how do we define year-round?
- More year-round housing is needed to support expanded business activity year-round.
- Fishing/aquaculture industry gets marginalized because of cruise ships and other access related issues.
- Lack of childcare and childcare slots on the island impacts many people and large employers.
- While there always seems to be interest in more year-round businesses Bar Harbor has many things other many communities do not.
- It is important to recognize what we have already and describe what is missing that we want to encourage.
- Lack of housing impacts the ability of businesses to attract and retain employees, and lots of income is lost when employees commute off island.
- 100 open positions exist at Jackson Lab, with wages above the state median income, and housing is the biggest detriment to filling them.

- Need the infrastructure in place to support this housing growth. Including water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure which is largely constrained.
- COVID has also impacted the labor pool, and the ability for businesses to stay open in winter, etc.
- Encourage a diverse economy to be more resilient to the threats to tourism.
- If we're going to use policies to guide economic development, how much will they make a difference knowing market forces will still drive business activity to some degree?
- What do we mean by housing need? Is there a number of units needed?
- It is important to clarify that many tourism-based businesses support year-round activity and employ some staff year-round.
- Community is torn - some want tourism to grow, some do not, and overcrowding in summer is already an issue.
- Acadian National Park is already working to limit access to summer visitors.
- Many businesses run a loss to remain open in winter.
- In the summer months many of year-round residents do not frequent local businesses (retail and service) that are overrun with tourists.
- The Town Council is currently looking at existing infrastructure needs. Are we trying to meet the demand experienced last summer?
- Examining tourism on the island should be looked at through a holistic lens - it is really an issue beyond the town including the island, region, state, and country.
- There are many local entrepreneurs and self-employed residents, and a large creative and craft-based population.
- A resilient local economy is desirable. The past disruptions experienced by the tourism industry are an indication that a more diverse economy is needed.
- Opportunity to nurture and capture College of the Atlantic graduates and others to set up businesses.
- Not much interest in increasing the amount of land area zoned for commercial uses.
- Market forces will likely prevent any scaling back of the tourism sector.
- The condition and capacity of the sewer system needs to be addressed, already strained and requires improvements.
- Sidewalk capacity is already a huge issue, and there are not enough places to walk during tourist months. Cellphone capacity and roadway capacity are also an issue during summer months.
- A sidewalk assessment has been completed and Public Works has great data on this. A road condition assessment is in the budget for this coming year.
- Outside of the Downtown there is less infrastructure and other needs like open space and natural resource protection are priorities.

## **9. Transportation Discussion**

Liz Kelly provided a short introduction to the topic of transportation. This included an overview of the most common aspects of transportation planning as they relate to the goals and analysis suggested by the State of Maine. Ms. Kelly touched on the inventory, assessment, and issue identification work underway and some of the earlier plans and studies informing this effort.

The following feedback and ideas were offered by Committee members during this discussion of Bar Harbor's economy:

- Data from the Public Works Department should be used to identify the highest priority needs.
- In the downtown, road capacity is already a huge issue, along with poor sight distance, narrow roads, parking space issues (lots of parking on roads that are really too narrow to accommodate parking), and dangerous crossing areas.
- Assess bridge conditions in Bar Harbor and be prepared to identify the funding sources needed to replace them.
- Analyze the circulation pattern in downtown and develop alternatives to expand pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure.
- Dangerous to bike in downtown due to congestion and parked cars. In addition, there is no separated space to ride.
- Route 3 is scary to bike on because of the small shoulders, and many College of the Atlantic students rely on biking to get around.
- The Route 3 and West Street intersection needs attention. There is no good way for pedestrians and bicycles to cross.
- More year-round transit options desired by College of the Atlantic students.
- Where does parking meter money go? Could it be used to address some of the issues identified?
- Unsure how economically feasible it would be to expand year-round bus service.
- Biggest issue with public transit is that it is not reliable for people to use. Also, inconvenient due to its service schedule for many people to use consistently or for travel outside the region.
- Fortunate to have public transit at all. Very rare for a community of this size, and only here because of Acadia National Park. Expansion of public transit may require new public/private partnerships.
- The Land Use Ordinance does not currently allow for parking garages which was one of the intended uses of the parking funds.
- Insufficient parking within the Downtown. A circulating shuttle could help address this need.
- Outside of downtown, there is limited infrastructure in general - no bus, no sidewalks or bike lanes.
- Crooked Road and Norway Drive are big collector roads and have no shoulders and could funnel bike traffic to downtown if infrastructure was there.
- The route from Town Hill to the Downtown needs infrastructure improvements that would make bicycling safely a possibility.
- Heading south towards Jackson Lab this is also poor road condition, and no safe biking space because there is no shoulder.
- Winter parking policies are also frustrating. No parking on road in winter is frustrating for people who are landlords and it's hard to get people to rent because this is not allowed and parking alternatives are limited.
- The head of the island now has so much congestion at certain times of day that it can take much more time to get off/on the island.

- Connection between school and ball field must be addressed as this should be a super safe pedestrian route. School Street also needs more sidewalks.
- The Island Explorer is the largest public transit system in the State of Maine.
- For the Island Explorer finding drivers is also an issue due to lack of housing and Bar Harbor not being an affordable place to live.
- The budget for Downeast Transportation is \$2.8 million/year. Seventy -two percent (72%) of this is paid by the National park Service, largely through park entrance fees and the remainder is covered by Friends of Acadia, LL Bean, Towns, and others.
- There is a need to increase the knowledge and support for what it takes to operate a public transit system. The public needs to know how its funded and where the money comes from.
- Many people come with bikes or rent bikes so there is lots of opportunity here to increase cycling. Increasing bicycle infrastructure may not decrease congestion but will provide more options. E-bikes will also become an alternative for more people.
- Very few signs on the roads alerting vehicles of cyclists. Could use more share the road signs on key corridors.
- Policy actions needed related to winter parking and one-way roads and circulation in the Downtown.
- Consider creating pedestrian only zones in downtown if this is feasible.
- It is not possible to get into Downtown for a quick bite to eat during peak season anymore.
- As it gets more congested, more cars cut through neighborhood streets.
- There have been plans made for Cottage Street and Main Street. These streetscape redesigns have never had the momentum to fund these improvements and are starting to get old now. It would be nice to do something with them as it routinely comes up in council discussions.

**10. Next Steps**

The April meeting will focus on parks, open space, and recreation and community facilities.

**11. Public comment period**

No comments were made.

**12. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM on a motion by John Kelly, seconded by John McKernan (14-0).

**Minutes approved by the Comprehensive Planning Committee on April 13, 2022:**

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**Kyle Shank**  
**Chair, Comprehensive Planning Committee**

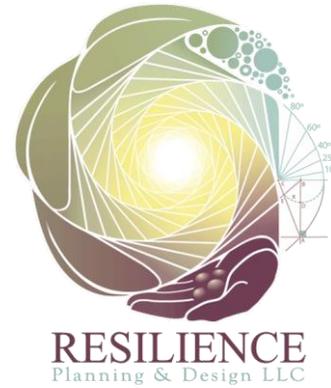
**Date**

MEMO

TO:  
Bar Harbor Comprehensive Plan Committee

FROM:  
Resilience Planning and Design

DATE:  
April 5, 2022



On April 13th, we will continue our discussion on the outreach efforts that are underway for this Comprehensive Plan, and discuss the timeline out to a September Forum. We will also have discussions related to our last two existing conditions topics. Given the full agenda and draft products created for your review we felt it was most efficient to clarify some details related to these items in this memo.

*Reminder: next month's meeting is on May 16<sup>th</sup>*

### **Outreach Related Items**

- **Updated Outreach Plan**
- **Project Flyer for print and digital use**
- **Website** - <https://bit.ly/bar-harbor-comp-plan>
- **Existing Conditions Feedback Form** – This is the form that Committee members, staff, and key stakeholders can use to submit topic specific ideas and questions that will further inform the consulting team.
  - [Understanding Bar Harbor Today](#)

### **Outreach Updates**

- Project announcement and flier have been circulated to the Chamber of Commerce, Elementary School District, and the Jessup Library for distribution to their membership/email lists.
- April Polco questions have been drafted and will be further refined with Polco, then sent out to Polco subscribers and posted to the town's website, the April newsletter, and the project website. These include:
  - What do you love most about Bar Harbor?

- What makes Bar Harbor unique?
- What would make Bar Harbor a better place to live, work, and play?
- Fliers have been printed and hung up in public locations around town, including in the Town office as a large-scale poster. Flier image is being shared on social media by the Town.
- April project update newsletter will be circulated this month.
- Consultant team has received permissions to use several photos from the Jesup Memorial Library photo exhibit and will replace some of the website photos with these.
- Press release will be going out through the Mount Desert Islander this month.
- The project video has been posted to the project website and the Town's Facebook page.

### **Existing Conditions Topics**

For the existing conditions topic discussions that will follow we have provided a list of potential questions as requested:

#### **Parks, Open Space, and Recreation:**

- What type of open space resources are missing from Bar Harbor or are in need of attention?
- Are there specific demographics or populations that are being overlooked when it comes to recreational opportunities in Bar Harbor?
- Does the town have a comprehensive prioritization process for open space land acquisitions?
  - If so, what are the metrics?
  - If not, what should be considered?

#### **Community Facilities and Services:**

- Are there known deficiencies with any existing public facilities, services, or utilities that will inform this planning process?
- Are there facilities or services residents desire or would like to see improved?
- Are there non-municipal facilities, services, or utilities that should be identified in this section?
- Is there a need to discuss regionalizing facilities or services with other towns?



## Town of Bar Harbor Planning & Code Department

### Memorandum

**To: Comprehensive Planning Committee**  
**Copy: Planning Board**  
**From: Michele Gagnon, Planning Director**  
**Re: Housing**  
**Date: April 6, 2022**

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At the beginning of the year the Planning Board began working on revising the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions of the Land Use Ordinance. The PUD includes language that incentivizes the conservation of land, as well as some limited language that incentivizes the creation of affordable housing. In exchange for conserving land and creating affordable housing, the developer is allowed to build above the base development density (either number of lots or dwelling units) of the district where the land is situated. The affordable housing provisions of the PUD are insufficient. Consequently, they do not provide the booster needed to create affordable housing in Bar Harbor.

The board is looking to develop inclusionary housing provisions that will truly incentivize the creation of affordable housing. Inclusionary housing is a program where developers set aside a certain percentage of dwelling units within a new development for low- to moderate-income, as well as for workforce-income, households.

To date, three workshops have been held. Work accomplished includes, but is not limited to, reviewing the existing PUD provisions, learning about the components of inclusionary housing programs, having speakers from Maine Housing, Island Housing Trust, and the Bar Harbor Housing Authority, and a preliminary discussion of what the goal and the policy objectives of this land use amendment project will be.

All the information about this project is available by visiting <https://www.barharmoraine.gov/502/Planned-Unit-Development>.

## Bar Harbor Outreach Planning and Meeting Topics March - August 2022

### March/April

- Outreach Tasks:
  - Consultant/Staff:
    - Identify possible date/location/format for September forum
    - Circulate project video
    - Develop draft POLCO questions
    - Send project announcement to select organizations to distribute in their e-newsletters (Library, Chamber of Commerce, School District)
    - Crowdsourcing images from the public
  - Committee: Hang up fliers throughout town and share digital image on social media
- April Committee meeting
  - Identify events/opportunities that committee members can table at in June/July/August

### May/June

- May Committee meeting
  - Discussion of Initial Existing Conditions Report Draft
- June Committee meeting
  - Review updated Existing Conditions Report
  - Collect feedback/edits on draft tabling materials
  - Discuss upcoming tabling assignments

### July/August

- Outreach Tasks:
  - Consultant - refine and print all forum materials and prepare online and print survey for launch in September
  - Committee - Continue tabling in July/August

- Staff - Coordinate town wide postcard mailing promoting event/survey
- All - Advertise the forum (social media, press releases, newsletters, direct invites, email lists)
- July/August Committee meetings
  - Collect feedback/edits on draft materials for September forum
  - Review logistics/format and advertising for September community forum

### **Monthly Outreach Tasks**

- Monthly newsletter
- Monthly/Bi-Monthly Polco Questions