

Approved May 15, 2014

CITY OF ROCKLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of Meeting
April 17, 2014

Board Present: Chair Valli Geiger, Audra Caler-Bell, Thomas Keedy, Eileen Wilkerson, and Mayor Larry Pritchett (ex-officio)

Board Absent: Ann Morris

Staff Present: City Attorney Kevin Beal, Code Enforcement Officer John Root, and Recording Secretary Deborah Sealey

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:08 P.M.

Mayor Pritchett said on Monday the City Council had asked the CPC to look at Order #25, regarding a study of zoning and public infrastructure along the Park St. and Payne Ave. corridor. The Mayor said the zoning on these streets was largely the same, though it looked different. Ms. Caler-Bell provided a Midcoast Economic Development District overview of a possible grant to help fund broader engagement with the community through workshops. Chair Geiger said the Camden St. review process had not effectively engaged the public. Mayor Pritchett said there had been too many community meetings and too little one-on-one strategy regarding Camden St. and noted that the council had since adopted city-wide value statements, which should help condense the process. City Attorney Beal said the adopted Gateway 1 Corridor Plan contained a lot of those principles, but in more depth and with specific and concrete examples. Suggestions were put forth for bringing people into the process.

New Business:

1. Ordinance Amendment #10 – Container Restaurants – Ch. 19, Secs. 19-302 & 19-309: Mayor Pritchett said this concerned taking a 8' X 24' shipping container and turning it into a modern reuse, such as a takeout restaurant, which had not been envisioned in the City's zoning regulations. Mr. Beal said they would be permitted in most zones, except the Tillson Avenue Area Overlay and Downtown Zones. CEO Root said this had come to his attention because any food wagon in those two zones would be subject to the Design Standards. Currently all food wagons and container restaurants were subject to Planning Board review under "Special Class", but this proposed amendment would condense that review to basic requirements only, exempting them from setbacks, design standards, etc.

City Attorney Beal said the amendment would add definitions for "container restaurants" and "food wagons" and outline a limited PB review. Ms. Wilkerson said container restaurants could be hideous and asked why we would want to make review easier. CEO Root responded that this would actually make review more stringent since currently, in the TAAOZ and DT zones, they required only a permit from him. Mr. Beal felt a container restaurant could not currently comply with the Design Standards in those two zones. He said a city councilor had asked that this be addressed and suggested her intent was to further economic development and add to quality of life and enrich the downtown.

Ms. Caler-Bell felt building an ordinance for this opened a can of worms and would bring up unforeseen consequences; she wondered if it could rather be addressed in the permitting process. Chair Geiger asked why we would want to bring containers into the Main St. area. Mayor Pritchett replied that containers were often used where there were historic buildings that were appropriate for dining, but not for locating a kitchen. Ms. Wilkerson thought the proposed amendment was full of holes and the issue needed more study. There was further discussion of possible locations for containers and simpler ways to deal with them.

ACTION: Ms. Geiger made a motion, seconded by Mr. Keedy, to recommend that the City Council postpone action on Ordinance Amendment #10 at this time to provide time for further study and review.
Carried 4-0-0

2. Ordinance Amendment #11 – Zoning Map Amendment Removing Harbor Park from TAAOZ:
CEO Root explained that Harbor Park was currently subject to the Design Standards of the Tillson Avenue Area Overlay Zone, which had raised the question of why parks were included in the TAAOZ at all. City Attorney Beal said the old Conti's building and Black Pearl would be exempt because they were private property stuck between two public properties.

ACTION: Ms. Caler-Bell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilkerson, to recommend that the TAAOZ be removed from the four properties listed in Ordinance Amendment #11.
Carried 4-0-0

3. CPC Meeting Dates: Chair Geiger suggested the commission meet twice a month since it could not accomplish its work in one meeting per month. The group agreed, though Ms. Caler-Bell felt the meetings should be shorter. Mr. Keedy felt time should be spent on terminology and updating the 10-year old Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Wilkerson wanted a long-term agenda for the second monthly meeting so it would be clear what needed to be addressed.

Mr. Keedy wanted to see more data, including revenue and projections, on tourism in Rockland to serve as a basis for making decisions. Ms. Wilkerson wanted Dept. of Labor statistics in order to know what Rockland's citizens needed. Some existing sources of this information were mentioned. There was further discussion related to updating the Comprehensive Plan in a meaningful manner. Chair Geiger said the next two months would be spent on Camden and Park Streets and she would make a calendar.

ACTION: Ms. Geiger made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilkerson, to move to two meetings a month: the meeting following the City Council meeting to be for the purpose of 30 minutes of education and any city ordinances that we must address, and that the second meeting be for longer-term work that the City Council has asked of us, which is Camden St. and Payne St. and Park St. and the fundamental work of the Commission, which is to make sure that Chapter 19 and the Comprehensive Plan are in alignment.
Carried 4-0-0

The first meeting of each month would be on the Thursday after the second Monday and the second meeting would be the fourth Thursday of the month. The next meeting would be held on April 24 at 7 P.M.

Minutes Approval: 3/13/14

ACTION: Ms. Caler-Bell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Keedy, to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2014 meeting.
Carried 4-0-0

Adjournment: Ms. Caler-Bell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilkerson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 P.M.
Carried 4-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Sealey
Recording Secretary