

Approved Sept. 11, 2014

**CITY OF ROCKLAND
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR JULY 31, 2014**

Board Present: Chair Valli Geiger, Thomas Keedy, Terry Pinto, Eileen Wilkinson, and Amy Files. Mayor Larry Pritchett, ex-officio member attended.

Board Absent: Audra Caler-Bell, Ann Morris, and Adam Ackor

Staff Present: Assistant Code Enforcement Officer David Kalloch, City Attorney Kevin Beal, Recording Secretary Kara Cushman

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 P.M.

New Business:

Presentation of Principles from the 2011 Waterfront Redevelopment Plan by Mayor Pritchett

Mayor Pritchett presented slides from the 2011 Waterfront Redevelopment Plan. The plan included Downtown (DT) development and infrastructure plans. Mayor Pritchett gave a general history of the commercial use of the area.

The COMPS Commission studied several slides that included maps of the DT & Tillson Ave Overlay. These maps included color coded designs that showed flood plain zones, city owned property, direction of water views, existing greenery and parks, and street alignments.

When studying the flood plain zones, Member Wilkinson asked why FMC was not included in the Overlay. Mayor Pritchett said that the City didn't anticipate any changes or see them going anywhere. Also, that the Overlay includes several zones.

When studying the street alignments, City Attorney Beal said that no steps had been taken as of yet to re-align the streets. Member Pinto said that street alignment issues should be faced as new development is proposed. Asst. CEO Kalloch said the street alignments were designed around view corridors.

The COMPS Commission then studied an example of a streetscape that included a 5-ft. sidewalk, 5-ft. throughway for bicycles, 7-ft. on-street parking, and widths for tree wells. Mayor Pritchett said this design concentrates on pedestrians and creates a look and function of public space. General discussion continued on tree wells located on the sidewalks.

The COMPS Commission then looked at a current picture of Park Drive and Tillson Ave and a re-design concept of the same area. City Attorney Beal said the re-design is more about re-envisioning. Chair Geiger said it's about rebuilding the streetscapes to get people to come.

Member Wilkinson asked if this is what the City wants the streetscape to look like. Asst. CEO Kalloch said yes and that the City Council adopted this plan. Mayor Pritchett said this plan is the official re-development plan, and it is fair to say that this is the intended goal for the City.

Asst. CEO Kalloch also stated that any potential developers could work with the City to change infrastructure at the time of development and do it in a way the City wants. It would be a benefit to the developer and the City. Chair Geiger asked about land swaps with the City for developers to use a little City land, especially if realigning streets.

Mayor Pritchett discussed the basics of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Member Pinto said that if large developers come in, they could have agreements to pay infrastructure costs.

Review of Design Alternatives 1 and 2- Winter Street

Member Pinto gave an overview of the two designs, but focused on Concept 2. He said Winter St. is short and movement of vehicles is not important to the City as a whole, as the design of the City is such that there are alternative routes. Vehicles are secondary to pedestrians. This new design would invite walkers from Main St. Also, by narrowing the streets, traffic would slow down. Chair Geiger asked what the narrowest width a street can be. Member Pinto said 16 feet. This design is 16 ½ feet. There would be no reason to close off the street, as it would be easy to share the road with pedestrians and vehicles. There would be minor issues of moving water utilities.

Member Wilkinson asked about raised islands and sidewalks. She said the design challenge is the surface of the road. The road surface would need to be a material that would work well with the trees. Member Pinto said an interesting part of the design is the dimensions. Trees are lost in a straight street design. Also, it would lend itself to closed street events. Member Keedy proposed having trees on both sides of the street to help mask power lines, making the street more attractive.

General discussion continued by the Commission regarding flat vs. raised sidewalks. Mayor Pritchett asked which would work better- where pedestrian level is flat and same as the road or with 3-4 feet sidewalk with green space. He also said there is a concern with curbs and asked if vehicles would pull around where pedestrians walk if it is flat. Other concerns of Commission members were parking eliminations and space for delivery vehicles.

Member Wilkinson asked about one-way streets. Member Pinto said that designs are steering away from one-way streets as they can be too confusing. There has been a change of thinking on side streets. He said that this plan discourages vehicle traffic. There are still other routes that include Park Street, Tillson Ave, Limerock Street, and Rankin Street.

ACTION: Member Wilkinson made a motion, seconded by Chair Geiger for the COMPS Commission to support Concept 2 of the Winter Street designs that includes designated sidewalks coming out to the outer edge of tree wells. VOTE: 5-0-0

Container Restaurants

Chair Geiger said there is a proposal before the City Council of whether or not to allow container restaurants in the City of Rockland. She said that COMPS should look at unexpected consequences. She suggested not allowing them on private property. By allowing 3-5 container restaurants on City property, it would allow a way to control it and the City could decide if it was working or not.

Member Wilkinson said she was concerned with what would be left after the container restaurant left where they are only there temporarily. She asked if there would be an empty lot with utility hook-ups everywhere. Member Pinto said the utility issue is controllable as the lot would need to be left in a certain condition.

Chair Geiger said the City could invest in shaded seating, tables, benches, etc. for visitors to sit in a public space. She asked if they should be exempt from design standards. City Attorney Beal said that under the proposed amendment, container restaurants are exempt from standards if they are in place less than 6 months. If they are used year round then they would have to follow standards. He also asked if the container restaurants could utilize architectural elements that are required in this area.

Member Pinto recommended setting prohibitions instead of setting rules of what they should look like. For example: not allowing soda vending machines outside of the structure.

Member Files said she likes seeing the space used but wouldn't want to see container restaurants in the downtown overlay. She said she felt that it sets a tone for the area. She also does not think we should start making exceptions to the design standards. Member Wilkinson said she wouldn't want them in downtown either, but she wouldn't mind them on City properties to rent. She also said they should define what they can't do and provide a maximum number that we will allow. She also asked about a food court or something to draw people to it. Chair Geiger also said she would encourage the food court when the City builds seating and all the container restaurants come together. It would bring people down Winter Street.

Chair Geiger asked the COMPS Commission:

- A) Should container restaurants be allowed in the downtown zone?
- B) Allowed in the Tillson Ave Overlay Zone?
- C) Allowed on City property?
- D) What about the food court idea with so many container restaurants together?

Member Keedy said he thinks they could be allowed in these zones with adequate standards to address appearance and design. Member Pinto said container restaurants should be allowed in both the DT and Tillson Zones with standards such as no porta potties or trash in the area.

Member Wilkinson said all right for TAAOZ but not in the Downtown Zone. She is concerned about having standards and pointed out that the online examples we have been looking at are probably the best of the best and poorly designed containers will not help development. Chair Geiger thinks they should not be allowed in either zone and only on city owned property with

fees paid to the City. She doesn't think we should challenge existing full-time restaurants that are located in buildings. Member Files supported allowing food trucks. Member Keedy said COMPS should start with what we want to see next meeting and decide what we want to give the City Council.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kara Cushman
Recording Secretary