

BUCKSPORT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2016
Monday, February 8, 2016 5 P.M.
Jewett School Conference Room (66 Bridge St.)

Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jef Fitzgerald at 5:04 P.M.
2. Members Present: Chairman Jef Fitzgerald, Larry Wahl, Hans Krichels, Christopher Johnson
Staff Present: Jeff Hammond
Consultant: Tom Martin (HCPC)
Public: Bruce Clement
3. **Minutes:** It was motioned by Christopher Johnson, seconded by Hans Krichels to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The vote was three affirmative, zero negative, and one abstention.
4. **Existing Land Use Review:**

Tom Martin requested a change in the agenda order. Mr. Martin wanted to finish up the section on existing land use. One issue he wanted to discuss was the adequacy of commercial zoning. His informed the group of the potential problems with allowing residential uses in the commercial zones and the difficulty with trying to retain the commercial zone character. Also he felt the transition would result in low money investments (rot conversions) and could result in low quality housing. There may not be much money in return. Chairman Fitzgerald reminded the group that we can't make the decision on to change the land use ordinance, but we have to create the framework for what does happen and make a recommendation. Tom Martin discussed how this discussion was about the adequacy of commercial zoned property, where we could develop some objectives where we could discuss recommendations where the Town Council could vote on those recommendations. Chairman Fitzgerald stated we need to acknowledge some of the problems expressed by some of the owners of not being able to rent commercial entities and their desire to rent to somebody. Perhaps there is a way to provide more flexibility in the commercial main street area. We can at least frame some of the discussion, but not hammer out a finalized solution.

CEO Jeff Hammond discussed there might be some insurmountable zoning issues on the South side of Main Street with the DEP mandates. These restrictions have prevented some folks from being able to use their properties as they might wish.

Jeff Hammond also pointed out local prohibitions affect the properties, including zoning codes dealing with commercial ground floor standards. Perhaps the fifty percent storefront ruling is too restrictive?

The Town can only go so far. The State would also have to change some of their standards.

Tom Martin: Once they tip this over to residential, it is hard to get it back.

Jeff Hammond: Most of the properties are in nonconforming usage now and adjusting this to residential would be very difficult.

Jef Fitzgerald: We're not sure what the future of mainstreet now. With all the competition, it is hard to maintain a business.

Tom Martin: Maybe we should review what are the boundaries of the downtown district should be.

Jef Fitzgerald: Perhaps the state could review the standards for changing since this area is serviced by Town sewer and water.

Tom Martin: The other factor to consider on Main Street is the Storm Water and erosion and sedimentation regulations. If there are adequate provisions to manage non-point pollution (such as road salt) washing off impermeable surfaces there would be less need for some of the state-imposed restrictions. The group discussed working with the current DEP to advance changes in the standards for Main Street.

Tom Martin: There are other things to focus on the get the Town thriving again. Bucksport is far ahead of most other Hancock County towns in its natural resource protection standards.

Hans Krichels: How fluid are the other chapters? Can changes be made? He has new materials for Chapter 11 from Pat Ranzoni and Sherrie Mitchell. Also Cheri Domina may have new materials relevant to Chapter 12 (Forestry). A copy of the Town of Bucksport forestry management plan was presented for the board records.

5. Health and Community Services:

Tom Martin: There were discussions concerning adding language to the Public Facilities and Facilities Chapter, but the requests for changes have not materialized. Maybe we can have more discussions on this chapter, so we can perhaps beef up that part of the chapter

6. Regional Issues:

Tom Martin: We want to take the chapters on the inventory analysis and find the key issues, and the major challenges the Town faces. This will help getting us moving.

The group reviewed the various topics listed. Should EMDC be added?

Chris Johnson mentioned adding the other development groups, but the group decided to reference this to Rich Rotella

The group reviewed existing regional groups, such as RSU25, transfer station, and PERC.

The recreation program also is available to other town citizens, as well as other groups.

Water Resources: The potential is there for problems. A lake association to monitor this issue might help promote the regional approach.

Marine Resources: Chris Johnson expressed his concern with the regional impact of mercury pollution in the Penobscot River.

7. Fiscal Capacity:

A new process for Capital Improvement Plans may start this year. The Bucksport Town Manager will work on this process. The possibility of having a regional approach to CIP spending is a long way off.

8. Citizen Outreach Committee

Chairman George MacLeod has asked the subcommittee to appoint a new Chair. The group is waiting for Caleb Carter to come back and present a plan for providing social media services. Has the committee accomplished its goals? Hans Krichels wants to continue with the citizen outreach, even without the formal committee set up.

9. Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be March 14, 2016 at 5 P.M. at the Jewett School Conference Room. The Committee will work to finalize chapters, and Tom Martin will provide what he sees as "major issues".

10. The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Johnson
Acting Committee Secretary