

Town of Washington, ME Comprehensive Planning Committee

Committee Meeting Notes for March 11, 2024

The town of Washington Comprehensive Planning Committee met at 6:30 PM on March 11, 2024 in the Bryant Room of the Washington Town Office. Members present were as follows:

Jeff Grinnell
Peg Hobbs
Mary Anderson
Matthew St. Pierre
Norman Casas
Sara Bullard
Robin Folger

Also present were:

Mitch Garnett
Wesley Daniel

The meeting was called to order and began with a discussion from Maxwell (Max) Johnstone, Senior Planner for the Midcoast Council of Governments. The MCOG will be a contracted partner assisting in the production of the Comprehensive Plan. Max discussed the range of options available for assistance from the MCOG, spanning from individual committee needs to almost a full authoring of the Comprehensive Plan. The Committee was able to use the discussion to understand how other towns had used the MCOG in the drafting of their Comprehensive Plan, what services the MCOG can provide, and better understand the purpose, inputs, and outputs of the Comprehensive Plan. The committee discussed including an ordinance review in the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose would be two-fold, first to ensure the entire town knows what ordinances are currently in place in the town, and second would provide a review of the town's ordinances by MCOG for their validity going forward to ensure the town's ordinances won't fail an appeal. After his presentation, Max stayed to listen to the rest of the meeting and provide feedback to the Comprehensive Planning Committee on their plan going forward.

The committee then shifted to a presentation on the Way Ahead (attachment titled 'CPC Recommended meeting slide 11MAR2024.pdf'). The purpose of this was to lay out a way ahead for the committee. The presentation covered how to develop the entire plan and how do we begin. The focus was how do we get the public's feedback as the building block for the Comprehensive Plan and where does the feedback fit in to the overall plan. Additionally, the committee discussed the assessment portion of the Comprehensive Plan, as required by the state, and the opportunity for the Comprehensive Planning Committee to remain as a standing committee after publication of the Comprehensive Plan to assist the town in the assessment portion and to begin the drafting of the next Comprehensive Plan.

The committee agreed to the forms of dissemination of the survey; hard copies with a drop box available at the town hall beginning on June 11, 2024 (to coincide with the State Primary Election/town voting, availability at town meetings, a special meeting for summer residents, and via online survey with a link emailed directly to participants.

The committee also agreed that postcards will be sent to all households in town alerting them to the Comprehensive Plan survey and how residents can participate.

The committee agreed to an information table at the Town Meeting on March 30, 2024 to allow the public to understand the purpose of the Comprehensive committee and give the public the opportunity to provide their email address if they wanted the survey sent to them. The survey will not be made available on public facing sites to prevent fraud.

The committee also agreed to the path forward for development of survey questions, as follows:

For the April meeting each member of the committee will develop ten (10) categories which they feel the town can invest in. Then within those 10 categories each member will develop 5 to 6 questions that will gauge the public interest in how the town can improve within that category. During the April meeting the Committee will agree to what the final ten categories are and will begin to develop what are the “right” questions to ask.

In the May meeting the committee will finalize the survey categories and questions and will prepare for publication. The committee will have the questions available to the town for publication in time for the June 11, 2024 election (Recommend the final product be given to the town no later than June 3, 2024.

Being the first official meeting of the Committee, introductions of present committee members were conducted.

The Committee began with an informal review of the Goals, Policies and Implementations of the Town of Washington Comprehensive Plan dated March 25, 2005 (henceforth referred to as the 2005 Comprehensive Plan).

The committee then shifted to a review of the “*Agreement for Comprehensive Planning Services between the Town of Washington and the Midcoast Council of Governments.*” The committee agreed that they need a better understanding of the Scope of Work of the contract and services provided by the Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG) prior to the Town meeting and vote for funding of the contract that will take place on March 30, 2024.

Due outs for the committee for next meeting are:

1. Each committee member will review the 2005 Goals, Policies, and Initiatives and indicate their status on the provided sheets and return those. The secretary will

compile that information and disseminate. This will serve as the assessment portion of the previous plan and can inform the next plan.

2. Each committee member will develop their list of categories and questions for the Comprehensive Plan Survey. These categories and questions should be viewed through the individual's lens. The committee will then refine all the members categories and questions to develop the committee's categories and questions to inform the survey and feedback from the town.

The minutes from the February 11, 2024 meeting were approved, the committee agreed the next meeting will occur on April 15, 2024 at 6:30 PM in the Bryant Room, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40 PM.