

CITY OF LEWISTON
PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP/PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
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LIGHT MEAL/REFRESHMENTS (First Floor – Executive Conference Room):

Roll Call: This meeting was held in the City Council Chambers on the 1st. Floor of City Hall, was called to order at 5:42 p.m., and was chaired by Chairman Stephen Morgan.

Stephen Morgan did the following attendance:

Members in Attendance: Stephen Morgan, Jonathan Earle, Roger Philippon, Lucy Bisson, and Denis Fortier. **Absent:** Jim Horn and David Vincent. **Associate Member Present:** Bruce Damon.

Staff Present: Gil Arsenault, Deputy Director of Planning & Code Enforcement; David Hediger, City Planner; and Doreen Christ, Administrative Secretary of Planning & Code Enforcement. **Others Present:** Bob Faunce, Land Use Consultant.

Before the workshop began David Hediger mentioned the next regularly scheduled Planning Board Meeting is Monday, July 28, 2008.

Also mentioned was the Cool Communities Initiative by Elizabeth Dube, City Councilor – Ward 6. The following motion was made to appoint a Planning Board Member to serve as a member to the Energy Saving Committee.

MOTION: by *Lucy Bisson* to appoint Jim Horn as a representative of the Planning Board to serve on the Energy Saving Committee. Second by *Denis Fortier*.

VOTED: 6-0 (Passed).

It should be noted that Jim Horn did submit an application of interest and volunteered his time to be on this committee.

Lastly mentioned, was the newly created position for a “Special Assistant to the City Administrator for an Energy Conservation Czar”.

WORKSHOP/PUBLIC MEETING (First Floor – City Council Chambers):

A discussion on Zoning and Land Use updates, specifically open space provisions. Bob Faunce presented the following. Bob Faunce said that these regulations would replace what we have now. Reducing lot size is the concept. He had spoken at previous workshops about the Rural Agricultural (RA) zoning district areas and the change in development over the years. This would preserve open space in the future. 60,000 square feet is the minimum lot size in the Rural Agricultural zoning district. Bob said that we need a larger minimum lot size with attractive benefits to encourage open space. He spoke of reducing frontage to as little as “zero”.

Bob Faunce showed the Board prepared maps showing what lots would be made non-conforming. If a lot is already developed, this does not affect it. He showed the Rural Agricultural Map 1 dated June 2008 - South Lewiston. He showed lots that could be merged with adjacent land creating a minimum lot size of 3 acres.

The next map showed lots that could be merged with adjacent land if the minimum lot size was 6 acres.

If the South Lewiston area has a 3 acre minimum lot size, approximately only three of these lots would be impacted.

Bob Faunce further discussed Rural Agricultural Map 1 (3 acres) and Rural Agricultural Map 2 (6 acres).

The open space could be preserved with incentives.

With these proposed standards if you are not doing a subdivision, you could have a 60,000 SF minimum lot size. This encourages splitting lot-by-lot and discourages subdivisions and the creation of open space.

Cluster subdivisions are not affective and are a benefit to the developer only.

The City now requires that all roads are to be built to City standards. The City Council does not want to deal with private roads. We currently allow developers Right-Of-Way (ROW) provisions.

David Hediger said that the Suburban Residential (SR) zoning districts are near both Pettingill and McMahon schools.

51 percent of Auburn is zoned agricultural.

The transfer of Development Rights are similar to this proposal, however, there has never been one in Maine.

There are only six (6) lots that are affected (60,000 SF) and the property is either vacant or the owner owns land adjacent to it.

This has the most direct impact.

The map labeled Rural Agricultural Map 2 shows the outer Grove Street/turnpike area. This mapping shows a big wetland system, which will never be developed. This would be a good area to preserve.

Bob Faunce said that he is not proposing to change the zoning, however, the open space provisions would change the dimensional requirements.

Next, Bob Faunce showed Rural Agricultural Map 3.

These provisions would save on infrastructure costs.

Bruce Damon said that if there was an increase from the 60,000 SF minimum lot size to 150,000, there would be a lot more protection of the open space.

Gil Arsenault asked, "What is the difference between bumping the standards up to three acres versus sticking with 60,000 SF with open space requirement of significance? Bob Faunce responded that this would have stiff requirements for a subdivision. If you want zero frontage, etc. you need to go before the Planning Board. What is in it for the City? Less frontage could constitute savings. Frontage in the Rural Agricultural (RA) zoning district is 200 feet. Gil stated that he was inclined to keep the lot size smaller (3 acres). Bob Faunce agreed that 3 acres is a good option. Bob Faunce then asked, "Should it apply to just the Rural Agricultural (RA) zoning district?" He was looking for input from Board members. Steve Morgan said that he liked the idea of a Rural Agricultural RA2 zone with the 3 acre minimum lot size. Lucy Bisson suggested doing the entire area. Bob Faunce said he will provide language. Bruce Damon suggested a minimum of five acres. This would maximize the full space and gain the most that you can. The 60,000 SF minimum lot size was also deemed to be part of the Comprehensive Plan. The people who own the existing lots could put more cash in their pocket with four or five driveways. Open space is great, but you do not want to be penalizing the existing lot owners. Bob Faunce suggested going to the City Council with the larger lot lines and then to come back if need be. Lucy Bisson said that is an attempt to minimize sprawl.

Gil Arsenault said that ideally open space provides connectivity to the other land.

The lot size will help with setting other goals.

Bob Faunce said that the open space had dovetails with the Cool Communities initiative.

Bruce Damon said that the lot size in the Rural Agricultural (RA) zoning district needs to be bigger.

Roger Philippon said that we need to encourage development in the urban area and suggested larger open space with connectivity. Steve Morgan said with a guarantee of open space. Bob Faunce said that the concept goes beyond the Rural Agricultural (RA) zoning district and could be applied to other zones.

Gil Arsenault asked what is the recommendation?

Bob Faunce said he will start with five (5) acres and then back off. Bruce Damon suggested a minimum of 250,000 SF lot size with contiguous open spaces. This needs to be sold to the City Council. In total, 6-8 properties are affected.

Bruce Damon recommended going higher to maximize gain, and try to sell it that way. He then said that you can change back to smaller later on if need be.

In conclusion, Bob Faunce will compare notes and draft a presentation for the City Council.

Lucy Bisson said that a landlocked lot could possibly obtain a right-of-way (R.O.W.) for access to be developed.

The costs would be much less for driveways.

This workshop adjourned at 7:12 p.m. The next Planning Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 28, 2008. A tentative date has been scheduled for a joint Planning Board/City Council Workshop regarding Bates College and the downtown for Monday, August 11, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucy Bisson, Planning Board Secretary

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