



TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH PLANNING BOARD

2200 East Main Road
Portsmouth, RI 02871
401-683-3717

PORTSMOUTH PLANNING BOARD Special Meeting June 29, 2016

Members Present: Guy Bissonnette, Edward Lopes, Luke Harding, Michael James, Kathleen Wilson, Ryan Tibbetts and David Garceau.

Members Absent: Edward Lopes

Others Present: Atty. Kevin Gavin, Portsmouth Town Solicitor, Gary Crosby, Town Planner, Michael Asciola, Assistant Town Planner and Leon Lesinski, Administrative Officer, Portsmouth Planning Board

The Meeting was called to order by Mr. Bissonnette at 7:00 p.m.

1. Agenda Continuances/Modifications: none

2. Minutes for Planning Board Special Meeting of May 25, 2016

MOTION: Mr. Harding made a motion, seconded by Mr. Garceau to approve the minutes of the special meeting of May 25, 2016. All in favor. So voted. Mr. Tibbetts and Ms. Wilson abstained from the vote due to their absence from the meeting.

3. Close out approval of the proposed Services and Facilities Element (7) of the Comprehensive Community Plan

Gary Crosby, Town Planner conducted a lengthy review of a document entitled Portsmouth Comprehensive Plan Draft Services and Facilities Element – Final Editing Guide (Final Editing Guide) which lists several recommendations taken from the May 3, 2016 meeting minutes of the Portsmouth Citizens Interested in the Comprehensive Community Planning Process Committee. In this document, Mr. Crosby has indicated those recommendations that require Planning Board guidance. The recommendations are for revisions to the March 28 draft of the Portsmouth Comprehensive Community Plan, Element 7 – Services and Facilities. In the aforementioned editing guide, Mr. Crosby cross-referenced the page numbers for the subsequent May 13, 2016 draft of Element 7 (May 13, 2016 draft) in parenthesis. The Planning Board took action on the following recommendations.

Page 3: (Pages 3-6)

Recommend that a paragraph be inserted that states that the Comprehensive Community Plan be reviewed every two years to assure that we are consistent with the population projections and standing of the school system.

MOTION: Mr. Harding made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilson, that the May 13, 2016 draft indicate that the population projections and standing of the school system be reviewed every 5 years. All in favor. So voted.

Recommend the removal of the section presenting the Community Survey Results. If the survey results are not removed, then the "Services Provided" table [*bottom of page 5*] should be expanded to include all the categories.

MOTION: Mr. Tibbitts made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to accept and approve the recommendation to remove the Community Survey Results from the Comprehensive Community Plan from the May 13, 2016 draft. The motion was denied, 2 votes for and 4 votes against. Messrs. Tibbitts and James approving.

Page 6: (Pages 6-7)

Recommend removal all reference to the goals and policies in the State Guide Plans.

MOTION: Mr. Harding made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilson, to deny and strike the recommendation and to retain all reference to the goals and policies in the State Guide Plans in the May 13, 2016 draft. The motion carried 5 to 1; Mr. James opposing.

Recommend insertion of a paragraph which states, "at this point, in the history of Portsmouth, the Town has not embraced residential sewers, but there are private enterprises that host their own sewer plants and if private enterprises would like to do that or run their own OWTS in appropriate areas, supporting economic development, we encourage it."

MOTION: Mr. Harding made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to accept and approve the recommendation to insert the following paragraph into the May 13, 2016 draft: "at this point, in the history of Portsmouth, the Town has not embraced residential sewers, but there are private enterprises that host their own sewer plants and if private enterprises would like to do that or run their own OWTS in appropriate areas, supporting economic development, we encourage it." The motion carried 5 to 1; Mr. Bissonnette opposing.

Page 12: (Pages 12-13)

Recommend addition of a bullet to the list of identified areas of improvements to better fulfill the services and facilities vision which states "Increase the efficient use of funds with cost cutting."

MOTION: Ms. Wilson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harding, to accept and approve the recommendation to insert the bullet into the May 13, 2016 draft with the revision to strike "...with cost cutting..." so as to read as follows: "Increase the efficient use of funds." The motion carried 5 to 1; Mr. Tibbitts opposing.

In the same list, recommend the separation of Prudence Island and Hog Island in the second bullet from the bottom of the page so that "improve municipal services..." applies to Prudence Island and insert "maintain municipal services and facilities for Hog Island."

MOTION: Mr. Tibbitts made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harding, to deny and strike the recommendation regarding the separation of Prudence Island and Hog Island in the bullet list of identified areas of improvements, (Pages 12-13) in the May 13, 2016 draft. All in favor. So voted.

Page 19: (Page 20)

Recommend the addition of a chart Fire Department emergence response times from the present station to areas in the north of Portsmouth.

MOTION: Mr. Tibbitts made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harding, to accept and approve the recommendation to add a chart Fire Department emergence response times from the present station to areas in the north of Portsmouth if the data is available within the May 13, 2016 draft. All in favor. So voted.

Page 24: (Pages 29-31)

Recommend a paragraph be inserted in the Wastewater Management section that states, "The Town of Portsmouth relies on and encourages private, onsite wastewater treatment facilities for commercial enterprises."

MOTION: Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harding, to accept and approve the recommendation and insert the following paragraph into the Wastewater Management section of the May 13, 2016 draft: "The Town of Portsmouth relies on and encourages private, onsite wastewater treatment facilities for commercial enterprises." All in favor. So voted.

Pages 26/27: (Page 32)

Recommend to remove the reference to future sea level rise in 2nd paragraph in the Stormwater Management Assessment of Current and Future Quality of Services section.

MOTION: Mr. Tibbitts made a motion, seconded by Mr. Garceau, to deny and strike the recommendation to remove the reference to future sea level rise. All in favor. So voted.

Page 29: (Page 35)

Recommend that “the next public building that needs to be looked at is the Portsmouth Senior Center for facilities and improvements. It’s out of date and we need to get a study together. We need a long range plan to improve the quality of our Senior Center.”

MOTION: Mr. Tibbitts made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harding, to accept and approve the recommendation with adjustments so as to read as follows: “The Portsmouth Senior Center is out of date and the Town needs a long range plan to improve the quality of the Senior Center.”

After discussion, Mr. Tibbitts amended his motion so as to deny and strike the recommendation regarding the Senior Center, noting that the language was not necessary. Mr. Harding seconded the amended motion. All in favor. So voted.

Page 33: (Page 38)

Action SF-1.3i – Recommend to add the phrase “maintenance or” before the word “construction.”

MOTION: Ms. Wilson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harding, to approve and accept the recommendation and include the phrase “maintenance or” before the word “construction” under Action SF-1.3i of the May 13, 2016 draft. The motion was denied 2 – 4; Messrs. Tibbitts, James, Bissonnette and Garceau opposing.

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Action SF-1.5a – Recommend to change the wording to read “At the Town Council’s discretion, they may annually fund...”

MOTION: Mr. Harding made a motion, seconded by Mr. Garceau, to deny and strike the recommendation and to leave the language for Action SF-1.5a as written in the May 13, 2016 draft as follows: “Participate in regional planning efforts where appropriate.” All in favor. So voted.

Policy SF – 1.6 – Recommend removal of reference to Hog Island from the policy statement.”

MOTION: Mr. Harding made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tibbitts to deny and strike the recommendation to remove the reference to Hog Island from the policy statement. All in favor. So voted.

Page 34: (Page 39)

Action SF – 1.6a – Recommend to delete the words “the private company.”

MOTION: Mr. Tibbitts made a motion, seconded by Mr. Garceau, to deny and strike the recommendation and to approve and accept the language for Action SF – 1.6a as it appears in the May 13, 2016 draft as follows: “Coordinate with and provide appropriate support to all entities responsible for maintaining high-quality, continuous ferry service to Prudence Island.” All in favor. So voted.

Action SF – 1.6b – Recommend to delete Action SF – 1.6b

MOTION: Mr. Harding made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to deny and strike the recommendation and to approve and accept the language for Action SF – 1.6b as it appears in the May 13, 2016 draft as follows: “Continue to investigate the re-establishment of limited ferry service to Hog Island.” All in favor. So voted.

Page 36: (Page 42)

Recommend addition of Action SF – 1.10i – To implement a sampling program in Blue Bill Cove to test water quality in appropriate areas every three month and keep the recordings.”

Mr. Crosby verified that RIDEM conducts ambient water quality testing in Blue Bill Cove every three years and that the town conducts testing on storm water drain discharge (outfalls). He noted that the RIDEM testing results historically fall within acceptable levels. Mr. Bissonnette acknowledged Larry Fitzmorris, 50 Kristen Court for the purpose of addressing the rationale behind the recommendation. Mr. Fitzmorris confirmed that he made the recommendation because the town received a notice of violation in September, 2010 for the areas of Island Park and Portsmouth Park. He commented that the notice was based upon the assertion that sewage is leaking into the storm. He commented that RIDEM has never released the data to the town and that while the town has an agreement with RIDEM, the notice has not been withdrawn. He made the recommendation so the town could certify that it has complied with the agreement and could prove acceptable testing levels. He expressed concern that if the notice of violation is applied, the town will be forced to engage in a sewer project at a cost of \$16 million.

Peter Roberts, 80 Ormerod Avenue, expressed concern that the town needs to conduct its own testing in order to argue the pollution claim made by RIDEM.

Mr. Crosby noted that the notice of violation was for the threat of intermittent pollution from the town storm drains. In accordance with the notice and the subsequent agreement with RIDEM, the town has implemented an illicit discharge detection program for town storm drains.

MOTION: Mr. Tibbitts made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilson, to deny and strike the recommendation. The motion carried 5 to 1; Mr. James opposing.

Action SF -1.10f – Recommend the deletion of the phrase “that are located within projected sea level rise scenarios.”

MOTION: Mr. Tibbitts made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilson, to retain all references to sea level rise scenarios be retained within the May 13, 2016 draft.

The motion carried 5 to 1; Mr. James opposing.

Page 37: (Page 42)

Action SF – 1.11b – Recommend the removal of the phrase “in on-site sewage disposal systems and the municipal sewer system” from the end of the sentence.

MOTION: Mr. Harding made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tibbitts, to deny and strike the recommendation and to approve and accept the language for Action SF – 1.11b as it appears in the May 13, 2016 draft as follows: “Develop a homeowner education program to discourage the disposal of environmentally harmful chemicals such as cleaners, solvents, paint, acid, and the like in on-site wastewater treatment systems.” All in favor. So voted.

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Recommend that the Town Planner review the combination of Prudence Island and Hog Island and separate those entities in the element, in that this committee believes that Hog Island has no public access and should be “maintained” instead of “improved” in all services.”

MOTION: Mr. Harding made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilson, to deny and strike the recommendation and to retain the joint references to Prudence Island and Hog Island in the May 13, 2016 draft. All in favor. So voted.

Upon conclusion of the review of the recommendations listed in the Final Editing Guide, Mr. Crosby presented further recommendations, which were approved by the Portsmouth Citizens Interested in the Comprehensive Community Planning Process Committee at their June 21, 2016 meeting. The Board took action on the following recommendations.

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Solid Waste – Assessment of Current and Future Quality of Service –
Recommendation to delete the second sentence as follows: “However, with continuing improvements in efficiency, the capacity of the station to accept current amounts of waste and recyclable materials is adequate and can likely accommodate modest increases in the near future.”

MOTION: Ms. Wilson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Garceau, to deny and strike the recommendation and to retain the second sentence as it appears in the May 13, 2016 draft as follows: “However, with continuing improvements in efficiency, the capacity of the station to accept current amounts of waste and recyclable materials is adequate and can likely accommodate modest increases in the near future.” All in favor. So voted.

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Action SF – 1.4c – Recommend the deletion of this action item

MOTION: Ms. Wilson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tibbitts, to deny and strike the recommendation and to retain Action SF – 1.4c as it reads in the May 13, 2016 draft as follows: “Pursue annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for projects that meet program guidelines.” All in favor. So voted.

Action SF – 1.7f – Recommend the deletion of this action item which reads “Pursue amending State law to make the Town Clerk an appointed rather than elected position.”

MOTION: Mr. Harding made a motion, seconded by Ms. Wilson, to approve and accept the recommendation to delete Action SF – 1.7f. All in favor. So voted.

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Action SF – 1.14c – Recommend the deletion of this action item.

MOTION: Mr. Tibbitts made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harding, to deny and strike the recommendation and to retain Action SF – 1.14c as it reads in the May 13, 2016 draft as follows: “Pursue annual CDBG funding to improve the operational capacity of the Portsmouth Multi-Purpose Senior Center.” All in favor. So voted.

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Action SF – 2.2d – Recommend changing “Bi-annually update” to “Keep” and add the word “current” to the end of the sentence.

MOTION: Ms. Wilson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harding, to deny and strike the recommendation and to retain Action SF – 2.2d – as it reads in the May 13 2016 draft as follows: “Bi-annually update the Portsmouth Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).” All in favor. So voted.

Mr. Bissonnette called for a ten minute break in the proceedings.

4. Review and discussion of the proposed Economic Development Element (5) of the Community Plan

Mr. Crosby conducted a lengthy review of each section of the May 25, 2016 draft of the Portsmouth Comprehensive Community Plan: Element 5 – Economic Development. He highlighted points and issues that would or could be subject to revision. Planning Board members raised questions in a discussion with Mr. Crosby. Mr. Bissonnette called for public comment.

Richard J Marano, 200 Lepes Road, member, Citizens Interested in the Comprehensive Community Planning Process Committee appeared representing the Citizens Committee with the following recommendations for the Element 5 draft:

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- Action ED –1.2b – Recommend that the term “fund” be deleted and

- replaced with the term “support.”
- Action ED – 1.2c – Recommend that the language be deleted and replaced with the following: “Establish and support adult education and training as well as apprenticeship/internship programs to improve the Portsmouth workforce.”

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- Action ED – 2.1e – Recommend that the term “spruce the place up” be deleted and replaced with the following: “enhance the image of the community.”
- Action ED – 2.4f – Recommend that the term “local businesses” be deleted and replaced with the term “the municipality”

Mr. Marano noted that the Citizens Committee is considering compiling a report of recommendations going forward in the Community Plan process.

Judy Staven, 51 Longmeadow Road, member, Citizens Interested in the Comprehensive Community Planning Process Committee stated that she would check to see if the Citizens Committee most recent minutes went out to the Planning Board. Mr. Crosby noted that he may only use minutes that have been approved. Mr. Marano explained that only approved minutes would be sent to Mr. Crosby. Mr. Bissonnette closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

At 7:46 p.m., a motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. So voted.

Respectfully submitted:
Dede Walsh
Recording Secretary for:

Leon Lesinski
Administrative Officer