



Town of Ogunquit
Planning Board
Post Office Box 875
Ogunquit, Maine 03907-0875
Tel: 207-646-9326

**OGUNQUIT PLANNING BOARD
WORKSHOP
MINUTES**

**DUNAWAY CENTER MAIN AUDITORIUM
MAY 29, 2019
4:00 p.m.**

Residential Growth Impact.

Members Present: Steve Wilkos (Chair)
Rusty Hayes (Vice Chair)
Jackie Bevins
Muriel Freedman
Mark MacLeod
Priscilla Botsford (1st Alternate)
Brian Aromando (2nd Alternate)

Also Present: Scott Heyland, Code Enforcement Officer
Lee Jay Feldman, SMPDC Town Planner

Mr. Heyland gave a presentation regarding growth and development in town from 2004 to the present. He supplied a map indicating where things have been happening and noted that analysis of the data may, or may not, lead to zoning changes such as in increase in minimum lot sizes (*a copy of Mr. Heyland's submittals will be archived at the Ogunquit Land Use Office*).

Mr. Heyland's map illustrated development of single family home parcels, lot splits, and approved subdivisions. He confirmed that the majority are off Berwick and Agamenticus Roads.

Mr. Heyland also reviewed data which was gathered by the 2018 Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Mr. Feldman pointed out that there is a significant difference between "seasonal vs. year round" property use which affects things such as: traffic, life safety service calls, Transfer Station use, etc.

Mr. Feldman noted that the majority of development since the 1990's has been on the west side

of Route One. He suggested this trend will continue. Mr. Feldman also suggested that the recent population increase in Ogunquit is due to retirees and other seasonal residents who have relocated their residency making Ogunquit their year round home.

Mr. MacLeod noted that voter registration lists indicate about 1200 to 1300 year round residents.

Mr. Feldman agreed and stated that average household size has dropped below two individuals.

Mr. Feldman advised the Board that they will need to look at the data and determine what type of policies they may want to implement, if any.

Elaine Cooper (23 Spring Street) addressed the Board with some data which she had developed. Among other things she stated that a majority of new homes, constructed after demolition of existing homes, increased the number of bedrooms by one. Ms. Cooper stated that she sees a significant increase in Town services and other affects upon the Town. She agreed to share her research with the Land Use Office when she has completed it.

Mr. Heyland noted that it is difficult to determine whether increases in services are due to day trippers, vacationers, year round residents, and/or season residents.

Mr. MacLeod noted that the recent increase in numbers of residents over 65 years of age has been the single largest growth factor, by a wide margin; and this may also affect the numbers and types of life safety service calls.

Ms. Botsford asked what mechanisms the Planning Board might use to accommodate, or curtail, growth.

Mr. Heyland suggested the Board would need to first identify problems, if there are any.

Ms. Botsford asked about the failed intersection at Berwick Road and Route One.

Mr. Feldman responded that he would not depend on that. He stated that until the Town pays for a full study there is no way to determine whether the intersection is in fact failing. He stated that there are other tools that could be used such as: growth permit requirements which restrict the increase of units per year.

Mr. Heyland responded that these types of restrictions need to be substantiated; and he reiterated that much of the impact is from visitors, not year round residents. He noted that there is a difference between “growth” and “usage”; and the hotels and motels which were open for three of four months in the past are now open almost year round.

Mr. Heyland suggested another useful tool might be an increase in required open space.

Ms. Botsford suggested the formation of a “study group”.

Mr. MacLeod offered a few questions which might be addressed:

- How big is too big? And how big does the Town want to get? How many homes and people does the Town want to have?
- Is the Town growing too fast?
- What are the limits on: existing roadways, sewer and water systems, transfer station, beach and parking, etc? and what is the difference between full time and part time home occupations upon these services?
- What is the affect on open space?

Mr. Macleod noted that from January through March there may be eight hundred people in town; and on an average day in August there may be thirty thousand people including day trippers. He pointed out that “the season” has been greatly extended.

Mr. MacLeod noted that on the street where he lives there are about twelve homes. In the past, about half of them were year round; now there are two. Many of the previously year round homes are now summer homes and/or weekly rentals.

Mr. Feldman added that this is a common trend with seacoast towns all along the East Coast; and he suggested the Town may want to look at how these other communities are dealing with growth.

Mr. Heyland suggested that the preservation of open space is critical.

Mr. Feldman suggested active land trusts; and a look at the Town’s willingness to spend money to preserve large parcels of land as open space.

Mr. Aromando responded that he would be reluctant to increase lot sizes. He noted that this action could effectively become a taking of someone’s property. He would prefer to look at market forces and the giving of a bonus or benefit to property owners who act in a manner consistent with the direction the Town wants to move.

Mr. Aromando noted that unintended consequences of land use ordinances can seriously impact property owners in a negative manner.

The Board agreed that failing intersections is something which needs to be researched.

Mr. Wilkos noted that Mr. Feldman looked into State grants to pay for such a study; and he was unable to get them.

Mr. Heyland suggested that any proposed development needs to meet the failed intersection standard; and should be responsible for the cost of a study. Mr. Heyland stated that he is opposed to having the Town pay the cost of the study; and if it isn’t broken it doesn’t need to be fixed.

Mr. Wilkos agreed; and suggested the Town should not have to pay for intersection studies.

Mr. Aromando suggested a consideration of rate of growth, budgets and the carrying capacity of

town services. He asked if town services are being pushed to their maximum limit; and if they have the funds to provide the level of services they need in order to meet the level of population increase.

Mr. Aromando suggested the Board needs to determine a baseline to identify what the problems are; and then determine what the Board is trying to accomplish.

Mr. Wilkos agreed that the Board needs to first determine if there is a problem.

Pam Sawyer (58 Grasshopper Lane) addressed the Board and agreed that the Board needs to determine whether there actually is a problem. She agreed that more senior aged people are moving back to the area. The number of homes may not have changed however the composition of the residents has. Seasonal homes have become year round residences as more and more people move back into Town.

Ms. Sawyer also pointed out that an increase in the number of bedrooms in a home doesn't necessarily equate to an increase in occupants. She noted that her home has several bedrooms however on a regular basis there are only two people living there; and those extra bedrooms are only used sporadically. There are so many variables and things to consider that even determining what needs to be looked at will be a big job.

Peter Kahn (3 Tern Street) asked what a "failed intersection" is.

Mr. Feldman responded that failed intersections are when cars sit at an intersection, unable to make a left hand turn for more than fifty seconds; which means that many intersections in Ogunquit fail during the height of the tourist season. However at other times they may not fail. The question is how the town wants to address that situation. Mr. Feldman explained that there are formulas that Maine DOT uses to determine an intersection's status year round; which is why it can be dangerous to label an intersection as "failed".

Mr. Feldman cited a 2012 study of projection for business growth in Southern Maine beach communities. He agreed to provide a copy to the Board members. The point is that Ogunquit's issues are similar to other communities and the Board may look to these other communities to see how they deal with things.

Mr. Wilkos reiterated that the Board needs to determine whether or not there is a problem.

Ms. Freedman asked for additional information from the Police and Fire Departments regarding the source and types of calls they respond to; and whether they are for seasonal or year round people.

Mr. MacLeod suggested that the problem may not be from year round residents but rather from seasonal visitors and the impact they have on the cost of services which are paid for by tax payers. Another issue may be the cost of living in Town. Mr. MacLeod suggested the problem may be the increase in people coming to town in the summer; and the Board needs to determine how this should be handled.

Mr. Hayes expressed his concern that data can be interpreted in different ways; and the Board needs to be cautious. He noted that he has a four bedroom house and there are two people who live there. Just because a new house is larger than the one it replaced doesn't mean that occupancy has increased.

Mr. Aromando noted that the Town hasn't prohibited new hotel/motel rooms; it has made the ordinance so strict as to make it impossible to build them. He suggested the Board needs to look at Town infrastructure first. He asked to have the Department Heads provide input regarding their budgets and whether or not they are stressed to provide services. He noted that growth also increases tax revenue which allows for an increase in services.

Ms. Botsford suggested that a study group would be helpful to gather data and develop appropriate questions and lines of research.

The Board agreed to the following:

- The Code Enforcement Officer will gather data on police and fire services: are they maxed? And what types of calls are they responding to?
- A study group / ad hoc committee should be developed; and the Code Enforcement Officer will ask the Town Manager how that needs to be done.

The Workshop was adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Maryann Stacy

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Town of Ogunquit

Planning Board

Recording Secretary

Approved on June 12, 2019

Note:

- *All Planning Board meetings/workshops are video archived, and may be viewed at any time, on the Town of Ogunquit's website at www.townofogunquit.org.*
- *These minutes are not a transcript.*