

# Maine Quality of Place Council

Minutes of the First Meeting, July 17, 2008

Governor's Cabinet Room, Augusta

**Next Meeting of the Council: Wednesday, September 17, 2008, 9:00am to 12:00pm, Augusta, place to be determined. Additional meetings scheduled for Tuesday, October 14, 2008, 9:00am to 12:00pm and Thursday, November 20, 2008, 9:00am to 12:00pm**

Present: Council Members: Richard Barringer (chair), Edward Barrett, Kat Fuller for David Cole, Martha Freeman, Eleanor Kinney, Eliza Townsend for Patrick McGowan, Donna McNeil, Matthew Polstein, John Richardson, Robert Thompson, Robin Zinchuck. Council Staff: Jody Harris, Kate Reilly, Linda LaPlante, Sue Inches. Others Attending: Hon. John E. Baldacci, Jane Lincoln, Phil Carey, Bruce Kidman, Bob Duplessie, Henry R. Heyburn, Jr., Patsy Wiggins, Amanda Rector, Meredith Batley, Ali Worster, Brett Johnson, Andy Despres, Greg Nadeau, Carolyn Manson, William King, Jr., Jayne Palmer, James Cote

**Introductions & Greetings:** Richard Barringer, Chair, opened the meeting at 9:00am with the introduction of council members, staff, SPO summer interns, and guests. He reviewed the agenda and expectations for the meeting. We were then joined by the Hon. John E. Baldacci and Chief of Staff Jane Lincoln. The Governor expressed his wishes that the Quality of Place Council lay the foundation for all state agencies to adhere to and develop appropriate legislation for January.

**Governor's Remarks:** Governor Baldacci thanked council members for agreeing to serve and recognized the staff of SPO and other state agencies for their work on quality of place recommendations. The first Council worked very hard and laid a solid foundation for this Council to build on. He was happy to see that the first Council's place and prosperity research confirmed Brookings' assertions that Maine's quality of place is the driver of our future economic prosperity, and understands that their two-dozen recommendations are now in various stages of implementation.

The Governor hopes to draw business to Maine from around the world and expressed need to decentralize the state's economic development efforts – locally and regionally – and have economic development occur from the bottom-up, rather than the top down. In both regards, he said, quality of place is our future prosperity. “I have always believed that the character of Maine's people, communities, and natural resources are powerful economic assets, in and of themselves. But it will take hard work to realize the 21<sup>st</sup> century prosperity Maine's Quality of Place promises. We must preserve and invest in these assets which are essential for the state's long-term economic health. Now is the time to shape Maine's government, services, and economic development strategies to

target investment in our Quality of Place. This is the work I hope you'll take up and help me implement.”

The Governor was introduced to the SPO interns (Andy Despres, Brett Richardson, and Ali Worster) and he welcomed them and thanked them for their help with our quality of place research.

**Follow-on Tasks:** Richard Barringer provided the new council members with an overview of the work of the previous Council on Maine's Quality of Place (2007-2008), whose genesis was in the 2006 Brookings Report: *Charting Maine's Future*. He reviewed the “follow-on tasks” that staff and interns are now working on (see handout titled *Follow-on Tasks and Assignments from the First Council*, dated 07-17-08, posted to SPO's quality of place web site at <http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/index.htm>).

**Quality of Place Investment Strategy:** State Economist Kate Reilly presented the growing evidence that quality of place can be an economic driver and described what's needed to implement a QOP investment strategy (see presentation titled *Quality of Place Investment Strategy*, dated 07-17-08, posted to SPO's quality of place web site).

Council discussion: When talking about the need to attract people, we also need to have the tools in place to manage their impacts and to address sprawl. We also need to combat the perception that tourism jobs are low-paying jobs. Quality of Place can be a way to bring our children and grandchildren home. Suggestion to share the QOP work with the Natural Resources Task Force. Discussed need to develop entrepreneurial skills. There is a thirst and interest to start new businesses in Maine. A council member recalled hearing of a recent survey of graduates of the Maine Community College System showing that 50% would like to start their own business, but don't know how. We need to prepare young people better and create entrepreneurial readiness. We need to change the mindset that someone from away starts businesses where Mainers work. Council would like to keep this as a priority. Suggestion to inventory efforts in this area.

**Summary of Executive Order:** State Planning Director Martha Freeman provided an overview of the Governor's Executive Order creating the Council and describing the Council's and State Planning Office' duties, as follows:

Working with the QP Council, SPO is to:

- Staff the Council
- At the Council's direction, prepare guidelines for:
  - Asset inventories
  - QP investment/training/marketing strategies
  - Best practices for QP strategies
  - Standards for grants
  - Performance measures

- Help Regional Council of Governments/Economic Development Districts
  - Establish regional QP Councils
  - Do inventories, strategies, develop proposals
- For Governor's consideration, (in consultation with other pertinent state agencies and COG/EDDs) prepare legislation by Dec. 1 to establish statewide and regional QP investment strategies for Maine

To report on to Council, SPO is to:

- Work with DECD, DOT, DOC and other pertinent state agencies to align missions, policies, plans, programs, activities, funding with advancement of QP investment strategies
  - Engage MSHA, FAME, UMS, MCCS
  - Report blueprint to Council and Governor
- Prior to Nov. 1, convene COG/EDDs to promote and gain feedback on QP investment strategies

Council discussion: Discussed need for draft legislation this fall and to engage gubernatorial candidates. Also recognized the need for a change in culture where QOP initiatives take on a life of their own, whether legislation passes or not. Suggestion to inventory other executive and legislative committees and groups working on QOP issues as a means to coordinate efforts. Suggestion to make a recommendation for a joint select committee to consider the legislation developed.

**Regional and State Roles:** Jody Harris, Director of Program Services, State Planning Office, provided an overview of how a QOP initiative might be organized and structured in Maine based on the previous Council's final report and the Governor's Executive Order. The Order provides for state, regional, and local roles (see presentation titled *Regional-State Roles*, dated 07-17-08, posted to SPO's quality of place web site).

Richard Barringer expressed the previous Council's emphasis that QOP will not be successful unless all related state agencies align their efforts behind this framework.

Council Discussion: Need to consider how state programs and grants link to QOP (targeting resources, changing scoring criteria), not taking funding or resources away from a program. It is a wholly new way of thinking. For example, building affordable housing in rural areas vs. redeveloping housing to help revitalize downtowns. Agencies must see themselves not in isolation, but as part of a larger strategy. John Richardson described how the delivery of grants and resources might be better coordinated and combined. No one program by itself can do it all, but coordinated we can be more effective and help leverage greater resources from outside state government.

**Quality of Place in Action:** Deputy DOT Commissioner Greg Nadeau and Director of Transportation Systems Planning Kat Fuller described how transportation investments are

aligned with QOP objectives. The department has retooled, reoriented, and reinvented their entire approach to planning to help strengthen systems and quality of life in Maine communities. Transportation investments ranging from scenic byways and transit networks to historic preservation and community gateways are geared toward enhancing Maine's quality of place. (see handout titled *MaineDOT's Quality of Place Investment Strategies*, dated 07-17-08, posted to SPO's quality of place web site).

Council Discussion: This is hard work. But through coordination and hard work, agencies can align missions and programs. Need to incentivize and reward proposals that address QOP, so when they come before coordinated agencies' review they are advantaged.

Suggestion: to develop a Governor's QOP Award program to recognize efforts of state agencies, communities, businesses, foundations that have obtained QOP goals.

### **Next Meeting – Information Needs**

- Inventory of current state grant programs that support QOP
- List of task forces and other committees with whom we need to coordinate
- Draft standards for quality of place planning
- Draft grant standards
- Outline possible legislative content

### **Next 3 Meetings: Locations to be determined:**

- Wednesday, September 17, 2008 – 9:00am to 12:00pm
- Tuesday, October 14, 2008 – 9:00am to 12:00pm
- Thursday, November 20, 2008 – 9:00am to 12:00pm

Meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm.