



WASHINGTON COUNTY
COMMUNITY GUIDED PLANNING and
ZONING PROCESS

Public Outreach Meeting Minutes
EDMUNDS TOWNSHIP
6-8 PM August 31, 2016



Dennysville Edmunds Snowmobile & ATV Club - Dennysville

Attendees:

<i>Community Participants</i> Janet Hough	<i>Convenors/Facilitators</i> Judy East, Washington County Council of Governments Sarah Strickland, Strategic Wisdom Partners Dr. Tora Johnson, University of Maine at Machias GIS Service Center and Laboratory
	<i>Land Use Planning Commission Staff</i> Samantha Horn Olsen, Land Use Planning Commission –Planning Manager, Augusta Karen Bolstridge, Land Use Planning Commission – Environmental Specialist, Bangor
	<i>UT Planning Committee Members</i> John Hough, Edmunds Susan Hatton, Sunrise County Economic Council Betsy Fitzgerald, Washington County Manager Dean Preston, Supervisor, Unorganized Territories

With only the spouse of a Planning Committee member present we did not run the meeting in the public meeting format we have used in the first 3 meetings. Rather those present discussed multiple ways and means to use the final 2 meetings to engage more of the community than we have heard from to date – particularly in the southern region and along the Route 1 corridor.

Discussion of reasons for poor attendance:

- It was the first day of school and a lovely summer evening
- The post card was sent to property owners in early July and directed people to a web site but did not list dates and locations
- Advertisements in the Quoddy Tides were small and could be missed
- There is no controversy to react to

Discussion of ways to attract people to the final 2 meetings:

- Issue a Press Release with a sense of urgency such as:
 - Listing hot button topics (shellfishing access, increased regulation, loss of local control)
 - Describe what we have heard to date: no growth, no new development, no change, permitting takes too long, don't want any new rules but we want more/better services and "we need more young families"
 - List who we have heard from: retirees, very few businesses, no young people
 - Use a headline "Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace"
 - Describe preliminary recommendations re: Floating Zones and the opportunity they offer to streamline permitting process (reduce time)
 - Describe how this is the opportunity to bring decisions to the local level; this is it.
 - Issue Press Release to Quoddy Tides and Calais Advertiser with dates, times, venues

- Send another letter using Dean’s mailing list
- Make specific phone calls to community leaders that Dean is aware of; ask them to use their networks to get people to the meetings
- In a letter to residents and in the Press Release, **Ask:**
 - Are there issues you want to see addressed in the UT?
 - Are there businesses that need support with zoning and land use issues?
 - Have you encountered problems with permitting?
 - What are they?
 - Do you have ideas for improvement?
 - Can you bring us specific examples?
 - Are there infrastructure needs/ideas you have to support your life/business – specifically around connectivity?
- Use Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonCountyUnorganizedTerritories/> and ask for networking to share widely

Discussion of Messages in the letter and in the Press Release:

- If you are or if you know someone who has a small business in Edmunds or Trescott this is the meeting you need to come to.
- The LUPC is on board with this process in Washington County – reasonable ideas will more than likely be approved
- This work and your input will impact recommendations now and in future (3-5 years) efforts of change/rezoning
- If proposals will reduce paperwork – more powerful to describe them as reducing the time it takes to get a permit
- Initial zoning tools seek to compress the time it takes to get a permit; come and learn about them
 - Floating Zone concept that is responsive and flexible to both existing and potential rural business ideas
 - Creation of tools/ fact sheets to describe and facilitate what you need to know about doing x, or y or z activity including:
 - Which permits
 - Which agencies (it is not just the LUPC) with contact names/ #s
 - Maps of who serves what region
 - Provide links to these tools, maps, contacts from UT and WCCOG web site
 - Washington County UT focused
- Offer the meeting as a space for a round table to offer ideas to improve on problems

Discussion of change to structure of final 2 public meetings:

- Indicate the Sept 20 focus is on Trescott, Edmunds, Marion, and Cathance
- Indicate the Sept 27 focus is on Baring and any Northern (non-coastal UT)
- Engage small businesses before hand (eg on the phone), in a pre-meeting, or at the beginning so that residents hear of their issues/ needs
- Limit presentation of context and timeline
- Sarah and Tora and Judy to get together to discuss this further

Discussion of areas not ready for zoning changes:

- Aroostook County did not find a lot of specific zoning problems to fix, but focused on the idea of creating flexibility for when someone does want to do something in the future
- The Capital Investment Plan can anticipate and support future growth using:

- The Proximity to Development GIS suitability analysis to depict location of current infrastructure and best places for growth
- GIS can also map the population data to support Capital Investment choices around investment in infrastructure

Discussion of improvements to description of Floating Zone concept:

- Use capitalization (Floating Zone) rather than quotations (“floating zones”)
- Use examples within Washington County where it has been used (Note from Judy: the Floating Zone concept has only been used in the Future Land Use maps of Comp Plans in Alexander and Cherryfield – neither have taken the step of implementing actual zoning and I am not convinced it will be useful to go down the rabbit hole of describing the difference between Future Land Use Districts and actual zoning districts)
- Describe how it simplifies the process and the criteria used for permit review
 - Flow chart Conventional Zoning change and Permit beside Floating Zone and Permit with steps or criteria that are not necessary blacked out
 - One overarching difference between rural and urban/suburban areas is that urban/suburban areas are far more uniform, compact and predictable
 - Rural areas are far more varied and unpredictable – this is why zoning is so often not developed or adopted (eg only 7 organized towns in Washington County have zoning)
 - Floating zone provide that flexible middle ground that allows rural landowners to respond to opportunity while also providing some sensible restrictions

Discussion of Floating Zone for Recreational Support Businesses

- Need to avoid discussion of the market viability of the businesses that would be allowed
- Zoning is not about evaluating market potential – legally and morally
- Zoning is about limiting the overall impact of development uses on natural resource; achieving that balance, thus:
 - Any regulation that allows an open-ended # or intensity of uses will be restricted in the number of places it can go
 - Vice-versa, regulation that limits uses in both variety and intensity can be allowed in more places
- The LUPC is not in the business of anticipating what the economy will do and wants to provide flexibility for new types of economic development that are not yet known.
- Any rules we recommend can only provide flexibility that can then respond to changing circumstances and innovation

One Edmunds property owner arrived at 7:55 PM “to see the maps” and was provided information about the Sept 20 meeting at the Whiting Community Center

Respectfully Submitted
Judy East