



WASHINGTON COUNTY
COMMUNITY GUIDED PLANNING and
ZONING PROCESS

Planning Committee Meeting Minutes and
Follow Up "to dos"
5-7 PM March 28, 2016



Assembly Room, Washington County Community College - Calais, ME

Attendees:

Judy East, Washington County Council of Governments
Sarah Strickland, Strategic Wisdom Partners
John Hough, Edmunds Twp
Karen Bolstridge, Land Use Planning Commission
Hugh Coxe, Land Use Planning Commission
Crystal Hitchings, Washington County Council of Governments, Downeast&Acadia Regional Tourism
Heron Weston, Interim Supervisor Washington County UT
John Bryant, American Forest Management
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager
Travis Howard, land manager for Wagner Forestry
Tora Johnson, University of Maine GIS Service Center and Laboratory
Susan Hatton, Sunrise County Economic Council
Heather Almeda, St Croix International Waterway Commission

Regrets:

David Bell, Cherryfield Foods, ME Wild Blueberries
Al May, Trescott Twp; Maine CDC
Dwayne Shaw, Downeast Salmon Federation
John Dudley, Town of Alexander

NOTE to Planning Committee/reader: **items in minutes in highlighter are "to be done"** before April meeting

Introductions, agenda review – added schedule of next meetings after Status of GIS Suitability analyses; and oops, we forgot to do introductions; sorry about that!

Status of Survey input: From Powerpoint slide:

- **Responses - Total: 121 - 5% response rate**
 - Community Meetings: 38
 - Online survey last Fall (UTs): 65

- Online Survey this Spring (Plantations; school outreach): 14
 - Mailed in: 4 plus 3 with written detailed comments
 - Mailing went out to 2001 (UTs) 377 (Plantations) = 2378 property owners
- The survey input will be assembled and summarized in the Collaboration Chapter – to be provided at April meeting.

Status of GIS Suitability Analyses : This was discussed in the context of the next schedule of meetings; there are some delays and adjustments due to student schedules and unforeseen health circumstances; Tora and Heron will be covering for those items that students cannot complete.

Planning Meetings – Schedule Update: adapted From Powerpoint Slide

- **April** : initial review of Suitability Analyses
 - Development, Conservation, Recreation
- **May and June** : Draft Prospective Zones ~~and Issues Forum~~ (Forum removed by consensus based on agreement that we are covering the bases; involving collaborators and need to focus our limited time on the prospective zoning task)
- **July – September**: and Public review of draft prospective zones
- **October**: Draft CIP; Finalize prospective zones
- **November**: review of prospective zones by County Commissioners

Review and Finalize Criteria and areas to conduct prospective zoning: multiple charts of data that are embedded in the 3-25-2016 DRAFT Contemplation chapter were projected using Powerpoint Slides. Each criterion and its threshold was examined and added (where different) to the summary chart (attached at end). NOTE – where we have finalized the criteria below the word “Preliminary” in the text box is indicated in strikethrough text.

Population Criterion – all agreed on the language and threshold as summarized below (and in the 3-25-2016 DRAFT Contemplation chapter). One observation: household size may be slightly higher (than 2.24) where there are year round households (Baring, East Central UT) than where there are more households with retirement or social security income (Grand Lake Stream, Northern UT).

Population Criterion: Conduct Prospective Zoning in UTs and Plantations where year round population exceeds 50.

~~Preliminary~~ **Conclusion**: This criterion and threshold suggest conducting prospective zoning in: Baring, Big Lake, Brookton, Edmunds, Grand Lake Stream, Lambert Lake and Trescott.

New Residential Development Trends Criterion – all agreed on the language and threshold as summarized below (and in the 3-25-2016 DRAFT Contemplation chapter). In addition though, Karen noted that we should also look at the total number of residential permits (not just new residential permits) to capture reconstruction, additions, accessory structures, septic systems etc. as this will give a picture of places where there is demand for residential development activity. Such locations include UTs and Plantations that:

- have limited room for new construction or have pre-existing non-conforming uses,
- are experiencing conversion from lease lots to owners, or seasonal to year round conversion;
- need/seek maintenance, expansion, accessory uses, and upgrades (septic, water, foundation etc.).

Judy will contact/has received from Tim Beaucage at LUPC a download of the total # of residential permits and revise/depict the chart of the total # of new dwelling permits (from most to least) with the addition of the total # of all other residential permits so we can see them in a stacked column by UT and Plantation. This will add to our understanding of the type and pace of residential development activity throughout the UT and may modify our selected sub-set of areas in which to focus; to be reviewed at April meeting. Thus the language and threshold of this criterion (shown below) stands for now and may be modified in April:

New Residential Development Permit Trends Criterion: Conduct Prospective Zoning in UTs and Plantations where (1) the number of new residential permits between 1995-2015 exceeds 20, or (2) where the highest proportion of new residential permit issued has taken place after 2005.

Preliminary Conclusion: This criterion and threshold suggest conducting prospective zoning in: Baring, Cathance, Edmunds, Marion, Trescott, and Twp 24.

Non-residential development trend criterion - all agreed on the language and threshold as summarized below (and in the 3-25-2016 DRAFT Contemplation chapter). Judy described the analysis of the LUPC Permit Data and the thought process behind the written analysis in the text. To make the text analysis clearer and our deliberations transparent we will also:

- Change the written analysis/conclusions (on pages 11-13 in the 3-25-2016 DRAFT Contemplation chapter) to a tabular format: UT/Plantation; # and Type of Permit; Summary of Activity Types; Conclusion on whether to conduct Prospective Zoning
- Add an Appendix depicting the original data for each UT or Plantation on which the analysis in the summary table in the text is based (Columns to include: Permit Type; Summary Activity; Date of Permit).

Karen also noted that this data spans 20 years and the ways that permits are issued has changed. For instance, she observed there are a lot of permits in TWP 24 but most are for water withdrawal and irrigation; LUPC no longer issues individual permits for that activity – they are grouped in one permit so a high # of permits is not necessarily an indication of a lot of non-residential permit activity. Judy has assembled the Appendix showing the detail for each UT to give the Planning Committee the opportunity to refine this criterion if necessary. Thus the language and threshold of this criterion (shown below) stands for now but the list of UTs and Plantations may be tweaked in April:

Non-residential development trend criterion: Conduct prospective zoning in UTs and Plantations where the amount and type of permit activity indicates likelihood and opportunity for economic growth as measured by high (greater than 10) development permit activity, recent permit activity (last 10 years), permit activity specific to growth opportunity (eg. recreation/lodging), and permit activity that may require reconciliation of competing uses (eg. residential and agriculture).

Preliminary Conclusion: This criterion and threshold suggest conducting prospective zoning in: Baring, Cathance, Edmunds, Marion, Lambert Lake, Trescott, and Twp 24. It further indicates that we need additional criteria to justify conducting prospective zoning in Big Lake, Brookton and Grand Lake Stream.

Transportation access criterion - all agreed on the language and but revised the threshold with the removal of the analysis at the top of page 14 in the DRAFT Contemplation chapter as it mixes up the population and development criteria with the transportation criteria. We will let the Summary Chart do that overall analysis once all criteria are reviewed. Thus the preliminary conclusion of this criterion (shown below) is modified to now include Twp 8 R3, Twp 8 R4, Twp 30 MD, Codyville, Devereaux, and Day Block.

Transportation access criterion: Conduct prospective zoning in UTs and Plantations that are traversed by State highways, State-aid highways or by active rail networks.

Preliminary Conclusion: This criterion and threshold indicates conducting prospective zoning in: Baring, Brookton, Cathance, Edmunds, Forest, Forest City, Grand Lake Stream, Kossuth, Lambert Lake, Marion, Trescott, Twp 24 MD, Twp 8 R3, Twp 8 R4, Twp 30 MD, Codyville, Devereaux, and Day Block

TIF Investments Criterion – The 3-25-2016 DRAFT Contemplation chapter provided the data on the amount of TIF loans and grants, the # of FTEs and PTEs created and/or retained by the investment by UT and by applicant. It did not make any recommendation about how to use TIF investments as a criterion. The Planning Committee discussed the pros and cons of using 1) the amount invested with and without a threshold, 2) the likelihood that one TIF investment would spur another one, and 3) also questioned the very high job creation figure (40+ jobs created) in Twp 43 (which pre-dated Susan’s administration of the program and she will look into it). Planning Committee concluded that the criterion was business specific and that a UT met the threshold if there had ben any TIF grant or loan and did not if there was not yet any TIF investment. Remember that Plantations are not eligible so they do not meet this criterion anyway. Thus the TIF investments Criterion is modified from the one in the 3-25-2016 DRAFT Contemplation chapter (that just raised questions) as follows:

TIF Investments Criterion: Conduct prospective zoning in UTs where there is a record of previous TIF grant and loan awards.

Preliminary Conclusion: This criterion and threshold indicates conducting prospective zoning in Brookton, Cathance, Centerville, Edmunds, Kossuth, Marion, Sakom, Trescott, Twp 24, Twp 25 and Twp 43.

Proximity to Services Criterion - all agreed on the language and threshold as summarized below (and in the 3-25-2016 DRAFT Contemplation chapter) with no changes:

Proximity to services criterion: Conduct prospective zoning in UTs and Plantations that are located in close proximity (within 10 miles) of a service center or retail hub.

Preliminary Conclusion: This criterion and threshold indicates conducting prospective zoning in: Baring, Big Lake, Brookton, Centerville, Edmunds and Trescott.

Proximity to recreational assets criterion: Judy reviewed recreational maps created for Washington County in 2014 (posted here: <http://gro-wa.org/getactivewc.htm>) and did a visual cluster analysis of assets within each UT and Plantation. This analysis yielded a rating of low, medium, high and very high based on the presence/absence of recreational assets (sports fishing, canoe routes, hiking trail access points, snowshoeing and x-c skiing, rod and gun clubs, recreational lodging etc. Planning Committee discussed with Tora that it is a fairly simple algorithm to do this kind of analysis more systematically using GIS so that each UT and Plantation gets a numerical score of the total # of recreational assets within its boundaries. All agreed that we will proceed with this approach and adjust the threshold (formerly those UTs and Plantations with high and very high ratings from the visual cluster analysis) once we see the results. Heron will do the GIS analysis and we will make final decision on this threshold in April. For now the language and threshold are in draft form:

Proximity to recreational assets criterion: Conduct prospective zoning in UTs and Plantations that have high or very high clusters of recreational assets as determined by a GIS analysis of the number of recreational assets within or in close proximity to them.

Preliminary Conclusion: This criterion and threshold indicates conducting prospective zoning in: Baring, Berry, Big Lake, Cathance, Edmunds, Forest City, Grand Lake Stream, Marion, Trescott, Twp 42, and Twp 43.

NOTE TO COMMITTEE: we discussed the cluster analysis that enumerated recreational assets within a UT or Plantation whereas the draft also said "in close proximity" which I think is valid. I will send an e-mail poll to determine what we collectively agree is "in close proximity" to give Heron our collective guidance in the GIS analysis.

Also – another thing that did not come up in the meeting but was discussed with Hugh in our prep meeting prior is my analysis on Page 18 of the 3-25-2016 DRFAT Contemplation chapter. I did not portray the impact of the changes in the recreational lodging rules accurately. Correction to be inserted in revised Contemplation chapter – details of existing LUPC zoning to be discussed at April meeting.

Also – we need to add ATV and snowmobile trails to the analysis –those trails heads are not on the Get Active maps and we do in fact have the shapefile with that information.

Land available for development criterion: In the analysis of this criterion (for the 3-25-2016 DRFAT Contemplation chapter) Judy reviewed the GIS maps depicting conserved land, roads and infrastructure to create a rating scale for the "land available for development". The scale ranged from high, to medium (where land was unencumbered by conservation easements or natural features and was near roads and infrastructure) to low for varying reasons including "limited by lack of infrastructure", "limited by access and lack of infrastructure", "limited due to the extent of conservation easements", or "limited due to extent of conservation easement and wetlands". It became apparent in the discussion that this criterion had turned into a substitute for the combined Conservation and Development Suitability Analyses. All agreed that we have a sufficient range of criteria in the first 7 (above) to make our decisions about where to conduct prospective zoning and that we did not need, nor was it possible, to have a "land available for development criterion". We did

recognize however that the suitability analyses will be run countywide so this criterion might be useful in those UTs and Plantations where it was not completely clear whether to conduct prospective zoning from the summary, or where we might focus on a small portion of a particular UT or Plantation.

Other “Opportunity Factors” criterion: This criterion arose out of the Feb 25 meeting discussion where we identified factors that would influence our decisions on whether to conduct prospective zoning – that had not been identified by our analysis at that time. All agreed that as we in fleshed out the criteria in the data mining and analysis since February that we have essentially incorporated the other “opportunity” criteria into the analysis. We will not use this criteria going forward but recognize that the discussion was still useful as a record of, and guidance to, our 7 final criteria, the suitability analyses, and our decisions going forward.

Criteria Summary Matrix: the Planning Committee reviewed and revised the Summary Criteria spreadsheet (attached). We have concluded at this point to definitely conduct prospective zoning in:

- Baring, Cathance, Edmunds, Marion, and Trescott

To conduct prospective zoning in some or portions of:

- Big Lake, Forest City, and Grand Lake Stream

To adapt the DRB (Development – Rural Business) zoning option developed in Aroostook County to one that applies to all of the 9 UTs and Plantations above plus:

- Brookton, Lambert Lake, and Twp 24

Further refinement of the areas within these UTs and Plantations where the D-RB would be an option – still to be discussed/determined.

Final decisions on whether to conduct prospective zoning in some or parts of the 2nd set of 3 UTs & Plantations will be made after review of the “all other residential Permits” analysis, the recreation cluster analysis, and another look at the development permits analysis that is now in Tabular form in the Contemplation chapter and includes all of the individual permits/UT and Plantation/Date/Summary Description in an Appendix.

Issues Forum:

All agreed we do not have time for an issues forum given that we still have enough on our plate and that the issues we need to incorporate are coming up front and center with both the data analysis and the collaboration input.

Next meetings for April, May and June to be determined by meeting doodles. Judy will send out

Respectfully Submitted
Judy East