

**Community-Guided Planning and Zoning for the Unorganized Territories
of Somerset and Franklin Counties: Workshop 3**

Webster Hall, Kingfield, ME

October 6, 2014; 4-6:00 pm.

Attendance

LUPC: Hugh Coxe; Samantha Horn-Olsen; Robert Dunphy, Commissioner; Bill Gilmore, Commissioner

Convening Agencies: Jim Batey, Somerset Economic Development Corporation; Chris Huck and Rosie Vanaderstine, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments; John Maloney and Bob Thompson, Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments

Steering Committee: Clyde Barker, Franklin County Commissioner; Gordon Gamble, Wagner Forest Management; Alison Hagerstrom, Greater Franklin Development Corporation; Luke Muzzy, Plum Creek Timber Co.; Alan Michka, Friends of Highland Mtns.; Steve Steward, Bingham Selectman; Tom Rumpf, The Nature Conservancy; Lloyd Trafton, Somerset County Commissioner; Russell Walters, Northern Outdoors.

Facilitators: Frank O'Hara, Alison Truesdale

Members of the public: Darryl Brown; John Bryant; Greg Drummond; Eliza Donoghue, Natural Resources Council of Maine; Mark Doty, Plum Creek Timber Co.; Richard and Cathy Horn; Roy and Paula Huff; Norm Kalloch, Carrying Place Town Township; Kay Michka, New Portland.

Agenda

1. Introductions, meeting overview
2. Approval of minutes
3. Discussion of three key issues
 - Area of focus of effort
 - Two-phase scheduling approach
 - Consensus decision making
4. Review of rest of Straw Man Proposal
5. Public comment
6. Vote on document
7. Next steps

Introductions, meeting overview, approval of minutes

After everyone introduced themselves, Frank reviewed the agenda and the minutes of the previous two workshops were approved with the following changes and clarifications:

June 24th Workshop 1 minutes:

- Kay Michka and Jean Antonucci were in attendance, Betsy Squibb was not.

July 22nd Workshop minutes:

- Commissioners Barker and Trafton (referenced under (1) of the straw man proposal) were not there. Frank clarified that the reference was to a telephone communication with Commissioner Trafton before the workshop.

Discussion of three key issues

Area of focus of effort

The convening agencies struggled with the balance between too much specificity and too little. What is the right balance between focus (e.g., trails) and breadth of focus (i.e., recreation)? Jim, Chris and John suggested language as a first step toward prospective zoning in the UT:

“The steering committee recommends that:

1) The initial area of focus of the planning effort be anticipated land uses needed to support outdoor recreation growth, and zoning changes needed to encourage/allow such uses – the facilities, trails, and land uses needed to support economic growth in the area including “hub” communities. This effort shall consider and account for protection of the resources, existing uses, and environmental quality of the area, infrastructure needs, zoning for associated uses, “hub” community impacts, the rights of landowners, the interests of local residents, and the needs of the wood-products industries. For more specific information about the reasons for this initial area of focus and trends and objectives, please see the final report of the Steering Committee.”

Clarifications:

- The initial focus may differ from the scope of focus once the Planning Committee begins work. This process document envisions allowing for a broader initial focus, while anticipating that the focus may be narrowed later on. The budget is also likely to force a narrowed focus initially. If additional funds become available, the focus could broaden again.
- The planning process does not necessarily involve creating new protection areas or zones, but instead envisions locating development zones away from sensitive areas.
- While the Rangeley planning process limited the opportunity for rezoning, LUPC does not envision that will be the case with this plan. The planning committee can recommend anything, but the LUPC has to consider the landowner equity issue and would not want to broadly limit other opportunities. The regular rezoning process will probably apply.

Comments/Concerns:

- Gordon and Jim: The focus on recreation may not consider industrial uses. The statement should add “and other growth opportunities.”
- Alan: Stimulating activity in the hub communities warrants an initial focus on those areas, but other opportunities may come up later.

- Russell: The document should say that the recreational planning group is looking for guidance from landowners on issues that affect the landowners.
- Tom: The document needs to define the meaning of “hub community” versus “service center”.

Two-phase Planning Process

Phase 1 – mainly defining focus area; Phase 2 – the planning for the area. The three agencies want to have enough resources at the end of the first phase so that a product could come out of it, if necessary.

Clarification:

- The Steering Committee’s process document has to be approved by Commission before the Planning Committee can begin. The LUPC staff will monitor the planning process to ensure that the Planning Committee follows the process document or gets LUPC approval to change the document.

Consensus decision making

The modified consensus process was adopted in Aroostook to provide a strong recommendation to the LUPC, without opening up the process to “hostage-taking” where one person could prevent consensus until they get what they want. The modified consensus decision making process (consensus-minus-one) would apply to the Steering Committee and the subcommittees.

Review of the Rest of the Straw Man Proposal

Gordon: What is the process for selecting committee chairs and committee members?

John: Candidates need to submit letter of interest or fill out a form provided by KVCOG or AVCOG, stating what they can bring to the planning process. The agencies will consolidate the lists, contact the finalists, and submit the final list to their respective boards. Those not selected will be put on the contact list.

Alan: what is a “special effort” to involve the public? “Community guided planning” implies that there will be extensive outreach to stakeholders. Alan encouraged the agencies to send notice to all residents of the UT in Somerset and Franklin counties at the beginning of the planning process, letting them know how to participate. In the past, the Maine Revenue Services has included materials with their tax mailings. Their next mailing would be in April. This process would notify out-of-state landowners as well as local residents.

Public comment

Norman Kalloch (Carrying Place Town Township) expressed concern about the role of residents of the UT in the planning process. Residents are not adequately represented on the Steering Committee, and need to be involved on the planning committee. One resident from each county is not adequate representation, as residents are the largest stakeholder group. Process should be driven by residents and should include outreach to everyone.

Frank: What would adequate representation be? Norman said he thought the agencies should figure that out, but one is not adequate.

Kay: As written, there is no public input into amendment process.

Vote on document

After amending the draft to add a definition of hub communities, include manufacturing as an example of future uses to consider, add a caution that the process should consider potential future land uses; add Maine Revenue Service mailings and other outreach methods for residents, call for an appropriate number of residents on the subcommittees, and include a public input step in the amendment process -- the document was approved unanimously, 9-0, with no abstentions.

Next steps

Alison and Frank will revise the document and send it to the agency boards (see the attached marked-up document). The LUPC will vote on approving the document at their November 12 meeting. KVCOG and AVCOG want to recommend committee members at their December meetings.

An email about how to express interest in serving on the planning committee will also be sent out. Chris will develop a selection process and post it on the KVCOG website.