

**Western Maine Planning Process for Townships and Plantations Served by the Land Use
Planning Commission**

**Somerset County Subcommittee
-Thursday April 30, 2015-
Valley High School, Bingham**

Meeting Minutes

Attending: Committee members Julie Richard; Luke Muzzy; Suzanne Hockmeyer; Kay Michka; Tom Rumpf; Lloyd Trafton.

Staff: Chris Huck, KVCOG; Hugh Coxe, LUPC; Nik Livesay, LUPC; Jim Batey, SEDC.

Public: Alan Michka, David & Carolyn Small, Peter Brink, Eric Tuttle.

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome and Introductions: Chris Huck welcomed members of the committee and asked for introductions of members and guests.
2. Committee Members' input: The committee members not in attendance for the March meeting had the opportunity to expound upon their interests and perspectives for the process.

Tom Rumpf represents the Nature Conservancy, a major landowner in Somerset County. He was on the LURC Reform Commission that recommended Community Guided Planning and would like to see the process work with the regional flexibility that was intended.

Lloyd Trafton is a county commissioner and resident of West Forks. His principal interest is economic development in the region and he is particularly interested in the balanced development of recreation and industrial uses.

3. Presentation of Somerset Economic Development Plan: Jim presented the draft recommendations of the economic development planning process for upper Somerset County. Jim described the background and process involved and the drivers of the economy identified by the plan (forest products, construction, health care, tourism). The plan described a series of recommended actions and initiatives, with some specific implementation steps:
 - Improve marketing capacity
 - Establish a recreational trail collaborative
 - Conduct a forest products supply analysis
 - Initiate a telecommunications infrastructure assessment, and
 - Perform a targeted workforce assessment.

At least two of the implementation steps will have an impact on land uses in the UT area.

The presentation led to an extended discussion of how future development of the region will proceed. Tom asked how the plan would lead to more trails and lodging opportunities, and noted

that recreational support services should be a major focus of this plan. Luke noted that one of the issues is zoning of remote ponds, which permits trails but no structural uses within ¼ mile.

Luke recalled that Chapter 10 is now 25 years old and many of the procedures and standards are out of date. In particular, rezoning takes way too long. Nik asked if rather than suggesting big changes in the zoning structure, we look at a new vision for land use regulation. If the committee can come up with solid ideas, LUPC can find a way to make it happen. One likely area is redefining small business.

Kay and Luke discussed the idea of seeking new definitions for the kind of businesses to be permitted/promoted in the region. How do we predict the future, and what kinds of shifts the economy will bring, so that we won't have to make ordinance changes to keep up? Jim asked if we could identify the kinds of business that could be successful in a recreation-based economy. Luke suggested that we look at what makes a recreational service successful, and reward quality projects. Suzie expressed concerns that many businesses have failed and that we don't want the kind of businesses that might "kill the goose."

Chris suggested that the proliferation of zones and use restrictions might be addressed by moving to a more performance standard-based zoning model. He will provide examples of alternate zoning techniques for the next meeting. Suzie posed some examples: a pellet mill, which might have noise impacts, or a kayak rental, which could be a mobile operation. Jim asked if it would make sense to establish a small business zone on either side of Route 201.

4. Because Bob Haynes was not available to talk about the Old Canada Road, the committee continued to discuss how its issues could be defined. Hugh reviewed work that had been done in the Franklin Subcommittee, labelled "strawboss." It highlighted the issues committee members identified and possible avenues for land use regulation or other techniques to resolve them. Luke observed that Franklin's issues seemed to be reacting to existing problems; that we should be more proactive. FOR NEXT MEETING, the committee will brainstorm our own issues.
5. Subcommittee Chairman: KVCOG/SEDC are responsible for *appointing* the chair of this subcommittee, but do not want to do it without the advice and consent of the committee members. Since members have been reluctant to nominate anyone during meeting time, no action will be taken immediately, and anyone who has a nomination or wishes to volunteer for the post may contact Chris prior to the next meeting.
6. Opportunity for Public Comment: Guests were invited to express any concerns they had.

Peter Frank expressed his strong preference to keep the skies dark over the unorganized territories. This includes development, roads, and motion detecting lights.

David Small believes that we need to look at the needs for the necessary infrastructure to support development. He is particularly concerned that development in the backcountry could overwhelm the resource.

Alan Michka noted that the website notifications were not up to date and needed to be kept current.

The next meeting will not be a joint meeting as originally advertised. The Somerset subcommittee will meet on Thursday, May 28th, at 3 PM, Valley High School in Bingham.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM.