



City of Caribou, Maine

*Municipal Building
25 High Street
Caribou, ME 04736
Telephone (207) 493-3324
Fax (207) 498-3954
www.cariboumaine.org*

Caribou Planning Board Meeting Minutes Thursday, April 8, 2021 @ 5:30 pm Via Zoom

Members Present: Dan Bagley, Christine Solman, Amanda Jandreau, Frank McElwain, Drew Ayer and Eric Hitchcock

Members Absent: Dave Corriveau

Others Present: Ken Murchison –CEO/Zoning Administrator, Dennis Marker –City Manager, Denise Lausier –Executive Assistant to the City Manager

Tom Ayer –Councilor Liaison (absent)

I. Call Meeting to Order – Meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm. Meeting was held via Zoom.

II. Approval of Minutes from the March 11, 2021 Planning Board Meeting –

Frank McElwain moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Christine Solman.

Roll call vote.

Frank – Yes; Amanda – Yes; Christine – Yes; Eric – Yes; Drew – Yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

III. Public Hearing to consider administrative amendments to Chapter 13, Zoning of City Code.

Public Hearing opened at 5:34 pm.

Chairman Bagley introduced this item and said that Manager Marker and others have contributed to these revisions. As each piece has been revised, they have been reviewed. This has been many months of effort to address the administrative portions of the ordinance. Chairman Bagley gave kudos to Manager Marker and staff and thanked Manager Marker for all the work he put into it.

There was no public in attendance. CEO Ken Murchison stated that there hasn't been any input from the community, no phone calls or written correspondence.

Manager Marker explained that a public hearing notice was in the newspaper for the last Planning Board meeting, but it didn't make it on the agenda. Notices were sent out and the entire amendment has been available for public inspection for about a month with no comments except from Planning Board members. This covers most of the administrative aspects of the code – who is responsible for it, zoning map and how to deal with that and amendments to zoning ordinances and maps as well as definitions applied throughout the code.

Chairman Bagley commented that the Board has had ample opportunity to review the document on multiple occasions.

Manager Marker stated that this was such a comprehensive rewrite that it would be replacing the current ordinance with this text and adopted as is.

Public Hearing closed at 5:40 pm.

IV. Discussion and possible action on administrative amendments to Chapter 13, Zoning of City Code.

Christine Solman had concerns with waivers of certain elements of site design review. Ms. Solman was concerned of it being arbitrary, where with one project things could be waived, but then when another project comes along that the same things may not be waived. Ms. Solman stated that the Board cannot have free reign to waive whatever the Board wants to or they could get into legal issues if they are not treating people equally. Ms. Solman's proposal was that in the preliminary site design review, the applicant could apply to waive a requirement with an explanation as to why and the Board could waive it at that point before the final review.

Chairman Bagley commented that the ordinance allows waivers of requirements with no standards. The Board had decided previously that as a practice they would not waive requirements.

Christine Solman said that it states in the proposed revisions "with good cause" and that would need some explanation.

Manager Marker stated that this is more of the public hearing procedure, not requirements of the applications. The Board may change to "amend" instead of "waive". In the definitions of waivers, it states that the CEO or Planning Board have no power to waive statutory criteria.

Chairman Bagley clarified that concept plan reviews and final plan reviews have a long list of requirements. The Board has discussed on multiple occasions if they have to require all of that. Mr. Bagley said that requiring engineered stamped drawings for someone building a shed is way over what is needed.

Manager Marker clarified that specific criteria could be built into the site design review process. When the Board gets into the revisions of this, they can take a closer look and add specific criteria.

Discussion on general maintenance activities on a property and what should and shouldn't require a permit.

Chairman Bagley stated that they would like to have the zoning ordinance be more user friendly and he also has concerns in making sure the processes are consistent with the Board's practice. Chairman Bagley feels more work needs to be done on this.

Drew Ayer moved to table this item; seconded by Frank McElwain.

Roll call vote.

Frank – Yes; Amanda – Yes; Christine – Yes; Eric – Yes; Drew – Yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

Public Hearing remains open until the next meeting.

V. New Business:

a. Discussion on Revisions to Section 13-700.13 Home Occupations. –

Manager Marker explained this has come to the Board before. Comments and changes given to Mr. Marker by the Board members has been placed into the document. Mr. Marker gave an overview of some of the elements of the proposed revisions.

Chairman Bagley recommended flagging the uses on the land use table for home occupations. Manager Marker clarified that the land use table identifies primary uses of property. For Home Occupations, you would need to look into the text of the code. It would be good to clarify that the land use table is a primary use table. Home Occupations is now a line in the land use table.

CEO Ken Murchison said that he suspects that Home Occupations will be a trending thing. There is more interest of people working from their homes.

The Board will hold a Public Hearing on this item at the next Planning Board meeting in May.

Manager Marker is working on Site Design Review Standards. He plans to have something ready for the Board at their next meeting for review. Review processes has standards intermingled in other sections. Mr. Marker will be simplifying and moving the standards into the standards section.

VI. Staff Report – CEO Ken Murchison -

- a. Land Bank Legislation** – Language is in for review, there are 1800 LD's ahead of it. Attorney Rick Solman is looking at language that could be used locally.

Manager Marker commented that it will not be called a land bank but would be used for tax acquired properties where perhaps a non-profit entity could rehab or develop a piece of property. City would enter into an agreement as they develop the property. The City would get the taxes owed out of it.

- b. Land Use Survey Mapping** – Mr. Murchison is still working on this project.

- c. Demolition of 827 Main Street** – This building is across from the Airport. The center part of the building and the roof have both collapsed. It has been deemed a dangerous building. Going out for bid on asbestos removal and demolition.

- d. Stream Smart Road Crossing Workshop** – Potential work at Otter Brook. The railroad base is washed out. The state is going to close it up and probably restore the stream. There is a City bridge on Limestone Street that is aging and showing some stress. Caribou Stream has many stream crossings in the watershed. There are several in the City but they start in another township. Develop a system for the stream crossing for a watershed.

- e. Continued Clean-up of Former Birdseye Processing Facility** – Need to dig out area and send waste to Aroostook Waste Solutions. Looking at Phase 2.

- f. Riverfront Redevelopment Committee** – Striving to become an official committee of the City. The Rec Department is holding a canoe race on the river coming up and the Riverfront Redevelopment Committee is hoping to be a presence at that event.

- g. Other Items** – There is some talk of a subdivision off the Baird Road, had an interest in a home occupation today and this is the time of year for a lot of garbage complaints.

Chairman Bagley suggested to Manager Marker to include the approved minutes from tonight to go to the Council for the public hearing on the rezone.

Chairman Bagley polled the Board about in person meetings. The Board decided to meet in person at the May meeting.

Manager Marker stated that for the Ogren Road dump site solar project, they have been going back and forth on lease agreements. Attorneys have been reviewing them. City ordinance states that the lease agreement has to be in an ordinance format with a first read and a public hearing at Council level. Manager Marker has been meeting with a Council sub-committee on the City Charter. There are

six Charter amendments to clean up some of these elements. These amendments need to be introduced as an ordinance and ratified by voters before becoming effective.

VII. Adjournment -

Frank McElwain moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 pm; seconded by Amanda Jandreau.

Roll call vote.

Frank – Yes; Amanda – Yes; Christine – Yes; Eric – Yes; Drew – Yes

Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,



Amanda Jandreau
Planning Board Secretary

AJ/dl