

Council Agenda Item #1: Roll Call

The Caribou City Council held a City Council meeting on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, in the Council Chambers with the following members present: Councilors Boma, Goughan, Morrell, Theriault, Willey and Mayor Smith. Deputy Mayor Ayer was absent and excused.

Penny Thompson, Interim City Manager was present at the meeting.

Department manager, Kenneth G Murchison (Zoning Administrator), was present at the meeting.

The meeting was broadcast via Spectrum and YouTube.

Council Agenda Item#2: Invocation/Inspirational Thought

Mayor Smith read an invocation.

Council Agenda Item #3: Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Agenda Item #4: Public Forum

There were no comments made.

Council Agenda Item #5: New Business, Ordinances and Resolutions

a. Discussion of Kacie's Place Campground proposal

Troy Haney, Caribou resident and business owner, came to speak regarding his proposal of Kacie's Place Campground.

He read the following letter that he has provided:

First off, I would like to thank the Council and the City Manager for their time to take a look at our project and the process we have gone through. Throughout the process, I have been to the past several months planning board meetings, and I noticed a few things that concern me as a taxpayer in Caribou. It seems that the current approach is to dig as deep into the rule books and find any and all points possible to challenge a project from happening. Now as a past Planning board Chairman, I understand and appreciate the need to make sure every project is meeting our rules, it seems to me the tone and approach seem to come off very ridged. My project was a prime example of what I'm talking about.

Here we have a project that meets all State and DEP regulations, but Caribou is more restrictive, and we are talking about the clean up of a literal former junkyard that only abuts a railroad bed and a river. This should have been a no brainer, but here we are elevating it all the way to council to make it happen. This is a project everyone understands should happen, but what I've observed has me more upset than my project itself. Here is an example of what I'm talking about, A gentleman from outside of Caribou comes here and buys a 180 acre parcel of land on the Bowles road and decides to split it into 3-60 acre parcels of land to sell off and large house lots. The planning board looked to run this simple land divide through the entire Subdivision rule set, even while our own Code Enforcement Officer tried to advise them that they didn't need to go through all of that as most of it didn't apply. Now we can stand here and debate what should have happened, but the end result is what matters. The end result was this man came here for several meetings only to give up and sell the property as a 180 piece of land. When the request was withdrawn at the past meeting, I heard the comment from our board, "Well that's good, he sold it" I see

it a little differently, as it's not good, because we had a land developer from outside our town willing to spend the money to survey and split a large parcel of land into 3 lots and that could have been 3 lots sold that could have been 3 new houses in Caribou that now will be most likely 1 lot with one house, So I ask you is that good for Caribou and does anyone think this developer will come back to Caribou? It's a missed opportunity, that's what it is and our town needs to react with more urgency to make these things happen instead of being a road block. I also noticed at the last meeting that the CEO was bringing forward a new project that a young businessman in town will be looking to build 3-4 cabins to rent out to sledders and vacationers along the Madawaska River and again it seemed the board was confused on how to handle this project. The direction is that this project needs to go through a subdivision, which makes no sense as it is all owned by one owner. This is more of a hotel/lodging project and shouldn't be looked at as mutli family housing as they board was discussing. I hope they figure it out and don't delay this person's project the way they did mine.

I have to tell you, I have grown up my whole life in Caribou, and this is my home. I have been blessed by the support of the local community, shopping at our store and supporting my business, but when I left the meeting last week, knowing that the project I proposed was denied, I was so angry with the whole situation. This project for us isn't about making money, it is about trying to do our part to give back. I truly believe that the waterfront property is under utilized in our town. I believe in it so much that I

wanted to put my money where my mouth was as I have been pushing this idea for years. This was my chance to hopefully give that area a jumpstart and show others what could be done in an area that needs attention. I got home and my first reaction was to say the heck with this town and just sell off my building and property and move my business to another town. Think about that for a minute, I've grown up here, I been committed to my town by being a firefighter emt, I served on the planning board, I've donated to our schools several different ways, and so on... What I'm trying to say is I'm committed to this place I call home and I was ready to throw the towel in over this process. Imagine if you were new to this own or trying to bring a business here from outside. You would say the heck with this town and away you would go. As I sat there stewing on this, I thought about it a bit and decided that this wasn't the right approach. What I needed to be is part of the solution and not give into the problem. And this is what brings me to this presentation tonight.

I believe our town needs an attitude adjustment at almost every level, I've watch local groups get together and try to separate the town and then seen other groups try to pick apart everything that the other side does from what shoes are being worn to a meeting and so on. I've watched the planning board almost discourage projects from happening that would increase our tax base and improve our town and our council works hard, but it seems to focus more on what they disagree about more than working on solutions. My point is we can all do better, this is Caribou, Maine, population 7500 not a big city. We need to remember that the comments we post on social media and our comments and actions at meetings are seen by the public outside of Caribou and if I were looking to relocate a business and took a look at the things going on here, I would look around for a town that has their stuff together. We need to show strong leadership and demonstrate that Caribou is a place you want to live and have a business. Attitude is everything and I hope we can change this to feel like we are Saying Welcome to Caribou, How can we help you open your business here.

We continue to discuss how to cut taxes and save money. We squeeze every department for every nickel we can save, and that's all ok, but it is the only place we focus on. We did away with our Chamber of

Commerce and eliminated economic development positions from our city to save tax dollars and now we have no one working to bring businesses here. We need to get back to investing the time and money necessary to reach out and bring businesses to Caribou. How can we grow a garden if we never plant a seed? You can't and if we can turn all of the negative energy into a positive approach we can make a difference.

In the coming weeks I will be starting a new citizen based group that will look to support a positive approach to not only find opportunities, but also look to work with our planning board, council, and city management to inspire a positive environment for opportunities to happen. This is not a problem created by one part of our city. It is not up to the city to provide all the answers and ideas. This is the responsibility of everyone in our community to try to help where they can. It might be as simple as sharing a positive post on social media about something great in our community. I could be sharing an idea to be considered, it could be a group planting flowers and cleaning up a neighborhood. Think of all the simple things that can be done to make it better for everyone. Here are a few actional steps for us to get started to better understand where our challenges are:

- 1. Run a few survey's to better understand the perception and vibe that the community has of Caribou and its willingness to work together.*
- 2. Create a group of people that want to see positive change and work together to make a difference by supporting change through the collaboration of our city boards and officials.*
- 3. Perform a SWOT analysis to outline Caribou's Strengths, Weakness's, Opportunities and Threats*
- 4. Creation of a team that is willing to guide and support entrepreneurs through the start up process at the very point of entry with our planning board. The goal will be to meet the needs of the city as well as the business person.*
- 5. Work with the city to induce a change in rules and regulations that invite people to come here. Caribou needs to be Open for Business.*

This is just a start and I will be bringing more ideas forward as we get established in the coming weeks. I appreciate you all listening to my spiel, and I hope that everyone gets involved to make this a success as our town is counting on this to happen. I'm committed to Caribou today as much as I ever have been, and when I put my mind to something, I generally look to succeed and get the job done. This is not a project I can do on my own, so I'm calling out to other citizens with different view points to get involved . If I offended anyone with my talking points, I apologize, but we are long overdue to make these changes to get things happening on a positive way. Thank you to the council for allowing me to speak tonight.

Steve Wentworth, a member of the planning board, explained that what is needed to be able to have the project continue considering the strict guidelines of the ordinance would be to have council issue a letter of Consent with no contest allowing for the project to be continued. He also suggested that the ordinance be re-written to align with the State.

Councilor Morrell commented that he agrees and that we should go by the state requirements for this project as well.

Councilor Willey questioned if they need an actual letter to be able to continue, and why are we so much stricter then the state guidelines.

It was explained that they would need a letter and that it could be drafted for the council to sign at the next regular meeting September 20th, and that Council would look into changing the ordinance to be more aligned with the state guidelines.

Councilor Theriault explained that we should move quickly so that the project could continue.

Motion made by Councilor Willey, seconded by Councilor Boma, to go ahead with the consent letter with no contest, then work on the ordinance at a later date.

Dave Corriveau, Caribou resident and planning board member, explained that all rules and regulations are put into place for a reason. These rules were put into place during the urban renewal time and he commended the council for addressing the issue because things are changing every day.

Roll Call Vote: C. Boma - Yes, Goughan – Yes, D. Morrell – Yes, J. Theriault - Yes, L. Willey - Yes, Smith - Yes (So voted)

Council Agenda Item #6: Next Regular Meetings: September 20, October 4

Council Agenda Item #7: Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Morrell, seconded by Councilor Theriault to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Roll Call Vote: C. Boma - Yes, D. Morrell – Yes, J. Theriault - Yes, L. Willey - Yes, T. Smith, Yes (So voted)

Danielle Brissette, Secretary