



## *City of Caribou, Maine*

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### **Caribou Planning Board Meeting Minutes Thursday, March 10, 2022 @ 5:30 pm City Council Chambers**

**Members Present:** Dan Bagley, Christine Solman, Amanda Jandreau, Dave Corriveau, Frank McElwain, Eric Hitchcock and Steve Wentworth

**Other in Attendance:** Ken Murchison – CEO; Denise Lausier – Executive Assistant to City Manager; John Morrill – Councilor Liaison; Melissa Lizotte – Aroostook Republican

Chairman Dan Bagley called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

- I. Call Meeting to Order, Determine Quorum** – Chairman Dan Bagley called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. A quorum was present.
- II. Public Hearings** – None.
- III. Approval of Minutes -**
  - a. Approval of Minutes of the February 17, 2022 Planning Board meeting.

Frank McElwain moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Amanda Jandreau.

Roll Call Vote:

Steve Wentworth – Yes; Frank McElwain – Yes; Amanda Jandreau – Yes; Christine Solman – Yes; Dave Corriveau – Yes; Eric Hitchcock – Yes.

Motion carried with all in favor.

- IV. New Business -**
  - a. Review of Section 13-700.13 - Home Occupations – Chairman Bagley explained that the revisions went to City Council, some issues were raised during the Public Hearing. No specific requests, just questions for the Planning Board to review and address.

Chairman Bagley testified during the Council meeting and gave an overview of what the Planning Board was intending in the revisions.

Signage - CEO Murchison stated that for the question on the signage, that was just a typo. Signs are supposed to be two feet square. Steve Wentworth stated it was intended to duplicate the size of a realtor's sign. Amanda Jandreau suggested to word it not to exceed two feet in any dimension. Board agreed.

Number of Employees - Discussion on number of employees for Category 1 and Category 2 for home occupations.

Eric Hitchcock has concerns increasing the number of employee parking in town. Steve Wentworth stated with employees, they need to be ADA compliant. Discussion. Mr. Wentworth stated that home occupations are intended for low impact, low scale, personal services, accounting etc. With employees, it creates issues with traffic etc. A home

occupation with employees may need to move towards a business instead of home occupation.

Traffic Flow - Chairman Bagley stated it is impossible to monitor or verify. Chairman Bagley recommended a softer requirement, left to CEO discretion whether it has the chance to increase traffic flow. Chairman Bagley stated that the answer to Council, Board will look at alternatives. This is a Category 1 criteria. More than eight cars per day, is not a no, but pushes it into a Category 2 criteria.

Deliveries – Chairman Bagley, there was a misconception on tractor trailers set in there intentionally Category 1, to provide a limit. Chairman Bagley recommended to leave this as is.

Dave Corriveau commented that Semi trucks cannot make the turns in some of the intown streets. CEO Murchison said they cannot be excessive or be a nuisance.

Eric Hitchcock commented that for many home occupations, that would not be necessary for deliveries.

Steve Wentworth recommended removing this section. Less verbiage, it will be easier for applicants. Dave Corriveau agreed with Steve Wentworth to remove the section. Leave it up to the homeowner, delivery trucks will check with home owners if they can get in.

Eric Hitchcock stated that it goes back to the type of business, large is more of a retail business which is not appropriate in a neighborhood setting. Shipping stuff in and out, not appropriate for a neighborhood setting.

Limitation is for Category 1 only. Limit impact. Eric Hitchcock commented occasional deliveries.

Eric Hitchcock had concerns with heavy truck traffic.

Board consensus to reword to limited heavy truck traffic.

Item G1 - Chairman Bagley stated this was set up to prevent someone from setting up a higher impact home occupation in a multi-family home situation.

CEO Murchison stated they need to split it out on the permit as a Category 1 and Category 2.

Consensus was to leave as is.

Item G1 – Chairman Bagley commented that the Board needs to explore an alternative to using traffic. CEO Murchison will take a look at this.

Farm Stands – not considered a home occupation, does not apply, no action.

Air BNB Rentals – regulated under different rules.

Chairman Bagley & CEO Murchison will draft up wording for Council and bring to the next Planning Board meeting to discuss and review.

- b. LD 2003 *An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions* – CEO Murchison gave an overview. Offered comment through NMDC on this. Comments were in

committee this week with MMA concerns by communities. This bill can strip away home rule from communities. We do not have any limitations except lot sizes. Need to address in ordinance the issues of short-term rentals, tiny homes and air bnb's. CEO Murchison has checked with other communities for a model, but they are having the same issues. NMDC is watching this closely.

- c. Tiny Houses – Code and Land Use Standards – CEO Murchison stated that the state has passed standards for tiny homes. We can now put together an ordinance. Can be placed on an approved pad, need to be treated like a modular home, need to be hooked up to sewer and water. Concerns with health and safety. Been looking for a model to adapt to our use, but there is none.

Discussion on accessory dwellings and subdivisions.

Board discussion on tiny homes and standards, limitations, sizes, etc.

CEO Murchison asked the Board if it was time to build an ordinance for tiny homes. A lady bought a property and wants to build a tiny home and there are others who want to buy Amish buildings and call them tiny homes.

- d. Short Term Rentals – CEO Murchison stated there is no good solution for this yet. There are half a dozen Air BnB's in Caribou and they don't have to register with the City, so we don't know where they are. Need to address rental cabins and short-term rentals in Caribou's Code. Already have Caribou Cabins on the Lombard Road.

Chairman Bagley said that hotels are lobbying against Air BnB's because it takes their markets away. Some places people are buying up single family homes and making them all into Air BnB's.

CEO Murchison stated that some places are requiring owners in the house, or a contact person within a certain distance of the house and a permit fee for an Air BnB. Need to go out to certify them. Off street parking is an issue.

Chairman Bagley commented that some communities are taxing Air BnB's, it could be a source of revenue.

CEO Murchison, other communities are looking at rental ordinances. Permits are involved, extra code enforcement is involved.

CEO Murchison will put together some language for an ordinance.

## **V. Old Business -**

- a. Continue Planning Board discussion on Broadband – Chairman Bagley

Councilor John Morrill stated that he was perplexed why the Planning Board is trying to address this issue so aggressively. He has concerns they are bogging themselves down on this issue when they have many other issues to address. The dynamics of the Board may get bogged down. The City Council are the ones to make the decision on this item. At the Council meetings, they could bring any suggestions to them. Councilor Morrill said he belongs to five or six other committees, and it keeps coming up at these meetings.

Councilor Morrill said that he respects the Board's suggestions.

Councilor Morrill stated concerns that he personally has is the medical marijuana issue. There was a comment in the newspaper that Caribou does not conform to this. Councilor Morrill stated that any statement like that needs to come from the Council.

Councilor Morrill stated that two entities are coming forth and could bring a revenue stream. They are well organized and coming forth. It's coming. Councilor Morrill commented that from now on, anytime something comes up in a manner like this, needs to come from the City Council or discussed first.

Councilor John Morrill thanked for the Board for their work on Home Occupations and the concerns brought before the City Council.

CEO Murchison asked if the City will opt in to the Maine Marijuana Law. Councilor Morrill stated that he cannot speak for the Council, but when it is brought before them, they need to be open minded and to be prepared.

Chairman Bagley stated the primary roles of the Planning Board is economic development and future planning for infrastructure. It is very much in the Planning Board's purview to look at such initiatives, as well as the Comprehensive Plan.

Board comments:

Steve Wentworth – progress has been a positive contribution.

Frank McElwain – selection of pathway to City Council, outside of the Planning Board's realm.

Amanda Jandreau – Planning Board should be informed at the City Council level for the economic development aspect, be integrated into the process, but need to be kept up to date on information.

Christine Solman – agrees with Amanda Jandreau. Don't need to duplicate what the Caribou Utilities District or Business Investment Group has done. Don't want to step on any toes or duplicate what has already been done. Ms. Solman stated that to her, the Planning Board's role is economic development and promoting what is presented to the Board.

Dave Corriveau – broadband has been discussed for eight years in the community and nothing has been done. That is why they took an active participation to advise to do something. Mr. Corriveau also sits on the Business Investment Group. Caribou Utilities District is open to all competitors and that far exceeds what is available right now. Have missed a lot of opportunities not having broadband in place.

Eric Hitchcock agrees with Frank McElwain. He made good points. The presentation by Chairman Bagley on the broadband was helpful and Mr. Hitchcock appreciated the leg work put into it to illustrate to the Planning Board. The Planning Board needed to understand it in a general sense. Very helpful.

Chairman Bagley felt it was helpful for the City Council to see it as well.

CEO Murchison said to offer a letter of support to City Council.

Chairman Bagley commented on how far to go in taking a stand, to make bold recommendations to the City Council. Believes it is a unique and critical role of the Planning Board to do this type of thing. Something to consider. Big enough issue that impacts the entire community. Public needs to be involved. No public hearing yet at this level.

Councilor Morrill commented that they need to hear from those who control the purse strings at the State. It is an emotional issue now.

Chairman Bagley said that the City needs to define objectives with respect to broadband. Tremendous economic development activity or is the objective to underserved.

Councilor Morrill stated that so far no organized approach. Different factors involved. Need facts. Franchise Agreement with Spectrum, \$109,000 grew \$2,000 from year before. \$100,000 in operating budget. Discussing Monday night.

Chairman Bagley stated that they will continue discussing broadband and continue giving recommendations.

b. Designate Riverfront Development District, address Land Use Table – CEO Murchison stated that the Riverfront Renaissance Committee is looking at designating the riverfront development district and land use and zoning.

Chairman Bagley will receive input from the Board members on the developed land use table. Board reviewed and discussed. The Board scheduled a working session to go through the land use table. March 24<sup>th</sup> @ 5:30 pm.

Discussion and overview on the proposed riverfront development district. CEO Murchison stated it is still in the proposed stage.

#### **VI. Staff Report; CEO Ken Murchison –**

- a. Dangerous Buildings – when snow starts to go, this is the time of year they see violations. Will be dealing with many dangerous buildings.
- b. Caribou Trailer Park Closure – three families left. Working with Housing Agency for placement.
- c. West Gate Villa – totally abandoned, many trailers were not tax acquired, City chose not to acquire those. Working to designate as dangerous buildings. There is a nuisance and dangerous buildings law where the City can deal with buildings and attach the costs to the owners on their tax bill.
- d. Tax Acquired Properties – several buildings will be demolished. 37 Home Farm Road has a collapsed roof, same dangerous building law. Owner is being served.
- e. Landbank Legislation – in front of the legislature. Held over for this session. Three work sessions on the idea committee. Public hearing is the next step.

CEO Murchison – meeting coming up on possible reuse of Maine northern railroad. Zoom meeting tomorrow at 10:00 am with representatives.

#### **VII. Adjournment –** Dave Corriveau moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 pm; seconded by Amanda Jandreau.

Roll Call Vote:

Steve Wentworth – Yes; Frank McElwain – Yes; Amanda Jandreau – Yes; Christine Solman – Yes; Dave Corriveau – Yes; Eric Hitchcock – Yes.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amanda Jandreau". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Amanda" and last name "Jandreau" clearly legible.

Amanda Jandreau  
Planning Board Secretary

AJ/dl