

Swan's Island Comprehensive Planning Committee Minutes

November 21, 2017

The Swan's Island Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting began at 6PM. The following members were in attendance:

Sonja Philbrook, Bill Banks, Myron Sprague, Jr., Keith Harriton, Dexter Lee, Donna Wiegler and Sue Estler attending via Zoom conferencing. Members Candi Joyce, Gary Rainford, Christal Applin and Sarah Lane were not in attendance. Carol Loehr, MAC Chairman and Island Institute fellow Stevie Kowalczyk were in attendance.

Minutes from the committee's previous meeting held on October 17 were read by secretary Donna Wiegler. Dexter Lee made a motion to approve. Sonny Sprague seconded the motion and the minutes were approved as read.

A brief discussion about the previous month's meeting with Tom Martin took place. Chairman Sonja Philbrook said she had some follow up with Tom after the meeting, but that he had a fall and had been hospitalized. Sonja was unsure of how much help Tom may be moving forward with writing the comprehensive plan.

Sonja shared that Gary Rainford has resigned from the committee, but he will be available to help the committee in his role as Code Enforcement Officer and Plumbing Inspector.

A request by Carol Loehr, co-chair of the Municipal Advisory Council (MAC), to have a member of the comp plan committee attend the monthly MAC meetings and report to its membership was discussed. The comp plan committee is a sub-committee of the MAC. It was discussed that Sarah Lane, a comp plan member, is also a MAC member. Sonny Sprague, also a comp plan member, regularly attends the MAC meetings and Carol Loehr regularly attends the comp plan meetings, so there is enough crossover to report at the monthly MAC meetings without assigning someone to be responsible each month.

A discussion on how the comp plan committee will share its progress with the community was held. Carol Loehr volunteered to post our monthly meeting minutes around town when she posts the monthly MAC minutes. Donna Wiegler will create a page on the town website and post a notice on the Swan's Island Information page that the minutes are available for download and viewing each month. Sonja Philbrook will post our meeting agenda on the Info page prior to our meetings.

A draft version of by-laws for the comp plan committee was reviewed and some changes were made. A discussion on having a student, under the age of 18, represented on the comp plan committee took place. It was decided, after some discussion, to include younger community members under 18 in the planning process by meeting collectively with them over the course of the time it will take to research and write the plan. A motion to approve the by-laws with the changes discussed was made by Sonny Sprague. Sue Estler seconded the motion and it was approved.

Sonja talked about the amount of information she is collecting with regards to the planning and writing of the new comp plan. She has created a Google folder where she will store all the documents. Sonja will send out an email informing everyone how to access this Google folder. Occasionally, she may send an email between meetings referring to documents in the folder that should be read prior to our next meeting.

A discussion on the need for some funding to aid the comp plan project was held. The possibility of applying for an Island Fellow to help the committee with their work took place. Several other island communities have utilized a fellow for this work including Vinalhaven, Frenchboro and Isle au Haut. Stevie Kowalczyk, our current fellow, shared information on the fellows' application process. It is not known if a community can have two fellows at the same time. Donna suggested that if we did apply for a second fellow that the fellow could live in the town office upstairs apartment to save the additional \$8,000 contribution to Island Institute to cover housing. No decision was reached and the discussion was tabled until further information could be obtained. We need a decision about any budget request by February's Town budget meeting.

The next part of the meeting involved members reporting on comp plans from other towns that were assigned to them for reviewing in an effort to become familiar with what is included in a comp plan and to share the highlights of the plans. Members reported on the following plans, which ranged from 100 pages to over 400 pages:

Donna Wiegler – Castine and Long Island
Sonja Philbrook – Vinalhaven
Keith Harriton – Chebeague
Bill Banks – North Haven
Sue Estler – North Haven
Dexter Lee – Isle au Haut
Sonny Sprague – Frenchboro

Each member took about 5 minutes to report on their plan. Highlights included:

- Strategy for implementation
- Policies
- History of community
- Public participation plan
- Wordles
- Implementation committee
- Economic Diversity
- Goals and recommendations
- Timelines
- Expert consultants
- Maintaining character of community
- Broaden tax base

Sonny Sprague obtained three additional plans that will be reviewed by the following members and reported on at our next meeting:

- Keith Harriton – Owl’s Head
- Sue Estler – Lubec
- Donna Wiegler – Deer Isle

Comp plan members not present at the meeting will be expected to report on their assigned plan at our next meeting.

A discussion on the use of a professional consultant versus an Island Institute fellow to help write the plan took place. Keith Harriton shared that in his review of Chebeague’s plan, they used a professional consultant. A couple questions came up—What would we be asking a consultant to do? How do we get to the outcomes that are right for Swan’s Island? Donna offered to contact several members of Chebeague’s comp plan that she knows, Leila Bisharat and Donna Damon, and ask for their input on the use of a consultant.

Members were asked to think about potential new members for the comp plan committee that would provide added value to the project and to come prepared with a name to next month’s meeting.

The next Comp Plan Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 19 at 6PM at the Town Office. Bill Banks made a motion to adjourn. Dexter Lee seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Wiegler, Secretary