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**YARMOUTH PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

October 11, 2023

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Holden called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**II. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Wendi Holden, Chair	X	
Janet Hansen, Vice Chair	X	
Hildy Ginsberg	X	
Mary Lynn Engel	X	
Jerry King	X	
Ian Cromarty	X	
Matt Schumacher		X

**OTHERS**

Erin Zwirko, Planning Director	X	
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**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon a motion duly made by Mary Lynn Engel, seconded by Janet Hansen and carried by a roll call vote of 6-0, the minutes of the September 27, 2023, meeting were approved.

**IV. COMMUNICATION**

E. Zwirko gave an update.

- The Planning Board was reminded of the site visit on October 16 at 5 PM at 251 West Main Street. E. Zwirko requested that if Planning Board members drive, to park on side streets rather than West Main Street.

**V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

**A. OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**B. NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Workshop Item: Presentation on Comprehensive Plan Progress**

Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning & Development, will make a presentation on the progress to date on the Comprehensive Plan update.

E. Zwirko made a presentation that summarizes the results from the summer survey and the three Community Conversations (Housing, Economy, and Natural Resources and Environment) held over the preceding weeks. The presentation does not include results from the workshop on the Climate Action Plan that was held the night before, although E. Zwirko was in attendance and provided her thoughts on the workshop as it related to the presentation on the Comprehensive Plan.

Engagement to date included a summer survey, the pop-up events that occurred about once a week, and the Community Conversations. In addition, during September, the staff attended the back-to-school nights at the public schools. In

about a week, the student representatives on the Steering Committee will present to the student body at the High School.

One of the primary items for feedback in the summer survey was on the draft vision statement that was created last year in the Visioning Initiative. The feedback from the survey was that the vision statement was generally in line with the responses to the survey. Support for walkable/bikeable community, vibrant and picturesque village center and abundant open space were identified as higher values. There was a question about the negative responses. E. Zwirko responded that the staff will be reviewing the open-ended questions to identify themes. The initial results suggested that inclusivity, growth, climate action, and housing were highly rated items that were missing. On the vision statement, the plan is to revise with a call to action on a number of topics. The Steering Committee will continue to work on refining this.

On Housing, both the summer survey and the Community Conversation asked about housing mixes. Generally, the results were very similar, with some distinct differences, although multifamily had the same results across the survey and forum. E. Zwirko reported that a theme she heard at the Community Conversation was to not leave single-family homes behind; rather, build upon what that typology is and create more types of single-family homes. Another theme from the Community Conversation was to offer affordable homes across the income spectrum. Board members in attendance at the Community Conversation supported this as a theme, supporting community members in their housing needs across their lifetime.

Questions were also asked about where new housing could be located in town. Not surprisingly, the highest rated choices were along Route 1 and in the Village where there is existing infrastructure. There is some desire to locate housing throughout town. Housing can support local businesses, but should not preempt the small business community. Further, there was commentary, as heard throughout the events, that trended toward balancing all of the priorities for the town. Specifically, in this case, balancing between protecting valuable open space and providing housing options. The Board members in attendance mentioned themes around lot sizes and concerns with the town's existing zoning regulations.

Moving onto Economy, both the survey and the Community Conversation asked about types of businesses missing in Yarmouth. Overwhelmingly, the top response was all types of restaurants (quick service, full service, and destination), and making this an anchor to the economy. There is interest in supporting the small business community. There were great comments about outdoor recreation and agri-tourism and drawing people into the community through our natural resources. In addition, day care for all ages, urgent care for humans and pets, and entertainment for families and adults.

We asked about where the businesses should be located, and most comments related to Route 1 and the Village Area. These responses were not unsurprising, although there was some interest in businesses on Cousins Island.

E. Zwirko reported that we also asked about municipal actions to support the economy. The strongest support was for workforce housing, working waterfront initiatives, public transit improvements, and support for small businesses. It was helpful

to hear that these municipal actions align with EDAB's workplan for the upcoming year. There was discussion amongst the Board members about expanding home occupations and allowing appropriate commercial uses in the rural residential districts. There was also discussion about the West Main Street schools, and how the Local Development Corporation can continue to support municipal actions with some autonomy.

E. Zwirko reported on the focus of the creative economy and the working waterfront. On the creative economy, there was an acknowledgement that there are existing organizations and programs doing good work in Yarmouth. Municipal actions could include public events and activities. We also heard about the need for marketing, alongside the local Chamber. The Board discussed the support for public events, and what beyond the Clam Festival and the winter markets could be supported. On the working waterfront, E. Zwirko reported that the results might suggest that there is some education that the municipality could do around the businesses and livelihoods that are supported by Casco Bay. The results show the tension between recreational use of the waterfront and commercial use of the waterfront. There was interest in increased public access, boats ramps, and amenities, and making these points accessible for those with mobility concerns. There was moderate support for dedicated commercial moorings and storage. Less support for "touristy" waterfront activities. The Board discussed there reference to energy generation, and how that it related to Wyman Station.

E. Zwirko reported on the last Community Conversation: Natural Resources and the Environment. She reported that the highest municipal priority should be investing in acquiring more open space for permanent conservation. Next was restoring the Royal River for fish passage and water quality improvement. Education to property owners on sustainable land care practices and the benefit of open space conservation. There was also feedback around zoning changes for sea level rise and allowing more compact development.

E. Zwirko reported on the interaction between the Comprehensive Plan and the Climate Action Plan, with the differing timelines, as well as in the future when it comes to implementation. The Town will need to be coordinated in this effort to ensure that all the priorities are moving forward in a coordination and collaborative fashion. The Board discussed how the acquisition of land for preservation purposes is important, but the Town could also acquire land for multiple purposes that are not at odds with each other, such as open space, community space, and housing, among other priorities. The Board discussed how the Town cannot take a siloed approach to implementation in the future and be innovative and creative.

Medium priorities for municipal action included invasive species management, mitigating flood risk inland and along the coast. E. Zwirko reported that the higher priorities are more applicable to the entire Town, while these medium priorities are relevant to specific areas in Town. E. Zwirko reported on the requirements out of the MS4 Permit that the Town will need to adopt in the upcoming year that will support stormwater management and ultimately water quality goals. The Board discussed how these issues are regional issues, that can be addressed at a local level, but need a coordinated approach at the regional or state level.

E. Zwirko reported that attendees were asked to identify places for preservation for ecological value and resilience and preservation for recreation. She reported that many located where tagged for both, supporting the town thinking about multiple priorities at once location.

The next steps included more analysis of the quantitative data as well as the qualitative data and releasing a memo on that engagement, and connecting with the outcomes of the Climate Action Plan. All of the information will help shape the approach to the Future Land Use Forum planned for November 13<sup>th</sup>. E. Zwirko reported that the Town will need to make decisions on how to balance all of the wants, needs and desires.

E. Zwirko reported that all of the recent events were recorded and the activities are available online.

Chair Holden opened for public comment.

There was no public comment.

Chair Holden closed public comment.

The Planning Board thanked E. Zwirko for the presentation.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no objection, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

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Erin Zwirko, Planning Director