

**TOWN OF YARMOUTH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING**

August 22, 2023

7:00 PM, Town Hall Community Room, 200 Main Street, and via Remote Meeting

<https://meet.goto.com/451872165>

Join by phone: 1 (872) 240-3412, Access Code: 451-872-165

AGENDA

- I. Public Comment (5 minutes)**
- II. Review Meeting Summary from June 27 (5 minutes)**
- III. Fall Engagement (40 minutes)**
 - a. Review Schedule for Events**
 - b. Discussion on Community Conversations Format**
- IV. Discussion on Feedback Received To Date (40 minutes)**
 - a. Inventory Chapter Feedback**
 - b. Online (Survey and Mapping Exercise) Feedback**
 - c. Pop Up Feedback**
 - d. Subcommittee Reviews**
- V. Committee Supported Outreach (10 minutes)**
 - a. Social Media Promotion**
 - b. Flyering**
- VI. Adjournment**



YARMOUTH MAINE

To: Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
From: Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning & Development
Re: Background for August 28, 2023, Steering Committee Meeting
Date: August 15, 2023

Please see the following notes to help you review and be prepared for the August 28, 2023, Steering Committee meeting.

I am pleased to announce that the two vacancies on the Steering Committee have been filled by the Town Council. Please join me in welcoming Tred McIntire and Kevin Hartnett to the Steering Committee! Also, please welcome Kate Burch from North Star Planning as having a larger project management role. Kate has been involved in the comprehensive plan since the start, although in a “behind the scenes” role. We’re lucky to have her stepping up!

Public Comment

Another Committee that I work with has requested that public comment be moved to the top of the agenda so that attendees do not need to wait for the very end of a two-hour meeting to provide comments. I thought that the Steering Committee might appreciate this adjustment as well.

Review Meeting Summary from June 2023

Attached is the June meeting summary from the Steering Committee’s previous meeting for the Committee to review and approve. Please let me know if you have any revisions to the meeting summary.

Fall Engagement

Please save the dates for the next three months:

- September 11: Community Conversation with Housing Focus
- September 18: Community Conversation with Economy Focus
- October 2: Community Conversation with Open Space and Natural Resources Focus
- October 10: Climate Action Plan Workshop on Goals, Strategies, and Actions
- November 13: Future Land Use Workshop

Each of these events will be held 6-8 PM. While these events were initially planned for the Log Cabin, we received feedback from Steering Committee members that a different location should really be sought out (one with less “formality”, ample parking, and space for table discussions). As a result, we have secured the multipurpose room at

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200 Main Street, Yarmouth, ME 04096

Patriot Insurance, 701 Route 1, for these five events. Thanks to Shawn Quirk, Yarmouth's TV and media manager, who will bring his own equipment on the road with us to record each event for community members to watch at a later date.

A postcard announcing these events will be mailed to Yarmouth postal customers.

At the August meeting, we will discuss the format for the three community conversations. We will discuss the Future Land Use Forum at a later meeting, and while we are advertising jointly with the Climate Action Plan event, the Climate Action Task Force and Meddy Smith, Sustainability Coordinator, are planning that event in conjunction with GPCOG.

In general, the format is proposed as follows:

- Each event will start with a brief presentation by our subject-matter expert (about 15 minutes), followed by some Q&A.
- Attendees will then split into tables for guided conversations about each topic.
- For the table conversations, 3-4 prompts will be shared to spur discussion.
- As part of the wrap up, each table will "report out" so that everyone in the room hears from all attendees.
- Following the event, we will make the recording available alongside Menti "boards" where people who were unable to attend can participate.

At the August Steering Committee meeting, the Committee will be asked to provide their input on the format and how to prompt the table conversations. There is room for each of the three Community Conversations to be tailored to the specific topics (i.e., discussion based versus activity based). The goal is to have community members talking with each other on these important topics and providing clear feedback for us to use moving into the Future Land Use Forum.

We will need Committee members to volunteer as greeters, table guides, and scribes. Town staff, North Star Planning staff, and the subject matter experts will "float" between tables to provide any targeted assistance. Please let me know if you would like to be assigned a role at any of the three Community Conversations.

Discussion on Feedback Received to Date

The previous agenda item may flow into this discussion, as it is relevant to the content to be discussed at the community conversations. So far, the Steering Committee, staff, and North Star Planning have received feedback from the following:

- Data Highlights Forum (shared and discussed at June Steering Committee meeting);
- Inventory Chapters;
- Online Feedback Received via the Survey, the Mapping Exercise, and the general PlanYarmouth.com online form;
- Pop up Activities; and
- Subcommittee reviews.

Kate will report on preliminary information from the PlanYarmouth website and Julie will report on the Pop up Activities. Committee members who have attended pop ups can also provide their thoughts on the feedback received. Attached to this memo are subcommittee notes received to date.

The goal here is to have a free-flowing conversation on trends (positive or negative), insights, and concerns, as well as how this information should relate to the presentation and discussion at the Community Conversations.

Committee Supported Outreach

As we approach the community conversation series and the Future Land Use Forum later this fall, we need support from the Steering Committee in spreading the word about the workshops. Although each postal customer will receive a postcard announcing the dates, a personal invitation from a friend or family member may convince someone to attend. We encourage you to share the information with your networks. We will share flyers and social media images that can be used by Committee members.

Special thanks to Sophie and Neena (and the Yarmouth Public Schools staff and faculty) for helping us and the Climate Action Task Force in reaching younger community members. Town Staff also have a good relationship with the NYA Head of School and are working on access to the NYA community.

Other Notes

Julie has been hard at work coordinating the companion events with support from Steering Committee members, and we have scheduled a number of them:

- Ongoing: Town Scavenger Hunt through September 25
- August 31: Yarmouth Trivia Night at Brickyard Hollow at 5:30 PM with the Historic Preservation Committee and the Yarmouth History Center
- September 23: Natural Resources Tour at Riverfront Woods with Parks and Lands Committee and YCARE
- October 20: Work from Home Meet Up with EDAB

Julie is also coordinating a Visualizing Density Walking Tour with the Affordable Housing Committee. We are still trying to figure out whether a walking tour, DIY walking tour, or a recorded walking tour is the best format. A coordination meeting is being planned.

A few others are still in the mix that still need to be coordinated.

I am attaching correspondence received as outlined below.

List of Abbreviations (Please feel free to add to this list as you come across abbreviations):

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XNrocha-2zFR0ZVpAKwVFdjVEyy9rQXc2OZ94a5B330/edit?usp=sharing>

Attachments:

1. June 27, 2023 meeting summary
2. Subcommittee Notes
 - a. Economy Subcommittee 7-19-23
 - b. Housing Subcommittee 7-20-23
 - c. Transportation Subcommittee 7-24-23
3. Correspondence Received
 - a. S. Prescott 7-19-23
 - b. C. Force 7-28-23
 - c. E. Ashley 8-12-23

Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC)

June 27, 2023

7:00 PM

Meeting Summary

Name	Attendance
John Auble	Y
Daniel Backman	Y
Crispin Bokota Bolese	N
Emily Bryson	Y
Judy Colby-George	Y
Hildy Ginsberg, Co-Chair	Y
Miriam Markowitz	Y
Tim McGonagle	N
Karin Orenstein	Y
Neena Panosso	Y
Todd Rich	N
Bill Richards, Co-Chair	Y
Lynne Seeley	Y
Sophie Wentzell	Y
Jamie Whittemore	N
Sarah Witte	N
Erin Zwirko, Planning Director	N
Scott LaFlamme, Economic Development Director	Y
Julie Dubovsky, Assistant Planner	Y
Ben Smith, North Star Planning	Y
Logan Capone, North Star Planning	Y

I. Review Meeting Summary from May

The Committee unanimously approved the meeting summary from May 25, 2023.

II. Debrief Data Highlights Public Forum

a. Discuss major themes and takeaways

Members felt the event went well, that the Menti exercises were very illuminating, as was the attendees' surprise over the existing Growth Area map. It was noted that many of the comments and dots on the maps conflict with each other, and are representative of the easy binaries to fall into. While these may be conversation starters, the challenge will be communicating these summarizing points without exacerbating the tensions of binaries like conservation vs. development.

It was suggested that the slide deck be added to the website, as well as bullet points summarizing the feedback from the public to show a balance of views. Data integrity was also discussed, and committee members suggested using consistent timeframes for comparisons and adding a note in the plan about the data constraints, including impact of COVID and the complexity of

estimates/projections. Noting that "all models are wrong and some are useful," it was also suggested that this section noted that data projections should be checked and adjusted as needed.

Ben and Logan shared the high-level themes appearing from the data gleaned so far that are shaping the listening session topics, and noted that Camoin's draft market study also answers some questions pertaining to housing and economic estimates. A summary of the feedback received at the Data Highlights public forum was attached to the meeting materials.

b. Discuss subcommittee next steps

The subcommittees will meet again mid-summer to review the feedback from the Data Highlights forum and identify trends emerging in their topic areas. Members agreed that outreach may need to be done to the Resident Advisory Committees or other stakeholder groups if it appears that data or balanced viewpoints are still missing from the draft inventory chapters. Resident Advisory Committees are also reviewing their respective chapters and providing feedback by August 21st.

Subcommittees were reconfigured due to some steering committee membership changes:

Housing: Daniel, Lynne and Tim

Marine Resources: Todd, Judy and Neena

Recreation & Natural Resources (*merged*): Emily, Hildy, Sophie and Sarah

Transportation: John, Bill and Sarah

Population & Demographics: Sarah

Historic & Archeological Resources: Miriam

Agriculture, Forestry & Land Use (*merged*): Jamie, Lynne, Judy, and Bill

Public Facilities & Services: Jamie and Bill

Economy: Lynne, Hildy, and Tim

Engagement (*new*): Lynne, Emily, Hildy, Judy, Neena, Sophie and John

III. Summer and Fall Engagement

a. Discuss topics for fall listening sessions

Ben and Logan provided an overview of the three topics coming together for the listening sessions:

- Housing with an added focus on transportation
- Economy with an added focus on fiscal capacity (taxes), Housing and transportation;
- Combined focus on Climate Change and Sustainability, Natural Resources and Open Space

The order of the sessions should tell a story and lead to the Future Land Use session, and the culmination of these integrating into a "sense of place."

CPSC members noted that it was important not to pit these topics against each other, but rather to show at each session how they're integrated. Noting that the CPIC tied into intense feelings around these topics, it was suggested that they be framed as questions stemming from the draft inventory chapters to make them relevant and relatable to the general public. The pros and cons of whether to include "character" was also discussed, since feelings are subjective. There was a

general consensus on the topics, including YCAT as a partner in the 3rd session, and agreement to change the title from "listening sessions" to a "forum" or "community conversation."

b. Overview of summer popups and companion events

Julie provided an overview of the companion events in development and created 3 virtual sign-ups for shifts at the summer pop-ups, putting up flyers throughout town, and to help with planning the companion events.

Flying: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084CA4A92EA4FFCE9-comp1>

Planning Companion Events: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084CA4A92EA4FFCE9-comp2>

Summer Pop-Ups: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C084CA4A92EA4FFCE9-comp>

The goals of the companion events are to:

- highlight the findings from the CP inventory chapters;
- highlight and support the resident advisory committees' projects/initiatives;
- highlight/advertise other departments' already planned programs/events;
- engage people more in town civics/programs and the comp plan; and,
- cross pollinate and empower current volunteers.

A new public engagement subcommittee was also formed to assist in strategizing outreach and engagement throughout the comp planning process, and to bolster the persistent engagement by NSP. A goal of the subcommittee is to reach the broader community with creative direct and indirect opportunities for engagement. Some strategies discussed include providing babysitting or holding an event at a playground so parents can participate, and working with the schools so that youth can earn community service credits. Neena and Sophie agreed to help focus on school-age population engagement.

IV. Summer Meetings

a. July 25th Meeting

Since there are no critical July agenda items, and light participation in July is anticipated, the CPSC determined that July 25th would be a social meeting. Bill and Hildy offered to host and a location will be determined based on capacity and availability.

b. Joint Meetings with EDAB and CEES/YCAT

Scott is following up with EDAB on the August meeting and with the Climate Action Taskforce.

V. Public Comment

None received. No members of the public were in attendance.

VI. Adjournment

Sub-Committee – Economy
July 19, 2023 Meeting Notes

Present: Lynne Seeley, Tim McGonagle, Hildy Ginsberg

Questions we considered included:

1. What sectors of our economy in Yarmouth need to be highlighted / focused on?
2. What is missing that should be included?
3. How can our subcommittee help shape the conversation for planning the fall topic-based forums?
4. How do we encourage certain groups and individuals in Yarmouth to participate more fully, thereby getting more informed opinions involved in the process?

Summary:

It felt as though three major areas of our economy were critical to focus on. Those included the Arts, the Waterfront, and the Economic Development work already active through EDAB.

Along those lines, what may be missing in its fullest capacity is a focus on the arts, the working waterfront, retail and other small businesses that are essential to daily life, and a focus on family experiences such as entertainment / sports / activity venues. Examples of these include:

- Arts – work with the Yarmouth Arts Alliance to identify areas of potential growth, incorporating school music and arts boosters somehow to highlight that already existing vibrancy in our community
- Working Waterfront – between Sea Meadow Marine Foundation that purchased Even Keel Marina, the Yarmouth Boat Yard area, and more... work with Harborfront Committee to highlight areas of potential growth
- Retail / Small Businesses – invite Scott LaFlamme to work closely with our subcommittee to get a handle on opportunities and potential barriers to business growth and change in Yarmouth, spend some time picking local brains to identify what daily services are missing in Yarmouth that are essential (such as UPS shipping, office supplies/printing, the pending move of veterinary services out of Yarmouth, clothing/shoes retail), perhaps plan a focus group with EDAB?
- Family Experiences – work with Chamber, highlight importance of keeping Clam Fest going strong for economy and also for family-focused fun, cross-over work with Recreation subcommittee to identify potential entertainment opportunities like bowling (just one example) to keep families in town for experiences together and sports like skate park/splash pad/etc.

Committee members agreed to personally reach out to four groups to see about involvement, either at their own existing meetings, or joining us for one of our meetings:

Chamber of Commerce – Tim

Rotary – Lynne

Lions – Lynne

EDAB (Scott) – Hildy

Outstanding Question:

When will subcommittees be able to help plan fall topic-based forums with North Star Planning?
Will this be at August CPSC meeting?

Erin Zwirko

From: Daniel Backman
Sent: Monday, July 24, 2023 5:01 PM
To: Erin Zwirko; Juliana Dubovsky
Cc: Tim McGonagle; Lynne Seeley
Subject: CPSC Housing Subcommittee Meeting Notes

Erin and Julie,

The CPSC Housing Subcommittee (Tim, Lynne and myself) met last Thursday 7/20.

Here are our meeting notes:

- Housing Forum also needs to include Population & Demographics and Zoning in addition to Transportation. Transportation is not a major driver of housing issues in Yarmouth, but traffic and parking will be a concern of many citizens.
- Issues of economic and ethnic diversity seemed to be one of the biggest concerns regarding housing from attendees of the June forum
- How can changes to Zoning incentivize development in growth priority areas and disincentivize development in outlying, non priority areas.
- MDR minimum lot size is the key restriction to creating new housing
- How do we talk about highest and best use for underutilized parcels, especially along Route 1?
- What sort of public investment (streetscape, plantings, lighting, signage) on Route 1 might stimulate growth or redevelopment?
- Explore housing typologies that add density while feeling “right” for Yarmouth.
- Showing people the density we already have, and the different typologies that create that density is critical. Contract zones on Bates St and Portland St are great examples. Walking tour is a really good idea.
- Fire sprinkler requirements for new construction as a barrier to development due to potential costs, permitting challenges, bureaucracy. Additional challenges in rural areas without water service.
- Examine how parking requirements affect what type of housing gets built and where
- Can new, denser development be built while sustaining the desire of residents for a community feeling and large lots

Erin Zwirko

From: John Auble
Sent: Monday, July 24, 2023 2:32 PM
To: Juliana Dubovsky; Erin Zwirko; Bill Richards; Sarah Witte; Hildy Ginsberg
Subject: Transportation sub-cmte meeting

Hi All,

Bill, Sarah and I met under the bridge this afternoon and we came up with a summary of a few major issues we think might be the start of the trans focus.

Bill and Sarah haven't seen these notes so I expect them to amend as they see fit but I wanted the first dump out there.

1. Ped/Bike Safety. We found 3 topics of interest here.

a. cross-walks. We have many more crosswalks than before and they use different systems. For example, some have lights and some don't. We talked about:

i. not going crazy with flashing lights.

ii. looking at other physical deterrents such as raised crosswalks that force cars to slow down. This is typically a problem for public works maint but worth considering.

iii. Can we reduce the heavy rush hour pushes that funnel traffic from the west through main st.

iv. There are some corridors like North road where speeding is still a problem related to child safety at the park and general peds/bikes.

v. Bike/scooter/skateboards are now all e-versions which means they go at high speeds and create safety hazards. These e-versions are also helping to grow the riding community. We see a need to manage the riding behavior of our bike/ped community proactively so everyone co-exists. This might be new registrations for fast rides, or restrictions on sidewalk riding, etc. This is sort of a follow-on to the success we've had expanding our trails/sidewalks. We see a need to manage our success over the next 10 years.

2. The Railroad corridor. This is the major resource/opportunity for enhancing transportation and recreation and something should happen in the time frame of our next 10 year period. We see it as a missed opportunity if we have still not changed anything regarding the use of this corridor through Yarmouth ten years from now.

3. Yarmouth is making sound investments in mass transit - mainly the breez. We need to keep this up and continue to look to where the demand is and to avoid pollyannaish pipedreams of what might materialize vs what we already have for demand.

Sincerely,
John

--

John Auble
email: ablejohn@gmail.com
mobile: 617.640.7897

Erin Zwirko

From: Susan Prescott
Sent: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 10:01 AM
To: Erin Zwirko; bsmith@northstar-planning.com
Cc: Jackie Schumacher; Linda Grant; Josh Tompkins
Subject: Comp plan inventory

Hi Erin and Ben,

I've been reading the inventory pages as part of the review by the Tree Advisory Committee. In doing so I read the section on Latchstring Park. As Chair of the Latchstring Park Task Force I would like you to please update the text for the park. We're incredibly proud of our fundraising effort and grateful to the hundreds of contributors to this renovation and we would like the description of that effort to be accurate.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for all your work on the new comprehensive plan.

Best,
Susan Prescott

In the Recreation section of the Inventory pages, p. 6 Latchstring Park

This should be updated to say:

Latchstring Park Located on the corner of West Elm and Main Streets in the Village, it is a small park, a quarter acre in size. Latchstring Park is currently an underutilized pocket park located in the hub of the upper village. The Latchstring Park Task Force, through a broad community effort, has successfully raised the funds necessary for a complete renovation of the park. Construction is to be completed Spring 2024.

Erin Zwirko

From: Christine Force
Sent: Friday, July 28, 2023 7:37 PM
To: Erin Zwirko
Subject: Royal River and Sewage outflows

Hi Erin,
I hope that you are well and having a great summer.

I meant to share this concern with you sooner. Last week I invited a friend to join me in a Royal River walk from Bridge Street to Elm Street. As we were walking along the river trail we noticed very pungent sewer odors near both sewage pumphouses.

As I look at our wonderful new brand and exciting comprehensive plan I hope that there is a plan to address these sewage outfalls along the river. We need to create a healthy environment along the river which will make folks eager to return! Thank you.

Best wishes,

Christine Force

Rather than critiquing or commenting on the text of the Inventory Chapter 6 on Housing, I am going to make a supplemental suggestion. It seems clear to me that the affordable housing issue cannot be fully addressed short of a package or bundle of disparate measures, including a strong element of subsidization, sources to be determined. Looking at one of the sticks in the bundle, zoning, I suggest the creation of an Affordable Housing Overlay District (AHD), as a new Special District under Ch. 703, the Character Based Development Code. This would function much like our Shoreland Overlay District, which implements the requirements of the Maine State Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act.

It would leave the existing zoning throughout Town in place, with certain identified areas or parcels being placed in the AHD. These parcels/areas need not be contiguous, but would be established by rating them for suitability based upon certain criteria or factors, which could include, e.g., existing infrastructure, Town ownership (a potential source of indirect subsidization), potential for conversion of existing structures, availability of public transportation, nearness to schools, shopping, parks and recreational amenities, etc. These desirable residential attributes should have an emphasis on pedestrian access and connections, existing and future.

It would be necessary to have a well defined process for determining whether a proposed project met the triggering requirements of affordable housing. I am confident that the Affordable Housing Committee and Planning Staff have considered many of the threshold attributes. If the proposed project met the ordinance requirements for initial eligibility, that would trigger the application of the Special District standards, which would supplant or replace the standards of the underlying district. Parallel ordinances such as Site Plan Review or Subdivision Review would remain applicable as with other CBDC Districts, but with possible special provisions unique to the AHD, as deemed advisable in the drafting process.

One measure which could be added to the AHD provisions could be a modification of the Town's building height limit, perhaps to 4 stories and 45-50 feet, predicated upon a stated minimum setback from any Thoroughfare or neighboring structures, with an assessment of impact upon streetscape, neighborhood character, buffering and treed screening, to minimize or totally prevent against any excessive visual impact. An example would be to compare the approved plans for 298 Main with the current plans for the residential units at the rear of the proposed Railroad Square development. In the latter case, those buildings to the rear are over 1,000 feet away from Main Street, and their apparent impact (if increased to four stories) would be minimal. However, 298 Main, sitting bold on Main and South Streets, would have a very material impact on the streetscape and neighborhood character if increased to four stories.

An example of a parcel which seems well suited to this approach, contingent upon pulling together some ancillary attributes, would be the parcel behind Brentwood Manor and behind the railroad track coming into Town from the South. This is currently before the Council with a request for a full zoning change to CD4, the Village Center character mixed use district, which if approved, would give no assurance that there would ever be housing on the site, let alone affordable housing. The attributes include:

- Set well back from Portland Street and neighboring residences, with forested buffers to all sides;
- Buffered from Route One by the railroad track and its treed peripheries;
- Having a possible direct vehicular access road through the MDOT maintenance lot to the Exit 15 Park and Ride Lot, with
- Corresponding direct access to both Route One and I-295, with
- Ancillary parking available at the Park and ride lot;
- Direct access to the BREEZ and possible future commuter rail;
- Walking and biking distance to the schools and the shopping amenities on route one, near the Beth Condon pathway (which could be extended further, even into a future housing development).

This is an example of a parcel which could take good advantage of an AHD overlay zone. It would stay in its current MDR zone unless and until an appropriate affordable housing project was proposed, which met the requirements of the AHD District, and if deemed eligible, the MDR zoning would be displaced by the CBDC and related standards and procedures. **BUT ONLY IF IT WERE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AS DEFINED BY THE ORDINANCE.** Giving the neighboring residents assurance and certainty, giving certainty to a potential developer, enabling speedy review by the Planning Staff and Planning Board, working with familiar procedures and standards. No need to invent the wheel.

Thank you for your attention.
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