

**City of Hallowell Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
February 19, 2008
Town Hall, 6-8:30PM**

CPC Meeting Focus: Transportation & Infrastructure

All members of the CPC attended the Tuesday, February 19 meeting. The following members of the public and City Council were also in attendance:

- John Bastey (ORC Chair)
- Councilor Lindley
- Councilor Vellani
- Mayor Masciadri
- Tom Warner
- Wendy Harrington
- Christine Canty Brooks
- Mike Laflin
- Dan Laflin
- Scott Baker
- Bill Duffy

The agenda included (1) discussion about the recent public workshop, (2) transportation, water, and sewer inventory presentation and discussion, and (3) the development of a CPC position regarding City Council plans for current development restrictions. A copy of the agenda is available on the Hallowell Comprehensive Plan Webpage.

Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted with the provision that minor revisions to text and content would be made. A new version of the January minutes can be found at the end of this document.

Part One: The Recent Public Workshop

On Tuesday, February 12 the CPC in conjunction with the OSC held a public workshop on development potentials in Hallowell at the Hale-Dale Elementary school. The meeting centered around a presentation by Beginning with Habitat Planner Stephen Walker. He presented the organizations "tool box" for municipalities and provided examples of how new development can fit into a rural character. Antje Kablitz from Planning Decisions followed his discussion with a look at the importance of including connectivity into the design process.

The PowerPoint presentation from this workshop can be found on the Hallowell Comprehensive Plan Webpage.

Comments about the Beginning with Habitat discussion included:

- It was a good presentation
- The information was practical
- It was geared toward open space/habitat
- Need to look at commercial development
 - Linkages between commercial developments
 - Lighting
- Perception of landowners W of Turnpike:
 - “We own the land (pay the taxes) but when the community talks about it they call it “open space”
- Need specifics
 - Financial incentives for land owners
- With regards to development
 - Need to be cautious of overregulation
 - Not close doors to development
- Would be helpful to have a discussion of towns of Hallowell’s size and population
 - Farmington
 - Looking at larger towns makes for an apples and oranges discussion
 - Southern Maine has dealt with these issues a bit more than areas to the north (thus they are used in the examples)
- How to look at the issue of planning staff
 - Town Planners differ from CEO roles
- Tremendous amount of information
 - How does it fit into Hallowell?
 - Loads of Development Concepts to consider

Part Two: Transportation, Water & Sewer Inventories

Antje Kablitz provided a general background presentation on transportation and infrastructure resources in Hallowell. The focus was on the general pattern of roads and modes of transportation within the City and some of the concerns regarding continued growth and development. The same was presented for sewer and water services. The inventory chapters can be found on the Hallowell Comprehensive Plan Website. The follow were comments discussed by those in attendance

With regard to Transportation:

- State and local control issues:
 - Curb cuts
 - Bump-outs
 - Bike lanes
 - Speed limits
- Speeds in Town (set by State)
- Changes in counting methods with regards to State-wide traffic counts
- Parking
 - Needed at south end of downtown
 - Add parking by making Water Street one way with angled parking and Second Street the other way
 - Need for a parking garage downtown
 - Slates/Wine Bar will bring additional parking needs
 - No downtown parking requirements in the ordinance
 - Use of the Gardiner Savings parking lot/land for parking
 - What about going down (underground) with parking rather than up?
 - City lease is over on Second Street parking
 - Need inventory of public and private parking spaces
- Winthrop Street
 - What is the minimum width the roadway must be?
 - Could the roadway be reduced to accommodate bike lanes?
 - Drivers using Winthrop Street to avoid Western Avenue
 - Light of left turn at Winthrop/Water intersection
 - Light at Whitten Road
 - Limit trucks use to discourage cut-through (already limited from going down hill but not up)
- Water Street

- Raised sidewalks
- Bump-outs
- Bridges over turnpike belong to Turnpike Authority
- Bus stops in the downtown?
- What number of Hallowell residents use Go Maine?
- We should look at transportation assuming gas prices will continue to rise
 - Look at alternative towns such as Cornwall – Lost Withiel
- Rail
 - Commuter line potential between Augusta and Hallowell
 - 1-day excursion train is running from Richmond to Hallowell
 - Rail platform built in 2000
- CP should reflect/represent City's perspective on transportation to MDOT

With regard to Sewer and Water:

- Augusta connection at Whitten Road is possible
- Is there a time line for CSO replacement?
- Town Farm Road/ Winthrop Street has gravity sewer lines
- Can the City tap into the trunk line?
- What about tapping into Balsam Road?
- Connecting development to water and sewer lines
 - Threshold on number of lots in subdivision before it needs to include connection to water (i.e. major subdivision yes, minor subdivision no)
 - Cost per foot of adding water lines? What about if there are ledges?
- There is a cost saving in water and sewer lines within cluster subdivision but an addition cost for infrastructure in linear (Great American Neighborhood) developments

The comments will be taken into consideration as new drafts of the natural resources chapter are completed.

Part Three: City Council Request for Comment

The City Council is currently looking at options for limiting certain types of development. As part of their review process, they would like to hear comments from the CPC on whether or not their work infringes/impedes on the work of this committee.

At this time the Hallowell Comprehensive Plan Committee has voted to provide “No Comment” to the City Council regarding the issues of moratoriums. Dawn Gallagher will prepare a formal response to be handed to the Council at their next meeting.

The following are highlights from the discussion.

What is the City Council proposing and why?

- Development of a rough ordinance to keep the City out of trouble
- They are not asking for legal help – rather how does the development of language around (A) parking garages, (B) Convenience Stores, and (C) Theme Restaurants fit into the work of the CPC
- They are looking at the option of a temporary ban (moratorium) on these uses
 - This would not be city wide but rather area specific
 - Specifically north and south Water Street
- Other option is prohibiting A,B,&C permanently
- There could be other uses added to the Moratorium
- Would the CPC be interested in providing help in framing a moratorium ordinance to be in affect from now until the CP is finalized?
- What if anything needs to be done with regards to the current plan?
- Council voted in January to put A,B,&C to prohibit uses
- February Council – direction memo
 - Historic
 - Prohibited uses
 - Legal ramifications

Comments from CPC and others

- What are other communities doing when looking at these types of restrictions?
- It sounds like they are looking to pursue the unknown- stop what we don't know
- Is the City Council chasing shadows?

- Anything could happen
- Moratorium is a joke
- Town seen as non-business friendly
- School is the biggest burden
- If franchises/convenience store wanted to be here, they would already.
- Don't see the fear
- Moratorium is not a good solution
- What is the rationale for the discussion?
 - Where is the concern coming from
- The CPC is in the middle of finding things out – we may have a different way of looking at limiting uses as the CP is drafted
- Comments to City Council Public Process (When are agendas presented to the public?)
 - Basic Agenda set and distributed 3 days before council meeting.
 - Agenda can be unmodified: (1) at the start of the meeting by councilors only or (2) during other business at the end of the session
- How would the concept fit into the current plan?
 - Part of it fit into plan: Yes/No
 - What language supports the idea?
 - If the language is in the current plan, the idea passes onto the ORC
- Alternative to Moratorium: Using definitions for current uses
 - Historic is not defined
 - Fix definitions within zones
 - Define things that need to be changed
 - List of conditional/permitted uses
- Rather than Moratorium on parking garage focus on how it looks (fit into historic character)
- Any new parking development would include public support
- Could this process be dealt with quickly using sunset provisions in conjunction with ORC definition work?
- Where is CPC?
 - We are not there yet
 - We have not finished our review
 - For this group to look at these points at this time is not proper
 - CPC looking long range
 - CPC not looking at specifics but rather the majority view
 - Not at point of defining vision
 - Need public input before we can give
 - CPC is currently focusing on inventory (still in data collection phase)
 - This discussion is stepping outside the bounds of the process

- A pause to look at this would cheapen the process and discredit the CPC and the Public process
- Any decision made by the City Council in the interim would not affect the work of the CPC
- What else are we signing up for? What is the expectation of the CPC?
 - After CPC gives its opinion its role is done
 -
- CPC options
 - Thanks but no thanks (no comment)
 - If the changes are constant with existing CP then a vote of no stance (proceed under current CP)
 - Memo stating the CPC agreement/disagreement/changes to proposed use restrictions
- This work seems more suited to the ORC and PB than the CPC

Part Four: Other Business

The CPC next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday March 18th. The meeting will focus on Economics, Fiscal Capacity, Historic Resources, and Public Services. In addition, the committee will begin to discuss the upcoming April Public Vision Process. A final review of all revised inventory chapters will also be held in April.