

City of Hallowell
Comprehensive Plan
Public Kick-off Meeting #1
September 27, 2007
Hale-Dale Elementary School
6-8:30PM

Hallowell Comprehensive Plan Public Kick-Off Meeting

The first official public kick-off event for the Hallowell Comprehensive Plan update was held on Thursday, September 27 in the cafeteria at Hale-Dale Elementary School. The meeting began with a series of introductions. Dawn Gallagher, the Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC), began by introducing herself and her fellow committee members. Dawn gave a brief synopsis of the committee's work to date. She indicated that the committee members were chosen for their diverse opinions and knowledge of particular issues and events within the community. After introducing the committee, she asked the public to introduce themselves. The list of attendees below was compiled from the sign-in sheet distributed during the meeting.

Comprehensive Plan Committee	
Dawn Gallagher	Jeanne Langsdorf
Al Hague	Richard Bostwick
Jeff Pidot	Eric Perry
Darryl Brown Jr	Sybil Baker
Ed Cerrone	

The Public			
Scott Kemmerer	Janet Merrill	Dave Wood	Bob McIntire
Carol Kemmerer	Kim Bittner	Stacey Mondschein	Jane Harvey
Gerry Mahoney	Dean Bittner	Dot Mithee	Harmon Harvey
Janis Cross	Tom Warner	Tony Masciachi	John Bastey
Bill Tozier	Kathleen Leyden	Phil Lindley	Joel Canty
Linda Gilson	Michael Longfellow	John McNaughton	Christine Canty Brooks
Joan Hague	Mary Plummer	Alan Stearns	Sarah Shed
Carolyn Manson	Paul Plummer	Deb Fahy	Bill Allen
Stephen Goldman	Scott Cowger	Mark Tyler	Michael Frett
Maggie Warren			

After introductions, Frank O'Hara gave a brief summary of Planning Decisions and the firm's role in Hallowell's Comprehensive Plan. He explained that Planning Decisions will be helping to facilitate public meetings and to write and develop the plan. In addition, Mark Eyerman (Frank's partner at Planning Decisions) will be leading a separate Ordinance Review Committee to look at updating Hallowell's existing ordinances. At this point he turned the attention to Antje Kablitz, also of Planning Decisions, who gave a brief explanation of the comprehensive planning process (the PowerPoint shown during her discussion can be found on the Hallowell Comprehensive Plan Webpage at www.planningdecisions.com/projects.htm).

Antje began with a synopsis of what a Comprehensive Plan is and why a community needs one. She indicated that communities are required by Maine state law to have a Comprehensive Plan to guide long range growth and development. Typically these plans are updated every 10-15 years with periodic reviews in between to ensure that the policies and objectives of the plan are being implemented. Hallowell's last comprehensive plan was written in 1997 and reviewed in 2003; this is the "perfect" time for an update.

A Comprehensive Plan begins with a thorough inventory and analysis of the current conditions, to understand where a community stands today. This inventory is accomplished in two ways. The first is through analysis of local, state, and national (census) data. The second is through discussions with the people who live in the community. The public's input is critical to understanding what residents see as the community's assets and the issues that need to be addressed.

After all the data and community input has been collected, the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) is charged with creating polices and objects which highlight the assets and address the issues. A plan is drafted from their recommendations and reviewed by the public, the City Council and the State of Maine before adoption.

Hallowell's Comprehensive Planning Process is estimated to take 12-15 months beginning in September of 2007 and ending with a draft plan in the fall of 2008. The fall of 2007 will include the public kick-off meetings and the gathering of the data inventory. In the winter of 2007 there will be a series of hands on public participation workshops to gather ideas and visions of what Hallowell is today and what it could be in the future. In the spring of 2008, the Comprehensive Plan Committee will form polices and objectives based on the inventory and public recommendations. The writing of the draft plan will be completed over the summer of 2008 and a draft plan will be presented to the public, City Council and the State in the fall of 2008. (A copy of

this time line and contact information can be found in the Hallowell meeting PowerPoint at www.planningdecisions.com/projects.htm)

After the Antje's synopsis, Frank O'Hara briefly answered questions about the comprehensive planning process. He then opened the floor to public discussion. Frank asked that people focus on issues and ideas for the downtown and waterfront areas of Hallowell. A subsequent meeting, to be held on October 3, 2007, will address issues and ideas for West Hallowell.

YOUR ISSUES & IDEAS for HALLOWELL

Businesses and Housing in the Downtown

- Waterfront and downtown are our most important assets; if we don't capitalize on them, we will lose our identity.
- Marvelous downtown is threatened by 1) store fronts changing from shop/restaurants to professional services; 2) upstairs downtown becoming more professional instead of housing. There is a need for retail and housing to bring people into the downtown.
- Delicate balance between community and housing. A vibrant downtown needs housing.
- Why have shops closed recently in downtown? Evolution of the downtown: the ebb and flow of commercial enterprises.
- Apartments upstairs are critical for nightlife; retail services are critical to downtown vibrancy.
- Overwhelmed by success of business and the interaction and support from other businesses. There is a symbiotic relationship in business and residents.
- Need for more money for business owners to do what we want to do in the downtown.
- Who is going to buy these businesses/homes? How do we attract what we want?
- Housing: since spring we have lost 1/3 of affordable housing; a recent inventory of apartments showed we lost 43 affordable housing units downtown. If we don't want

to be Camden we need to have a vision and focus on affordable housing to ensure diversity.

- Define what is “affordable”.
- Economic development: tourist dollar should be brought to community to help business grow.
- Hallowell has never spent money promoting city businesses.
- Need to do Hallowell promotion.
- Focus on Hallowell’s niche and events (Old Hallowell Days). Explore marketing of niche.
- Make Hallowell a destination with the new boat traffic and the experience to be had; colonial lighting need to be addressed and fixed.
- New businesses are focused on adults; need to focus on kids.
- Kids need parks, sidewalks, indoor activities (old theatre), and a playground.
- The “village” grid pattern is very strong. New development should mimic the pattern and in particular limit cul-de-sacs. Ordinances should complement the village feel.
- Marketing: 2012 is the 250 year anniversary for Hallowell
- Need for a theatre.
- Children’s theatre.
- Open gallery/events throughout four communities.
- Art Walk flyer/tours.
- Open gallery days (1st Thursday model) and once a month everything is open in the evenings.
- Live music brings alcohol. Need areas for teens that are alcohol free, such as coffee shops.
- Cluster housing on a village grid pattern.
- Spending money locally; tell businesses what you need so they can stay in the area.

- Hallowell “Bucks”
- Need to have age appropriate areas for kids/teens to enjoy in the evening. Integrate teens and adults!

Waterfront

- Concern about Public Boat Landing owned by the State of Maine, the city doesn't have control outside of policing. Would like to see the city have total control over the site, buy it from the state.
- Clean up riverfront from public works through the downtown.
- What is happening with bulkhead? No huge boats but allow small non-motorized boats.
 - Park Plan: phase 1: 275 ft pier following historic wharf. ½ will be tie-ups for small boats, north end for larger/excursion boats (12-18 slips). Hope for a boardwalk that connects to rail trail. Phase 2 is undetermined
 - Waterfront plan to be added to the website.
 - Need for parking and public restrooms, possibly in bandstand area.
 - Carry-in boat area at the north.
 - Most decisions on the waterfront plan will be made in the next 3-4 months to prepare for the bond issues.
 - If you have comments or ideas for waterfront please contact the waterfront park committee.
 - It will NOT be a marina.
- What are the waterfront issues? Conservation and recreation uses are all that is allowed along the waterfront currently; parking lot is going to remain and be a trail head; want to produce a multi-functional facility; ecotourism industry along the waterfront; river that is a bit busier more places for people to explore; tie-ups to bring people into the city.

- Mobil site: plan to deal with the location, how could it be used, cleaned up, etc.
- Boat launch to Mobil site: marvelous pier and water district owns much of the property.

Transportation

- Parking problems: people parking over 2 hours; waterfront parking is difficult to access; snow mounds on the sidewalks; intermittent parking enforcement.
- Parking solutions: policing existing and add more parking.
- Keep Front Street area open, don't cut off access.
- Crown on the road is ridiculous. Need more parking places.
- Traffic issues: left turns; quality of streets/sidewalks; traffic safety for students and pedestrians; need bike lanes; Greenville St. needs sidewalks; focus on pedestrian traffic (museum in the streets), need safe reliable access; Winthrop St. as bad as 201; commuter traffic.
- Winthrop St. lumber trucks need to be limited or eliminated all together.
- "Fixing" crown on 201 would mean ripping up whole road bed. What is the likelihood? It would be very disruptive but good.
- Granite curb cuts throughout.
- Hold off on paving to deter traffic.
- Winthrop St. cars ignore pedestrians.
- Regional transportation needs: mass transit alternatives (rail or bus) between communities.
- Need to preserve/improve pedestrian character.
- Winthrop St. is too wide.
- Every aspect of City development should respect pedestrian integrity.
- Speeding: need speed bumps.
- Widening of Western Ave. will mean more traffic on Winthrop St.

- Hallowell needs to show up for traffic discussions in Augusta.

Open Space Preservation

- Open Space: support keeping views to waterfront open, support park proposal, question of motorized boats on the river and how they will impact the water.
- Mobile Farm: open space, would like it to be park; contact about purchase and clean up. Process needs to be put in place.
- Address green space through a surcharge or impact fee to purchase open space.
- Vaughan Fields: putting out bids to tear down old school and replace with park open to all ages and connecting trails.
 - 2-3 weeks to gather input on Vaughn Field
 - Open space plan wants VF as open space
 - Network of trails and sidewalks
 - Connection between VF and school
- Vaughan Woods is in danger of being loved too much. Should not be linked to rail trail.
- Maps on Hallowell Conservation website www.hallowellconservation.org.
- Focus on open space plan.

Rail Trail

- Concern over gap in rail trail.
- Parking for rail trail outside of downtown.
- Changing businesses: from antiques to arts/culture/food. Nurture affordable housing for people working in the area.
- Need to consider parking for the rail trail. People parking throughout and need a designated area.

Development Issues

- Gateways are important. Strip development: reduce curb cuts, grants for façade improvements.
- Much has changed in the last 10 years. Good growth. Document what has happened in comprehensive plan. City investment has been positive.
- At some point there will be new constructions; it would be ok but new investment/construction should have a design vision. In Portland new development compliments the existing city; we want the same in Hallowell in terms of design guidelines and incentives. Comprehensive plan to anticipate growth.
- FEMA power over flood area? There are ways to deal with flood areas but they can be costly.
- South end: city garage and sand pile need to move.
- Maintenance garage, police and fire are not functional for today's needs. What is happening to state complexes on Winthrop Street?
- Mixed use (limited commercial) in Stevens School area.
- Stevens School to the turnpike as a buffer to Augusta.
- Howard Hill as a buffer natural area with trails and large undeveloped block for wildlife. Ordinance to maintain buffer but proportionate development.
- So much transition has been piece meal. City government needs to ask for new city services such as arbor funds. City needs to be visionary including landscaping and funds to pay for it.
- Water St: vacant lots south of town, potential building lots north; very important to decide what we want on the corridor. Small businesses and shops with focus on architecture. Many in favor of mixed use that is seamless.
- Negotiations with FEMA to ease up on their regulations.
- Negotiations with "planet" to reduce rise of water levels.
- Infrastructure needs to be addressed.

- Fix fire station.

Historic Preservation

- National Historic District: created in 1970s to purchase and restore historic district. Our website highlights its history but the city doesn't promote it. Between resource protection and historic districts we have a rich environment. Need to renew our commitment to history and downtown image.
- Want to keep historic buildings; need to search for grants to pay for rehab.

Development Standards

- Signage: increased signage in Downeast area
- Signage issues on the fringes. Help bring signs into compliance.
- Design Standards: need to focus on lighting, need light standards.
- Zoning Ordinance work is needed. Need to overhaul the code to ensure that it meets the needs and reflects the vision of the city. Look at design standards in regards to development.
- Priority on addressing water drainage issues on any type of development.
- Incentives for types of building we want on Water St.
- Downtown Committee is active and has design proposal for lighting.
- Dark sky lighting.
- Abandoned buildings need to be addressed. We have no maintenance code. Want a house maintenance code.
 - Code is in the proposal stage and will allow city to take action on compromised structures.
 - Other feel we could do a lot without turning to regulatory control.
- Plan needs to make things easier for Planning Board.
- Not become too cute. Ordinance should not be too restrictive for new ventures.

Regional Impacts

- Partner with other communities to streamline services regionally.
- Concern about Augusta development and connection to Whitten Rd; would impact traffic in the city. Hallowell needs to resist Augusta traffic.
- New Augusta Crossing will increase traffic at Whitten and Winthrop. 201 needs sidewalks.
- Eliminate toll off of 295 between Gardiner and Augusta as commuters come through Hallowell instead.
- Traffic is generated from other towns. Hallowell can ask for mitigation for commuters. Hallowell can comment on development outside the community to ensure that increased commuter traffic is managed in the community.
- Rail overpass is being redone by DOT and we need to ensure that it remains in character.
- We win if we partner with others.

Stevens School

- Stevens School: issue with an ordinance for affordable housing is that developers will chose offices over housing to get around the regulation.
- Vision for the Stevens School area in the plan that focuses on limited office, mixed income housing, open space.
- Stevens School is a huge property and no matter what happens it will change the character of the town. Historic building will stay.
- State has not made a commitment but they want to sell Stevens School at market value; transfer in 2011, expect town input.
- Stevens School: art studio, coffee house, teen space, community space.

Public Participation Process and City Committees

- Who got postcards? Based on voting list.
- Need to have cards go to every taxpayer.
- Every taxpayer (and renter) should have a say in the plan.
- City is over-run with committees; but this plan will create new ones.
- There is an economic development committee that can discuss business growth/marketing.
- 25 active committees; 17 inactive committees. Kick them in gear as needed.