

Town of Machias

Town Office, Suite 1
P.O. Box 418
Machias, ME 04654

Machias Comprehensive Planning Committee

Meeting Notes

March 3, 2025 @6PM
At the Machias Tele-Business Center

Ann-Marie Evans called the meeting to order at 6PM. Also in attendance committee members Aaron Ackley, Sarah Dedmon, James Jackson, Chris Meroff, Carole Porcher, and Josh Spencer. Also in attendance were Tora Johnson (via phone) and Frank Rodriguez in person. Board members Julie Barker and Wendy Schoppee were not in attendance.

Minutes from the 2/18/2025 meeting were accepted. Carole Porcher 1st, Jim Jackson 2nd.

A decision was made by the Selectboard to let us make use of the Secretary to take meeting notes once she/he is hired

We don't have a planner yet, but once we do (hopefully after the next Selectboard meeting), he/she will act as our guide to updating and building this plan. In addition, she/he will do some of the research and write the document. The team will be responsible to review, edit, comment and also be responsible for reaching out to the community for their ideas.

The Selectboard has opted not to construct a shared vision on the various Comprehensive Planning topics at this time. They are looking for us to provide community feedback on the various topics so that they can better understand what the community is looking for. It is more common for the committee to periodically provide updates to the Selectboard. The Selectboard carries the vision we map out forward.

The Selectboard has no mandate to carry out the comp plan, but the comp plan reflects the will of the voters.

Frank Rodriguez was present at the meeting and is looking to join the committee. Frank is the interim President of the Machiasport Historical Society. He is also on the Fort O'Brian School board.

Action: AM to send a request to the Selectboard asking that he be appointed to the committee.

Discussion: We need to go where the people are and start the conversations. Public meetings and surveys are required but we need to go further. There are certain things the surveys must contain, the planner will help us with this. **Action: Tora will provide us with some survey examples.**

We need to engage the community. Focus on what now how. Dream the dream.

Where do you think we are in the economy. Need to be careful about how we construct the survey – make it check the box. Keep it simple but provide ways for folks to elaborate.

Need to understand where we are economy wise. How many FTE's (Full time employees)? What is the median income? Some of this is on SCEC's web site. Will be able to use data once we get an economic developer onboard. **Action: Tora will provide us with some data.** We need to start with a baseline and understand where we are currently.

Discussion on what is happening in the Maine Street Business downtown. Office space, business coaching, access to small business loans.

Chris is putting together a new non-profit to help our future business leaders/entrepreneurs. (has done this before) focused on Mental health , creating of marketing, bookkeeping and leadership development, and training.

When we speak with folks, we need to hit the fisheries. With the focus on the health and well being.

How do we keep the graduating kids in town? What do we need to keep them here?

What do we need to do to generate economic health. How do we develop the economy?

Need to start talking to folks Need a list of questions for students and businesses. **Action: ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS. Start by coming up with a list of questions for both youth and business.** This can be the basis for us starting the community engagement. This is for sit down conversations with small groups of people.

Action: ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS we should all take a couple of minutes and prioritize the chapters list below.

Chapters	Priority
History	
Population	
Natural Resources	
Economy	
Housing	
Recreation	
Transportation	
Public Facilities	
Fiscal Capacity	
Land Use	
Healthcare (physical/mental)	
Resiliency	
Regional Coordination	
Aging (including nursing homes)	
Youth	
Substance Use	

Planning process:

1. Gathering information (7-8 months)
2. Discussion phase – feedback and public engagement

3. Land use engagement – future land use. Used as the basis for future ordinances.

We could reach poll businesses at the Chamber dinner.

Need to get the papers to write some articles.

Future: regularly scheduled meet the manager (town manager) meetings.

Grant update: NBRC \$47,000.00 grant for economic development. We should hear sometime this summer if we will receive.

When do we meet next? **Monday, March 17th at 6PM in the temporary Town Office.**

Meeting ended at 7PM with a vote. Josh Spencer 1st, Aaron Ackley 2nd.