

Machias Comprehensive Planning Committee Minutes
Monday, April 7, 2025
At Machias Tele-Business Center

Ann-Marie Evans called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

Committee members in attendance were: Evans, Joshua Spencer, Carole Porcher, Julie Barker, Chris Meroff, Frank Rodriguez, Aaron Ackley. Also attending were: Sarah Craighead Dedmon, town manager; Patricia Tilton, planner, Sunrise County Economic Council; Tora Johnson, interested party, and Sharon Mack, committee recording secretary. Members not attending were James Jackson and Wendy Schoppee.

Julie Barker moved and Josh Spencer seconded to accept the minutes of the March 17 meeting, as amended by Evans to clarify that the committee was using its own Google Drive and not the town's. Vote was unanimous.

1.SURVEY REVIEW: Members went through an example of the survey used by Roque Bluffs, refining, reviewing and adding to the suggested 110 questions.

Questions that did not pertain to Machias will be removed as did several water supply questions. The choices of occupations will be expanded to reflect Machias current opportunities. All of the questions regarding wells and sewer system will be removed. The members agreed to revisit the commercial development questions as well as the choices for preservation. It was determined that the comprehensive plan will create a new land use plan and all current ordinances will need to be reviewed to ensure everything meshes. Tilton said she will create a map of current land uses. It was also suggested to add a final note that additional information and ideas could be sent directly to the committee by respondents.

2.INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS: Four chapters were presented - Historical/Archeological, Population and Demographics, Housing, and Economy. It was agreed to take them one at a time, starting with Population. Tilton has provided copies of the 2006 comprehensive plan to refer to.

There was a general discussion regarding the state projections that Machias' population, which has been declining, is expected to slowly rebound by approximately 400 people.

Questions were posed about how to determine what assets bring and keep people in Machias. Collaboration with surrounding communities was determined to be key to growth of the Shiretown as most of those citizens use Machias as a service center. Johnson suggested a simple Facebook or other social media survey of surrounding towns could help provide insight. General discussion included the impacts of child care, infrastructure, real estate, aging of current population and seasonal residents.

Tilton suggested that each committee member familiarize themselves with the first four chapters and formulate their answers to the state's questions. At the next meeting, Population & Demographics, Housing and Economy will be prioritized.

On a motion by Spencer, second by Porcher, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Next meeting date: Monday, April 21, 2025.