Planning Board Meeting
September 3, 2015
Draft Minutes

The Planning Board held a meeting on Thursday, September 3rd, 2015, at the Island Hall beginning at 7:00pm.

AGENDA: Discuss Section 1 of Comprehensive Plan re-write

Chair John (Chip) Corson called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.
Members present: Chip Corson, Donna Colbeth, Nancy Hill, Jane Frizzell and Carol White
Also present: Gloria Brown, John (Jay) Corson, Suhail Bisharat

See attachments for written comments.

Discussion regarding the preamble/vision of the Comprehensive Plan:
- Some board members want to keep the original preamble; others prefer the more compact version proposed by Orlando Delogu.
- Suggested changes to Orlando’s wording throughout: visitors instead of day-trippers; non-resident property owners instead of summer natives.
- Suggestion to include both preambles.

Re: page 8
- Sustainability of year-round community is more likely because of its proximity to the mainland
- References to 2010 should be 2011
- First sentence “shares to work” instead of “symbiotic”; so, “recognized and valued the work shared between…”
- Define “affordable housing” vs. “low income”

Re: pages 9-15
- From original CP p. 9 to be added to Orlando’s p. 9-15:
  “In order to become Town policies or ordinances the ideas here not only have to be developed in more detail by Town committees, sometimes with the help of outside consultants. In addition, they must be discussed in public meetings, considered by the Selectmen, and, in many cases, brought up for a vote at Town Meeting.”
Third paragraph of Orlando's p. 9-15, last sentence: Unfortunately, however, that plan did not lead to a uniquely (a first generation) Town of Chebeague Island zoning ordinance, subdivision, and (non-housing) development ordinances.

Regarding Planning Board Ordinance: Request to talk with CEO Nick Adams again about appeals from Planning Board decisions. Orlando's idea is that it costs a lot of money to go to court; not so much to go to the local appeals board. So having to go directly to court discriminates against moderate-income applicants. Nick disagrees. What is the opinion of the Board of Adjustments and Appeals? Also, discuss with town attorney. This item to be taken up at a separate meeting.

Somewhere in the process: Town purchasing property to be a priority

Meeting with Orlando to discuss Part II, Thursday, September 17th, 5:30 PM. Members would like to review the pages before discussing with Orlando.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Brown
Deputy Clerk
A Vision For Chebeague

The Town of Chebeague Island became independent in 2007, but it is only now beginning to focus on how it can sustain this unique island community. This revised comprehensive plan, a focus on essential goals, and the adoption of uniquely Chebeague Island land use control ordinances will enable us to preserve our past and build a sustainable future.

That future must include preservation of the quality of life that Islander’s have valued for nearly 200 years, the protection of the Island’s fresh water aquifer, the retention and growth of the Island school which is essential to maintaining a year-round community, the retention of critical transportation linkages to the mainland, and measures that protect historical activities on the Island, i.e., fishing, agriculture, and forestry and simultaneously encourage new appropriately scaled business activities.

Beyond the needs of year-round residents, future town planning must value, and meet the needs of summer residents. From day trippers to those who each year spend several months on the island these visitors have been an integral part of island life almost from the beginning of the Town’s existence. Of course, these visitors also benefit from protecting the Town’s water supply and transportation linkages, but they are particularly concerned with quality of life issues—access to the foreshore, beach and boating facilities, the expansion and safety of trail and bicycling facilities, access to tennis, golf, Inn, and dining facilities, the protection of their seasonal homes during periods of the year these structures are not occupied.

More importantly, summer visitors want to retain the feeling of inclusion that has existed between them and year round residents of the island—it is a part of the charm of Chebeague that should not be lost. As much as anything, it is what brings visitors back year after year—generation after generation.

Achieving these goals will require growth in all types of appropriately located seasonal and year-round housing—housing that meets the needs of all income groups, i.e., young families, the elderly, traditional year-round residents/workers, those who work on the mainland, but choose to live on the Island, and those who would spend a night or a few days or weeks on the island.
Why we need a Revised Comprehensive Plan

Though there are many factors that play a role in the maintenance of a viable year-round/summer Island community, there are three that are critical—protection of the island’s fresh water aquifer, maintaining transportation linkages to the mainland, and providing sufficient affordable housing for a critical, a self-sustaining, mass of year-round residents.

Bearing in mind that 80% of the Town consists of coastal waters (over which we have only limited control) and that 15 of the 17 islands in the Town have no year-round residents, a RCP is an essential first step leading to the adoption of detailed regulatory measures, and Town spending policies, that will enable the Town to achieve its vision for the future.

These planning and regulatory steps may be initiated by the town’s Planning Board, but little of long term value can be achieved without a close working relationship (a partnering) with the Selectmen, the Code Enforcement Officer, Town administrators, and the myriad of public and private groups (and organizations) that have long existed on the island. Ultimately it is the Town Meeting that must put regulatory and spending policies in place, but this step is made easier when a broad consensus is fashioned—when year-round and summer voices have been heard.
The Capacity to Implement the Plan

Chebeague Island’s first comprehensive plan (adopted in 2010) certainly recognized and valued the symbiotic relationship between the year-round and summer communities on the island. But that plan also recognized (as we must) that of the two groups it is the year-round community that ultimately bears the burden of sustaining the future of the Town of Chebeague Island. The 2010 plan frankly conjectured that: “The year-round working community as it exists now may not be sustainable.”

At that time the year-round community consisted of approximately 330 people; summer visitors numbered around 1500. These numbers are little changed today. The question remains—is the year-round community large enough to sustain Chebeague Island’s vision of the future? No clear answer is possible—what is possible is a conscious effort to increase the size of the year-round community. That is why the RCP’s focus on affordable year-round housing is critically important.

We are not alone in recognizing this fact. Other island communities in Maine have recognized that affordable housing is the key to raising their year-round population to a level capable of sustaining their vision for the future, their quality of life, their year-round and summer communities.

In short, Chebeague Island’s year-round population can/must be increased; to this end, the Town’s focus on affordable year-round housing is a correct step. Achieving a critical mass, a population base capable of sustaining the Town’s vision for the future benefits both year-round residents and summer visitors to the island.

A larger year-round population base provides children for the island school, personnel to staff essential full and part-time paid administrative positions on the island, personnel to staff the array of citizen boards and committees that are part of a viable (a sustainable) municipal government. Finally, it strengthens the tax base of the Town—year-round residents and summer (often land-owning) visitors are more willing to pay for a government that works.
Past Planning and the work in progress:

In 2000, Great Chebeague Island (then an offshore neighborhood in the Town of Cumberland) undertook a first effort to articulate/examine its own needs, values, goals. The Town of Cumberland was amenable to these GCI overtures and some useful steps were carried out, i.e., the Cousins Island Wharf was improved, Chandlers Cove Beach was secured, junk cars were removed from GCI. But real long range thinking about GCI had not yet begun.

In 2007 when the Town of Chebeague Island became an independent municipal entity, the next step was undertaken by a transition group that focused on building codes, plans, and ordinances in effect in the Town of Cumberland. At the Town of Chebeague Island’s organizational meeting, a series of transitional ordinances were put in place. These tracked (often verbatim) Town of Cumberland ordinances. It was anticipated that these ordinances would be flexibly applied to meet Town of Chebeague needs. But it soon became apparent that the shoe did not always fit.

In 2008-2009 the Town of Chebeague Island undertook to prepare its own comprehensive plan. It was a long, a thoughtful, a careful process that led to the adoption of a Chebeague Island Comprehensive Plan in 2011. Unfortunately, that plan did not lead to a uniquely (a first generation) Town of Chebeague Island zoning ordinance, subdivision, and (non-housing) development ordinances.

In late 2014, as development pressures (primarily on GCI) began to mount, the lack of these ordinances was ever more apparent. That prompted the present effort to revise the 2011 comprehensive plan—giving it more focus; to clarify the powers and duties of the planning board; and to put on the table within the next year or two (ultimately for Town Meeting enactment) uniquely Town of Chebeague Island zoning, subdivision, and development ordinances. Relying on the good work done of the Town of Cumberland will not achieve Chebeague’s vision for the future.
Ex pg 2/3 Vision for Chebeague - C. Deboege

I agree with Donna C. that this shorter version of the "vision" should be replaced by the already existing vision written by Cheb. residents and members of the original Comp. Plan Comm. I am not as worried about the length as I am about the "heart" of the matter.

I would add to the original vision some wording on town land purchases and other land conservation efforts.

We need in our wording to distinguish between "visitors" and long time "summer natives." The latter are essential to the sustainability of the island community - the former, in my mind, are very less essential to community viability and could be harmful to our quality of life. "Summer natives" should definitely be involved or at the very least be listened to in decisions regarding the future of the island.

Chebeague is different from all other ME
islands with year round populations even Peaks. We are sustainable because of our proximity to the mainland and therefore can choose to to a great extent the types of businesses we consider appropriate and whether we really do want to be part of "Vacationland."

I think Orlando has been a tremendous help and certainly want his help with many considerations, but I do think writing a vision should be handled by islanders. I feel that the shorter version doesn't really reflect the larger one in some important instances.

Ex. pg 8
Paragraph 1 - last sentence should be changed to say that even if traditional fishing etc. jobs become a smaller fraction of the employment on the island that the community can still be viable.

- All paragraphs "visitor" should be changed to "summer resident or "summer native"
Paragraph 4: We should consider or look at "can/must" be increased.

Original vision - paragraph 8
Take a look at last sentence. Is that part of our vision? It does not seem to me that "summer businesses" contribute a lot of summer or other opportunities. With the exception of the N. b.h. e.t.e.

Paragraph 8
Define the word "business friendly."

Original copy, pg. 11 - paragraph 10
What is the meaning/intent of the paragraph? Does Osborne speak to it?
PB Ordinance -
I spoke with Nick Adams on last Friday while at the TOCI office. I asked him for more info on why he felt that PB decisions should go to court and not to BofA.
If I understand him, he feels that permits that go through him and are turned down should go to BofA. Permits that are turned down by the PB would go to court. I guess that would be because PB handles more major projects.
I would sure like the whole PB to hear his side of the argument before we approve the whole thing and send it to Town Meeting.
Please put on agenda if possible.

More than you needed to know.
Thanks, Jane
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