

Winthrop Comprehensive Planning Process

Board Attendance:

Patrice Putman
Ken Johnson
John Callinah
Jack Kaiser
John Carpenter
Phil Locashio
Kristen Bartlett
Sarah Fuller
Jim Norris
Andy Wess

Town Support:

Chris Huck, KVCOG

Community Members: Students from WHS, Steve Knight, Margy Burns Knight, Russ Hazard, Monika Riney, Joe McLaughlin, others

Students from Mr. Knight's second year chemistry class gave a presentation on the issue of a livestock ordinance in Winthrop. They researched the ordinances of surrounding towns and presented these as well as giving the results of a survey they had issued to students at the high school.

Following the presentation the discussion was opened up to those in attendance.

The importance of having well-defined zoning within the town was mentioned. People looking to move here may want to know what "could" move in next door (whether it be agriculture or commercial). There was some confusion on the specifics of the current zoning ordinance and several thought that there was a need to look closer at the current law.

Currently, no commercial gardens are allowed in limited residential or downtown (The issue of commercial property within these zones is due to traffic, pesticide storage, machinery, etc). You may be allowed to sell with code enforcement permit for home occupation; however, with outlets like E-bay, it is getting difficult to define "commercial". Current Maine law says that the derivation of income does not make a property "commercial", however Winthrop's ordinance says that if you sell your produce it then becomes classified as "agriculture" (and thus prohibited in limited residential and downtown).

Chris Huck of KVCOG noted that there has been a shift in Land Use language. Regulating the "Use" is now making way for regulating the "impact" of the activity (traffic, run-off, machinery, fire hazard, etc). Monmouth's land use ordinance is now structured in this way.

Jim Norris mentioned the need to define pet vs. livestock as well as making ordinances differ in the different zones. Defining across the town just based on acreage alone should not be the only factor to use in determining livestock density.

Andy Wess mentioned that personal consumption vs. commercial use may be a qualification to make when defining agriculture. Monika Riney shared the state's definition of what constitutes a farm. A

“farm” must earn \$1500/year (income...not profit). When classified as a farm, the state oversees the best management practices and can trump any town ordinances unless zoning has been approved by the dept of Agriculture. According to sources within the state government, Winthrop's ordinances have not been approved yet.

The idea of community gardens was brought up and was widely accepted. Waterville's community garden (and the process they took to get there) was mentioned as an example.

Current community gardens within town include: a plot near the High School that is used by the botany class, and an area used by East Winthrop Baptist Church. There has been an attempt to do begin one at the Grade school as well, but there has been a lot of resistance to the idea.

A subcommittee was created to come up with recommendations and present them to the full committee in two months. Members include: John Carpenter (chair), Monika Riney, Sarah Fuller, Andy Wess, and Kristen Bartlett.

Next meeting: November 23, 2009 Downtown