

WINTHROP TOWN COUNCIL

Monday, October 4, 2010

Minutes

Attendance: Kevin Cookson, Chair; David Rheaume, Linda Caprara, Ken Buck, Sarah Fuller, Priscilla Jenkins, James Lattin, Cornell Knight, Town Manager, and Julie Winberg, Secretary.

Called to Order at 7:00 p.m.

Approve the Minutes of September 13, 2010.

Motion made by Rheaume and seconded by Fuller, the minutes of this meeting was approved with a unanimous vote.

Item # 81 Hold a public hearing on the 2010 Winthrop Comprehensive Plan and comments from the State Planning Office, Patrice Putman, Chair of the Committee

At 7:02 p.m. the public hearing opened on Item #81. Ms. Putman presented a brief overview of this report. She noted that two comments were made by the State Planning Office on the Town's plan. But as a whole, they found it complete and consistent with the Maine Growth Management Act. They reviewed the Plan for consistency with this Act using the Comprehensive Planning Criteria Rule. The Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife also reviewed the Plan and provided their comments. Those reports from these agencies, as well as comments from the public, are in Comprehensive Plan file in the Town office.

Winthrop's top ten priorities (on pages 4 and 5 of the report) were reviewed and discussed thoroughly. The Committee recommended that those ten priorities be listed and posted in a chart which will be put up in the Town office. As an item is completed, it will be checked off.

The Plan incorporates a vision and that vision has begun. The Recreation Committee is up and running. The Historic Society has been reactivated. The Land Trust is considering purchasing new land at Mt. Pisgah. And the town's new motto "Winthrop Plays Outside" is being very well received. Also recommended is activating the Land Use Committee as the Town needs accurate maps throughout.

The implementation plan starts on Page 6 of this report. It suggests an annual workshop to be held in June/July of each year to review its accomplishments, progress, and to do list.

One item to consider is the implementation of an Oversight Committee which will be responsible for review as well as the authority to recommend changes to strategies on going forward. This Committee would be chaired by an Implementation Strategist.

Councilor Rheaume noted that the Plan did not incorporate the comments made by the Department of Inland Fisheries to the Plan's deficiencies in a few areas.

Ms. Putman responded that the State Planning Office did find the Plan to be complete. They did not feel that they had to address individual departments' comments until implementation was done.

Councilor Fuller responded that the Committee plans on having smaller groups dealing with specific issues and that that would be much more efficient.

Councilor Jenkins expressed an interest to the 'process' at which time Ms. Putman responded that the Plan intent is to give broad guidance.

Councilor Caprara expressed concern that the Plan was to address the housing issues (on page 36) and was to concentrate on housing in terms of senior housing. At a glance it does not support that request as written. The way it is written could mean anything. She expressed that it is very broad and not clear in the definition of housing. In previous conversations about this issue, it was stressed that concern was about quality, affordable housing.

Councilor Putman explained that the Plan is a guide. The Council does not have to follow it word for word. Much of it is written generically. These are recommendations.

Councilor Rheaume thanked the Committee for a job well done and noted all the hard work that went into the final product.

Some public in attendance expressed concern that their comments on the Plan throughout its process were not incorporated in the Plan.

Town Manager Knight addressed this concern in that the comments would be put in a file under the Comprehensive Plan section in the Town's website but that they would not be a part of the Plan itself.

One correction was noted and that was to change VFW Lot to the American Legion lot.

The public hearing closed at 7:33 p.m.

Item # 82 Consider the 2010 Winthrop Comprehensive Plan

Motion by Rheaume and seconded by Caprara to approve the 2010 Winthrop Comprehensive Plan. The vote was 5-2 (Buck and Lattin in opposition).

Item # 83 Consider a feasibility study for a solar farm at the former landfill site on the Annabessacook Road.

This Solar Energy Farm project would be on the Winthrop Landfill Superfund site on Annabessacook Road in Winthrop. The project is being supported by the Western Kennebec Economic Development Alliance and initiated by Maine Energy Performance Solutions. The Council's approval of the concept is needed if it is to go forward to a feasibility study.

Jack Kaiser, president of the Western Kennebec Economic Development Alliance said there would be no cost to that group or the Town for the project. The Town owns the former landfill site. This does require the okay from the EPA.

Scott Hayes, a partner with the Maine Energy Performance Solutions presented a proposal for this project at the landfill site. The Council will have to approve this in concept for it to go forward, as the Town owns the landfill site. If approved, both agencies will seek funding for a feasibility study and possibly some start-up costs for the project. There are not expected to be any costs to the Town or to WKEDA for this project. The feasibility study will answer many questions about the project and will be the basis for a decision by the two agencies as well as the Town.

Alternative energy source brings more businesses to the Town as well as increase the tax base. This is a parcel of land consists of twenty acres of open land that is just being maintained. This would be renewable energy for a site that is not useable for anything else, thus, bringing it back to productive use. Maintenance is limited as it is a benign source of energy. And there is enough sunshine on average over the year for a system this size.

There will be an estimated 1.3 gigs produced annually. EPA is behind this kind of development. The town needs to approve a feasibility study to be done by an outside agency. Some of the funds will come from EPA for the feasibility study. It will take four months to be constructed with the hiring of 20-30 employees that will be trained. The system can be expanded and there is enough room on the site for expansion. The power can go anywhere. It would be the largest system in the area.

Investors will be sought as the total cost of this system will be \$5.2 million.

Environmental International Government, which is a small business in D.C., would do the feasibility study. There are only four such agencies in the country.

Motion by Rheaume and seconded by Fuller, to approve the feasibility study for a solar farm at the former landfill site on the Annabessacook Road. Vote 7-0.

Item # 84 *Discuss the need for the Property Assessed Clean Energy Ordinance.*

The Green Committee has unanimously recommended that the town pursue the adoption of the PACE ordinance. Adopting the ordinance would allow residents access to the \$20 million of energy loans available there is no obligation or involvement by the town. Efficiency Maine Trust will take care of all the documents and monitoring. If the Council wants to consider the Ordinance, a public hearing and first reading can be scheduled for the November meeting.

The Ordinance proposal would have to be scheduled for a public hearing at a later session in November.

There is a total of \$20 million to distribute. The money for the loans pass thru the municipality.

The suggestions were that the Town would be the intermediary with the citizen submitting the application would go directly to Efficiency Maine.

This is not a tax. Should the home go into foreclosure, the bank would have the first responsibility to collect. There is no liability to the Town.

The Town Manager will have a representative here for the public hearing next month.

Motion by Fuller and seconded by Lattin, to hold a public hearing on November 1, 2010 on the Property Assessed Clean Energy Ordinance. Vote 7-0.

Item # 85 *Consider changes to the Transfer Station's credit policy.*

A draft policy was presented noting that the only change is reducing the balance from \$500 to 300 as the final cut off for additional charges for accounts unpaid 30 days past statement date. If the account goes to collection and is paid in full (30% goes to the Thomas Agency) they can resume credit with a limit of \$100 and must pay within terms for the next six months before they can resume a credit limit of \$300. And if they are sent to collections a second time, they permanently lose their charging privileges.

Motion by Caprara and seconded by Fuller, with a unanimous vote, to accept the changes to the Transfer Station's credit policy.

Manager's Report

The town office will close at 2:00 on November 1 and open all day in November 2.

Main Street is scheduled to be milled this week and a shim coat of hot top is scheduled to follow and paving soon after. There is a breakdown lane on the right side going down Main Street down to Highland Avenue, and that will not be milled or paved. DOT said it was in good shape.

Turtle Run Culvert. The engineer has completed the design but is waiting for word from the Army Corps about their permit and from the Greater Augusta Utility District regarding their sewer pipe work, before putting it out for bid. This process should not take long.

*Councilor Rheaume nominated Ingrid Nivison to the Recreation Committee
A motion by Fuller and seconded by Caprara, this was approved with a unanimous vote*

At 8:30 pm. The Council went into executive session for a property abatement application, Title 1 Section 405 6 (F).

Return to regular session.

Motion by Rheaume Seconded by Caprara to adjourn at 9:05 pm. Vote 7-0.