MINUTES

Long Range Planning Committee Meeting

August 14, 2026

8-9:30 am

In Person: **Council Chambers**

Virtually via Zoom: To view the meeting via Zoom, Click Here

Members of the public may attend virtually or in person. Committee members are expected to attend in person unless the member meets one of the circumstances established in the Committee's remote participation policy.

Members: Portia Hirschman, Ed Hodgdon, Robyn Saunders
Alternates: Rebecca Hatt
Planning Board Liaison: Rick Meinking
Council Liaisons: Michelle Hayes, Cory Fellows
Staff: Karen Martin, Erin Moriarty

I. Roll Call and Identify Voting Members.
II. Review Minutes July 10, 2026 – Approved
III. General Public Comment - Items not covered on the agenda (3-minute limit per speaker) - None
IV. Consider a request to add Landscape Contractor uses in the B3 zoning district as a permitted or special exception use.
    - Public Comment (3 minutes per speaker) – None

Erin provided an introduction to the item. The Town has received inquiries about permitting landscape contractor uses in the B3 zoning district. The use was recently been added as a Special Exception in the Running Hill-Gorham Road zoning district and is permitted by right in the Light Industrial and Industrial zones. Performance standards for the use are the same for each district. The difference between Special Exception uses and permitted uses are that Special Exceptions must go to Zoning Board for approval. There is a list of standards the applicant needs to meet as well as the Performance Standards that apply specifically to that use. Performance standards apply to the use even if it is permitted by right. Performance standards provide another layer of standards with site plan review. Erin provided an overview of the performance standards.

Robyn asked about screening standards. Karen responded that screening could be included in the performance standards. Karen suggested adding screening to the first performance standard. Planning Board would be reviewing those standards. Rick expressed interest in more oversight through the Special Exception process. Ed agreed that it would be appropriate for Planning Board to have more

oversight. Portia suggested the Special Exception could eventually become a permitted use, but agreed that having more oversight for the newer use makes sense. Rebecca asked about the process of approval, and Erin responded that Zoning Board and Planning Board review are both required with the current ordinance language. With pending updates, it may only need to go to Planning Board, and would likely need to go to Planning Board even as a permitted use due to site plan review requirements.

Rebecca suggested that given the site plan review requirements, there does not seem to be a substantial difference between the use being considered a Special Exception versus permitted use. Portia responded that Special Exception involves more standards, and that the specific zoning district may require more care with regard to screening and abutters. Rebecca asked what harms were of concern with the use being permitted. Erin added that as a Special Exception, the Town could say it still is not an allowed use if the standards have not been met, whereas the owner of a business that is a permitted use would know it is permitted by right, but that there are certain standards they will need to adhere to.

Portia asked about types of equipment. Robyn added there is a wide range of materials, storage, and equipment, and reiterated that it requires more oversight. Rebecca suggested that screening would address those concerns. Erin confirmed that the Planning Department enforces approved site plans, which would need to meet the performance standards. She added that there are buffers in place for residential adjacencies.

Robyn asked about employee parking. Erin responded that employee parking is regulated elsewhere in the ordinance. Rebecca said the performance standards address the concerns being raised. Rick commented that a permitted use limits dialogue between Planning Board and the applicant. The group looked at the B3 district on the zoning map. Ed commented that given what businesses are already there, this could be a suitable use. Robyn asked about the boundaries of the DOT Urban Compact.

Erin concluded that staff would incorporate the committee's feedback considering performance standards and Planning Board review. Robyn expressed concern regarding traffic impacts, materials storage, and pesticides. She agreed with Portia and Rick on allowing the use as a Special Exception to ensure additional oversight.

V. Interactive exercise applying nine newly discussed zoning districts to existing Town zoning- Oak Hill.
    - Conservation near headwaters of the marsh
    - Town Center corridor along Route 1 and in the Downs Town Center
        - Explore strategies for softening and slowing Route 1 to support resident uses, safety, and access (trees, noise reduction, narrowing)
    - Business and Industrial along Payne Road
    - Regional Center around Costco
    - Neighborhood Residential surrounding Town Center areas
    - Neighborhood Center for area around schools

- Explore opportunity to connect multi-use trails between Neighborhood Center/Residential areas and Town Centers in order to eliminate Route 1 crossings (connecting municipal campus and surrounding residential uses to the Downs)

VI. Committee and Staff Updates

Erin provided staff updates on upcoming changes to Special Exception uses and tree clearing/site plan review updates going through Ordinance Committee and Council review. Staff is continuing to update ordinances and will be looking at the Comp Plan update to do a land use adjustment for the growth area conversation.

Karen added that Tom Hall received a major leadership award this week from the Maine Association of Town Managers. Helen provided Zoning Board updates. Zoning Board saw two Special Exceptions this week and has a Shoreland Setback Determination coming next month.

Cory shared that Council has a second reading of the mobile sauna use and second reading of the Rate of Growth ordinance changes. They are also looking at accepting the Complete Streets Manual. Nine people have pulled papers for running for Council in November. Karen and SEDCO are planning a candidate's night for the fall. He added that the Close the Gap event went well and had a lot of public support.

Rick shared that Planning Board approved two new banks in the Downs last month. The next agenda is fairly light and includes trailhead parking at Beaver Brook Preserve. Ed shared that the Portland West group had a workshop and will have an open house in Gorham on 9/22 and a public meeting on 9/24.

Portia shared that the transportation plan has been approved, Transportation Committee is still looking at Vision Zero, and there is a pedestrian island demonstration project on Route 1. Fixed route service is starting soon, and mini-transportation service will begin in September.

LRPC will discuss the Rural Farming areas at the next meeting.

VII. Adjourn- next meeting September 11, 2026