
HCPC NEWSLETTER

Hancock County Planning Commission

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Fiscal Year 2006-2007

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PLANNING NEWS

By Tom Martin

HCPC Available to Help Towns with Shoreland Zoning Changes

Those of you who have read our recent newsletters know that the DEP has revised the Shoreland Zoning Guidelines. They took effect on May 1, 2006 and towns have two years to make their local ordinances consistent with the revised standards. A copy of the complete guidelines is available at our web site (www.hcpcme.org/landuse). We also have hard and electronic copies of the 65-page document available at our office. In addition to the guidelines for communities with salt water, we expect to have an inland version of the guidelines shortly. We are available to help you revise your ordinance as necessary to meet the new guidelines.

The importance of accurate shoreland zoning maps

If you have not already done so, you may want to ask us to make a GIS (computerized version) of your shoreland zoning map. Once your shoreland zoning map is digitized, it will be very easy to make future revisions. Also, a copy can be placed on the municipal and the HCPC web site for convenient reference by residents.

The Maine Supreme Court has ruled that a municipality's official shoreland map is the primary source to which to refer in determining district boundaries. Where there is an inconsistency between the map and the general text descriptions of boundaries, the map prevails.

This means that it is important to have high quality shoreland zoning maps.

Comprehensive Planning: A Status Report and Some Tips

We were pleased to hear that the Mariaville and Verona Island comprehensive plans were adopted at their respective 2006 town meetings without comment. Bar Harbor, Cranberry Isles, Castine, Mount Desert and Trenton are presently working on plans. Brooksville and Deer Isle are in the wrap-up stages of their plans. While the voter rejection of the Blue Hill and Surry plans has been widely reported, other towns have been more successful. What are the elements of a successful plan? There are no magic bullets, but some general hints follow:

1. Be sure the plan addresses specific issues the town faces

While public opinion surveys regularly report that respondents wish to maintain the rural character of the town, this is akin to favoring motherhood and apple pie. A plan needs to address specific threats to small town character and highly valued resources. For example, one town passed a plan with strong measures for lake water quality protection when it realized that a deterioration of lake water quality would threaten lakefront property values and thus erode an important part of its tax base. At least two towns have passed plans in response to potential large-scale subdivisions flooding the town with poorly planned development.

2. Make things easy for the small landowner

Maine's economy is changing, but land is still an important source of revenue for many residents. Many property owners bank on the options to sell their land or give a piece to their children. Residents will generally be wary of the plan that places too many restrictions on small-scale land development or limits home-based businesses. Always stress that the goal of the plan is to manage, not restrict, development.

3. Have a balanced committee

It is important to have a mixture of long-term residents and recent arrivals on the committee.

This allows the committee to make compromises that reflect the wishes of both groups.

4. Involve Local Leadership

Most plans will fail if they are not supported by the select board. Be sure to involve the select board from day one. It is important to address their concerns. It is also important to involve the fire department, historical society and other active groups in town.

Regional Planning: Is the Time Ripe?

As the above article indicates, it is challenging for some towns to adopt comprehensive plans. The state is putting increasing emphasis on regional planning as an alternative. There is a history of regional planning in Hancock County, although we don't always call it by that name. In the past few years for example, the HCPC has been active in working with Healthy Community groups in developing regional health assessments. We have also done many regional transportation studies. There are also many examples of regional solid waste and recycling endeavors.

We are presently seeking grant funds for a regional housing needs analysis. There is preliminary discussion with the towns on Mount Desert Island on developing some shared comprehensive plan chapters. These efforts are not intended to impinge upon local autonomy but rather enhance it by allowing a more thorough approach to a problem that crosses a municipal boundary. The HCPC will be looking at other possible regional planning projects over the upcoming fiscal year. Feel free to contact Tom Martin with any suggestions or comments.

REVISED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT RULES TOOK EFFECT IN 2005

In addition to making changes to the shoreland zoning guidelines, the DEP has also revised its stormwater management rule. These changes will be of particular interest to those towns that review developments that result in one or more acres of disturbed area. A brief summary of the changes follows below. For more information, contact

Tom Martin at the HCPC or see the DEP website at:

<http://www.state.me.us/dep/blwq/docstand/stormwater/rule500and502/index.htm> .

What are the major changes?

- Shifts to standards that rely upon a range of specified BMPs (Best Management Practices), while retaining flexibility to allow appropriate alternatives. Combines "quantity and quality" standards into a single set of standards.
- Establishes general stormwater standards for all watersheds. The across-the-board standards increase protection for both pristine and threatened water resources, while minimizing incentives for sprawl. Exceptions: Certain standards such as the phosphorus standard continue to apply in "most at risk" lake watersheds.
- Removes the "most at risk" coastal list, as well as the "most at risk" and "sensitive or threatened" streams lists from Ch. 502. They are no longer needed, because basic quality standards apply everywhere under the provisionally adopted rules.
- Shifts to a single permit threshold of one-acre disturbed area (dependent upon proposed statutory changes). Although not part of the rule, a [flow chart](#) has been developed for use with application materials, to help applicants determine what approvals are required.
- Redirects permit by rule (PBR) availability to focus on projects that do not require engineering review.
- Adds requirements for maintenance and inspection, together with a continuing certification requirement. Inadequate inspection and maintenance is generally recognized as one of the major shortcomings in the current program.
- Increases consistency with Maine Construction General Permit provisions, so that the department can continue to improve coordination between the stormwater programs.

What do the revisions NOT do?

- **Does not make Chapter 500 shorter, although Chapter 502 is shorter.** Stormwater is a complicated subject. While the new Chapter 500 is not shorter, there was a concerted effort to make the chapter easier to follow, and to include material to make the process more predictable for applicants. There is an educational effort associated with implementation of the revised rules.

CDBG NEWS

Preparing for the Upcoming Round of Grants

While this year's round of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) is largely over, it is never too early to start planning for next year. We presently expect most grants to be due between December and January. Here are some general tips:

1. Plan to Secure Your Local Match

The trend in recent years has been for more application categories to require that some of the match be raised through a direct town appropriation. You may want to have that money available before you apply. Now is also the time to contact other funding agencies as well. The HCPC can help you identify potential matching sources. The reduction in grant funding in recent years could mean that part of the match has to come from low interest loans.

Create a Citizen's Advisory Committee

Many strong CDBG applications have failed due poor scores in citizen participation. It is important to have an active citizen advisory committee that meets regularly and shows strong public support for the project. This means going far beyond the obligatory public hearing and having additional outreach sessions. The need for the CDBG project should be identified in the comprehensive plan and other town-endorsed studies.

2. Contact the HCPC

The HCPC has extensive experience in preparing CDBG applications. We are very familiar with

the program regulations. The staff is happy to meet with any town and discuss how potential projects can be addressed through CDBG. If a project is not eligible for CDBG funding, we may be able to help you identify other sources.

3. Address the Income Issue

There is a widespread perception that most towns don't qualify for CDBG funds since town-wide income levels are too high. This is only partially true. Overall town incomes are only an issue for public facility projects that benefit an entire town such as a fire station or salt-sand storage shed. Economic development and housing endeavors can generally be funded in any town if they are focused on the needs of lower income households. It is also possible to target an application at a certain area of town where incomes may be lower such as a section of town served by public water or sewer system or a particular neighborhood. For some of the "fine print" exceptions contact the HCPC.

Projects aimed at a targeted group or neighborhood generally require that an income survey be conducted to verify income levels. The HCPC can help towns design and conduct income surveys that meet current Maine Office of Community Development guidelines. It is important to follow these guidelines since surveys that are inconsistent with state standards are likely to be rejected, jeopardizing the entire application.

HEALTH NEWS

by Jim Fisher

Common Health, Public Health: Working to Stop Teen Substance Abuse

HCPC continued hosting Common Health, a monthly, one hour public health forum on WERU/FM through the spring. Our broadcasts included discussion of the Bird Flu Pandemic, Homelessness, Violence in Society, Teen Substance Abuse and Promoting Locally Grown Food. The program continues to draw regional attention with our informed guests and lively call-in format.

Our May broadcast featured Attorney General Steven Rowe and local health planner Michelle O'Meara in a fast paced dialogue about substance

abuse. This program is part of a longer term effort to develop a strategic plan for combating underage drinking and drug use in Hancock County. HCPC staffers are working with Healthy Maine Partners, Health Community Coalitions and local law enforcement to write the plan and begin its implementation over the coming year.

Our June 21st program that airs at 10:00 AM will focus on emergency response in eastern Maine. Our guests will answer callers questions about how we can better prepare for natural and man-made disasters. Please join us. If you can't join us live, then visit our website www.commonhealth.org to hear audio from past programs. We also have audio CD's that include samples from all of our 2005 broadcasts available at HCPC. Contact Jim Fisher for additional information.

SOLID WASTE

By Jef Fitzgerald

Two regional Household Hazardous/Universal Waste collections are planned for 2006 in Hancock County. Though the State Planning Office is not offering grants to subsidize this year's collections, we expect another successful round.

Here are some highlights:

- ★ *Small (17" or less) monitors and non-console televisions will be taken back by manufacturers at no cost to towns.*
- ★ *Free digital thermometers will be handed out to reduce environmental mercury*
- ★ *Educational materials will be distributed before and during the collections.*
- ★ *The collections will be held rain or shine.*
- ★ *The collections fulfill the state's municipal requirements for UW recycling*
- ★ *Reusable latex paint that comes will be set aside for non-profit group use.*
- ★ *Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) accepted include Acids, Adhesives, Antifreeze, Automobile Fluids (Brake, etc.), Batteries (Rechargeable only) Chemicals (Pool, Photo, etc.) Cleaners (Oven, Drain, etc.), Lighter*

Fluid, Linseed Oil, Paint Remover/Thinners, Pesticides/Fungicides/Herbicides, Oil-Based Paint and Stain, Oil Waste (from cars, trucks, etc.), Solvents Transmission Fluid, Turpentine/Varnish

- ★ Universal Waste (UW) accepted include Computers, Monitors, Televisions Fluorescent Bulbs & Ballasts, Mercury Items: thermometers, etc.
- ★ *Wastes collected will be recycled or disposed of properly!*

Details for each collection are below:

The Greater Ellsworth Regional Collection:

HCPC and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension will conduct the third annual HHW/UW collection in Ellsworth. The event is planned for Saturday August 26, 2006 from 9 AM to 1 PM at the Ellsworth High School on Route 1A. Sponsoring communities so far include Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Dedham, Deer Isle, Ellsworth, Gouldsboro, Frenchboro, Hancock, Mariaville, Sedgwick, Sorrento, Surry, Trenton, Winter Harbor and the Unorganized Territories of Hancock County. If your town is not on the list, it is not too late to participate. Residents from other towns will be required to pay for disposal.

The MDI Regional Collection:

The Acadia Disposal District and HCPC will conduct the annual HHW/UW collection in Mount Desert. The event is planned for Saturday September 30, 2006 from 9 AM to 1 PM at the MDI High School on Route 1A. Sponsoring communities include Bar Harbor, Cranberry Isles, Lamoine, Mount Desert, Southwest Harbor, Tremont and Trenton.

Contact Jef with any questions or comments at 667-7131 or jfitzgerald@hcpcme.org.

TRANSPORTATION NEWS

by Jim Fisher

MaineDOT Announces Two Grant Opportunities

Transportation Enhancement Program

Transportation Enhancements (TE) activities are federally funded, community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure. The federal government provides funding for TE projects through our nation's surface transportation legislation. A 20% state, local or private match is required.

MaineDOT is accepting applications for the Transportation Enhancement Program through July 1st, 2006. This is a competitive funding program. The application form is available at www.hcpcme.org/transport.html

Eligible Activities

The following activities are eligible:

- A. Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.
- B. Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- C. Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites including historic battlefields.
- D. Scenic or historic highway programs including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities.
- E. Landscaping and other scenic beautification.
- F. Historic preservation.
- G. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities including historic railroad facilities and canals.
- H. Preservation of abandoned railway corridors including the conversion and use of the corridors for pedestrian or bicycle trails.
- I. Inventory, control, and removal of outdoor advertising.
- J. Archaeological planning and research.
- K. Environmental mitigation
 - i. to address water pollution due to highway runoff; or
 - ii. reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity.
- L. Establishment of transportation museums.

Visited www.enhancements.org/index.asp to learn more about Transportation Enhancement Program Goals. You will find detailed explanations for each of the eligible activities, information for preparing grants and links to resources.

Local municipalities

Most pedestrian improvements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic signals are constructed in local villages or cities and are the responsibility of local municipalities. Thus, local municipalities should be the first source of funding for desired pedestrian improvements. For projects beyond the scope of a municipal budget, it is possible to seek the Federal funding administered through MaineDOT but these funds are very competitive. It is also possible that some communities can fund pedestrian improvements, particularly in downtown areas through the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG).

Please contact Jim Fisher at the Hancock County Planning Commission for assistance with project selection and proposal development.

MaineDOT questions should be directed to:

Duane A. Scott
Transportation Enhancement Coordinator
800-380-7822
duane.scott@maine.gov

Safe Routes to School Request for Proposals **Pending**

The Maine Department of Transportation will soon launch a project solicitation for towns. The Safe Routes to School Program is intended to fund projects that will significantly improve the safety and access for students within 2 miles of a K-8 school. Eligible activities include planning, design, and construction of projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school.

Southwest Harbor received a grant in 2005 to build sidewalks connecting residential areas with the primary school. HCPC will post grant information to our website as soon as it arrives. MaineDOT has posted preliminary information on their website at:

www.maine.gov/mdot/opt/srts.php

Please contact Jim Fisher at the Hancock County Planning Commission for assistance with project selection and proposal development.

Downeast Sunrise Trail – DEST to Destiny

Destiny 2010 is a long range economic development planning initiative to promote growth and diversification of Maine's economically depressed regions. One avenue for economic development in Washington County is building new forms of low impact "eco-tourism." To this end the State of Maine contracted with Fermata, Inc. a tourism planning consulting firm to identify new opportunities leading downeast. In addition, the office of the Governor contracted with David Flanagan to develop a list of opportunities for economic development of eastern Maine. The Fermata Study and the Flanagan Report both concluded that conversion of the long unused Calais Branch Rail Corridor to a multiuse trail would stimulate new opportunities for tourism and local economic activity.

In the final hours of the 2006 legislative session the Joint Transportation Committee voted 12 to 1 to endorse the creation of the Downeast Sunrise Trail (DEST) between Ellsworth and Ayer's Junction in Washington County. HCPC staffers have worked for several years with the MaineDOT and the Sunrise Trail Coalition to establish suitable management guidelines that will permit multiple uses of this corridor including bicycles, walking, horseback riding, snowmobiles and all terrain vehicles.

The Downeast Sunrise Trail will help the MaineDOT to preserve the corridor, keeping open the possibility of reconstruction for rail when economic conditions permit. The Maine Department of Conservation has committed to hiring a full time trail manager and the MaineDOT will provide modest financial support to make this trail a reality.

No construction is anticipated this summer, but the MaineDOT and MaineDOC will develop a bidding process for rail and tie removal, trail grading and other related tasks.

Interim projects in preparation for this conversion include the restoration of Station 98 and a railroad

box car in Machias which will serve as one of many trail heads along this 87 mile corridor. More information is available at www.sunrisetrail.org.

Municipal Transportation Priorities

The Hancock County Planning Commission is working with the Maine Department of Transportation in a two-year effort to develop corridor management plans for Hancock County's most heavily traveled routes, including Route 1, Route 1A, Route 3 and Route 15. We're well along the pike already, with an assessment of major corridors including goals and objectives relating to transportation, economic development and land use. You can read the report and see maps online on our transportation page.

Next steps include identifying and prioritizing projects along the corridors, meeting with local leaders to refine project proposals and identifying opportunities for implementing projects. The municipal project solicitation survey formed one basis for identifying priority projects and most towns in Hancock County responded. We have posted a map of responding towns and the project requests registered by MaineDOT to: www.hcpcme.org/transportation/corridor/corridor_merpc.htm on the Hancock County page.

Please contact Jim Fisher at the Hancock County Planning Commission for more information.

GIS MAPPING

by Jef Fitzgerald

Oh, how things have changed!

Historic Topographic Maps, available on the worldwide web, can be valuable tools for future planning by helping us gain perspective on past development.

You can find them at the [University of New Hampshire Dimond Library](http://docs.unh.edu/nhtopos/Ellsworth.htm) at <http://docs.unh.edu/nhtopos/Ellsworth.htm> or by Maptech at <http://historical.maptech.com>.

Call Jef Fitzgerald at 667-7131 if you would like to have historic USGS Topo maps printed on our 42" color plotter. Members will be charged \$1 per square foot.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Ellsworth HHW Collection

Saturday, August 26th
Ellsworth High School
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

STRIKING A BALANCE WORKSHOP

Thursday, September 28th
VFW Hall, Washington Junction Road
Ellsworth 5:00-9:00 PM

MDI HHW Collection

Saturday, September 30th
MDI High School
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM