

Town of Hancock, Maine

MINUTES OF JAN. 14, 2025 PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING

Board Members: Doug Kimmel, Ken Emerson, Scott Dyer, Deb Foster, Meredith Akerstein, Ant Blasi; CEO Kevin Brodie, Assistant CEO Nick Branca

Town residents: Carol Lowrie, Ruth and Rod Franzius

Doug Kimmel called the workshop meeting to order at 5:00.

Recognizing that all its decisions would require formal approval at a subsequent Planning Board meeting, the board agreed, but did not vote, on any of the items on this meeting's agenda.

1. Review of Proposed Amendments to the ECO discussed at previous meetings

- Definition of "Density"

The board agreed on the definition: "The number of housing units in an area of land."

- Definition of "Internally Illuminated Signs"

The board agreed on the definition: "Internally illuminated signs are translucent freestanding signs."

- Changes to Sign Ordinance

The board agreed that Doug's draft of an addition to the ordinance covering "Town-sponsored electronic message board signs" should be expanded to include those erected by parties other than the Town. Those message boards, subject to all the requirements for Town-sponsored message boards except the prohibition of commercial advertising for products and services, should be allowed only in commercial zones and require the approval of the Planning Board, which will consider the appropriateness of such signage and its effect on nearby properties, especially private residences.

At its end, this expanded ordinance will treat Town-sponsored message boards, indicating that they are subject to the same standards as other message boards but restricted to postings about Town business, events and needs, and may not advertise commercial products or services.

Under Definitions, NITS will be defined as “a measure of brightness, one NIT amounting to the brightness of a single average candle.”

Internally illuminated signs and electronic message boards will be added to the Schedule of Uses, restricted to commercial and industrial zones, and requiring Planning Board approval.

Doug will redraft this ordinance accordingly and send it to Ken Emerson for copy-editing before sharing it with the entire board.

2. Review of the Shoreland Zoning section of the current ECO (Section 5.C.)

- Note cross-references in other sections of the ECO to this section
- Note two current zones: Shoreland Residential Zone; Shoreland Development Zone

3. Discussion of Previous Planning Board draft of separate Shoreland Zoning Ordinance (approved in 2022, but never acted upon by the Selectboard, apparently) [How we got here.]

- Discussion to begin with original State amendments to earlier Shoreland Zoning standards
- Final State document from which the PB created the 2022 document

4. Review of previous PB Shoreland Zoning document

5. Discussion of next steps to bring our ECO into compliance with current state regulations regarding the Shoreland

The board agreed that:

- i. It would be more efficient and effective to include a revised Shoreland Zoning Ordinance in the ECO rather than create a stand-alone document.
- ii. Rather than reviewing the previous Planning Board draft of a revised Shoreland Zoning Ordinance that the Select Board did not act on, Planning Board members will discard that document and start over again from scratch, reviewing shoreland ordinances in the current (though outdated) ECO alongside the Department of Environmental Protection’s “Chapter 1000: Guidelines for Municipal Shoreland Zoning Ordinances,” and updating Town ordinances to comply with state law.

Nick Branca pointed out that Hancock does not have a “working waterfront,” as mentioned in the previous Planning Board draft of a revised Shoreland Zoning Ordinance that the Select Board did not act on.

iii. The board scheduled another workshop meeting to conduct this review and update on February 26 at 5 p.m. To facilitate this, copies of Chapter 1000 and of the latest approved version of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance in the ECO will be circulated to board members.

Deb Foster moved to adjourn, Meredith Akerstein seconded, the motion passed 5-0, and the meeting adjourned at 6:47.