



# TOWN OF WELLS, MAINE

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

---

Meeting Agenda

Thursday, March 20, 2025, 6:00 P.M.

Wells Town Hall

208 Sanford Road

### **6:00 PM CALL TO ORDER & DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

### **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

10-minute "Open to the Public" comment period when any member of the public may speak for three minutes, or such longer time as the CPUC may permit. Per § 12-3.I of the Wells Town Code.

### **MINUTES**

- I. Review and approval of minutes of January 28, 2025, meeting.

Documents:

[01-28-25 CPUC MIN DRAFT.PDF](#)

## **PUBLIC HEARING(S)**

- I. Introduction of committee, brief overview of CPUC process, and explanation of format of the public hearing (to consider all proposed changes to existing 2005 Comprehensive Plan).
- II. Discussion and vote relating to reasonable time limits for public hearing.
- III. Motion and vote to open the public hearing to consider all proposed changes to the existing 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update.
- IV. Motion and vote to close public hearing.

Documents:

[SBUTLER PUBLIC COMMENT 022025.PDF](#)

## **CPUC BUSINESS**

- I. Discussion regarding public comments.
- II. Discussion regarding any additional changes to the proposed plan.
- III. Discussion regarding whether further proceedings of the CPUC are required to make additional changes to the proposed plan.
- IV. If no changes are to be made, discussion and action on forwarding proposed plan to the Board of Selectmen for its consideration (including, holding a public hearing and placing proposed plan on an upcoming town meeting warrant).

Documents:

[CPUC MEMO 03-11-25.PDF](#)

## **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

10- minute "Open to the Public" comment period when any member of the public may speak for three minutes, or such longer time as the CPUC may permit. Per § 12- 3.1 of the Wells Town Code.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- I. If another CPUC meeting is not anticipated, a motion to authorize the chairman to approve and sign minutes to be considered.

## **ADJOURN**



# TOWN OF WELLS, MAINE

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE

---

Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, January 28, 2025, 5:00 P.M.  
Town Hall  
208 Sanford Road

### **5:00 PM CALL TO ORDER & QUORUM DETERMINATION**

Chairman Chris Chase called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. A quorum of members was determined. Members present: Dave MacKenzie, Jason Vennard, Carol DesJardins, Martin Morse, Tim Gowen, Nick Tricarico, Jonathan Moody, and Mark Bagdasarian.

Also present: Town Engineer/Planner Mike Livingston, Town Manager, Mike Pardue, and Town Attorney Leah Rachin.

### **5:05 PM EXECUTIVE SESSION WITH TOWN ATTORNEY**

#### **MOTION**

Motion by Dave, seconded by Jason to hold an executive session, pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A Section 405(5)(A), to consult with legal counsel concerning the committee's legal rights and duties related to an independent investigation's report and the remand by the Board of Selectmen. All were in favor. PASSED.

Martin Morse wanted to disclose that Bergin and Parkinson are his family's attorney and did not believe there was a conflict of interest but wanted to have it on the record. Leah Rachin the Town Attorney is now at Drummond and Woodsum and no longer at Bergin and Parkinson. There is no conflict.

### **6:00 PM**

Election of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary.

#### **MOTION**

Motion by Martin, seconded by Dave to nominate and vote to appoint Chris Chase as the chairman. All were in favor, except Mark Bagdasarian abstained. PASSED.

#### **MOTION**

Motion by Martin, seconded by Dave to nominate and vote to appoint Jason Vennard as the vice chairman. All were in favor. PASSED.

1 **MOTION**

2 Motion by Martin, seconded by Dave to appoint Carol DesJardins as the secretary. All  
3 were in favor. PASSED.

4  
5 Selectmen Liaisons John MacLeod and Jim Smith joined the meeting.

6  
7 **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

8  
9 10-minute "Open to the Public" comment period at the beginning and at the end of each  
10 CPUC meeting, when any member of the public may speak for three minutes, or such  
11 longer time as the CPUC may permit. Per Ordinance §12-3.I.

12  
13 No comments from the public offered.

14  
15 **CPUC BUSINESS**

- 16  
17 • Discussion on Select Board remand of Comprehensive Plan Update back to  
18 CPUC  
19 • CPUC to consider scheduling a Public Hearing for March 6, 2025

20  
21 Chris Chase said the Select Board have requested the committee rescind their last  
22 recommendation and consider scheduling another public hearing. The committee will be  
23 meeting at 6pm. The committee didn't feel there was sufficient time to meet in February  
24 and would like to meet on the third Thursday of the month.

25  
26 **MOTION**

27 Motion by Jason, seconded by Martin to rescind the June 27, 2024 vote to recommending  
28 forwarding the proposed Comprehensive Plan changes to the Board of Selectmen and  
29 schedule a public hearing for March 20, 2025 to receive public comment on all proposed  
30 changes to the Comprehensive Plan, which public hearing will include reasonable time  
31 limits as determined by the committee at the public hearing. All were in favor. PASSED.

32  
33 **MINUTES**

34  
35 None.

36  
37 Chris asked if Cinni Davidson would be acting as the recording secretary. Mike said she  
38 is currently ill but can check if she plans to continue.

39  
40 **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

41  
42 10-minute "Open to the Public" comment period at the beginning and at the end of each  
43 CPUC meeting, when any member of the public may speak for three minutes, or such  
44 longer time as the CPUC may permit. Per Ordinance §12-3.I.

45  
46 No comments from the public were offered.

1 **OTHER BUSINESS**

2

3 None.

4

5 **ADJOURN**

6

7

**MOTION**

8 Motion by Jason, seconded by Dave to adjourn the meeting at 6:09 pm. All were in favor.  
9 PASSED.

10

11 Respectfully submitted,

12

13

14

15 \_\_\_\_\_  
Shannon Belanger, Recorder

16

17

\_\_\_\_\_

Chris Chase, Chairman

DRAFT

**Mike Livingston**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 20, 2025 8:27 AM  
**To:** Mike Livingston; Michael W. Pardue; John K. MacLeod  
**Subject:** 2025 PROPOSED COMP PLAN VISION STATEMENT FEEDBACK

**Caution:** This is an external email that originated from a domain outside of Town of Wells. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize sender and know the content is safe.

**\*\* CAUTION EXTERNAL EMAIL \*\***

All,

Please pass to CPUC, Select board members, Planning Board members and others as needed. I know that all have already gone through the draft plan, including the vision statement and found it "worthy". I think breaking it down will help people see the issues more clearly.

Here are some comments I, and others, have made repeatedly over the years. I am owning these comments, but they also reflect others who do not wish to subject themselves to the process.

I broke them down sentence by sentence so it is easier for people to understand and see just how out of sync and non-visionary the vision statement is. The vision is the driving force of all that follows in the Comp Plan. Thus, it is arguably the most important piece to get right because it provides the guardrails for the future we envision.

A good vision statement is ambitious, aspirational, feasible, practical and, importantly, desirable. It should inspire residents, town officials, developers, etc to believe in the vision and to want to take actions to achieve it. The company hired to help the CPUC should have known this. If they didn't, we hired the wrong company. If they did but were shut down, we either had the wrong people on the CPUC or the company failed to provide adequate support needed to develop a typical vision statement. As a result, we ended up without a true vision. In my opinion, the draft vision statement lacks all of the elements, noted above, and required to make it a worthy vision.

#### PROPOSED 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION STATEMENT

**BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT:** The vision statement as written does not provide an actual vision beyond developing "an interconnected transportation system" as the only concrete "vision" element. There is marginal reference to resiliency to climate change and coastal hazards. Statements of the past and or statements of the present are not "visionary".

Items in UPPER CASE reflect my comments so that they are easier to find. (I am not yelling; I just want it to be clear which is in the draft and what my comments are) I made comments specific to each

paragraph or sentence, to better demonstrate how this vision statement is not a vision statement in the traditional way that vision statements are formulated. I did not reconstruct verbiage or resident input that the CPUC has but did not incorporate. They can easily go back and find relevant resident input to formulate a new vision. That is, they have input, it just wasn't used.

#### Draft Vision Statement

"As a historic coastal New England community, the town of Wells contains valued natural resources including conserved forest lands, protected surface waters, an active harbor, a productive estuary supporting wildlife and fisheries, and several prized beaches." STATEMENT OF FACTS ...LARGELY IRRELEVANT TO A VISION STATEMENT UNLESS THE NEW VISION INCLUDES A VISION TO IMPROVE OR MAINTAIN THESE CHARACTERISTICS. THIS CURRENT DRAFT VISION STATEMENT FAILS TO DO SO MAKING THIS IRRELEVANT ALTHOUGH, TRUTHFULLY, IT SHOULD BE RELEVANT THE VISION STATEMENT NEEDS TO BE MODIFIED TO MAKE PROTECTION OF "valued natural resources including conserved forest lands, protected surface waters, an active harbor, a productive estuary supporting wildlife and fisheries, and several prized beaches" AN ACTUAL PART OF THE VISION.

"Over the past decade, Wells has worked to protect and steward this important network of natural resources while seeking to guide new development activity in ways that both preserve and enhance the community's distinct character." STATEMENT OF PAST ...LARGELY IRRELEVANT TO A VISION STATEMENT. STATEMENTS OF THE PAST AND PRESENT ARE NOT VISIONARY BY DEFINITION.

"As the community continues to transition to new types of economic activity and away from the land-based industries it relied on in the past, Wells remains a highly desirable place to live and work because of its welcoming people, network of protected open spaces, history, and coastal location." STATEMENT OF CURRENT/PRESENT STATE. ALSO, WHAT ARE THE NEW, NON LAND-BASED INDUSTRIES? THESE SHOULD BE SPECIFIED, OR AT LEAST EXAMPLES PROVIDED, SO WE KNOW WHAT WE MEAN. GIVEN ALL THE DEVELOPMENT, IT SEEMS THAT LAND-BASED INDUSTRIES HAVE BEEN THE STATE OF THE PAST AND ARE ALSO THE STATE OF THE CURRENT. THUS "NON LAND-BASED INDUSTRIES" IS TOO NEBULOUS. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THIS MEANS. IT NEEDS CLARIFICATION.

"Together, the citizens of Wells are working to embrace new residents and economic opportunities, while making the community more resilient to the changing climate and coastal hazards." STATEMENT OF GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT, WITH SOME UNDEFINED VISION FOR ENHANCED RESILIENCY TO CLIMATE AND COASTAL HAZARDS. RESIDENTS ARE LOOKING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH MEANING GROWTH THAT OCCURS AT A PACE THAT THE TOWN CAN ACCOMMODATE. CURRENTLY, OUR GROWTH HAS OUT-PACED TOWN'S CAPACITY AND IS AT RISK OF OVER-WHELMING INFRASTRUCTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES. SO THIS VERY OPEN-END "LETS KEEP GROWING UNRELENTINGLY" IS OUT OF SYNC WITH JUST ABOUT ALL THE FEEDBACK RESIDENTS PROVIDED TO THE CPUC. GUARDRAILS ARE NEEDED BUT NONE ARE PROVIDED.

"This has been accomplished through both new land use regulations and infrastructure investments." STATEMENT OF PAST...LARGELY IRRELEVANT TO A VISION STATEMENT. ALSO, THIS IS A STATEMENT OF FACT; THIS IS HOW THE VISION, WHATEVER IT IS, WILL BE ATTAINED.

"These changes are now guiding and informing new business and housing opportunities that add value and reinforce the character of the community." STATE OF PRESENT/CURRENT. ALSO, WHAT "CHARACTER" ARE WE REINFORCING? THIS NEEDS DEFINITION, OTHERWISE IT CAN BE ANYTHING FROM CHARMING SEASIDE COMMUNITY TO RURAL FORESTED FARMLAND TO HONKY TONK OR "URBANIA", SUCH THAT "ANYTHING GOES" WITH REGARD TO THE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY. RESIDENTS ARE SICK OF THE ANYTHING GOES APPROACH TO PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT. WITHOUT CLEARER DEFINITION, ANY AND ALL DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE PERMITTED. THUS, THIS LACKS ENFORCEABLE "VISION". IT LACKS ADEQUATE DEFINITION AND GUARDRAILS RESIDENTS ARE LOOKING FOR. THE TOWN CHARACTER CAN BE JUST ABOUT ANYTHING NO MATTER HOW HORRIBLE.

"Quality municipal services with an emphasis on health, safety and sustainability, and an interconnected transportation system also contribute to the quality of life for residents, and continue to attract seasonal visitors." THIS LAST PARAGRAPH IS THE ONLY ONE THAT PROVIDES A "VISION"! WHAT IS MEANT BY SUSTAINABILITY IN THIS PARAGRAPH? SUSTAINABILITY MEANING "GREEN" OR SUSTAINABILITY MEANING GROWTH COMMENSURATE WITH CURRENT AVAILABLE MUNICIPAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE VICE UNSUSTANANLE GROWTH? MUCH TOO VAGUE.

IN SUMMARY, THE VISION STATEMENT AS WRITTEN BOILS DOWN TO HAVE "AN INTERCONNECTED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM". THIS IS A VERY, VERY, WEAK VISION. NOR DOES IT REFLECT IN ANY WAY THE MAJORITY OF INPUT PROVIDED TO THE CPUC. RESIDENT INPUT SHOULD NOT BE DISREGARDED AS "WORDSMITHING". RESIDENT INPUT IS MUCH MORE MEANINGFUL AND IMPORTANT TO BE DISREGARDED SO EASILY. ALSO, THIS "VISION" LACKS MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING SMALL TOWN AND RURAL FEEL THAT MOST RESIDENTS WANT. IT LACKS DEFINING, IN BROAD TERMS, THE TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT WE WANT. IT CONTAINS VIRTUALLY ZERO PERCENT OF RESIDENT FEEDBACK THAT THE CPUC COLLECTED OVER THE YEARS, EXCEPT, IT SEEMS, FOR FEEDBACK PROVIDED BY THOSE WHO HAVE A TIE TO DEVELOPMENT.

Thanks for your consideration of the above concerns.

Sue



**To:** Wells Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC)

**From:** Planning Office

**Re:** Comprehensive Plan Update History and Overview

**Date:** March 11, 2025

### History

- Ordinance Adopted November 2019
- Members appointed to Comprehensive Plan Update Committee
- 1<sup>st</sup> meeting: 1/30/2020
- 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting: 2/20/2020
- COVID
- Reconvened 1<sup>st</sup> meeting: 12/8/2020
- 2021 – 11 meetings were held March to December
  - Resilience Planning & Design was contracted 3/22/2021
  - Community Forum Event #1 held on 7/13/2021.
  - Community Forum Event #2 held on 11/10/2021.
- 2022 – 8 meetings were held January to June.
  - Plan was submitted to the State in June 2022.
- 2023 – 4 meetings were held May to September.
  - State Review comments on Plan received and revisions to plan done.
  - State granted approval on 7/26/2023.
  - CPUC Public Hearing was held on 9/21/2023.
  - CPUC forwarded the Plan to the Select Board for the June 2024 Town Meeting.
  - Select Board received on 11/7/2023; workshops determined to be needed with CPUC so the Plan could be jointly reviewed.
- 2024 – 6 Joint workshop were held January to April.
  - Plan revisions approved 5/16/24 by CPUC.
  - CPUC Public Hearing held 6/27/24.
  - Plan was forwarded to Select Board.
  - Select Board reviewed public hearing conduct and remanded the Plan back to CPUC to conduct another public hearing.
- 2025 – Meeting held on 1/28/25 and public hearing was scheduled.
  - CPUC Public Hearing to be held on 3/20/25.

### Overview

- ▶ The Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) was established in December of 2019 and held its first 2 meetings in January 2019 and February 2020. COVID suspended meetings until December of 2020. Over 27 meetings have taken place from 2020 through 2025.
- ▶ The Plan was determined to be consistent with State requirements on 7/26/2023 by the Maine Bureau of Resource Information & Land Use Planning now part of the Department

of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry. Resilience Planning & Design was contracted by the Town to develop the Plan at the CPUC's direction.

- ▶ Community Forums, public comment at meetings and public hearings have been part of the process.
- ▶ Per Ordinance (Chapter 12), the updated Plan was required to be based on the 2005 Plan, Part 1 through Part 5 to be maintained.
- ▶ Chapters of considerable focus were: 1- The Vision for Wells; 3-Natural Resources; 6- Existing and Future land Use Policies; 7-Town Character; 8-Transportation; and 15- Flood Mitigation.
- ▶ Part 3 – Implementation Program was also of significant focus to establish a method of achieving the goals of the Plan.
- ▶ The Town has moved forward with actions and ordinance changes to accomplish the Plan's goals prior to adoption of the update and are consistent with the 2005 adopted Plan:
  - Moratorium on large scale residential development.
  - Route One Corridor Study.
  - Support of the Eastern Trail development.
  - Residential Cluster Subdivision changes.
  - Multifamily Development changes.
  - Flood Ordinance changes.
  - Subdivision review procedure changes.
  - Stormwater Design and Analysis changes.
  - Creation of the College District zone.
  - Lifecare Facility changes.
  - Traffic Impact and Analysis changes.
  - Parking requirement changes.
  - Open Space requirement changes.
  - Wetland definition and maximum allowance changes.