

**MINUTES**  
**FREEPORT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING #22-22**  
**TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 30 MAIN STREET, FREEPORT**  
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2022**  
**6:00 PM**

	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
Councilor Chair Daniel Piltch, 25 Quarry Lane	X		
Council Vice Chair, John Egan, 38 Curtis Road	X		
Councilor Matthew Pillsbury, 36 Todd Brook Rd	X		
Councilor Chip Lawrence, 93 Hunter Road	X		
Councilor Darrel Fournier, 3 Fournier Drive	X		
Councilor Jake Daniele, 264 Pownal Road	X		
Councilor Edward Bradley, 242 Flying Point Road	X via phone	-non-voting	

**FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS:** Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

**SECOND ORDER OF BUSINESS:** To waive the reading of the minutes of Meeting #21-22 held on November 29, 2022 and to accept the minutes as printed.

**MOVED AND SECONDED:** To waive the reading of the minutes of Meeting # 21-22 held on November 29, 2022 and to accept the minutes as written. **VOTE:** (4-Ayes)(0-Nays)(1-Abstain: Egan)(1-Absent, Bradley)

**THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS:** Announcements (15 minutes)

- **2023 Dog Licenses are available.** All dog licenses expire December 31st of each year. Dogs six months and older are required to be licensed by law. You may register at the Freeport Town Hall or online at: [www.doglicensing.com](http://www.doglicensing.com). Please bring proof of the rabies vaccination and spay/neutering. *Please be aware that you must renew your dog license no later than January 31st of each year, or a late fee of \$25.00 per dog will be charged.*
- **Nominations are now being accepted for 2022 Citizen of the Year**  
Each year the Freeport Town Council presents a Citizen of the Year Award to honor those who have significantly contributed to the quality of the Town. Nomination forms are available at the Town Office and on the Town's website at [www.freeportmaine.com](http://www.freeportmaine.com). Deadline for nominations is January 5, 2023.
- We have with us tonight one of the "Mainers to be thankful for" as written in the Press Herald. Bob Stevens was one of 8-10 Mainers who received this designation.

**FOURTH ORDER OF BUSINESS:** Information Exchange (15 minutes)

The Chair is inviting both Bob Stevens and Tawni Whitney to speak with us tonight.

Mason Morfit representing Freeport Climate Action Now (FCAN): Congratulated the town on receiving a Community Action Grant from the State for \$121,000 to hire a Sustainability Coordinator in

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conjunction with Yarmouth. FCANs proposal tonight is that the town allocate \$150,000 from ARPA funds to fund a municipal rebate program for electrically powered devices. The intent of the program is to reduce the bills of Freeport residents while reducing greenhouse gas emissions that are the cause of climate change. On Election Day, 700 Freeport residents signed petitions to support the town doing so. According to the Efficiency Maine Program, heat pumps can reduce annual fuel costs by 50 % and reduce CO2 emissions by 55-60%. A proposal was presented to the Council prior to tonight with hopefully enough detail to start a conversation. This is available on the town website. Their proposed program is based on an existing state rebate program run by Efficiency Maine and supplemental municipal programs run by South Portland, Bangor, Auburn and other smaller cities around the state. These programs provide rebates for an array of electrically powered devices and efficiency projects ranging from electric vehicles, to heat pumps to weatherization programs. Rebates run from about \$1,200 for an air source heat pump, to two thousand dollars for an electric vehicle and up to 20 percent of project costs for insulation up to \$2,000. Higher rebates are available under some programs for low-income applicants. We are proposing a similar program for Freeport, with a cap on total rebates of \$2,000. They would require an Efficiency Maine rebate before they receive a Freeport rebate, a prerequisite of other municipalities. This condition means Freeport's money is doubled or more in advance and as a result, Freeport's program gets the most bang for the buck. They based the proposal amount on Auburn's model with a proportional request. Income eligibility requirements vary from program to program, none from some Efficiency Maine programs and none in all Auburn programs. This proposal has an income eligibility ceiling for Freeport of 90 percent of area median income which would be \$80,280 annual income for a household of 2 people to \$108,630 for a household of five. This will target the program on low to moderate income residents. We want to make heat pumps available to the people who are least able to afford them and would benefit most from a reduction in their heating bills. Administration of the program in other towns varies from the General Assistance Manager to the Sustainability Coordinator. Times vary amongst programs but is reported at less than 15 minutes in Auburn which processes 95% of the applications online. They suggest that a Zoom meeting be convened among existing program administrators, Efficiency Maine staff and Freeport staff to determine the least time-consuming process that meets Freeport's needs. Finally, they believe the Freeport program should be initiated as soon as possible. Weatherization contractors and heat pump installers are booking out months in advance. We need to give residents to schedule installations before next winter hits them with another round of fossil fuel price increases hit the state and the town of Freeport with more calls for heating assistance.

Robert Stevens was asked how they came up with the rebate figure and total figure. What was the calculation used to incentivize. They looked at other towns and the expenses of items. He explained a \$5,000 heat pump would include a \$2,400 rebate from Efficiency Maine and a \$1,200 rebate from Freeport that brings the cost to \$1,400 moving it into a more acceptable cost. The heat pumps for water are less expensive and the rebates are still good. This provides opportunities for people who would otherwise not be able to do it.

Regarding the administration, he has talked with Matt Peters (Freeport Housing Trust) and he is interested in this program. Freeport Housing has boilers that need replacing and they need to decide to replace the boilers at \$8,000 or should they go to heat pumps. If they go with heat pumps, they will be able to pass the cost savings on to the tenants. There are 25 homes on heat assistance that own their own homes and would qualify for the program.

Councilor Daniele inquired about the initial cost of the heat pump being prohibitive and a possible revolving loan fund may make sense. That approach had not been considered by FCAN. Efficiency Maine issues an eligibility determination letter before the individual spends any money with a contractor. If the town accepts that as evidence of qualification, that person could talk with the contractor and work out something. It will be a hurdle for some people. Efficiency Maine has a low-income loan program.

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Councilor Lawrence: have we thought about making this a nonprofit and making it exclusive to Freeport, and then you can open it up to the rest of the state. With that we could do a lot of things differently. FCAN does not think they have the energy for that. They wanted to get something started in town. Councilor Egan inquired about how other communities were able to get uptake on the program with their residents. Mr. Morfit explained how other towns did it with word of mouth and little promotion. Mr. Stevens presented the petitions that residents signed on Election Day. He asked that the names and emails of the signers be added to receive the town bulletin to get the word out if this program starts.

Councilor Pillsbury: Are there eyes to how this program will be more sustainable instead of a one-time allocation of money. Are they thinking private fund raising or maybe it's a loan fund that has some sort of forgiveness. Auburn used ARPA money for both amounts they allocated for the program. What they are proposing is not perfect, there are details that need to be worked out. FSAB may be interested in working out a short loan program if it could be made sustainable. Does this generally make sense and how soon can it get going.

Councilor Fournier: Some people who have installed heat pumps are now struggling to make the \$400/month electric bills. Was the home insulated properly? Are we putting the cart before the horse? You have to make sure the home is the right place to put this. Instead of initially doing an air ceiling test, we should look first in the basement. Should we first seal basement floors to address humidity, etc. They included in this proposal, a rebate to look at consulting to make sure people have the right information before they jump in. The town has done grant programs for energy efficiency and sealing in the past. About 8 years ago we got a CDBG grant from the county that was used to do energy sealing and make weatherization improvements on a small scale (houses with single layer walls, etc).

We had a lot of requests to use the ARPA money. Are there are other sources to use such as the Inflation Reduction Act or LiHeap funds? Let's take some time and be thoughtful about it. The idea is to replace the Heating Assistance with the cost savings, so the band-aid approach isn't necessary.

Kathleen Sullivan (coordinator FCAN): spoke on people's positive reactions to the petitions in helping their neighbors and the support of heat pumps in general.

Chalmers Hardenberg: Supports this proposal. This is not just about next winter, these heat pumps run through the summer cooling. This is not just heat pumps, it covers landscaping equipment such as buying electric riding mowers and grinders. This will help not just heating but also the entire fossil fuel emissions. Quiet electric leaf blowers would also be a benefit.

Megan Shore (FSAB member): FCAN presented this proposal to FSAB members. The committee stands in support of efforts the Town can make to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and save money for our residents.

Mark Miller: complimented FCAN on their presentation. This program can expand the group that enjoys the superiority of electric appliances and once it's expanded you become a fanatic about it. Then can we expand to other communities in Maine.

Councilor Bradley (via phone): supports this. Let's do a pop up of this with not a lot of money but enough to get some experience with this in order to understand what the problems are in identifying the right people, right projects and working towards a bigger goal. Let's show we are committed to climate ideas.

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Councilor Daniele inquired about the amount of money we appropriated for a Sustainability Coordinator before we got the grant. Consensus was around \$40,000-\$50,000. This would be a great first project for that person. That \$50,000 could be proof of concept. We based proposal numbers on Auburn but they were not income restrictive so we may not have as much demand as them.

Councilor Egan: Likes the idea of a pop-up. Let's have a heat pump demonstration with a vendor answering questions. Heat pumps should save money and there is something else wrong when somebody is experiencing a dramatic increase in their electric bill. When we are ready to launch the rebate program we will coordinate the event.

Councilor Pillsbury: He would support Freeport Housing Trust in making a conversion on a test basis.

Mountain Bike Trails at Hedgehog Mt.:

Tawni Whitney (Executive Director of Freeport Chamber): still working full steam ahead on creating mountain bike trails. It ties in with our vision of being outside and being more about experiences in Freeport. They did not want to ask the Town for financial support, but for this to be self-funding. She has had substantial donors come forward that would like to support the project but need to contribute before the end of the year for tax purposes. They came up with a way to raise money by allowing people to name a trail for \$50,000. She has 3 people ready to do that. We need to get a head nod from the Council that this is an allowable way to do this. NEMBA has worked with a designer and the signs will be beautiful and appropriate for Freeport. Donations will go directly to NEMBA. If things go well, this project could start this spring and ties into the Downtown Vision.

The Conservation Commission is reviewing a draft of the Hedgehog Mt Management Plan at their next meeting. Councilor Piltch will let the Commission know about the trail naming plan. The Council gave their nods of approval.

**FIFTH ORDER OF BUSINESS:** Town Manager's Report (15 minutes)

The Manager announced the \$120,000 grant for a shared Sustainability Coordinator with Yarmouth that was hushed until the State announced it. They are working on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which will be brief. This will be 100% Freeport position and 100% Freeport grant. Yarmouth is not interested in housing or handling money. The grant application goes through Freeport but half of it has to be spent on Yarmouth time. The MOU will address their expectation of what the 50% of the time looks like. Personnel control of the individual rests with us. They are talking about who the interview committee will be and they've already got a job description and job posting. Those are being tuned up based on the grant application feedback and will be posted shortly.

We are still in the selection process for the Social Worker position. They had some good interviews with qualified candidates. They have not made a selection yet. We'll be talking about that more in the coming weeks.

**SIXTH ORDER OF BUSINESS:** Public Comment Period – (30 Minutes)  
(Non-Agenda Items Only)

Robert Stevens: wants to talk about the Stretch Code. The State is still looking at it and it takes time. Let's jump ahead and deal with it this year. It will make more efficient buildings and will help the planet.

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He encouraged the Council to adopt the Stretch Building Codes which really are the next version of the building code (2024).

**SEVENTH ORDER OF BUSINESS:** To take action on the following items of business as read by the Council Chairperson:

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ITEM # 212-22 To consider action relative to adopting the December 6, 2022 Consent Agenda.

**BE IT ORDERED:** That the December 6, 2022 Consent Agenda be adopted. (Piltch & Lawrence) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes)(0-Nays)(1-Absent-Bradley)

(Council Chair Piltch) (5 minutes)

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ITEM # 213-22 To consider action relative to a Special Amusement Permit for Mast Landing Brewing Co. PUBLIC HEARING

**MOTION:** to open the Public Hearing (Fournier & Lawrence) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes)(1-Absent- Bradley)

**MOTION:** to close the Public Hearing (Fournier & Lawrence) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes)(1-Absent- Bradley)

**BE IT ORDERED:** That a Special Amusement Permit for Mast Landing Brewing Co be approved. (Fournier & Lawrence) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes)(1-Absent-Bradley)

(Town Clerk, Christine Wolfe)(5 minutes)

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ITEM # 214-22 To consider action relative to supplemental appropriation to the FY23 Budget in the amount of \$20,000 for the procurement of police cruisers. PUBLIC HEARING

We talked about specifics at the last meeting. This was for the purchase of two cruisers that came back at \$11,000 more for each cruiser bid. We were able to secure one bid. The second cruiser wouldn't come in until after the order period next year. Initially this was a procurement problem. We were going to buy the one cruiser. However, the second lower bidder then had a cruiser become available so then we would have been short by \$20,000 for both purchases. There was some wiggle room on the changeover. If we appropriate the extra \$20,000 we could purchase both cruisers this year although we don't know about wait times for delivery. If not, we would purchase one and talk about it during the budget process. We researched group bids. There is not a current State bid out there. The last one expired in May 2022 but was a very specific bid package (not what we were purchasing). The State bids are only marginally different from what they offer for municipal bid packages. There isn't always a savings with larger bid packages because of associated additional transportation costs. He displayed the 2021 State bid spec sheet.

**MOTION:** to open the Public Hearing (Lawrence & Daniele) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes)(1-Absent- Bradley)

**MOTION:** to close the Public Hearing (Lawrence & Daniele) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes)(1-Absent- Bradley)

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Councilor Egan: He would like to hear more about the 25 specification details that were just provided to hear the pluses and minuses. It seems part of the reason for the dynamic we're in where the municipalities can't agree on the specifications is because municipalities want different things and we are being played by the dealers who know that they can divide the buying group and have a negotiation on each of those and make more money. He's been watching Capital Budgets for years and we rarely miss with an estimate like this.

What may happen to the prices next year? We have talked about repair bills if we don't do this now.

Chief Goodman: We are well into the repair cycle for these cruisers. They have been perpetually behind with cruiser purchases for several years. When we delay putting cruisers online, we run over on the repair line which has historically run in the negative. These cruisers can be spec'ed in a number of configurations. We have a tendency in ordering bare bones specifications. He believes we are getting a very close price to the lowest margin we can get. We spend a lot of time on this. Towns that use out of state conglomerates are not getting a better price than those we received.

Councilor Fournier wanted to caution with messing with the Capital Program and vehicle replacements as it has given us problems. It ends up being more cost and more down time. It would be nice to have a discussion and get 5-6 communities to agree on a group bid. It would be a challenge.

Right now, we are in direct competition with people who are buying loaded versions of the same vehicles they are spec'ing so dealers are allocated a certain amount with current chip shortages. He explained how allocating cars for police production cuts into their bottom line. They struggle to get dealers to do business with them. He spoke about the limitations from dealers on bidding. The capital requests from four years ago are woefully short now.

What happens to the used vehicles was discussed. They are normally sold via private sale or traded. Traditionally, we run our cars so long they are only worth a few hundred dollars. Historically, we get \$300-\$700 for a trade in. We have taken bids before and get around a \$1,200.

The cars that would be coming offline would be in the 130-to-150-thousand-mile range. Police miles are a 4 or 5 to 1 ratio to civilian miles. More discussion ensued about the shortage of police vehicles. Thirty-eight cruisers that became available were spoken for in 2 hours.

Councilor Bradley: supports this appropriation.

**BE IT ORDERED:** That a supplemental appropriation, pursuant to section 6.08 (A) of the Freeport Town Charter in the amount of \$20,000 for the capital purchase of police cruisers be approved. (Lawrence & Daniele)

**VOTE:** (6-Ayes)(1-Absent- Bradley)

(Police Chief, Nathaniel Goodman)(15 minutes)

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ITEM # 215-22      Review and approval of list of goals and project recommendations from the Downtown Vision Implementation Task Force.

Mary Davis, FEDC and Councilor Piltch gave a presentation to the Council:

We started Phase I in December of 2020. We were in the thick of COVID. We came up with some of the pop-up ideas that we were just talking about. We had an early action plan that had five or six things in it

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that we were able to accomplish. We learned a lot about how to get stuff done around town. Phase II we had a Downtown Design Week collecting a whole bunch of ideas and starting a community dialogue. That continued into Phase III with a Vision Plan. We had an open house here at Town Hall. One of the most powerful things that happened was the communication between the residents, the committee, the Council and Principle Group. The 137-page Plan was delivered in May. We went into implementation plan. We have a good plan to move us forward. We accepted the Vision Plan in May and two days later we started the Task Force to start talking about how to make process. They have met monthly since then. We can't do everything in the Plan but what should we start with. They came up with a lot of ideas about "we should tackle this before that". Their mandate was to say where do we start and what do we start with. They worked on that till October and then hosted a workshop at the Community Center to say "how did we do?".

***FOLLOWING INFORMATION TAKEN FROM POWERPOINT PRESENTATION***

Implementation Task Force:

40+ individuals representing 23 organizations (more are welcome) Monthly meetings since May, open to the public.

Charged with the following activities:

- Coordinate activities across projects (and committees)
- Communicate about updates
- Serve as a clearinghouse for resource requests (I need ... for my project)
- Provide recommendations to the Town Council regarding priorities
- Allow for, and encourage, public input throughout
- Meet in a public setting (noticed on the Town website, and open to all residents)

Steering Committee:

- Adam Bliss, Town Engineer
- Mary Davis, FEDC
- Caroline Pelletier, Town Planner
- Dan Piltch, Town Council

The Task Force is an enabler, but not a limiter. As today, projects can be done without needing to go through the Task Force. Downtown Vision Task Force can be a "fast lane" for projects ...providing extra coordination and unblocking. The Task Force might "groom" an idea from the list of Downtown projects before it goes to the Council for approval and resource allocation. Not all projects go through the Task Force. The other two ways projects could happen is that it's a new project that wasn't part of the original 137- page Downtown Plan but it's a good idea such as the golf cart idea. The last way is Other Project that doesn't go through the Task Force because they don't want to hear it or you don't want to wait or for whatever reason it's not appropriate, it's can go directly to Council. That leads to established projects with resources that have been allocated by the Council and potentially help from the Task Force.

The Guiding Principles were discussed.

Starting with the entire Vision Plan, which included input from 1,500+ participants ... we solicited additional input from boards, committees, staff, and residents to recommend 21 goals and projects to start implementing the Downtown Vision.

We followed a top down approach:

values → vision → goals → projects → priorities

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The consultant's suggestions for high & medium items mostly aligned with Task Force recommendations. Task Force recommendations include public input + board/committee priorities + Task Force Steering Committee opinions

Goals are high level guidance that we should (all) be keeping in mind as we propose projects. Boards and committees should consider these when making policy decisions.

Each goal can have projects proposed to support it. Of the original 25 goals:

- 7 already incorporated into existing work
- 9 recommended for advancement (what we are presenting today)
- 9 are in backlog for future

The Task Force filtered for projects where the Town can have a meaningful impact within the next two years on a project within the limits of downtown.

Of the original 45 projects:

- 13 already incorporated into existing work
- 12 recommended for advancement
- 18 are in backlog for future
- 2 are mostly complete

There are also 10 Catalyst Sites that will require public/private partnerships. Some of these are already intertwined with existing goals/projects.

Where Do We Go From Here?

What we're looking for today is consent that these are good ideas and it's worth pursuing details. We don't have all the details/answers/costs tonight. The question is "Is it worth it for us to pursue getting answers to these projects?"

- Next steps will be project charters, refining resource requests, etc.
- Need to be mindful about capacity ... if we approve these (or more) what won't get done.
- Periodic updates to Council on projects (quarterly).
- Task Force can accept and evaluate new ideas and propose to Council at quarterly meetings

### **Nine Recommended Goals (These are guidelines)**

#### **GOAL: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled-GOAL: Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled**

A combination of strategies including designing better streets, creating safer biking and walking experiences, and making it easier to get around Downtown can help to nudge human behavior and encourage healthier transportation choices. The train station on Depot Street with Downeaster train service and the MetroBreez bus service are existing public transportation assets. Embracing public transit and encouraging development near existing transit facilities can reduce vehicle trips by giving people the opportunity to live close to where they work or run errands.

#### **GOAL: Explore redesigning Main Street into a Universal Street or some similar alternative with slow-moving vehicles, outdoor seating and dining, street trees, and wider sidewalks-**

Downtown has a number of existing parking lots and sites that could support new housing to attract retirees aging in place, young people, and those who work in Downtown Freeport. The Town wants and needs people of all ages, incomes, and abilities to live here. Proximity to schools, town hall, community center, library, shopping, a grocery store, L.L.Bean, jobs, Metro Breez bus, and the Train Station make downtown a great potential neighborhood for new housing.

#### **GOAL: Encourage Multi-Family Housing and Mixed-Use Development in Downtown Freeport-**

Downtown has a number of existing parking lots and sites that could support new housing to attract retirees aging in place, young people, and those who work in Downtown Freeport. The Town wants and needs people of all ages, incomes, and abilities to live here. Proximity to



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schools, town hall, community center, library, shopping, a grocery store, L.L.Bean, jobs, Metro Breez bus, and the Train Station make downtown a great potential neighborhood for new housing.

**GOAL: Encourage more public art, sculptures, murals, temporary installations, outdoor instruments, interactive installations**--Public art plays an important role in placemaking and comes in a variety of forms from sculptures to street murals. Public art promotes a community's values, character, and cultural heritage, inspires connection, and can even become anchors to draw people to a destination. Public art can be funded through individual donors, local businesses or corporations, grants, crowdsourcing, or events, auctions, and sales.

**GOAL: Support local arts and cultural programming, festivals, and events in downtown**--Support new arts and cultural events and events that celebrate Freeport's heritage, such as walking tours, open studios events, haunted tours at Halloween, chalk art or fiber arts festivals.

**GOAL: Recruit more local businesses and food merchants to open Downtown to maintain a mix of local, regional and national businesses**--We've heard people say that Downtown Freeport has the potential to grow a local food scene if it can attract more variety and options for food and beverages. Locals want more small businesses and stores they can shop at in Downtown, shifting away from its reputation as an outlet center with mostly national retailers.

**GOAL: Establish Downtown as a hub for trail connections, better multi-use pedestrian and bike access to and from downtown and surrounding areas, including better signage, ability to park (only) once, and maintain walkable routes**--We know that there are a variety of beautiful trails, natural resources, and outdoor destinations within a short distance of Downtown. However, today these connections are not clear to locals and people from away. Downtown does not connect to Freeport's beautiful coastline along Harraseeket River and Maquoit Bay. Downtown can be the starting point - a trailhead to access Freeport's outdoor amenities.

**GOAL: A downtown that supports people and families of all backgrounds and abilities**--Support age-friendly interventions such as more benches and seating downtown, accessible public transportation and street design, conveniently-located restrooms, and a variety of housing choices. Freeport is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion, because these values make us a stronger community. The diversity of people, and mix of residents and visitors makes Freeport special. The Town, businesses, and residents all have an integral role and daily responsibility to make Freeport welcoming and friendly to everyone. Offering a variety of housing options, jobs, and cultural activities helps to achieve this goal.

**GOAL: Create Flexible and Multi-Functional Civic Space**--A great neighborhood has a network of well-connected public spaces that are flexible and support the many functions of public life that happen day to day and month to month. Freeport's Downtown can have this characteristic if we can come together to think through these details, particularly as new development and larger infrastructure capital improvements happen. Short term "tests" can pilot ideas before making significant investments in permanent improvements.

### **Twelve Recommended Projects:**

**PROJECT: Establish Emergency Management Plan, Climate Resilience Plan**--Establish a community resiliency and preparedness plan, Assess the impacts of climate change and how the Town can address them as whole.

**PROJECT: Install EV charging stations at municipal facilities**--Consider installing EV chargers at municipal properties in/near Downtown Freeport to further increase opportunities for EV charging stations throughout town. The Town can be a leader by encouraging sustainable choices while also having economic benefits to the community.

**PROJECT: Encourage EV charging stations to be made available as part of new development**--Work with local property and business owners to increase opportunities for EV charging stations

in Downtown and Lower Main Street. Not only does this encourage sustainable choices, it also has economic benefits and some companies are adding EV charging stations to their parking lots to attract EV drivers to stop and charge.

**PROJECT: Transform Mallett Drive and Route 1 S to be gateways to Main Street pedestrian and bike-friendly boulevard**-Right now, MeDOT and the Town are making investments in Mallett Drive, presenting a timely opportunity to truly transform how Mallett Drive functions. With bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements coming for the bridge, Mallett Drive can be designed as the new gateway to Main Street, bringing cars to a slower speed sooner. A redesigned street can also support new housing and business opportunities, too.

**PROJECT: Create an Accessibility Map for Freeport's Trail system**-Ensure that Freeport is accessible for all and friendly to those aging in place. A Town-wide Access map would take into account slopes, sidewalks, construction, and other barriers to pedestrians to promote accessible routes for people with different abilities. This could be done by partnering with a university or research organization using grant funding.

**PROJECT: Assess Parking Requirements for Downtown**-The Town should reassess Downtown parking needs, existing regulations and identify misalignment and opportunities for increased efficiencies. If parking requirements are too restrictive, it'll thwart conversion of empty commercial spaces to residential, and cause difficulty filling vacant spaces with new tenants. Taking a district-wide parking management approach will allow lots to be redeveloped even if they're too small to provide on-site parking.

**PROJECT: Streamline the permitting process to make the development process quicker and more predictable**-Throughout the process, we have heard that one of the barriers to development is the long and complicated permitting process for new development downtown. Updating the zoning and project administrative process for Downtown will provide the private sector with clear directions for how they can help implement Downtown's long-term vision in a more timely manner.

**PROJECT: Update zoning for Downtown to align with the long-term vision**-The Town has recently amended zoning in certain downtown zoning districts to allow increased density, building height, and reduced parking requirements. Enabling the kind of development shown on the catalyst site drawings will require further amendments including a defined framework of building and architectural standards, shop-front street standards, additional street types, civic space standards, districts and boundary adjustments and land use amendments.

**PROJECT: Support Local Arts Programming, Festivals, and Events by building public infrastructure in existing public spaces**-Freeport can continue to support local arts programming and events by building public bathrooms, a pavilion or shelter for outdoor events, stages for outdoor performances, and making the events permitting process easier to navigate. Use of current and future space could be considered (High School, parking lot behind ACAF).

**PROJECT: Review sewer connection fees**-Work to define predictable and consistent sewer connection fees for the downtown area. It is currently difficult for projects to plan for these fees and the fees are incredibly high to the point that they are discouraging development Downtown.

**PROJECT: Use interesting wayfinding and "landmarks" to link people to local attractions outside Downtown -mountain, harbor, farm, beer, open spaces** -Updated wayfinding could help all navigate around Freeport and support connecting the downtown with our many experiential attractions. This updated wayfinding could include a central gathering location downtown to enjoy a beverage and light fare outside while learning about the what Freeport offers in the downtown, waterfront, parks, resources, and offerings.

**PROJECT: Rethink how parks are being maintained, potentially create a parks or maintenance department within Public Works**-Improving and inviting more use of parks and open spaces will require additional maintenance to ensure spaces are well-cared for. The Town should explore

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creating a parks or maintenance department within Public Works and scale up equipment and staffing over time to meet new, expanded needs.

Councilor Pillsbury spoke about his concerns in keeping the momentum going. Relying strongly on volunteers is not sustainable. He would like to see us focus on additional resources to help us keep this going. There are resources available for being an affiliate member of the Main Street Program. Principle Group had suggested we might want to have someone who's leading this. Keeping the momentum up and going is a lot of work.

Councilor Egan: Rather than going through the process of creating and hiring a position, we could contract for 20 – 24 months. The first task of that contract could be actually to write a communications narrative across all this, because one of the ways to get the energy amplified is to be telling the broader section of the community about it. We've kicked around the idea of a communications director inside Town Hall, maybe we can get some of the net effects of that by taking a look at a contract with the right firm that can initially do the communications narrative and secondarily to add energy to a lot of the tasks that are involved here just coordinating and connecting the activities to each other. They spoke more on the possibilities of this position. Councilor Fournier spoke in favor of a contracted position. Councilor Lawrence asked if they have thought about who might take over for the two of them.

Councilor Pillsbury: If we move forward with these projects as recommended and as we get into them problems come up, things change or the path moves. How do they envision adjusting to those changes and getting reauthorization? As we go from here, how do we stay engaged with the path we are on? The projects all had funding, staff time and community time so we wanted to do this and layer it into the schedule. If the Council gives the go ahead tonight, we can then do the homework and come back with the line item we want to add to the budget when we do that between February and May. We want to have that ready to go. In addition, we will come back every quarter and update on specific projects or outline roadblocks we're facing.

Do we envision more community engagement process as we get further down the road? When we had the town meetings, we had much more participation than expected. We can also highlight what is happening when we do the district workshops. Maybe we use contingency funds to help fund a position. Principle Group is willing to come back and assist with items and the Town can find some funding for that option. Maybe we reach out to them to help us with a specific project.

The Town Engineer talked about using some projects as building blocks to build momentum. They talked about the reconfiguration of Main Street as a place to start or return to.

**BE IT ORDERED:** That the recommendations for prioritization of goals and projects recommended by the Downtown Vision Implementation task force be approved. (Daniele & Lawrence) **VOTE:** )(6-Ayes)(1-Absent- Bradley)

(Council Chair Piltch) (45 minutes)

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ITEM # 216-22      To consider action relative to the 2023 Town Council Schedule

We haven't done district workshops for three years. Do we want them added back? The Chair would like to set a goal setting workshop where they get a facilitator in to help elicit all the ideas and prioritize them. He suggests a Saturday meeting. We don't need to set the date tonight, but they will get a facilitator set up.

**BE IT ORDERED:** That the 2023 Town Council Schedule be approved. (Egan & Lawrence) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes)(1-Absent- Bradley)

(Town Manager, Peter Joseph)(5 minutes)

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**OTHER BUSINESS:**

1. Discussion of Town Council Committee assignments (if necessary)(Chair Piltch)(10 minutes)

All Councilors will keep their assignments from 2022. We will make the three formal selections (Ordinance, Municipal Facilities and Special Projects) at the next meeting.

2. Discussion of a temporary downtown transportation experiment (Councilor Bradley)(15 minutes)

This stems from the Downtown Revisioning. It's embedded in the goals and the projects, but not specifically identified. When asked where is the transportation piece, a small group formed to deal with it which has led to the idea that transportation has two pieces to it in the downtown. The downtown should create a transportation hub, one along Main Street and the other is using the downtown as a hub for people who are here to shop to get them to some of the outside assets. He's not sure what all the spots would be. This idea he's presenting tonight is an experiment to see if transportation along Main Street makes sense. Councilor Bradley reached out to Doug Heestand from the Desert of Maine who has an electric extended 8 seat golf cart that we could run along Main Street on routes to be determined to see whether this works. Mr. Heestand was going to sell the cart, but is allowing the Town to use it on a license basis initially between now and the spring. He's asking for us to pay \$250 for that period. If it works, he's willing to lease it to us for \$1,000. If then we decide to buy it, he will sell it to us for what he has into it (\$9,000) and he will credit us the lease amount. It's almost no money to try it out. In order to get it going, we have to know that the Town will allow us to use it on the streets and wants to see us register it as a town vehicle and put liability insurance on it. DMV is willing to approve, and the town's insurance is willing to add it. We would use the driver's as town volunteers. He's worked with Kathy Smith who has done this in Washington D.C. Tawni Whitney is willing to get sponsorships. Mary Davis and Eric Smith are willing to work with us. He has recruited senior gentlemen as volunteer drivers. He needs to know if the Council is behind this before he proceeds with getting into the details and registering and insuring the cart. He will get everything together and bring it back to the Council.

Chair Piltch supports this but cautions that we identify what problem we're solving and how we know if it's successful. Winter may not be the best time to try it. We will keep logs and try it over varied times and events. Councilors Egan and Daniele spoke in favor of the experiment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ITEM # 217-22

To consider action relative to an Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(E) pertaining to a legal matter and 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(D) pertaining to

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discussion of labor contracts between the Town of Freeport and the Freeport Police Benevolent Association.

**MOTION:** That the Town Council enter Executive Session. (Piltch & Egan)

**VOTE:** (6-Ayes)(1-Absent- Bradley)

**MOTION:** That the Town Council exit Executive Session. (Piltch & Egan)

**VOTE:** (6-Ayes)(1-Absent- Bradley)

(15 minutes)

**END OF AGENDA (Estimated time of adjournment 9:15 PM)**