

MINUTES
FREEPORT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING #15-23
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 30 MAIN STREET, FREEPORT
TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2023
6:00 PM

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 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		

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 #14-23 held on July 25, 2023 and to accept the minutes as printed.

MOVED AND SECONDED: To waive the reading of the minutes of Meeting #14-23 held on July 25, 2023 and to accept the minutes as printed. **MOVED AND SECONDED:** (Lawrence & Bradley) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes) (0-Nays)(1-Excused Fournier)

THIRD ORDER OF BUSINESS: Announcements (15 minutes)

1) The LD 290 "Property Tax Stabilization for Senior Citizens" program, enacted in August 2022, was repealed by the Maine Legislature on July 6, 2023, effective October 11, 2023. The popularly regarded program had allowed Maine seniors 65 and older who owned a permanent residence for at least ten years and was receiving (or eligible for) a homestead exemption to freeze taxes at the previous year's level regardless of income.

The repeal of this program means there will be **no reapplication process** and **no need to follow up with the Assessing Department** in late August/early September, as previously thought. Although the program has been repealed, your initial application will still be administered this year for the upcoming Tax Commitment for the tax year 2023 – 2024.

It is important to note that these are State programs, and while the Town plays a role in their administration, the Town is not responsible for the policy objectives of these initiatives. Owners' questions or concerns regarding this program should be directed to your legislative representative. To find your representative, please visit: <https://legislature.maine.gov/senate/>

- The library is looking for part-time help at the front desk – visit our website for more info!

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- Come visit the Library on August 4 between 10am-12pm to learn about the Affordable Connectivity Program. ACP offers [eligible Maine families](#) \$30 a month off their internet bill. Drop in to learn more about the program, find out if you qualify, and what information you'll need to have ready to complete your application.
- Workshop: new state rules that will affect housing production in Freeport
Please join us at the next Planning Board meeting, August 2 at 6:00 pm. We will be learning about Maine's new LD 2003 law and looking for public input on the future of housing in Freeport. For more information contact the Freeport Planning Department.
- We are always in search of individuals interested in serving their community by serving on a Board or Committee that matches their interest. Please be advised that we have openings on the Board of Appeals, Board of Assessment Review, Cable Regulatory, Conservation Commission, Police Advisory student associate members, Voter Registration Appeal Board. Please contact the Clerk's Office for more information.
- The Freeport Players are doing "Love & Lobsters" next weekend August 11, 12 & 13 and the following weekend. The backdrop is unbelievable. It's a local playwright. It's at the FPAC.
- This Saturday there will be live music in Memorial Park from 12 to 4 pm sponsored by Meetinghouse Arts. It's a program that's been going the first Saturday of the month in alignment with Maker's on Maine. Free music in the park.

FOURTH ORDER OF BUSINESS: Information Exchange (15 minutes)

The Chair, the Manager and Councilor Daniele met to work up a job description for the Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator position. We hope to have that posted soon.

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

The Manager met with the Freeport Street Gang which is a conglomerate of citizens that are interested in various things downtown and realized there are a lot of activities going on in town on August 5th. There is Makers on Maine, the Music in Memorial Park and a concert at L.L.Bean that is anticipated to draw a large crowd. It will be a busy traffic day.

Baker Tilly update: The first review of applications will start August 10th. We have received 47 applications. They plan on having Baker Tilly here on September 5th for an executive session to have the Council narrow down the candidates.

On Friday the President came to Freeport. She wanted to thank all the municipal departments especially the Police and Fire Rescue Departments that worked with the Secret Service. A lot of extra staff was asked to work and she thanked them for being flexible. We delayed a bridge project to make sure the Burnett Road Bridge was passable for the President.

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

There were no public comments.

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

ITEM # 142-23 To consider action relative to adopting the August 1, 2023 Consent Agenda.

The Chair reviewed the items on the Consent Agenda.

BE IT ORDERED: That the August 1, 2023 Consent Agenda be adopted.
MOVED AND SECONDED: (Pillsbury & Lawrence) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes) (0-Nays) (1-Excused Fournier)

(Council Chair Piltch) (5 minutes)

The Chair stated he would like to add a non-agenda item to the agenda which they can do if they all vote in favor. There is a request for Town Property from RSU5 Community Programs to use Memorial Park for a graduation ceremony for adult education students.

Councilor Bradley: It's things like this that emphasize to him how important communication and cooperation between the RSU and the Town are. There are interests that the town and RSU share that are critically important to the people, this is one. There is no reason that this should be denied. It brings to mind a recent request that the town made to the RSU that was denied. It suggests to him that there is a need for some sort of talk between the RSU and the town to deal with common issues where one or the other has a problem. The fireworks were a jarring event for him as a Councilor who's used to thinking of the RSU and the town as a single entity and finding out it wasn't. Commenting on the merits of that decision is not his point, but that the process was one that wasn't satisfying. Whether you agree or you don't, but he'd like to suggest to find a way informally to start a discussion about the RSU and the town's common interest when they diverge or they are perceived to diverge by one party or the other. He supports this, but this gave him the opportunity to talk about an experience that he just had as a member of the Council and trying to do something for the town that didn't get very far.

Peter Wagner, Director of Community Programs: The superintendent of schools is happy to discuss things with the town. There's no question about that. The Town and School District relationship is really important to everyone in the school district so that sounds like a reasonable request and he's sure the superintendent would agree.

MOTION: To add this item to the agenda (Piltch & Egan)(6-Ayes)(0-Nays)

MOTION: To approve the request for Use of Town Property for Freeport Community Programs for August 20th, 2023 for Memorial Park. (Piltch & Lawrence)(6-Ayes)(0-Nays)(1-Excused Fournier)

ITEM # 143-23 To consider action relative to Special Amusement Permit renewals. PUBLIC HEARING.

MOTION: To open the public hearing (Piltch & Egan)(6-Ayes)(0-Nays)

MOTION: To close the public hearing (Piltch & Lawrence)(6-Ayes)(0-Nays)

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BE IT ORDERED: That the Special Amusement Permit renewals for the following businesses be approved:

1. Cadenza-5 Depot Street
2. Freeport Oyster Bar-43 Main Street
3. Stars & Stripes-8 Varney Road
4. Hilton Garden Inn-5 Park Street

MOVED AND SECONDED: (Lawrence & Daniele) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes) (0-Nays) (1-Excused Fournier)

(Town Clerk, Christine Wolfe)(5 minutes)

ITEM # 144-23 To consider action relative to amendments to Chapter 32, Shellfish Conservation Ordinance. PUBLIC HEARING

MOTION: To open the public hearing (Daniele & Lawrence)(6-Ayes)(0-Nays)

MOTION: To close the public hearing (Daniele & Lawrence)(6-Ayes)(0-Nays)

Councilor Bradley: It seems to him we are adding an opportunity for the town to issue a license that was not picked up in the initial lottery. He questioned why we would have to go through a lottery for that. Why can't the town clerk or Town Manager just issue it to the first person that comes up after that opportunity. It sounds like another process that this town will go through to do something that we may not need to do.

Town Clerk: Right now, we have one student resident commercial license and I have had two inquiries of interest in that one license. We couldn't just decide or choose who we want to issue it to.

If you did his way you could issue it to the first person who came in. The problem was two people came in on the same day with interest in the license. The Clerk's Office does not desire to be in that position and would prefer a second lottery.

The number of licenses we have are as follows (approximately)

Resident Commercial-40

Non-Resident Commercial -7

Resident Recreational -180

Non-Resident Recreational -20

Does the Shellfish Commission set the number of licenses? The make the proposal to DMR who actually set our numbers, we just send the proposal to them.

Chair Piltch: He got a letter from the Shellfish Commission Chair Chad Coffin that they are eager to meet with the Town Council. They say: *We're experiencing the biggest ecological crisis in Freeport's history and need to know what the Council intends to do about it. It seems that the Council has forgotten about the shellfish program. We haven't been invited to any work sessions with the Council.* They are eager do a work session to go over their recommendations and issues. It seems important and the Chair is willing to find a time in the next month or two. What is the ecological disaster they reference? The Chair didn't know. He has an email from the Harbor Master with other proposed ordinance changes. He believes there is more than just the ordinance changes that they want to do.

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DMR will need to approve these changes. They approve it after we adopt the ordinance amendments. If we were doing something controversial, we would try to get an advisory opinion from DMR first. Shellfish wants to make some changes that DMR wouldn't allow which is why they want to talk to the Council first in workshop. DMR does not charge us for this service.

BE IT ORDERED: That amendments to Chapter 32, Shellfish Conservation Ordinance to add provisions for an additional lottery and the amendment of the minimum age requirements be approved. **MOVED AND SECONDED:** (Daniele & Lawrence) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes) (0-Nays) (1-Excused Fournier)

(Town Clerk, Christine Wolfe)(10 minutes)

ITEM # 145-23 To consider action relative to the Freeport Business Fit-Up Grant Program.

Brett Richardson, Director of FEDC:

The Business Fit-Up Grant Program is to deploy funding that was allocated by the town this fiscal year. It is \$60,000 to do work related to the Downtown Vision Plan and fostering a business community in the downtown area. This program is based on best practices of similar programs that are used around the region of the State and the country that will deploy funding that will leverage private investment. The goals of this program are to activate underutilized spaces, to create a local food scene and help recruit local businesses to town and facilitate that investment in our downtown. A one-to-one match is required. The way the program is structured is it would be a reimbursement. The administration of it is the applicant, which could be a business owner or a property owner, gets a couple quotes for a project that will help activate a space or achieve one of the other important program goals around business niches. Then they present those bids in an application. The town would have a Review Committee that would be representative and knowledgeable to review the applications to make sure that they fit the program. If they do, the applicant would get a notice to proceed. They go ahead and execute the work. When it's complete, they come back for the reimbursement from the town with proof that the project was executed in compliance with the scope of work.

There are a lot of best practices on how to administer the program and making sure we are spending the money in a wise way and that what we are approving is carried out before the funding is deployed.

A couple of key changes that were made based on feedback from our previous conversation:

- They included new businesses: to recruit new businesses to town as a key priority in the selection committee.
- They expanded the geography: There was a desire to include the commercial zones to go beyond downtown and include the Route 1 South and other commercial areas into the eligible geographic area.

We would love to get the approval, so they can put together the administrative packet in collaboration with the town Finance Director. Then get to work promoting the program. The application period will be Oct 1 to Nov 15. He thinks that's important because it allows projects to be approved and then gives folks time over the fall and winter to execute that.

Councilor Pillsbury: Do we have any concern that it's a limited pool of money. From his perspective, he'd love to see it used in a really targeted way. We've outlined that in the selection criteria, but do we want to limit it to small businesses that wouldn't otherwise be able to take on these projects? What if a major coffee retailer in town came in and applied for a grant and then using funds that wouldn't be

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available for some other locally owned small business. He's thinking through the scenarios where the money might not go where it's intended or could do the most good.

Brett Richardson: He recalled his experience in managing a program like this in the past. His experience is that if a business has resources, they're not going to want to spend a lot of time in town process. They're not going to spend a lot of time before a committee, talking in front of a group. So, it's de facto small businesses, because they really need the resources to invest to make it happen. The other way to think about that is if we have a space that's dormant now and somebody comes in and puts the investment in to activate that space, if the grantee moves on, that space will be improved for the next tenant. He gave the example of a food business that installs a new hood, that improvement is there for the next owner. Typically, it's small business that apply because they truly need it and they're willing to come into Town Hall and do the work that it takes to get that money. We also think about this in an infrastructure play too. We're fitting up spaces that will be activated for a period of time regardless if it's the original grantee that is the tenant in the long term.

Councilor Pillsbury: That's fair. Would it be reasonable to say let's revisit in a year and see who's utilized the money or if we can change some of the criteria if not meeting the intended goal? Definitely. When we put together the committee we can fine tune this in terms of what the expectation is around that. This is designed to be an out-facing document that they can take to property owners and pitch the program. There's additional work that will take place to hone in on how that committee operates. It's a great point and they can incorporate it into the operations.

BE IT ORDERED: That the Town Council approve the Freeport Business Fit-Up Grant Program as presented. **MOVED AND SECONDED:** (Bradley & Lawrence) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes) (0-Nays) (1-Excused Fournier)

(FEDC Executive Director, Brett Richardson)(15 minutes)

ITEM # 146-23 To consider action relative to funding the Historical Society \$10,000 out of ARPA funds.

Last February, the Town Council had an annual workshop with the Historical Society. At that time, there was discussion about their funding request and how their operations work. This year during the budget process which started in mid-March due to all the outside agencies that were interested in requesting funding, we went to a new form that all non-profit agencies had to submit if they were requesting funding for FY24. A form was not submitted by the Historical Society. There was some unclarity that they had to submit a form since they had previously talked about this with the council. They did not receive funding in this year's operating budget which is something they rely on as an organization. Eric Smith from the Historical Society reached out to us. The solution that Jessica Maloy came up that might work is that we have some ARPA funding for this. There is information in the packets. There is \$133,000 left in there to appropriate over the next 17 months.

Councilor Lawrence: Is this in addition to what we pay as a member?

Eric Smith: no, that is what that is. To provide some history, in previous years the council was adamant that the town did not fund non-profit organizations with the exception of social service organizations. There was a form for Social Service organizations, but not for other non-profits because the town did not fund non-profits. As they continue to make the case that the Historical Society does essentially do work on behalf of the town and that we incur costs on behalf of the town to preserve and store documents for which they are the repository and provide staff to help researchers access those documents. That's when the town, several years ago, decided they would fund the Historical Society and it was written into an

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administrative line budget which meant that they sort of became one of the groups that the council regularly holds those spring workshops with. We would normally meet with the council during the budget process. They met with the Council in February instead of March this year. Up until this year, that workshop and that conversation for the sole purpose of requesting that fund. They were unaware of the change in that budgeting process.

BE IT ORDERED: That the Town Council approve funding the Historical Society \$10,000 out of ARPA funds. **MOVED AND SECONDED:** (Egan & Lawrence) **VOTE:** (6-Ayes) (0-Nays) (1-Excused Fournier)

Note: Currently, Council has appropriated \$771,873.30 of the \$905,068.14 ARPA Funds awarded.

(Town Manager, Caroline Pelletier)(10 minutes)

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Update on recommendations from the Housing Committee (Councilor Egan)(15 minutes)

At our meeting last week, we all got a copy of recommendations from the Housing Committee which had been working for several months on reviewing our land use ordinance and rules for finding ways to promote the development of more housing in our community. The group felt strongly about the priority list that came forward. There was an initial 5 recommendations and an additional 5-6. There's a lot of work that has gone into that review. The primary focus of that in the context of what conversations they have had here, was to try to accelerate getting a public conversation about it so that we could get something moved along. The Planning Board, which goes through its deliberative process, has plenty of other things that they are working on. The key element of last week's presentation and recommendation was to get the council to endorse having a public workshop with the Planning Board in August and a second in September to start a public conversation about these changes. We have examples of, in contrast, the lengthy process that the Planning Board goes through to examine land use recommendations (ADUs and Cannabis are examples). The focus on trying to address some opportunities for promoting activity to get higher density housing particularly in downtown. They would like to schedule the workshop.

Town Manager: She likes the idea. The Planning Board did have a workshop with the Housing Committee in which the Housing Committee talked about some of their ideas, but they never had their own discussion or took action or anything like that. A workshop in a group setting to review those recommendations could be beneficial to potentially move some discussions forward while we have other land use projects going on around us. One of the things we did pre Covid was have a small working group on some design review components. They looked at some things of design review that could be low hanging fruit. We're talking about some different things here, but having small groups sit around a table to look at the low hanging fruit to bring forward could be an effective way to bring some change forward in a quicker way. We will have initial discussion and hear from the community about how they feel about the recommendations and give people an opportunity to ask questions. Some of recommendations are going to be absorbed into ongoing work the Planning Board is doing under the LD2003 required changes for housing, but others are not. Design Review is a stand-alone ordinance, not in Zoning. It's a separate project that could be taken on while we are waiting to update the entire ordinance.

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Councilor Egan: is it possible that the small working group process could be front and center at the proposed workshop we're trying to organize and could then be handed some to-do list of activities from the group discussion that we're hoping to promote?

Town Manager: If the Council has some interest in having a small working group, we could reach out to the boards and see if they have two people that would be present and make some sort of commitment to meet weekly to work through some of the public comments and the recommendations and to bring something forward to the council, starting with a public workshop.

Public input is good, but we're here talking about this because there was a startling recommendation from the Housing Group to exempt housing from Project Review Ordinance because of the need to get housing in the downtown to promote the downtown visioning process. Councilor Egan clarified that, technically, the request was to exempt new construction because that's a big distinction because it doesn't have to be housing.

Councilor Bradley: Well, it was about housing and it was because of 22 Main Street and that was the answer to all the questions that were asked. What he's saying is that it seems to him that getting the groups together to have a workshop to determine what to do with respect to the things that we know need to be done is an unnecessary delay. Another situation in which even though we know what we need to do but we aren't going to do it until some other people say it's okay. He would say let's do what we talked about at the last meeting which is to set up an executive sewer like committee process which has the people on it that need we need to have on it. Sit them down with what the Principle Group ideas were, what the Housing group ideas are and have them in short order come back to the Council with recommendations for implementation of ordinance changes in a two- or three-month period. If it wasn't for the fact that we lost maybe a project and the response was to do away with the ordinance provisions that caused that to be turned away, we wouldn't be having this discussion at all. He's convinced by what the Housing Committee said that it's a critical moment for downtown. We have plenty of time to redo the whole ordinance over time. He doesn't know the right way to do it but there is an acute moment now. He'd like to see us instead of going through hearings and public meetings to determine what to do, we want a group of qualified people from Planning, FEDC, the Council, the ordinance committee to come together in a two-three month period with recommendations (you call low hanging fruit) that will get people into the process for housing in the downtown and leave it at that for now. Leave the broader issues for a process that we know we are going to go through in the next year or two. He senses that what we like to do is to involve so many people that it takes much longer than it needs to when we have a specific need and interest that we can define.

Councilor Pillsbury: are we talking about having a workshop and public input on the priorities that were set or just around ordinance changes and design review process. There is a larger issue as well about the lack of definition around the housing stock and the type of housing, specifically affordable housing. He thinks there is some public comment and some change that needs to be done to address that. He thinks that when we went through the visioning process it was to promote housing, but it was also to target the type of housing our community needs. He doesn't believe that leaving that up to the market is going to solve that problem. He thought we talked about having a housing study done to say that's our inventory and then making strategic decisions based on the type of housing we wanted to promote and go after. That would inform how we address ordinance languages or TIF Districts or incentives. If we don't know what we want to incentivize for housing, how can we create a plan to get there? He doesn't want to miss the opportunity and just open this up and just have more development of housing of types that we don't need or that aren't going to get us where we want to go.

Councilor Lawrence: the housing that we need is between low income housing and high-income housing. We don't have any in between and that's what he was talking about last week. The issue he sees is that our ordinance is very subjective, case in point the project (22 Main) that is not being built now because

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part of the town thought it was okay and the other said no, we don't want it here. The ordinance itself is very subjective so it makes it opinions and that's what we're trying to get away from.

Councilor Pillsbury: If we don't know exactly the type of housing, what type of density, what size, what price range do we want to do, how are we going to incentivize the market to bring us that? The market that's going to come is whatever is profitable to the developer. This is our chance to target specific housing projects and incentivize those. Otherwise, we are just going to get, what we get. That doesn't get us any further toward what we set out in the visioning process. He thinks there are some quality recommendations there, but there are some gaps. He doesn't believe that implementing all 5-10 of them will get us where we need to go.

Chair Piltch: We don't do anything without public input. The alternatives he sees are that we can have a large public workshop followed by a small working group to iron out the details and then bring something to Council to act on. He thinks we can do all that in 2-3 months. The alternative is we start with a small working group to work out the details and then have public hearings, we may have to go back and rejigger the details. There is a lot of public interest germinating about the topic. He doesn't want to say "hold your thoughts while we work out the details", he'd rather say "give us all your thoughts, and we'll hammer out the details". Then we'll come back and then again discuss in the public. He's for doing the public workshop followed by hammering out the details. When we do the public workshop, he'd like to include the Project Review Board since they're the ones who implement the ordinance. They are the ones that have to wrestle with this language.

When we established the Housing Committee, affordable housing was one of the things we asked it to look at. Was that the spirit of the discussion the Housing Committee had? Was it specifically around affordable housing or was it how that fits in with other housing?

Councilor Egan: Yes, affordable housing was part of the conversation and every member of the committee was focused on making that part of the conversation. The group felt, at this point, that nothing was getting done. They actually have a significant amount of data. He's all for understanding where our market is. Freeport Housing Trust actually has a significant amount of data about affordability in the community, number of units, what the rents are and how skewed they are from market and where affordability levels are for anything that's related to a wage you might earn in the community. Maine Housing also has data on what our numbers are but it's slightly outdated (2021-2022). Realtors also have a significant amount of data. We wouldn't need a study, we just need to call in the folks that have this data. He'd be happy to help with this. The challenge is that nothing is being built right now and not a lot coming forward. We don't have an opportunity for any conversation about how many affordable units can we have in X and Y when there is zero production being planned. It's quite a surgical process to get those incentive right to where you're working with the market and you're working with the private developers who are going to build the projects you want to see in the community. There is a lot of give and take. The seven of us saying we want this and that without having it sort of in a process with what's going to work in a project and with the funding that comes with those projects, it's difficult to nail it and say we want 7 of these and 22 of those and at this level when we don't understand the complexities that go into it. He's not stalling this at all. He thinks it's a subsequent conversation after we get to the point of deciding how we're going to have higher density than the town is ever used to seeing. That's going to be a polarizing issue. We can talk about how we want density in various parts of the community whether it's downtown or in other areas not zoned residential. As soon as we talk about allowing a density, everybody that lives near that is going to have a reaction because it's different than they are used to seeing. That's a very common dynamic in many Maine communities. To step into that we have to be aware of what wire we're grabbing onto here and how much voltage is in it in terms of finding out what really needs to happen. That frankly was part of the reason why he wants to have a public hearing, so we can get all that stuff out on the table and have some back and forth on how we're going to move forward as a community.

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Councilor Bradley: we are talking about two kinds of processes. One is sort of the comprehensive approach to housing or development, we should get all the people in front of us that have any ideas on that, take them, process them and work them into a solution. His experience has been those kinds of hearings where nobody shows up unless their ox is being gored and there's a project in their neighborhood that affects them negatively, then they show up in hordes. If we hadn't been through the revision process where Principal Group put together basically a road map to the kinds of things you could objectify your zoning by. We didn't say that in downtown revisioning that housing is the key to bringing people downtown or is the key to the experience that we're trying to promote down there. Any housing would be better than what's going on right now. That doesn't mean it gets approved, but it just means that you take away the things that are subjective and that are inhibitory in the first instance. We seem to know a lot about those things. It doesn't take long to do an inventory or put together what the Housing Committee said or what Principle Group said. There's a Principle Group person who is on board already. We can do this lickety split, get it done. Then we can get public input as response to a specific as opposed to work from the general to a specific then out to the community to get more input. That's what will happen because public input is so valued here. We know enough to do this now. He'd be surprised to see what Councilor Egan put on the table be done in 2- or 3-months' time, but he'd be happy to see it done. He's not going to vote for that, but he'll support anything necessary to get it done including funding. The Housing Committee raised a critical issue to the downtown development. They had an extreme way of achieving that, but the point they made is well taken. There is nothing going on with housing and it's the key to the downtown that we have worked on for three years. He sees the ideas on public input as taking too long.

We are looking at August 22nd at 6 pm to invite the Council, Planning Board, Project Review Board and Housing Committee to a workshop to talk about the recommendations and talk about affordable housing and the blocks that exist. One of the recommendations was to have a joint workshop. What's been perceived as a provocative first recommendation has produced this as part of the results. We got some action, we're going to get some conversation and not necessarily how it's going to end up.

Councilor Bradley has received more calls about this issue, than any other he's dealt with in the last three years. He doesn't support the exemption. He does want to respond to the Housing Committees immediacy. It's the key to accomplishing the experiential change in the downtown that we all want.

Councilor Egan: he's in favor of getting to some quick solutions first. Maybe it's not about what's exempt or not exempt, but maybe just focusing on fixing some of the language. If we can do that quickly we don't need to have any sort of emergency action or exemption.

Councilor Daniele: We really do need this conversation with the general public. Hopefully, having some targeted ideas that come out of it and also saying this is going to be a longer conversation. By gathering everyone together, making that task force, getting a few items and moving it forward, we're going to move things quicker.

Councilor Egan: That the point of why the committee came forward with recommendations is to jump right over that usual circuit that things take (1 year to 18 months).

Town Manager: Recapped: We have an RFP out right now for Comprehensive Plan update. We have changes required under LD 2003 which is going to impact multiple ordinances and so many sections of that. We are also working on an RFP to update the Design Review Ordinance, not just put some band-aids, to fix it to reflect what our community wants for desired outcomes. We've got these recommendations (10) from the Housing Committee. Top priority one was a recommendation that has

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gotten a reaction from everyone in our community that exempted certain development from Design Review. They then have the other priorities. If we are going to focus on priority one, there are some quick fixes we need to do. We don't have 3 months. She does like the strategy of getting some feedback early on, hearing from the community and hearing from the boards and committees that use this ordinance. We would listen to the feedback on priority number one. While we're in the room, let's see the other ten recommendations just to get the reaction while we're all in the room. Then she pictures a small group taking that feedback and coming back in a couple of weeks with some draft ordinance language focusing on that top priority number one. Some of the data the housing committee has pulled together would be educational for the council and everyone in our community. If we go off on other tangents we won't get anything done with the low hanging fruit that we should be considering.

Councilor Lawrence: We need recommendations on how the process can be fixed as a place to start.

MOVED AND SECONDED: to add a workshop to the Council schedule on August 22, 2023 jointly with the Planning Board, Housing Committee and Project Review Board at 6 pm at Freeport Community Center to discuss changes to housing and land use.(Piltch & Lawrence)(6-Ayes)(0-Nays)(1-Excused)

Backup will be the Town Council Chambers.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ITEM # 147-23 To consider action relative to an Executive Session with the Town Attorney pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(E) pertaining to a Legal matter.

MOTION: That the Town Council enter Executive Session. (Piltch & Lawrence)(6-Ayes)(0-Nays)

MOTION: That the Town Council exit Executive Session. (15 minutes)

END OF AGENDA (Estimated time of adjournment 8:30 PM)