



**TOWN COUNCIL
WORKSHOP
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 30, 2011**

Mark Lunt, Chair District 1 2012
Lori Pomelow, Vice Chair At Large 2012
Roger Cote, At Large 2011
Michael Bowie, District 2 2012
Roger Bickford, District 2 2013
Fern Larochelle, Jr., At Large 2013
Gina Mason, District 1 2013

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE TO THE FLAG. The Chairman, Mark Lunt, called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance to the flag at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL. Members present were Councilors Mason, Larochelle, Cote, Lunt, and Bickford. Councilors Bowie and Pomelow were excused. Also present were Stephen Eldridge, Town Manager; Scott Benson, Economic & Community Development Director; Dorothy Fitzgerald, Budget Advisory Board Member; and one other citizen in the audience.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

POPULATION STATISTICS

Mr. Benson said ideally these tables and charts in the Comprehensive plan should be updated to reflect the new 2010 data, but there is no economic or social information ready right now, so for now we have to look at what we have for 2010 data and combine that with some of the 2005-2009 stuff for interpretation.

Demographics & Economic Characteristics: Our population right now is 9,009 that is a loss of 68 people since 2000.

- The male and female numbers remain identical.
- Our median age is a little lower than the state average, but higher than the national average.
- Our 18 year old and over 65-year-old population increased since 2000, but remains consistent with the national average.

Lisbon is graduating a greater number of students from the High School that is above the state and national average, although that number is not nearly as well as the state and national average on secondary educational achievements.

Housing Characteristics: Our housing units are 93.6% occupied, which is doing better than the state and national averages so that indicates that people are still in their homes. Although Lisbon has a higher vacancy rate than in 2000, it is still less than the current state and national average.

Population Demographics: The figures are starting to show the impact resulting from the base closure. For instance, Brunswick's population dropped 4%, Topsham has dropped 3.50%, and Lisbon's dropped .75%. The population appears to be sprawling into surrounding areas around us since the population in Lewiston, Durham and Sabattus have grown.

Jobs by Earnings: If you draw a circle around Lisbon, this report shows us where people who live in Lisbon work.

- Lisbon lost 80 jobs since 2002, with a total of 1,928 jobs in Lisbon in 2009. That may have even been Knight Celotex.

- Folks employed here are earning more than they were in 2002.
- Our workers are getting older, 16% of the jobs were held by people age 65 and older in 2002, and now 19% are held by people age 65 and older.
- The folks employed here in Lisbon, between 2002 and 2009, a greater percentage of them made more than \$3,333 a month, which is in that top bracket as far as this sort of data collection is.
- In 2002, 55% were earning between \$1,200 and \$3,333. Now it's only 45% so there is some good news in there.
- We see in 2002, 40% of the jobs were in manufacturing that continues to dominate here in Lisbon in 2009 at 19%, due primarily to Dingley Press.

Mr. Benson said we should continue to keep as many of them as we can, because they tend to be higher paying jobs. Retail trade, when manufacturing goes down, goes up like everywhere else and we end up trading jobs with benefits at a higher wage for jobs at a lower wage and no benefits, which has been happening in the this country for a long time and continues to be a problem. Health care and social service jobs, technical jobs, and accommodation and food services jobs grew here in Lisbon.

Home & Work Destination Reports: A lot of people come from Lewiston, 300 plus. They come from Brunswick, Augusta, and this begins to tell us where the people who work here are coming from. The work destination reports tells us where the people who live here work. Again, Lewiston tops that list. You see Bath rise to the top of the list since many people work at Bath Iron Works. In 2002, only 2 people commuted to Portland to work and in 2009 that number goes up to 239 residents commuting to Portland to work. The Comprehensive Plan forecasted that because of the affordable housing opportunities here, and because of our transportation infrastructure, that this is going to happen. People who are employed in the Portland market are going to start migrating this way and this data tells us that this in fact is beginning to happen. The work on Route 9 is only going to improve our position in that respect. It will be a lot easier for folks to purchase affordable housing here in Lisbon, get a bigger bang for their buck in Lisbon, while still able to commute to their jobs in Portland and other places south.

Inflow/Outflow Report: We migrate jobs out and we don't bring employees in as indicated in the minus 2,300 deficit under "employed in the selection area" and "living in the selection area," so when we talk about Economic Development direction and larger strategic plans one of the things we may want to address, Mr. Benson said, is can we create greater economic opportunities for the people who live here because then you are talking about wealth creation because you are giving them an opportunity to work closer to home, which cuts down on their expenses, etc. Mr. Benson said these are the kinds of things that we can learn from this kind of data. There is a lot more out there, but that's what we have for now.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN / LAND USE PLAN

Mr. Eldridge said this is not a review to change the document. It's our plan set forth as adopted by the town and put together by quite a few people to be used as a planning guide. The Council will be working their way through this document to make themselves aware of what's in it. We can discuss it, Mr. Eldridge said, things have changed, we can discuss how they have changed, and it gives us a real insight into the direction we maybe thought we were going in, however, because all of a sudden the economy shifted it may be viewed differently. This is broken down into planning topics.

Historic & Archaeological Resources: The policy suggests taking action to maintain values for historic properties if we have them. The Council could consider preserving existing historic properties in Lisbon. The first thing the Council could do is:

- catalog what we have (perhaps involving the Historical Society)
- designating neighborhoods with older homes here that may have historic value
- encourage property owners to register their properties with the National Register of Historic Places
- discuss the feasibility of a reduction in property tax (although not discussed before, this is something to consider)
- amend the zoning ordinance to require special permits for buildings of historical significance
- identify architectural designs and/or landmarks from our past

These buildings and/or sites are not protected unless federal or state funds are involved in redevelopment so it is important that we assess their values fully to minimize the effects any development might have on these buildings or sites before they are disturbed.

Housing/Affordable Housing: The availability of affordable housing has become a major concern across the state. The Council could consider adopting a housing policy, which would involve deciding upon whether Lisbon:

- has enough affordable housing and rental units
- should increase or decrease housing and rental units
- should allow mobile park expansions
- should encourage townhouses, elderly and congregate housing units, etc.
- should encourage compact and walkable (Great American Neighborhoods) neighborhoods
- should reduce sprawling patterns of development

Councilor Cote mentioned a lot depends upon the economy.

Councilor Mason pointed out that developments like Winter Park and elderly housing units affect Lisbon differently.

Councilor Cote indicated that people move into communities that have good school systems or new schools and that this draws people into the community.

Mr. Eldridge said we need to think about whether we have the infrastructure to support the influx. Growth should be managed, which in turn is determined, in large part, by how it will affect us. Councilor Mason agreed.

Mr. Benson pointed out that to some degree Lisbon can exercise control over this, for instance, most Worumbo Mill buyers would typically be interested in working with the town on a TIF or something, which we would be interested in doing if Lisbon supported the type of development being considered.

Public Facilities/Services: Our sewer facility is in good shape. The municipal building is only ten years old and houses the Police Department. The Fire Department buildings, Public Works facility, and Solid Waste facility are all part of our infrastructure.

- It is suggested that Lisbon seek a new water supply and that water line extensions would compliment this endeavor.
- Removing water infiltration was discussed.
- Unfortunately, sewer lines were not installed on Route 9 when the water line went in because it was cost prohibitive.
- Lisbon should make sure new growth doesn't exceed what we can handle for new growth.
- Future demands should be assessed based upon projected growth in population and the needs for new or expanded municipal services.

Councilor Cote pointed out how curb cuts affect traffic flow and that a town planner would look at these issues. For instance, it would have been much better to have one entrance to the Post Office and Credit Union that diverted traffic into the two parking lots at the back of the property.

Mr. Eldridge said some strategies include joint community services, like sharing Animal Control Officers.

Councilor Lunt suggested storm water run off be disconnected from the sewer system. Mr. Eldridge said that some sewer lines are being replaced this year.

Economic Development: Mr. Benson said efficient use of public services could prevent economic development sprawl.

- Lisbon should create a policy for business development and retention, and it is important to combine that with expansion and attraction procedures
- Lisbon lacks a strong envisioning plan. This is the movement happening across the state
- Lisbon has a terrific loan program and has experience with the TIF process
- CDBG has less funding and does fewer things now
- The Pine Tree Zone issues have been resolved so those problems no longer exist. Mr. Benson pointed out that it is easier to use this program now
- Lisbon is well capitalized right now so this should not be a priority

Lisbon has done very well with business retention and expansion, but it could talk more about attraction. For instance, do you want business to come here from away and/or further analysis of the tax base could indicate whether Lisbon has the right balance it wants here.

Councilor Cote mentioned that traffic has increased dramatically in Lisbon and asked what have we captured from this and now Route 9 when completed should deliver another impact.

Mr. Benson pointed out that Lisbon is geographically well positioned within 7 miles in either direction of main arteries and businesses. The main question is, what are we going to do as a town to attract business to the town for the benefit of our residents.

Councilor Mason stressed shovel ready projects are important. Councilor Larochelle said Carl Huston's site was, for the most part, shovel ready.

The Council discussed wetlands and the future development of our industrial park.

Councilor Larochelle stressed the importance of an attractive gateway to these spots and said that a little finesse out front goes a long ways. He said an entrance portrays to travelers and potential buyers what potentially lies beyond, which might be a good tool to be used in other areas in town as well. Mr. Benson said exactly, what will be the public's role in creating that attraction, and to what end, will the public sector go to fill that void to get that done.

Transportation system: Mr. Eldridge said Lisbon's transportation system includes highways, bridges, sidewalks, trails and the bus system.

- Lisbon has worked well with the Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center
- We secured funding for the Route 9 and Upland Road projects
- Route 196 has been delayed, but is going to be address next year

Mr. Eldridge pointed out that the Lisbon Falls/Durham bridge was quite a few years away from being replaced. MDOT was watching the bridge today because the water level was too high, he said, and they were worried about the temporary materials breaking free from the Worumbo Dam reconstruction project. Structural work has been done on it for the last two or three years; they are maintaining what they have, but any thing more than that is a ways off.

Lisbon continues to develop its trail system and already has a great trail system in place with further work taking place. It was suggested that an argument could certainly be made for hiring a professional planner, which would collapse the time frame needed to prepare and secure trail system documents.

The Council discussed the train system. Mr. Benson pointed out that although Lisbon has some good infrastructure coming into town and going all the way to the industrial park, the critical mass needed to increase use of the rail link does not yet exist in Lisbon. Some companies have indicated that over the road shipping better suits their business.

Natural Resources: Lisbon has many natural resources, great farmland, and riverfront property. Lisbon should protect that and encourage its land use. The Cooperative Extension is an asset to residents as well.

Councilor Mason mentioned that there are things we can and cannot do near the waterfront; however, its potential may be under utilized. Many opportunities exist for recreational use, for instance, it may be ideal for a kayaking or canoe rental business.

Mr. Benson pointed out that Lisbon needs to consider its connectivity to the larger trail systems. Councilor Bickford said Lisbon should consider connecting its snowmobile and ATV trail systems to local restaurants and local gas stations too. Mr. Benson said this leads us right back to business attraction so he recommended the Council go down that road, hold a public hearing, encourage public dialogue, and find out what kind of participation the community would welcome in that direction.

The Knight Celotex property is going to be cleaned up soon. Our gateway entrances need some work. The Worumbo Mill property is located within the floodplain. The Council discussed the Worumbo Mill property and whether or not such a building could be replaced with something that brings in the same tax revenue. If it were torn down, what would we lose economically? Mr. Benson said a key piece to a previous grant identified the need to look for ways to connect the river to the downtown area. Mr. Eldridge mentioned that the riverfront was an excellent place to hold events, for instance, like developing the ballpark area.

Mr. Eldridge briefly mentioned a couple of items that were coming up on the next agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM.

Twila D. Lycette, Council Secretary
Town Clerk, Lifetime CCM/MMC

Date Approved: _____

Last Revision 9/15/2011