

July 12, 2022 DRAFT

Comprehensive Plan Committee – Admin Sub-Committee Report

Who did we see?

Town Manager, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Visitor Services Supervisors

To be arranged: Budget Review Committee – after the recount

Key themes

Comp Plan

The current Comp Plan is not at the top of everyone's reading list. There is some support for an Implementation Committee if the revised Plan is approved by voters. Its remit would be to guide / advise other committees and promote a culture where the Comp Plan is treated as an expression of the community's vision and a guide for the future. It should also help to inform the budget process.

Technology and connectivity, which have become integral to our lives in so many ways, were in their infancy when the Comp Plan currently in place was written. An updated Comp Plan should reflect the Town's achievements as it undergoes a major digital transformation and acknowledge how important it is for the Town to keep up with industry standards for security and technology, remaining at the forefront of best practice initiatives, to deliver a five-star service.

Character

The Town has changed, with more people in their 50s and 60s, rather than 70s and 80s. What initiatives could be taken to encourage the return of families with children - the "cornerstone of community"?

Quality of life, including community activities, is important. The Town continues to be attractive to visitors, reflecting some degree of success in maintaining Ogunquit's special character. It succeeds in maintaining a tradition of generations visiting, with comments such as "The most beautiful place I've ever been."

Tourism brings in essential parking revenues, so maintaining Ogunquit's unique character pays off financially. Sustaining our natural resources is key to maintaining the Town's reputation as a tourist destination. Note: the tourist season is already longer than in the past.

Infrastructure

Workforce housing is a challenge, not only in retaining Town Hall staff but also to accommodate workers who are essential to local businesses in Ogunquit and the area.

How will the Town respond to the requirements of LD 2003: what changes will need to be made to Ogunquit's ordinances once the rules for implementation have been published? How can elderly residents be helped to "age in place" rather than having to move out of Ogunquit? Where could affordable housing go? And of course, there are already areas where owners are bringing in "auxiliary dwelling units".

Both needs must be addressed.

Transportation: look at public transportation (trolleys / future funding); pedestrian initiatives; safe cycling (Village Partnership Initiative); and renewable energy services. The challenge of installing recharge stations in Town parking areas is the loss of revenue if the space is unused. Is there enough demand for charging fees to be a revenue raiser? On a typical day, how many EVs from out of town are in the Town's parking areas?

Water quality: a regional approach is essential to working to improve water quality.

Technology

From a standing start, the town is currently undergoing a major digital transformation including a new cloud architecture, cyber security and digital compliance via Thrive, a corporation with national reach under direct supervision by the Town Manager. Thrive was selected after an emergency RFP that took place in Fall 2021.

With this important shift, the current risk of losing private data and high level of cybercrime vulnerability is being mitigated.

Web services

The town is launching a new website. The approach encourages each agency/department within the town to work under the umbrella of the new website. The digital integration of all departments is key for the success of a secured system process within the town. In future, websites set up by individual Boards / Committees will sit under the Town's digital umbrella, ensuring continuity and accessibility as the membership of Committees changes.

Members of the public will eventually be able to do more online, not only complete code enforcement forms. One interviewee suggested that an integrated online platform would include both local and national applications, for example, promoting environmentally conscious tourism.

The town's email server is now in the clouds as well.

Hardware

The Town Manager has authorized changes and updates in personnel workstations (15 units). Now that servers will be in the clouds, there is no need for major hardware purchases. The Town Manager suggests a renewal of hardware (workstations, in particular) every five years.

Next-generation connectivity

The town's operation is now using two internet connections: Spectrum and fiber. This is a very efficient way to keep the connectivity of the town's offices and agencies up to speed in case one service fails.

After the digital transformation takes place, the town will have the capability to offer faster, innovative, and more reliable connectivity to its residents and visitors.

External communication

Currently the town still prints one weekly newsletter with periodic information. We suggested transforming the format into one digital e-newsletter, and including an e-address for the newsletter in printed copies, for future access. [Note: printed copies are available at the Town Hall and there is discussion re: placing paper copies in hotels.]

Parking

The Town has successfully moved from cash payment to metered payment, adding a mobile pay facility and electronic enforcement in 2020. The Town should ensure that it has a reliable collection and enforcement system, retaining and building on improvements already made.

Finance

How can tourists contribute more to Ogunquit's revenue? Currently, residents subsidise tourists. Can the Town Investigate new revenue streams, for example: "wet summer" events, recreational and children's events, guided walks with different pricing for residents and tourists. In the absence of legislation permitting a "bed tax", what options are open to the Town?

A robust capital improvement plan to include maintenance and replacement of assets should include natural resources, which are critical to the Town's financial and general wellbeing.

"Ogunquit is very young for an organized Town, being only 42 years old, and while it is not financially unhealthy, it is financially juvenile." The Town should move towards reserving bonding for major projects and develop a facility through the use of reserve accounts to make down payments on smaller items (e.g., trucks, copiers), helping the Town to build a credit profile rather than continuing to pay for items that have come to the end of their useful life.

Community Character—Interim Report June 22, 2022

The committee has met with the Bike/Ped committee, Heritage Museum and OHPC. A meeting with the Parks & Recreation committee is being held on 6/22 prior to the CP meeting and a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce has yet to be scheduled. The comments gathered thus far support retaining all or a majority of the language of Chapter 6. Policies and Actions, Section A. Community Character 1. Policy of the 2004 plan. As to subsection 2. Of Section A, the committee also finds the provisions of parts a-d remain recommended. More study must be done before it can be recommended that the language of e-g remain as drafted. As to h., the planning and select boards have implemented the recommendations: graphic arts and performing arts are allowed as a Permitted Use after site plan review in the Downtown Business District, General Business Districts 1 and 2 and the Shoreland General Development District 3-Ogunquit Playhouse. Also, electronic electric signage is permitted with select board approval. It should be noted (and will be addressed by the zoning and land use CP committee) that the town does not have a defined “growth area”. Some retooling of i. is clearly necessary after the recent vote on Question 53. Chapter 6, Section D, The Local Economy, at least in part, is also a focus of the community character committee. Again, the comments support retaining all or a majority of the language of Subsection 1., Policy. Many of the provisions thereunder remain actions to be undertaken by the select and/or planning board. Section F., Traffic, Section g., Recreation and Open Space, H., Cultural and Educational Resources, and J., Historic and Archeological Resources, are also factors of Community Character. The policy statements contained under such sections appear to remain appropriate. After meeting, in particular, with the Bike/Ped committee, it is clear that work remains to “enhance the pedestrian orientation” of the village center. Some work has been done, such as the establishment of a bike lane, the installation of sidewalks on both sides of Beach Street and other areas. Areas that need to be addressed included: the limited Trolley service and the expense thereof. The recommendations in the CP for satellite parking should be reviewed. The use of such lots is only recommended if there is a decrease in parking in town. The carrying capacity of the local roads is a concern. The congestion in town has significantly worsened since the 2004 CP. The recommendation in the 2004 CP for a “Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Master Plan” has not been satisfied. Some additional ideas: a focus on trail development A potential subsidy for the trolley system or a monthly/summer pass system to be implemented. For pedestrian safety; The enforcement of existing laws/rules on loading zones, Installation of traffic calming areas downtown In terms of historic resources, the Design Review provisions of the zoning ordinances, section 225.11, apply to specific districts in town. To preserve the historic charm of the town, OHPC would like any pre-1930 building in town to be subject to Design Review. The 2004 CP identified six historic and archeological resources of significance on the National Register. 2 more have been added: The Colonial Inn added in 2012 and the Marginal Way. The CP needs to be updated to add them. In terms of goals: A systematic inventory of resources is in process. OHPC wants a goal to be added to find ways to encourage building owners to preserve the historical character of their

properties. Recognizing that that maintaining historic character benefits all residents and the businesses in town, to help find a way to subsidize additional costs by way of grants/subsidies. All of these areas are ripe for suggestions from the community during the Vision meeting and from surveys.

Natural Resources and Conservation

Ogunquit contains a wide variety of significant natural resources: the beach, the estuarine system, marginal way, existing conservation lands, marine environments and the riparian habitat along streams, brooks, rivers and wetland. Of course, we can't forget climate changes, potential sea-rise levels, possible beach erosion, and maintaining natural open spaces.

The community needs a plan to prioritize which areas of natural resources require action plans to preserve and conserve.

Ogunquit Beach and estuary have been reporting high bacteria counts over the past years especially after heavy rain falls. The Sustainability Committee developed a water quality plan for the Watershed this past spring which focuses heavily on storm water management and non-source pollution. The Conservation Commission continues to work with local land trusts and residents to preserve more open space, tests water in the estuary and beach for pollution, encourages the planting of native plants, protection of wetlands, protects critical habitats, and works to support the Shellfish Committee to protect marine wildlife.

Natural resources and conservation are a broad category which interfaces with land use, soils, geology and the capacity to expand future building while protecting the environment.