



WASHINGTON COUNTY  
COMMUNITY GUIDED PLANNING and  
ZONING PROCESS

**Public Outreach Meetings - Summary for  
Planning Committee meeting on  
October 18, 2016**



The 2<sup>nd</sup> round of public meetings was conducted in 6 locations between July 20 and September 30, 2016. Two additional citizen-initiated public meetings were held in October of 2016.

Detailed minutes from all of the meetings are posted on the Community Outreach page (<http://www.wccog.net/community-outreach.htm>). The following provides a summary of these meetings for the October 18, 2016 Planning Committee.

**Attendance**

Marion	3 (July 28); 1 (Oct 11); 2 (Sept 20)
Cathance	4 (July 28)
Grand Lake Stream	13 (July 20)
Forest City	8 (Aug 29); 2 (Sept 27)
Big Lake Township	2 (Aug 29)
Edmunds	3 (Aug 31) ; 2 (Sept 20)
Trescott	10 (Sept 20); ~8 (Oct 4); 6 (Oct 11)
Baring	10 (Sept 27)

**Visioning**

The first 3 meetings (Grand Lake Stream; Marion & Cathance; Forest City, Brookton, Big Twp, Lambert Lake Twp) included a Visioning exercise.

With minimal attendance at the Edmunds meeting we did not conduct a visioning exercise. Instead the staff and Planning Committee members re-focused the meeting approach, prepared more media and advertising and attendance improved at the last 2 meetings in Whiting for the coastal UTs and in Baring.

**Specific Prospective Zoning recommendations**

Only Grand Lake Stream and Baring Plantations were ready to make concrete changes to their existing zoning maps.

**Grand Lake Stream** is meeting October 19 to finalize their prospective zoning changes on the 3 parcels given to the town that are part of the \$600K grant project.

**Baring Plantation** discussed several prospective zoning changes and had several “thumbs up – thumbs down” votes on them during the meeting. Some are very clear changes (noted below) and one will require additional refinement of existing zoning (the existing map layer was out of date) and expansions of the D-CI district near the airport.

**Baring Prospective zoning changes:**

- Change the zone on the existing Baring gifts (Knock on Wood) property from D-RS (residential) to D-GN (general development) to recognize existing commercial development and facilitate some change of use or expansion in the future.
- Change triangular shaped property on Route 1 owned by Janie and Ernie Morrell and Donna O’Neill from General Management to General Development given existing conditions and desire for redevelopment after Brownfields cleanup.

**Floating Zone Input:**

There was substantially fuller description and understanding of the floating zone concept at the meetings in Whiting (for the southern UTs), in Baring, and at the citizen-initiated meetings. The following summarizes thoughts to date organized by UT or Plantation.

**Baring:**

- generally in favor of the D-RB idea;
- like the flexibility it offers; like that it is only on primary roads
- Recreation Support Business seems less applicable to Baring but all agreed to allow it in order to provide future services in the event the rail corridor is turned into a recreational trail corridor. Also that it made sense to allow it on secondary roads not just Route 1 and 191

**Grand Lake Stream:**

- consider allowing rental of canoe/kayaks near good water access but also where you are close to other services (toilets, parking, docks); or some of those things must be provided
- will residential be allowed? – if you allow residential you open the door for residential activity near recreational assets eg. at trailheads; do we want this?
- this kind of business will be at a different scale (likely larger) than for home occupations

**Marion/Cathance:**

- very little input on the floating zone idea as the small group did not think that business would be viable
- comments from Marion residents at later meetings indicated support as long as it was restricted to primary roads.

**Forest City, Big Lake Township, Lambert Lake Township, Brookton:**

- only had participation from Forest City and Big Lake Township
- comments on the D-RB floating zone concept:
  - there is no need for any more development over what is present now
  - all 3 categories are too intense
  - we like peace and quiet; that is why we live here
- comments on the D-RSB floating zone concept:
  - the idea was less distasteful than Rural Business; scale make more sense
  - the idea could not be supported due to poor economic conditions (so why bother)
  - building encroachment is occurring on the lakes in organized towns – and – the rules are too fierce here now
  - it would lead to too many businesses that ruin the area in which they are located (eg as in Lake Tahoe)
  - is no different than a variance, merely imposes another layer of government regulation, and we have too many rules now

### **Edmunds, Trescott:**

- The minutes from the Sept 20 meeting provide a far more in depth set of questions and answers about this concept (please see those minutes)
- Generally in favor of the concept but need to know where would it apply and would like to see a map of the eligible areas.
- The types of Rural Businesses in Categories 1 and 2 may make sense in Trescott, or in portions of Trescott but some are too intense like Category 3
- The Bold Coast Scenic Byway is designated along some of the primary public roads where the 3 Categories of a Rural Business floating zone might “land”.
- Category 2 businesses that could have a lot of foot traffic and need to be visible and near the road – include good design standards in the rule that ensure development is in keeping with the scenic character of the Byway.
- Category 3 business uses have a bigger physical footprint and could be noisier so include standards in the rules that address screening, greater setbacks or perhaps not allowing them at all in certain areas.
- allow all 3 Categories of the Rural Business zone to “land” along one road (eg. the Route 189 portion of the BCSB) but only Categories 1 and 2 to “land” along another (eg. Route 191 of the BCSB)
- The benefits I see are that floating zones afford opportunity to have small businesses start in the future in a way that is adaptable to change. This seems true for both the Rural Business and the Recreation Support Business zones – they offer flexibility.
- I understand that the rules would include ways to buffer neighbors who are mostly residential. I like that. My nervousness stems from the change this would pose to a neighborhood that is currently quiet, rural and private. It introduces some instability to what exists now.
- Sometime impacts go beyond the abutters. Could the notice provisions cast a wider net? How about extending notice to a half mile? New rules could include additional notification provisions, say out to 2500 feet.
- There are some cottages on Route 86 – they are small cottages now. We can’t predict what people might want in the future. This floating zone idea gives flexibility to the next generation; we need to allow flexibility as needs change over time. We can’t imagine or know what is needed in 50 or 75 years
- Very glad to hear that the planning horizon is 5-10 years. Trescott has no village or central focus. Our “village” is Lubec. That is where we rely on retail, restaurant, and other services and we have a vested interest in keeping Lubec viable. Recreational Support Businesses on the other hand are a good idea for Trescott; just make them look good.
- Wish to make is clear that I/we are not hostile to development as long as it does not infringe on the rural character and values we love about this place.

### **Trescott/Marion – by Oct 11 meeting:**

- This region and Trescott in particular, is so very far away from a lot of commerce and it is (and has for a long time been) very difficult to make a living here. Some do very well at it with fishing, trucking, and so on. What we do have is our beauty. We can “sell” our beauty and the quality of the remote rural experience to a growing tourism market. So we need to limit the overall number of places the floating zones can “land” and be mindful of the scale and intensity of their impacts on one of our greatest assets – the beauty of this place.
- There is an inherent conflict between the goal of the TIF program (Economic Development in the UT) and the LUPC regulations that are so limiting on what is allowed. The process takes too long. Zone changes and permits are often denied....Later

comment from the same person: the floating zone idea is a good one to give greater flexibility and actually allow some commercial development; and to reduce the time it takes to get a permit.

Overall – everyone agreed that the floating zone idea was good, that it could provide flexibility, that “good neighbor” standards that protect adjoining landowners were very important, and that there should be some limitations on how extensively they would be allowed to apply.

The group did reach tentative agreement on the following way that the two floating zones would apply:

**For the Development – Rural Business (D-RB) floating zone:**

- Allow only the Category 2 types of businesses (retail, office) to “land” on Route 191, the part of the Bold Coast Scenic Byway that is closest to the coast and the most significant to tourism.
- Allow all three Category types of businesses to “land” on Routes 1 and 189
- There was agreement on the idea of limiting the total # of floating zones that could “land” over 5 years but we did not reach consensus on what that limit would be; those present felt it was important to have more input before reaching a conclusion

**For the Development – Recreational Support Business (D-RSB) (the D-Fun! One) floating zone:**

- Those present agreed that it was not necessary, nor desirable from a business point of view, to allow the D-RSB zone to “land” on secondary roads near trailheads or boat launches. The argument was that services would not be used if they were so far away from well travelled roads.
- Agreement was reached to allow the D-RSB zone to “land” on Routes 1, 191 and 189 with a limit of one being allowed on each major road in Trescott. Thus, once a zone change and permit was allowed on each of these primary roads, no more D-RSB zones could “land”. All agreed that this would give some time to see how many zone changes resulted and that this limitation could be examined / changed / left alone after a 5+/- year time period.
- The floating zone that allows recreation support businesses (D-RSB or D-Fun!) should also allow some limited education and interpretation of what is found on the recreational trails, waters, woodlands, wetlands, and shorelines that people / visitors are coming to see.

Finally, all agreed that it was very useful / helpful to review the maps of existing zones and the zoning options under consideration – and, most importantly – that they would like to meet again to refine the preliminary conclusions and get more input from other landowners and residents.

**Capital Investment Plan**

We received some questions and input on the Capital Investment Plan:

- Widening of Route 1 in Baring?
  - Would need to think about setback allowances with any zone changes
  - According to MaineDOT the AADT volumes do not justify road widening at this time.
- If expanding the D\_CI zone near the Baring airport: think about internal road construction to allow for ingress / egress to commercial sites without additional curb cuts onto Route 1; would require coordination / cooperation among affected landowners
- Forest City did not want any new development; they do however want better and faster broadband, better schools, better emergency response (coordination with Border Patrol

to allow access to New Brunswick hospitals), reliable telephone land lines, and better health care

- Big Lake Township expressed concern about lake levels and whether the CIP could direct dollars and attention at ensuring the dams that regulate lake levels are maintained

### **Additional Public Meetings**

There is clear interest on the part of many residents in Trescott, Edmunds, Marion (maybe Cathance?) to meet again so they can involve more people and come to consensus on zoning changes.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting (Oct 11) helped to flesh out questions that people had about the floating zone idea. They would like to see the areas where floating zones could “land” and to involve more people.