

Unity Comprehensive Plan committee meeting July 2, 2015, 6:30 pm at the Town Office.

Present: Ken Murch, Emily Newell, John McIntire, Barry McCormick, Tony Avila, Clem Blakney, Jean Bourg, Travis Smith, Don Newell, Bob Mentzinger.

Review of what everyone heard at last week's forum.

Barry: Density is not an issue for people; disappointed that people don't see the need for a safe walking/biking lane on Depot Street.

Tony: the majority of the groups would like more business in town, not concerned about where they go. Sidewalks: people concerned about cost of maintenance and liability.

Clem: Also surprised about people's lack of concern about Depot Street walkable

Jean: Most people wanted fewer restrictions; people like the idea of clusters of development; all the investments that have revitalized Unity have come from within the community, not from attracting investment from outside.

Travis: When you bring businesses you also bring in more people to work in them. Businesses will locate where they will succeed without the restrictions.

Extended discussion on safety of Depot Street.

Don: People were too focused on sidewalks when the issue is walkability on trails, roads, not necessarily sidewalks. Sidewalks can be worse for wheelchairs.

Folks recognized the value of clusters of residences and businesses.

Over the years we have been working on the plan, the majority of people want to protect rural lands and separate downtown from rural quiet.

How can we make it more flexible and still get it approved by the state.

Ken: walkability was important to most in his group. People thought satellite locations were good. Paved shoulder on Depot comes down to cost. People want nothing that raises taxes. Maybe big trucks could be made to take 220 to 202 rather than taking Depot Street.

Ken grew up near the cedar mill on the lake: noise, smell, hazardous. Made jobs but it's gone now and there is a mess.

Emily: Rural character should be preserved, and businesses should have more options for where to go. Making the plan more flexible will require more complexity in the ordinance and more training for the planning board.

John Mac: Most folks in his group didn't know what the regulations are now, but don't want anymore. Concerns about Depot Street and about Main Street where it's falling into the stream. Balance between density and parking availability.

Emily: Looking for a prompt for changing language to performance-based.
We need to make categories of businesses so we can write performance standards.
Need language for developments on arteries.

Tony: what is the character of Unity?
Don reads the vision statement.

We the People of Unity envision a future where we thrive in a vibrant community that cherishes our environment, supports and celebrates our citizens, and welcomes all.

In the 1800s, Unity was known as the garden spot of Waldo County. We envision a future Unity that is a flourishing garden—a place of beauty that nurtures life in multiple ways: growing good food; enhancing our health; fostering our economic prosperity; and enabling us to lead safe and fulfilling lives.

We see Unity in the future as a community that has:

- *Retained our small town character, historic downtown, and identity as a farming community, while carefully growing as an economic hub for surrounding towns.*
- *Improved our economic future by building off our many strengths—including being a crossroads location, home to Unity College, and a growing center for sustainable agriculture.*
- *Attracted businesses/employers that fit our character and identity, and that pay living wages which attract young families and enable all residents to thrive.*
- *Adapted to more complex demands on local government, like road maintenance and municipal services, while retaining Town Meeting as our chosen form of government.*
- *Engaged more of our citizens in civic and community activities by increasing government transparency, communications, and volunteer opportunities.*
- *Enhanced public access to recreational and cultural facilities.*
- *Dramatically improved the water quality of Unity Pond and protected and preserved the local aquifer.*
- *Invested in the health of our citizens by building a "walking town" with all-season sidewalks and trails that connect common destinations like schools and stores.*

People will write suggestions for performance standards for next week.