

# *Knightsville Fore and Aft*

Minutes  
June 21, 2018

## **Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee**

### **Present**

Peter Stanton, Chair	Susanne Conley
Barry Lucier, Vice Chair	Troy Chase
Councilor Sue Henderson	Tom Falby
Mike Hale	Phil Notis
Melanie Wiker	Buzzy Trusiani
Bland Banwell	Tony Grande
Caroline Hendry	Kathleen Egan
Mitchell Sturgeon	Joe Brown
Bob Foster	Frank Carr
Tom Ainsworth	Bill Boeschstein
Luke Thomas	Joe Brown
Bill Mann	Barbara Psichos

### **1. Welcome**

The following documents were provided: the 6/21/18 agenda and 5/17/18 minutes, a printout of the Knightsville survey, and a printout of emailed comments from the group on the survey.

**Chairperson Peter Stanton** welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves and share where they live.

**Peter** proposed that the Committee relax in terms of Robert's Rules. He would like free, open, civil discussion and people should try not to interrupt. He would like to thoroughly explore topics and brainstorm rather than having motions in a formalized way. When they work towards an objective they can craft a motion and vote on it, but discussion-wise he would like it more open.

**Tex** asked, for example, if they would use a motion to call the question. **Peter** said he thinks not. If they get to topics that are contentious, maybe they need to think about how to bring in more formality but as long as everyone is getting along he thinks it's better to have a discussion. It goes back and forth and you get more from it.

### **2. Adoption of Minutes**

**Bob Foster** motioned to adopt the 5/17/18 minutes. **Councilor Henderson** seconded. **Unanimous approval.**

### **3. Knightsville Inventory**

**Buzzy** showed his draft map of Knightsville inventory and explained the color coding, noting there were some things to be changed and/or still colored in. He would like to walk the area again and count meters.

**Councilor Henderson** said her home is color-coded incorrectly, as is a neighbor's home.

**Susanne** asked what's going on on Ocean and C. **Buzzy** said he's not sure. It's an example of a great building with potential. It's under contract but he doesn't know anything about it.

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**Troy** said there are two on A Street that are marked incorrectly. **Buzzy** said he will walk the area again—the tax map doesn't always coordinate with meters.

**Peter** suggested they have the map out and people who have knowledge can add to it at the end of the meeting. **Tex** said their summer intern could help.

**Phil N.** said that the map captures use, not zoning. He thinks it's a good start. There's potential for moving forward with lots that are stagnant because of current zoning. He'd like to see a zoning subcommittee started soon.

**Peter** said it would be interesting to have a list and do it as an overlay of problematic properties on that map. He asked if they can put this info on the GIS. **Tex** said yes, once they have the information.

**Tom F.** asked if form based zoning is still a consideration. **Tex** said it's a consideration once they get to the zoning module. These modules overlap so they can talk about it.

**Buzzy** spoke in support of a subcommittee. **Bland** said she would like to be on that committee and that Eva also previously expressed interest.

**Tom A.** asked about rising sea levels and the final map. He suspects a significant piece of land in this area will be impacted over the course of the final product. It would be helpful to have the ability to overlay the rising sea level pieces.

**Peter** said the Gulf of Maine Research Institute has been running something where you can look at the lot and see what happens as sea level rises and their predictions. **Tom A.** wondered if that could be combined with the City's software.

**Susanne** asked if it will be a plan to change things like height restrictions because that's a huge concern. She would like to be on the subcommittee as well.

**Peter** said height and setbacks are a big part of it. **Susanne** asked what happens from the subcommittee—they talk about it and it goes to the Planning Board?

**Peter** said that portion begins in September and that may be an appropriate amount of time to talk about it.

**Tex** said that ultimately this will go to City Council in a workshop. They will see where it goes from there.

**Tom A.** talked about redevelopment that could allow tall buildings and the issue of preserving space, light, and views. There's a canyon effect on Ocean.

**Susanne** said she feels that if someone is not involved and doesn't know this is happening and the Committee is making recommendations, that's huge.

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**Tex** said there is a citizen participation process and they will be rescheduling the forum.

**Bob** said that when they did the Mill Creek plan, this issue came up there also. Zoning is important but keep in mind all things are discussed before the plan goes to City Council.

**Phil N.** would like to alleviate anxiety over height. Knightville is unique and is made up of single-families, multi-units, and condos. It's not like Portland or India Street. He doesn't see it happening; they are a small neighborhood. If they all express what they'd like to see and their fears, they will work it out. He doesn't see high rises going up. No one is looking to shadow over properties. With some tweaking of zoning, he thinks it will work.

**Peter** would like to explore this later. Some of this can happen in the subcommittee.

**Tex** asked for subcommittee volunteers to stick around after the meeting

**Councilor Henderson** said that looking at the parts, she doesn't see a whole. She doesn't see a vision before they start talking about zoning. She'd like to go back to the 2005 Knightville Plan and take that vision and maybe tweak it. High rises are a real threat. Walking down Ocean Street in the morning there are shadows from the buildings. Sunshine and outdoor space is an issue for health and quality of life.

**Peter** said that's a good working document.

**Kathleen** said they had copies of it at the first few meetings. She wondered why they're not referencing it at this point. **Tex** said this is not the document that is in effect. **Kathleen** thinks they should start with it. They have a document that worked for the neighborhood with many layers.

**Peter** said they have the 2012 Comprehensive Plan. It's newer but not specific. **Tex** said it's more specific in terms of land use and looking at different sections of Knightville. The 2005 Plan is broader in looking at other things other than land use. It had more of a vision statement.

**Peter** asked if the subcommittee can work with both documents and update them together.

**Buzzy** said the concept of the inventory was to get a handle of what's in Knightville. It's easy to say you like what's there but there's no logical rhyme or reason in the area. He invites the subcommittee to walk through street by street. There is a lot of uncertainty so investors don't want to commit. He wanted to start with what's there before they make decisions of what they want there.

**Tex** said the reason he proposed zoning at the end was that it is informed. It's like a last step. Everything before will inform what they want to do with zoning. It's a good point that they should refer back to the 2005 Plan but they don't want to go too fast. He thinks it's a good idea to get the subcommittee going and ready for the fall but they don't have to have the full debates right now.

## **4. Survey Development**

**Tex** said that Luke has taken the bull by the horns and done a lot of the survey work. The version handed out is an updated version from today. He also sent out the comments provided. The basic concept was not

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to guess what's important and has specific multi-choice questions but to have it general with open-ended questions, see what they get, and follow up at some point with a more specific survey.

**Luke** said there is a map included because a lot of people don't know the general boundaries of the area. The first question was updated and asks the person's relationship with Knightsville—resident, business owner, visitor. Your selection determines the questions you answer; not everyone who takes it will answer all the questions. Questions are generally open-ended because you collect richer feedback this way. It can be reviewed collectively and decoded. The idea is to build a sense of ground truth about what people are actually saying. The last question is for optionality in the future. The last piece is a promotional aspect and the different channels the survey will be sent to—a flyer for businesses, the City email newsletter, Facebook groups. If they don't see quantity they want at first, they can explore other methods.

**Bill B.** asked about adding “potential investor” to the first question.

**Kathleen** sees that issue addressed in #10, 11, 12. She thinks there's room for non-residents to participate. She thinks it's broadly worded and he could specify.

**Mike** asked if it could be added into the business “or investor.” In the questions, they could ask, “Why did you choose?” or “Why would you choose?” He'd like to see #12 in the business questions as well.

**Barry** asked if there are business owners who are also residents. How would they choose to answer the survey?

**Luke** said the logic is tough; they could retake it with their business address.

The Committee discussed how to address this issue and making a note at the beginning of the survey to retake it. They talked about how doubling up could affect results or be problematic.

**Melanie** was confused about #6—there's flooding everywhere and she feels it's pointless. She suggested changing it to, “What are your concerns on your street?” Each street has different problems.

**Tex** said it is there for sea level rise.

The Committee discussed how to address this issue; adding a checklist of different issues, asking which challenges concern you, deleting it, or making it open-ended.

**Peter** asked about character limits. **Luke** said there are none.

**Luke** recapped the changes: adding commentary, deleting #6, adding #12 to the business section, and exploring a fourth option for potential investors. It's an easy addition but he needs the questions and direction.

**Tex** suggested wording—“What needs to happen to make it feasible for you to invest in Knightsville?” “Is there anything from preventing you from investing currently?” “What would you like to see changed in

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order for you to invest?” “What kind of investment are you interested in?” “What possible hurdles do you see?”

**Phil** said the problem is that they have zoning that does not allow buildings to go up. This is why he thinks they need the subcommittee.

**Buzzy** suggested, “What kind of zoning they would like to see?” “What are the hurdles and do you have zoning suggestions?”

**Luke** suggested something such as, “What kind of investment would you be considering making, is there anything preventing you, do you have comments, questions, concerns?” If someone said they are a business they can see this as well. If they are an investor, they will skip past business questions.

**Kathleen** said there was discussion to whom this is going to. How will they capture outside of Knightsville? **Tex** said it will be on the City’s website but marketed towards Knightsville.

**Kathleen** said anyone in Portland would have to stumble upon it. **Bill M.** said it could be a story in the Forecaster or maybe the Press Herald.

**Councilor Henderson** said the vision in 2005 Plan is them—it’s who they are, a mixed-use residential community neighborhood with a village concept. She thinks it’s important to identify who they are.

**Tex** said he’s hoping they’ve gotten far enough that they can trust the subcommittee to come up with final version and proceed. **Tony** said they did a great job.

**Barry** asked about a date. **Tex** said it will go out next week through mid-August.

## **5. Business Retention and Attraction**

**Tex** said at some of the initial meetings there were traces of, “It may be nice to have this type of business here.” They talked about not necessarily retail but niche manufacturing. This has always been part of the challenge of Knightsville—to find the right mix of businesses and services that mean people don’t need to go to the mall for a lot of things. Also so people in the community could come here and find cool things to do and places to shop and eat. They will start tonight with assistance from Bill Mann, the City’s Economic Development Director. He asked the group to share if there are there different types of businesses or manufacturing they’d like to see and asked them to be creative—attraction, providing incentives, how to grow existing businesses and retain existing businesses.

**Bill M.** said he comes from a commercial banking and economic development background. There are people who want to do some things in this community. He spoke about how to build a relationship and asked what the group would like to see. He talked about the area’s walk score, which is walkable for a restaurant or retail but not as good for a rental. He spoke about services you can subscribe to: Starbucks, Aroma Joe’s, Burger King. He asked what openness they have to national chains or do they prefer local business? A 60-foot building height could allow a developer to get more residents and mixed-use on the first floor, for example. More people generally means more vibrancy. They need to know what the group is looking for and survey responses.

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**Susanne** understands this but asked where everyone would park. Do they need a garage or parking area? Where would employees and patrons park?

**Buzzy** said Knightville is a broad term and the area is generally from the rotary down to the bridge for most people but some people think otherwise with Mill Creek in the general vicinity. It becomes a broader conversation. He wants someone to discuss the value of what's already there.

**Barbara** said they need to figure out the area they're talking about. **Peter** said there was a Mill Creek Master Plan. Mill Creek can have different kinds of properties. They may want to talk about neighbors getting across Broadway and the overall transportation infrastructure, which they shouldn't ignore. That may help this neighborhood.

**Tex** said looking at zoning map, it's clear from E Street south is Mill Creek and not Knightville. He spoke about the Village Extension (VE) included as part of the Mill Creek Master Plan. Looking at the map he showed, they are talking about roundabout north. They don't need to be tight about things.

**Councilor Henderson** spoke about high residential density in the Mill Creek area having commercial on the first floor. When they think about more residents to feed businesses in Knightville, she thinks of someday when they have five story buildings in Mill Creek. They need to look at holism—population demographics, traffic. They could have a share-a-car; older people don't have iPhones and they could have a small office to help them get car service. They need to think outside the box.

**Caroline** said they have bus service. **Councilor Henderson** said the bus service is wonderful but people who are frail and have disabilities have trouble in the winter.

**Tex** asked if there are other businesses Councilor Henderson's group talked about that could help meet needs of the aging population. **Councilor Henderson** said they have data but looking for the elderly it will show there's a group of people who cannot meet monthly expenses. When people can't drive anymore, what do they do?

**Peter** said tying it to business development, a developer could make a building accessible for the aging population or they could say they want it cheap to move it along. Should the City have regulations in place or incentives?

**Bill M.** said in terms of affordability, there's more demand than available housing stock. There's also a challenge of not enough young people to fill jobs. He spoke about community-based transportation. If you're in a 25-unit building there may be an office to help people getting a car. That way, you don't have the added cost of car, insurance, and parking.

**Buzzy** asked if she's suggesting a tax incentive to create a local bus or trolley for the neighborhood. For an aging population that may be something South Portland could subsidize to create an incentive.

**Councilor Henderson** said she has always thought that but she's thinking more of a business like an apartment with a concierge for a car share.

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**Tom A.** said they would benefit from exposure to the independent transportation network in Westbrook. They could be a partner in this vision of development—enhancing a transition away from cars. He spoke about the City properties and sewage treatment plant. Yankee Ford would have been developed but there are odors. The City owns a significant property in size—the Park. It’s the most underappreciated piece and could be a billboard of what they envision Knightsville to be. He suggests part of their visioning is being open to meshing of purposes.

**Peter** said Yankee is Mill Creek and they fall under the guidelines that they could redevelop with fresh zoning. **Tom A.** said unless they bring them in, they will have a neighbor in Mill Creek affecting the vision in Knightsville.

**Tex** said it goes back to Councilor Henderson; it makes sense that it’s artificial to talk about Knightsville without talking about what could happen in Mill Creek. Yankee was part of the Mill Creek Master Plan. It was a property they did diagrams for to show what could happen there. It showed housing but they’re disappointed to understand Yankee is not interested. The City is interested in wanting Finard to do something with one end of the shopping center. The zoning adopted requires lower heights approaching E Street but lets you go up. There is potential for more businesses and more residents here. The good thing is it wouldn’t impact Knightsville too much.

**Peter** said they can’t do another NAPA—one story, spread out, parking at the road. That is what they are pushing them from doing.

**Tom F.** asked what’s in old Martin’s Point. **Peter** said they’re laid out for a doctor’s office with appointment rooms and a lab. **Tex** said Cape Vet is moving there.

**Buzzy** said that’s an example of the neighborhood dying and you get buildings like this. He spoke about the myth of Knightsville. CIA does well but there’s a massage business and two retail spaces that are offices with their blinds closed. It couldn’t be more unfriendly to the public.

**Peter** said it will turn over; you have to create traffic. **Tex** said there’s a point that it’s a myth of a cool happening place but it’s still out of the way, no destination draw, no critical mass.

**Kathleen** disagreed and said people drive to lamp repair store and Legion Square Market.

**Buzzy** said if you have something they want to get, they will get you. He has had retail tenants who come and leave. He doesn’t think the CIA building is something they would want built again. The feeling he gets is that people don’t want more of that.

**Tom F.** asked if the goal to have the retail spaces filled with something walkable—kitschy stores with people walking around? His friend runs tours for people coming off the cruise ships in Portland and the tourists go to the mall because they’re bored. Someone could open a ferry and bring it in here and flood the place. Is that what people want or is there another vision of what fills the spaces? He spoke about the old mill buildings in Biddeford where they’re packed in with things that have nothing to do with each other.

**Buzzy** said they can’t build another interesting building. Until zoning is figured out, it sits there on hold.

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**Luke** talked about the distinction between destination and drive. Cape Vet is a destination business; you visit it infrequently and go out of way to visit there. Watching the turnover in retail, he's skeptical about retail here in general. It's out of the way and those businesses need more traffic. Contrasting it with parking, those conflict with each other. If you want a retail to thrive, you need more foot traffic or people mulling about. Parking would be an issue if you're increasing retail. He sees turnover in types of businesses that require passing through.

**Tex** asked if office is the only alternative to retail. **Phil N.** said he hasn't heard anyone say there's another alternative—why are we stuck on this? The buildings were built in 1900s and not all have businesses on the first floor; there's residential, restaurants, a grocery store, a bar. His vision is that they reach a point where there's not retail all the way down. Why can't they rethink and have a residential property—not one that is street-level but more elevated, windows high, like a townhouse or brownstone. Knightsville is entirely different since when they prohibited first-floor residential and can accommodate decent housing on the first floor.

**Peter** said there can be other ways to define mixed use. **Tex** said this is a good case where the zoning and business discussions mix. There is a current prohibition of ground floor residential and getting rid of it opens up other opportunities. They've allowed live/work spaces in VE. Would they want to attract live/work places?

**Councilor Henderson** has been to businesses in the Biddeford Mills. It was exciting. She wishes they could incentivize having lower rates to get starter businesses in. She spoke about living where you work.

**Mike** said allowing living there could be an incentive.

**Susanne** said in terms of getting a boat with people over, they could have bikes that people can rent and ride or even mopeds. There are opportunities but how can you get people in?

**Buzzy** asked if South Portland can buy a ferry. There are different regulations to go land to land. **Tex** said yes, a water taxi.

**Melanie** liked the guy who fixed bikes, rented them out, and had a wine store. The location was wrong and she's sad it's gone. She likes the idea of bikes.

**Tom A.** said it's easier to get people here than they think. A charter school would bring in youth, parents, activities, and functions. He suggested a daycare. This portion of the City is underserved by daycare and closely positioned to Portland. The concept of a daycare means lots of children but also better use of the park, docks, and duck pond. There is so much infrastructure already here that could be used in different seasons. That would generate traffic. Feeding people's needs here is easier and cheaper.

**Kathleen** said they keep referencing people coming here. The bridge moved. That's why people didn't want to live on the first floor. They are off the path and the bridge is a hindrance to people in Portland. They need to bridge the rest of South Portland and discuss foot traffic off Broadway. They need to bring families into Knightsville and make getting across Broadway easier.

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**Peter** suggests they try curating an email. There are great ideas and he would like to start building a master list of ideas that they could start to narrow down what works.

**Troy** said to be careful what you wish for. He lives on A Street. and since Foulmouthed opened he has lost on-street parking. People park in front of his driveway and his tenant could not get to work. People go the wrong way and there are people always almost getting hit. The area is crowded.

**Kathleen** reinforced that. She lives in D Street. Since traffic and parking changed she counts when people make a U-turn in the intersection. There is increased traffic on D and people turn around in driveways. It's getting to be dangerous. She agrees that there's a traffic problem. Walking is something they pride themselves on but it is getting more dangerous.

**Bill M.** said he pulled lists of different businesses and is inclined to put it together and circulate it to this group.

## **6. Forum Rescheduling**

**Tex** said the forum will be pushed to Thursday, July 26.

## **7. Comments from the Public**

None

## **8. Round Robin**

**Melanie** said Legere Park is being slated for the new skate park. In Portland they have the park and are servicing 150+ kids a day. They are on a fast track of a year and a half. She's written to several people and doesn't think they have looked at all of their options. She is an advocate for a park but not at Legere. She's concerned and doesn't see how it would work here.

**Caroline** said they would lose green space, which is important in Knightsville where people have small lots or live in condos. They need common space. The argument is that Knightsville has three parks and can give one up. She agrees with Melanie; it was a given that Legere is the best place.

**Troy** was also at the meeting and he said it seemed biased towards Legere. They said it was centrally located and he doesn't think it is. Redbank is at a disadvantage especially with the long bus ride. He also found it was a given and he felt uncomfortable that something sneaky was happening. He has a feeling parents want a private venue.

**Tex** has offered the old Hamlin School as alternative.

**Susanne** said she learns so much here. She asked about hours of operation for the park. Why wouldn't they have it closer to a school with more open space in a safer area?

**Bland** said the park is being used now; it would be a shame. It completes their neighborhood.

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**Luke** said it could be helpful to think about what Knightsville can offer that the Old Port can't. He goes to a co-working space and there's a huge demand for small office space—that could be worth exploring. He used to skateboard and it is noisy.

**Phil N.** said they could build a world class skate park by Bug Light and it would be beautiful to skateboard next to the ocean. No residences would be bothered and it could be off to the side. People would come from all over. It's also on the Greenbelt.

**Mike** is torn about the skate park. He has concerns that a group of young kids will be dumped there. He picks up trash in the area every morning.

**Kathleen** would like to see more family-friendly businesses or activities in neighborhood—things that would support people living there and residents close by. An outdoor pool—something cool for people who live here that would get used. She likes the idea of a checklist of businesses but what can they provide to make life better that isn't a business?

**Buzzy** said he likes residential on the first floor. He also likes the Bug Light idea.

**Barry** likes the idea of a daycare. He tends to do business around the daycare rather than this side of town. There are also waiting lists everywhere.

**Bill M.** said he has worked in communities where they do this and he has observed the level of civic engagement in South Portland. Tex and City staff have done an exceptional job with community meetings. He is pleased to be a part of this.

**Tom F.** likes the small office idea, renting by the hour or having a loft space to live in. Incentivizing creative use of space is the most likely thing to get to the end goal. The more rules, the more unintentional consequences.

**Tex** said this Committee did the West End Master Plan, which won plan of the year. He showed an area where CMP owns property. It's a big piece of land that is potentially permissible for the skate park.

**Tony** said there are great ideas here. Small workspaces would be a great idea. He agrees with the idea of a daycare.

**Barbara** is not for Legere Park; there's a committee forming and they are still looking at locations. Legere Park came into play because kids mentioned it. She spoke to co-working and said there are many people who work from home who need to go into an office.

**Councilor Henderson** said there are wonderful, exciting ideas. She thinks that this potentially foot traffic distance for people who shop in Mill Creek. She likes the idea of trolleys or golf carts. She likes people watching in downtown Portland. She spoke about music and more places where people can sit—more street fun.

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**Mitch** said that going down Commercial Street, there are many buildings he cannot get into. He is in favor of redevelopment so that buildings are more accessible. He's excited about development opportunities, especially for disabled people.

**Tom A.** spoke about collaboration—the City, developers, and residents. They may get Finard to fill the shopping center with a charter school and redevelop the beauty of Legere as an ancillary piece of the school. There is an enhanced opportunity for non-school hours, some during school hours. The concept is to actively enlist partnership and collaboration. Finard has been so empty for so long; they have parking, and are approximate to Portland and Ocean Street. They are a broad player—bringing something that is on the City's agenda and that benefits them but enhances the quality of life here makes sense. It has to be a collaboration.

**Troy** said he is not against the skate park, but it has to be fair for everyone in the City. He picks up trash every morning; he does it because he loves the area and has invested heavily. He's not against the park but not here.

## **9. Adjournment**

**Bob Foster** motioned to adjourn. **Barbara Psychos** seconded. **Unanimous approval.**