

TOWN OF TRENTON Comprehensive Plan Committee – Meeting Minutes

Date: August 26, 2026 | **Time:** 6:00 PM | **Location:** Trenton Town Office

Attendance: Greg Askins, Aaron Brown, Steve Heckman, Christina Heiniger, Chantal Longo-Guess, Peter Lazas, Jarod Rollins (Co-Chair presiding), Judy Sproule, Mary Turner, Jacob Wartell

Absent: John Bennett, Ann Luther

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Co-chair Jarod Rollins.

2. Approval of Minutes

The committee reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as submitted.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

3. Administrative & Infrastructure Updates

- **Remote Meeting Participation & Voting Policy:** Jarod presented findings on Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) requirements (1 M.R.S. § 403-B) regarding remote participation. Under state law, committee members attending via Zoom can only vote if a formal written remote participation policy is adopted following a public hearing. The committee agreed to table remote voting for official actions involving town expenditures until a committee policy is drafted and formally adopted. Jarod will coordinate with the Town Clerk to see about drafting a remote participation policy.
- **Dedicated Town Webpage:** Judy reported on setting up a dedicated Comprehensive Plan webpage on the official town site. Working with Carol and the webmaster, a layout was designed featuring meeting dates, minutes, photos, and a project timeline. The committee confirmed it will use the official municipal site rather than a third-party platform (such as Wix) to ensure security and official standing. Judy will act as liaison to keep content updated.
- **Upcoming Meeting Schedule:** Proposed schedule changes for November and December were discussed to avoid holiday conflicts. The committee proposed holding meetings on the third Wednesday of those months (November 18 and December 16), pending confirmation of room availability.

4. Planning Board Update: Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

- **Public Workshop Recap:** Greg Askins and Jacob Wartell updated the committee on the Planning Board's recent public working session.
- **Community Feedback:** Public straw polling showed overwhelming support for mandatory STR registration, health/safety inspections, application fees, occupancy limits based on septic capacity, parking regulations, and mandatory fire safety/nuisance rules

for guests. Community opinion remains divided regarding numerical caps on short-term rentals.

- **Land Use Ordinance (LUO) Analysis:** The committee discussed how Trenton's current LUO treats short-term rentals. Under Section 3.1, uses not specifically permitted are prohibited. While seasonal rentals are allowed as conditional uses in Residential Growth areas, transient lodging is not explicitly authorized in Rural Residential zones. The Planning Board is preparing new draft ordinance language for a town vote at the May meeting.
- **Regional Coordination:** The committee discussed coordinating with neighboring Hancock County communities through the League of Towns (via Tremont Town Manager Thurlow or Select Board representative Fred) to address short-term rentals as a regional housing issue.

5. Community Survey Review & Refinement

The committee conducted a line-by-line review of the draft survey incorporating feedback from Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPC) planner Avery Varney:

- **Survey Flow & Order:** Agreed to move demographic questions toward the end to prevent survey fatigue and lead with engaging visioning questions.
- **Employment & Local Economy (Q5):** Retained the distinction between home-based microbusinesses and standard businesses to gather accurate data on Trenton's informal/creative economy. Agreed to add a question capturing whether residents work inside or outside of Trenton.
- **Housing Affordability (Q8):** Expanded the definition of housing costs to explicitly include rent/mortgage, property taxes, utilities, and insurance when assessing the 30% income threshold. Removed short-term rentals from the housing type list to avoid confusing lodging with long-term housing.
- **Commercial Development (Q19):** Revised the question regarding unwanted commercial uses to be open-ended and neutral, removing references that singled out existing permitted uses (e.g., medical cannabis, storage units).
- **Water Resources & Testing (Q24–Q29):** Simplified the water section by removing technical questions regarding past well testing history and specific ordinance enforcement.
- **Climate Resilience (Q30):** Reframed the question to ask what priority level the town should place on allocating tax revenue toward climate change mitigation and coastal resilience.
- **Public Water Access (Q31):** Streamlined phrasing to ask directly whether residents feel public shoreline/water access in Trenton is adequate or needs expansion.

6. Public Outreach & October Kickoff Event Planning

- **Kickoff Visioning Session:** Reaffirmed plans to host a large public Visioning Session in October at the Trenton Elementary School gym to launch the survey.
- **Subcommittee Formation:** Recognizing the lead time required for publicity and logistics (EDDM mailings, posters, town newsletter), the committee formed an Event Subcommittee.
- **Subcommittee Meeting:** An open subcommittee planning meeting was scheduled for **September 9, 2026, at 5:00 PM** at the Town Office.

7. Public Comment

No public comments were offered.

8. Action Items & Next Steps

- **Judy:** Share page layout draft with committee and coordinate with Carol/webmaster to publish the official webpage.
- **Jarod:** finalize survey edits based on tonight's review.
- **Event Subcommittee:** Meet on **September 9th at 5:00 PM** to plan venue, maps, publicity, and logistics for the October Visioning Session.
- **Select Board / Town Liaison:** Reach out to the League of Towns regarding regional STR coordination.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Next Scheduled Regular Meeting: September 23, 2026, at 6:00 PM at the Trenton Town Office.