

MASG Steering Committee 11.13.2020 9-11 am

1. Member Update Roundtable

Greater Portland Landmarks:

- October Climate Change Symposium: Staying Above Water
 - 200 registrants.
 - Finishing Property Owner Guide for buildings impacted by rising sea levels
- Atlanta Black Box Project:
 - highlighting the history of slave trade across New England.
 - Munjoy Hill historic district designation goes before the City Council next week (Monday, November 16).
 - Annual Meeting Dec 3 with Inaugural Legacy Business Awards.
 - Historic Tax Credit advocacy with MEREDA and other MASG steering committees.
 - Involved in the newly-formed Cultural Alliance of Maine, established to create a strong statewide network of cultural organizations/businesses and provide an advocacy voice in Augusta. Will be announcing shortly a part-time coordinator position to help advance the work.
 - [updated Maine Historic Preservation Tax Credit economic impact report](#)

Portland Downtown:

- To focus on Portland referenda and COVID adaptations.
 - 67 outdoor permits submitted/approved for parklets, tents, etc for sidewalk dining. This will likely be a long term improvement/adaptation.
 - Working with GPCOG and others with their Resiliency AmeriCorps members on winter adaptations.
 - Winter DineOut best practices outreach.
<https://www.mainewinterdine.com/>
 - DECD funding sought for “creative solutions”.
 - Holiday activities in the works, with [Christmas tree cam](#).

Northern Forest Center:

- Millinocket:
 - Sixth residence renovation completed
 - working on downtown revitalization there.
 - Outdoor recreation focus with partners as well.
 - Comparable work in Lancaster NH and others in the region.
 - MaineWest is working with Mia Purcell of Community Concepts Finance Corp, Maine Broadband Coalition on Broadband Boot Camp for communities to initiate local broadband committees.
 - Piloting with MBCoalition a statewide crowdsourced speed testing initiative
 - with mapping to capture data which can be used to challenge FCC maps that over represent broadband speeds.

- Incentivizing community use of Maine Trails app.
- New initiative to develop visitor ethics to deter harmful impacts of outdoor tourism.

Maine Association of Planners:

- We will be sharing notes from this meeting with MAP Legislative Policy Committee.
- Tex Haeuser contracted with State to report to Climate Council regarding land use planning considerations for climate goals.
 - The link when it is posted can be emailed to committee members.
 - This is a report prepared for the GOPIF to fulfill task 1.1 of the Community Resilience Pilot Project With an interest in efforts of GSM and BuildMaine on broader land use and planning policy.

Maine Downtown Center:

- mdf Lead Now leadership programs transitioning to online
<https://www.mdf.org/leadership-development/lead-now-online-leadership-programs/>
- AmeriCorps Volunteers on site in several cities
- Annual Meeting pending.
- Working Communities Challenge:
<https://www.bostonfed.org/workingplaces/communities-challenge/maine.aspx>
- Assisting Millinocket with their downtown plan
- PictureMaine to tweak incentive to bring more filmmakers working in Maine.
- "Company plans biorefinery for zero-emission heating oil in Maine. Biofine Developments Northeast Inc. of Bangor has formed a partnership with Sprague Resources LP to produce a patented biofuel made from forest product waste."
<https://www.pressherald.com/2020/10/28/company-plans-biorefinery-for-zero-emission-heating-oil-in-maine/>

BuildMaine:

- Held a small-scale developer workshop last month, and boot camp on March 2nd.
- They continued state-level work to redirect development to priority growth areas.
- Will be reaching out to partners to get more input, believe we'll be speaking with the Maine Association of Planners in January, potentially working with GrowSmart.
- Incredible need to advance policy solutions, with major projects being proposed on highway greenfield sites in Kittery and Freeport, which are counter to climate and financial goals.
- Anticipate Maine housing committee with Ryan Fecteau following housing policy conversation in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.
- We are following an effort in Maine to advance 40B legislation, modeled on Massachusetts, which is concerned with the approach to promoting housing.

GrowSmart Maine:

- Summit
 - It was a success with 80 virtual attendees and about 50 in-person participants at six locations all connected through the internet.
 - We are following up on the theme of building on the value of home rule with the potential of regional solutions.

- Through the keynotes, breakout sessions, and follow up forum, three areas have been identified as priorities:
 - within the Climate Action Plan, focus on removing barriers to renewable energy generation;
 - housing choices across Maine;
 - land use regulation and enforcement.
 - More to come on all this.
- Our Maine Smart Growth Awards were presented via a 12-minute video that is now available on our website.
- Energy Efficiency Community Campaign in Biddeford and Windham:
 - With the departure of Jodi Castillo, our Community Outreach Director, we will be bringing on an AmeriCorps member to work with partners in the Energy Efficiency Community Campaign in Biddeford and Windham.
 - more to follow.
 - We also see these are avenues to cultivate interest and funding in our Housing Choices for a Well-rounded Community program.
- Advocacy efforts:
 - focused on the broadband referendum in July, with the Maine Broadband Coalition, and work with CEI, Maine Preservation, Greater Portland Landmarks and MEREDA, supporting the state's historic rehab tax credit.
 - We are building on our Racial Equity statement with a series of forums on racial equity and smart growth.
 - Within the Climate Action Plan, we continue to highlight the carbon benefits of adaptive reuse of existing buildings over demolition and new construction and greenfield construction.

The Nature Conservancy in Maine

- was unable to attend today but Nancy shared updates from a meeting with Rob and Kaitlyn yesterday.
- They are fully engaged in the Climate Action Plan, are looking toward a possible bond package in 2021, continuing to address equity through engagement with the Tribal Sovereignty Bill.

2. Advocacy Update from Members

State:

Leadership races:

House Ryan Fecteau will be Speaker

Michele Dunphy as Majority Leader

Majority Whip will be Rachel Talbot Ross

House Republicans: Rep. Kathleen Dillingham, R-Oxford Leader and

Rep. Joel Stetkis, R-Canaan, as Assistant Leader.

Senate: Troy Jackson will be Sen President again

Sen. Nate Libby, D-Lewiston, majority leader

Sen. Eloise Vitelli, D-Arrowsic, assistant majority leader.

Republicans - tbd

MDC/mdf:

- With the singular push in state for electrification of HVAC, Maine-sourced wood byproducts are being overlooked
- advanced wood products can be seen as a component of clean energy solutions

GSM:

- We will continue to
 - lead advocacy efforts with the Maine Broadband Coalition,
 - work with partners to support the state's historic rehab tax credit,
 - consider a concept bill on regional approaches perhaps with an eye towards the property tax differential between urban service centers and rural hubs with surrounding areas.
 - be watching the budget as well as bond discussions.

Federal:

Greater Portland Landmarks: We're monitoring the Historic Tax Credit on the federal level:

<https://forum.savingplaces.org/HigherLogic/System/DownloadDocumentFile.ashx?DocumentFileKey=e26b8773-b9f1-496c-10d5-f31189c0f3d5&forceDialog=0%20>

Northern Forest Center likely not focused on advocacy in the coming year.

Portland Downtown: Federal discussions: standstill while the dust settles.

GrowSmart Maine: Smart Growth America is working with state organizations to draft a priority list for the administration's first 100 days.

Maine Preservation: also advocating for Federal historic tax credit improvements

Municipal:

- Portland referenda implications City Council is reviewing
<http://portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29039/Ballot-Question-Initiative-language-Nov-2020>
 - Increased Minimum Wage with increase of 50% during emergency: city council sees it implemented Jan 2022.
 - Almost certain lawsuit pending.
 - If workers are either headquartered in Portland, or working in Portland, both have implications.
- Air BnB restrictions is the only referenda that did not pass.
- Question C:
 - GPL and GSM opposed.
 - Portland Downtown did not engage.
 - GPL had concerns with process and how drafted,
 - the waiver process does not include mechanism for federal historic rehabilitation projects.
 - the apprenticeship requirement is lacking available local labor for this and union requirement.
 - Kara involved through YIMBY:Portland there are many reasons good intentions were not realized with these proposals.

Summary of “Green New Deal” passed in Portland November 2020

The language requires contractors to hire an increasing share of apprentices on projects in the city. The level would be phased in over time, from 10 percent in 2021 and 2022, to 25 percent in 2025

- It updates and changes energy-efficiency and roofing requirements in the city’s Green Building code;
- increases workforce housing requirements in certain new development projects
- while simultaneously lowering the allowable rents and sales prices,
- as well as the income limits for people qualifying for those units, and
- adds an apprenticeship requirement for city-funded projects

The council can’t amend or repeal the ordinance for at least five years. Any changes during that period would have to come through another referendum, which could be initiated by the council.

The new ordinance will require all city-funded projects over \$50,000 to participate in a formal apprenticeship program.

It also would require certain residential developments to include 25 percent of units at a price affordable to middle-income residents, **as opposed to the preexisting 10 percent requirement**. It also would lower the income levels determining who would qualify for those units

3. Smartinis

- Two dates / locations, limited invite list, outdoor venues with COVID compliance:
 - August/Augusta - 14 attendees
 - October/Hallowell 20 attendees.
- Feedback:
 - People were SO pleased to have a chance to see others in person
 - The smart growth tours were well received.
- Thanks to
 - Augusta Downtown Alliance’s Michael Hall for co-hosting and setting up the tour
 - Anne Ball for designing the walking tour of Stevens Commons in Hallowell.
- Next Round? Bonfire in Bath? Monitoring pandemic data
- COVID precautions
 - Caution continues with gatherings,
 - don’t want to be a spreader event so Nancy will monitor COVID and explore another outdoor Smartinis when it seems feasible,
 - Will seek input from this group at that time.



- Currently Smartinis are on hold.

4. MASG Revamp Updates on:

- Membership connections
 - Email updates: summary notes of these meetings
 - Smartinis: noted above
 - Facebook Group:
 - exists but not very active.
 - How can we use this as an effective educational tool?
 - Steering Committee:
 - Rural town/Small City representation to replace Eastport:
 - Nate Rudy, City Manager of Hallowell, will be invited to join.