

A workshop meeting of the Bath Planning Board was held on Tuesday, August 5, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cal Stilphen
Robert Gersh
Greg Johnson
James Hopkinson, Vice Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT

Bob Oxton, Chair
Andy Omo
Phyllis Bailey

STAFF PRESENT

John Rutecki, Assistant City Planner

Planning Board Vice Chair, Jim Hopkinson, called the meeting to order in the second-floor conference room at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, August 5, 2025. He opened the floor to Assistant City Planner John Rutecki, who provided updates on ongoing projects within the Planning Office.

Mr. Rutecki began by informing the Board that BIW had submitted revisions to their request for a Zoning Amendment to reduce certain setbacks in the Industrial Shipyard Zone. The revisions limited areas of proposed setback reduction to more specific locations, and no reduction in the area surrounding the Transporter Road. The request would go before the City Council on August 6, 2025, where it would be approved or potentially transferred back to the Planning Board for further workshopping and review.

Mr. Rutecki then informed the board that the Planning Office is currently examining updates to the Fee Schedule for planning applications. He demonstrated that Bath's current fees, unchanged since 2011, are low relative to nearby municipalities, and like do not cover the city's processing costs as intended. He observed that, when Bath's current fees with numbers adjusted for inflation, the adjusted fees are more consistent with those of other communities. He noted that fees must be based on a reasonable approximation of administrative costs incurred by the city. To illustrate the complexity of such approximations, he referred to a series of newspaper ads used by the city to notify the public about Planning Board meetings: the cost of an advertisement is determined by the size in print, and is unrelated to the number of applicants, making it difficult to apportion the cost consistently and evenly to all applicants.

Mr. Rutecki moved on to the subject of submission requirements for applications like Site Plan and Subdivision review. He notified the Board that the Planning Office is proposing several minor revisions to the current list, both additive and subtractive, and to extract submission requirements from the land use code to exist externally. A list of submission requirements would be accessible to applicants via the Planning Office, the city website, and attached to applications. An external list would be more quickly and easily amended as needed for changes in code, technology, etc.

Vice Chair Jim Hopkinson suggested that the proposed external lists of submission requirements should be approved by the Planning Board and reviewed periodically (possibly annually). The other Board members appeared to concur. He also noted that

Department Head Review of Site Plans had previously been helpful in determining whether the application is complete.

Mr. Rutecki then addressed the new draft Floodplain Management Ordinance based on a model provided by the Maine Floodplain Management Program. The new ordinance includes updates from 2015-2025 to align with state guidelines. He noted the following unresolved items and offered the Planning Office's suggestions:

- FEMA requires the ordinance to designate a Floodplain Administrator. The Planning Office proposes to designate the Code Enforcement Officer.
- Hydrologic and Landscape analysis must be conducted by either a Professional Engineer or a Qualified Professional. The planning Office proposes the latter.
- The new draft ordinance includes language regarding fees based on the state model, as well as language from the current ordinance. The Planning Office proposes to use the language draft as written.

The Board did not object to the above proposals.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:50 PM.

Notes prepared by City Planning Staff