BATH PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP NOTES September 1, 2026

A workshop meeting of the Bath Planning Board was held on Tuesday, September 1, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT
Robert Gersh
Andy Omo
George Sprague
Cal Stilphen

MEMBERS ABSENT
Bob Oxton, Chair
James Hopkinson, Vice Chair
Greg Johnson

STAFF PRESENT
John Rutecki, Assistant City Planner

Planning Board Member Andy Omi commenced the meeting at 5:00 PM and opened the floor to Assistant City Planner John Rutecki.

Mr. Rutecki updated the Board on the status of the new Land Use Code (LUC), scheduled for a second and final vote of approval by the City Council on September 2, 2026. He provided a review of changes that will affect Planning Board review processes, including Site Plan, Subdivision, Shoreland Zone and Waterfront Setback Reduction, Historic District, and Demolition Delay. Mr. Rutecki noted alerted the Board to other changes to remember during upcoming project review, such as renamed zoning districts, commercial and mixed-use design standards, specific principal and accessory use standards, and alternative residential development options.

Mr. Rutecki then introduced prospective post-adoption amendments for the Board to consider if the new LUC is passed:

- Lighting Standards – Section 9.8
  - Reconsider Security Lighting Exemptions
  - Additional Requirements for Outdoor Recreational Fields
- MC(C5) Uses left out by oversight
  - Short-Term Rentals
  - Accessory Outdoor Storage (Section 8.4.E)
  - Accessory Outdoor Sales and Display (Section 8.4.D)
- Battery Energy Storage Systems (as discussed at the June 2nd Board workshop)
  - Add Use definition to Section 8.6
  - Add Use Principle and Accessory Use Standards to Sections 8.3 & 8.4
  - Designate districts where allowed
- Data Centers (ca. January)
  - Draft an appropriate ordinance to align State Guidance expected in January 2027
- Remove outmoded Contract Zones
- Time limit for Site Plan Amendments

- Approved Site Plans should be ineligible for amendments after issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy

The Board agreed that they would like to move forward in preparing recommendations to the City Council regarding the amendments above. There was some concern about allowing Short Term Rentals (STR) in the MC (C5) District. Mr. Rutecki explained the Board had previously reached consensus at the December 3, 2024 workshop meeting to allow STR in all districts that allow residential uses, and that the City General Ordinance (Chapter 5, Article 17) should sufficiently control for impacts. Mr. Rutecki also noted that City staff were examining whether STR in the MC District should be included in the new LUC as it was implied to be the original intent of the Board, because the C5 did not allow residential uses at the time of the 2024 workshop. The Board acknowledged this possibility and agreed to discuss the issue further if is not included in the new Code at the time of adoption.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.

Notes prepared by City Planning Staff