

Plan Commission & Task Force Minutes

Town of Washburn

Town Hall

Tuesday, January 7, 2025

Commission members present: Cyndi Belanger (secretary), Kim Bro (chair), Jim Park (town board representative), Tim Schwenzfeier (vice chair), Caroline Twombly.

Commission members absent: none.

Planning Task Force members present: Terri Bahe, Tom Cogger, Phil Kraus, Dennis Weibel.

Planning Task Force members absent: Ryan Padrutt, Alex Prediger, Charmaine Swan.

Others present: Northwest Regional Planning Commission consultants Clem Larson (mapping), Emily Nelson (planning) attended online.

1. Chairman Bro called the meeting of the commission to order at 7:00 P.M. and verified its legal notification (posted on town website and at town hall and Tetzner Dairy on January 4).
2. The minutes of the December 3, 2024 meeting were approved (Tim moves, Cyndi seconds).
3. Clem has posted links at NWRPC to maps he has produced:
 - Map1_RecreationalResources-print.pdf: Terri will mark numbers for historic/cultural sites. Kim will scan Terri's mark-up and send it to Clem.
 - Map2_TransportationSystem-print.pdf: This looks good.
 - Map3_PASER-print.pdf: Caroline said that she thinks the state PASER road condition map may not be up to date. For example, the condition of Church Corner Road pavement seems worse than the PASER system indicates. We need to check whether the system can be updated before the final map is included in the plan.
 - Map4_PrimeFarmland-print.pdf: This looks good.
 - Map5_Topography-print.pdf: This looks good.
 - Map6_Soils-print.pdf: This is a map of general categories, as with the previous plan.
 - Map7_ExistingLandUse-print.pdf: We need to double check based on the land use categories that the county wants all towns to use.
 - Map8_FutureLandUse-print.pdf: We need to double check based on the land use categories that the county wants all towns to use. Kim will send the definitions that the county wants towns to use.
 - Map9_FutureLandUseOverlay-print.pdf: See notes for Map8.
 - Map10_Zoning-print.pdf: This looks good.

We also asked Clem to produce a "Natural Resources" map, a "Bicycle Routes" map showing the Washburn–Ondossagon Road Loop and the Moquah Barrens–Washburn Loop from the "Bicycle Map for Ashland and Bayfield Counties," and the Town of Washburn portion of the "Groundwater Table" map on the Bayfield County Land Records website.

4. The chapter subgroups summarized their progress in revising and updating the plan chapters:
 - Kim asked the subgroups to list goals and objectives in the chapters using the definitions he previously distributed. The 2007 often listed action steps as objectives or subobjectives. The only place to show action steps is in the tables in the "Implementation" chapter, which shows timing and those responsible for taking action. An action step could be to recruit an *ad hoc* committee to lead implementation. The Plan Commission and the Town Board likely cannot implement every action step in the plan. Preparers of plans often confuse the differences between goals, objectives and actions. Here are the terms:
 - ◆ **Goals:** Broad, value-based statements describing a condition that we hope to see in the town in the long term (20 years or more). Goals specifically address key issues, opportunities, and problems described in the chapter narrative.

- ◆ **Objectives:** Statements of the specific changes that will occur in the town toward achieving a goal. Objectives should be measurable, achievable within the timeframe, and relate directly to the objective.
- ◆ **Actions:** A stepwise set of activities that lead toward achieving an objective. Because each action needs to occur in a specific timeframe, it should have a date of completion and not be “ongoing,” and those responsible for taking the step should be identified in the “Implementation” table
- **Issues and Opportunities:** Kim describer four key issues that the plan should address:
 1. Preserving rural character by reducing fragmentation of forests and farmlands.
 2. Serving an increasingly older population and smaller household size.
 3. Providing affordable housing and childcare as working families are recruited to replace retirees.
 4. Increasing demand for opportunities to be close to nature.

The State of Wisconsin has prepared updated population projections. Emily will update the projections in the chapter and add side-by-side age/sex projections for Bayfield County to show the increasing proportion of elderly people expected in the future.
- **Housing:** Many of the actions in the 2007 plan can be trimmed. The focus will be on providing sites for new houses that do not greatly increase fragmentation of larger parcels.
- **Utilities and Community Facilities:** This chapter has been updated, but there needs to be some further editing to differentiate between existing, ongoing functions and planned changes. Action steps need to be moved to the “Implementation” chapter.
- **Transportation:** This chapter has been updated, but action steps need to be moved to the “Implementation” chapter. The PASER data is not up to date. Create an action timetable rather than “ongoing” action steps.
- **Economic Development:** Many of the actions in the 2007 plan can be trimmed. Focus on development specific to the town.
- **Agricultural & Natural Resources:** This section has been updated, but action steps need to be moved to the “Implementation” chapter. Create an action timetable rather than “ongoing” action steps. Add an objective for preventing future fragmentation of industrial forestlands.
- **Cultural Resources:** This section has been updated, but action steps need to be moved to the “Implementation” chapter.
- **Land Use:** This chapter and map still needs revision. Some areas west of the Ondossagon Road north-south line have become *de facto* rural residential areas. We need to propose a way to define them in the “Future Land Use” map.

The draft plan needs to be completed **no later than the January 28th meeting** so that Emily can bring a hard copy for the Washburn Public Library and a PDF copy for the town website on February 4th.

5. Kim shared a draft notice for the *Ashland Daily Press* of the March 6th a public hearing. It needs to be published at least thirty days prior to the hearing. The group approved publishing the notice.
6. The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. at the town hall..
7. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 P.M. (Cyndi moves, Caroline seconds).

Draft submitted by: Kenneth Bro, Chair, Town of Washburn Plan Commission (January 16, 2025).

Plan Commission Report

The commission recommends that the town board attend the March 6th public hearing on the draft plan.