

EDGECOMB PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC MEETING
MINUTES, MARCH 3, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 p.m. by Vice Chairman Katharine Braid. Planning Board members present were Dave Boucher, Katharine Braid, Bruce Cameron and alternate Amy Winston. Also present were Selectman Jo Cameron, Charlotte Boynton of the Wiscasset News and five residents.

Katharine Braid said the purpose of the public meeting was to consider an amendment to the Edgcomb Land Use Ordinance dealing with performance standards for large-scale development. The previous year voters approved a size cap, and the amendment under consideration puts standards on building appearance, parking, landscaping, lighting, screening, and location within the community. The visual standards will apply to non-residential buildings of a certain size, i.e. commercial, retail, or service. The uses are outlined in the definition of large-scale development found at the end of the proposed ordinance.

The size cap passed the previous year limits the size of retail businesses to less than 35,000 square feet of floor area, whether or not an aggregate of structures. Katharine Braid asked for feedback on the definition of large-scale developments found in the draft amendment.

Large Scale development. Unless otherwise described, a retail sales establishment that exceeds 10,000 sf of gross floor area or a non-residential development that exceeds 25,000 sf of gross floor area, a commercial development with a drive-thru facility or outdoor fuel sales, or a formula restaurant; large scale development does not include agricultural buildings or commercial greenhouses and nurseries accessory to a retail or wholesale sales establishment.

She said that the definition of "retail" in the current ordinance includes the sale, rental, or lease of goods or services to the ultimate consumer for direct use or consumption. Therefore, the standards will apply not only to stores but also to service establishments. Drive-thru facilities could include banks and pharmacies as well as restaurants. Formula restaurants would include McDonalds, Dunkin' Donuts and other chains with consistent colors and designs.

Excluded from large-scale developments in the draft are agricultural buildings or commercial greenhouses and nurseries accessory to a retail or wholesale sales establishment. According to the original Comprehensive Plan and work done by the current Comprehensive Plan Committee, the majority of Edgcomb residents wants Edgcomb to remain rural and marine and agricultural uses encouraged. The Planning Board has also discussed excluding from the standards marine uses and public facilities. Marine uses would include boat manufacturing, boat repair, shrink-wrapping, boat storage, etc. whether or not directly on the water.

She emphasized that the amendment would apply to new construction and/or expansion of buildings. In response to Bruce Cameron's question, Katharine Braid said that she would confirm with Bob Faunce that non-residential developments would include wholesale establishments, warehouses and all forms of manufacturing.

In response to a question from a Mike Elkins, Katharine Braid said that the Edgcomb Land Use Ordinance does not prohibit commercial, retail or industrial uses in any area of town, although there may be lot size requirements, which must be met. She listed the proposed criteria for

large-scale developments (building appearance, parking, landscaping, lighting, screening, etc.) and said that the amendment does not prevent uses, but it may be more costly to build according to the proposed standards. This might tend to discourage location of a business in Edgecomb if a neighboring town does not have the same restrictions.

Amy Winston said that there is a small-scale manufacturing niche, which, with diversity, should be encouraged. Mike Elkins suggested that the wood products industry should be excluded.

Katharine Braid said that Edgecomb must look to the future and avoid making it too difficult for an employer (who would provide jobs) to build in Edgecomb. Steve Burt commented that the terrain in town limited the large areas where development could occur. He said town-based businesses were beneficial but the performance standards shouldn't be gutted to accommodate them. He suggested that marine uses off the water would tend to be larger than those on the water and should be held accountable to the standards.

In response to the suggestion that an area be set aside similar to an industrial park where there would be fewer restrictions, Katharine Braid said that neither the current zoning nor the proposed amendment allows that; however, the amendment does include additional standards for retail establishments between 20,000 s.f. and 35,000 s.f. requiring that those buildings be located in areas that are not visible or are screened from the road. She suggested that if the town wants to set aside a specific area for industrial development, the place to start would be with the Comprehensive Plan Committee, which is now revising the current plan. The ordinances implement the comprehensive plan and at present there is no foundation in the plan for establishing such an area.

With regard to an exclusion for public facilities, Katharine Braid said this would include sports facilities, a hospital, fire station, town hall, etc. She asked whether those present favored excluding these uses from the performance standards. She said many sports facilities that are used extensively would not meet the standards. Steve Burt said that public facilities generally have a better funding base with which to hire architects to produce an attractive building and should be held to the standards.

In an informal poll, six of those present favored excluding agricultural uses from the standards, five voted to exclude greenhouses, four voted to exclude marine uses, no one voted to exclude public facilities, and three voted to exclude natural resource-based, value-added manufacturing.

Katharine Braid briefly reviewed the performance standards described in the pamphlet provided by Bob Faunce. Building appearance includes roof lines, facades, exterior building materials, etc. The outdoor sales standard applies to car dealerships and stores, which, like Ames Hardware, have outside displays of merchandise. There are standards for customer parking, and lighting standards deal with the height of lights and the illumination produced so it does not affect abutting properties. Also addressed are landscaping, screening, separation, building foundations, all designed to make the development more attractive and to conform to New England-type architecture.

The definition of buffer was read and there were no objections to it

There was a suggestion that the standards address the corporate structure to encourage Maine-based businesses. Katharine Braid said that it probably would not be possible to do that, as it might be considered discriminatory, but the town could offer incentives to encourage those

businesses. With regard to formula restaurants, she said they are not prohibited, but they must conform to the performance standards. As to offering financial incentives, Katharine Braid said that was not possible for the Planning Board to do; however, Maine State statutes do allow incentives for state-funded buildings.

It was suggested that those having issues, which were mentioned but which are not directly applicable to the performance standards, contact the Comprehensive Plan Committee and/or Planning Board for discussion.

There will be a second public meeting on March 15 and a public hearing on March 24.

The public meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.