

City of Biddeford
Policy Committee
April 29, 2025 at 6:00 PM
City Hall Council Chambers & Zoom

1. Roll Call

Councilor Belanger - present

Councilor LaFountain - present

Councilor Beaupre - present

Mr. Pierson - absent

Acting City Manager Brian Phinney - present

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Adjustment(s) to Agenda

None

4. Approval of Minutes

4.a Policy Committee Minutes 3-24-25

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion approved.

5. Discussion/Review

5.a Clifford Park Conservation Easement(s) Review

Manager Phinney reviewed the revised draft and references up for discussion. Specifically, structures, motorized vehicles, timber cutting, protected property use, rights of interest, specific property descriptions, and maps.

Councilor Beaupre - motion to recommend the revised easement to City Council.

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Public Comment – one citizen commented previous groups had recommended an easement, questions about the maps, the importance of a management plan for the park and possible funding for it.

Councilor LaFountain motion to strike the word “daytime” on line 138.

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Councilor LaFountain asked for the shading on the maps for the Council vote to also exclude the Pool St playground area. He asked if a forest management plan should be included in the conservation easement.

Councilor Belanger – would have the authority to do it without adding new language to the easement.

Councilor LaFountain asked if due diligence with Maine Coast Heritage Trust should be done before or after going to the Council.

Manager Phinney suggested it should be before.

Vote on the motion as amended: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

5.b Proposed Ordinance Solar Energy Systems

Councilor LaFountain - motion to adopt the ordinance as presented.

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Brad Favreau, Development and Sustainability Coordinator presented the ordinance and the process it has gone through since last summer. The ordinance will help the Sustainability Commission meet its greenhouse gas emission targets and to meet goals in the Climate Action Plan.

Councilor Beaupre asked about the email from Dirigo that suggested language changes.

Nick Sampson reviewed their recommendations.

Councilor LaFountain had a question on page 6, where the natural areas defined might be? Areas would need to be investigated and paid for by the applicant. He would like to have information about the economic impact, specifically tax implications for the city. He also confirmed that Section D – roof solar and small-scale ground installations would require building permits and the standards per zone.

Councilor Belanger suggested adding language so that a building permit is required. He wants to commend all those who have worked on the ordinance, it is reasonable and easy to read. It is well vetted.

The Councilors do not agree with the Dirigo suggestions.

Public comment – two people with solar developments commented on the prime soil language and PFAS exemptions on prime land.

One citizen commented on the net billing process.

Councilor LaFountain asked about the decommissioning language and if it has been tested. He also asked about clear cutting, waiting and then adding solar. This was confirmed. He is generally supportive of solar, but Biddeford has few large parcels that the large would fit. He would like to see more on the economic impact and would support the small and medium scale projects.

Councilor Beaupre – motion to Table until the economic study can be completed and available for review by the Policy Committee.

Second: Councilor LaFountain.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed

**5.c Statutory Committees: Board of Assessment Review, Planning Board, Shellfish
Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals**

Board of Assessment Review - Manager Phinney explained the committee's structure and requirements.

Councilor LaFountain asked if it could be combined and staffed with the same people as the Zoning Board of Appeals. It also helps with quorums.

Councilor Belanger asked what makes sense with the committee structure, it should be standardized with the details mentioned in the March meeting. He suggests 5 members, 2 alternates, 3-year terms that are staggered. He supports combining the two. With 2 subcommittees based on the topic.

Councilor Beaupre agrees that they should be combined, and terms should be staggered.

Councilor Belanger asked Manager Phinney to start looking at the necessary ordinance changes.

Planning Board – Manager Phinney explained the structure and state requirements. Duties are very well defined.

Councilors discussed the structure of the committee.

Councilor Belanger - membership language needs to change, the chairperson terms, chair titles should be consistent, section H 7, nothing listed in what needs to be included, should be added or remove the sentence, remove the 2-person limit per ward. Also remove the responsibility for preparing the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilor Beaupre would like to see the recommended changes in writing for Policy to review.

Councilor LaFountain pointed out on page 11, item g the state language recommends 10% of affordable housing.

Shellfish Conservation Commission -

Councilor LaFountain recommends combining this commission with the Harbor Commission. He mentioned that the staff liaison for both is the City Clerk as well as the Shellfish Warden and the Harbor Master.

Councilor Belanger asked about the commission members getting licenses in advance. (*Clerk note - this was already removed with the March 2025 ordinance change*). Make this 5 members, 2 alternates, staggered terms.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Councilor Belanger make changes parallel with the Board of Assessment Review.

Other committees -

Councilor LaFountain would like to look at the recommended changes for the Finance Committee meeting. And then get feedback from the committee members and the public.

Councilor LaFountain asked for the Condo Conversion Ordinance on the next agenda.

6. Adjourn

Motion: Councilor LaFountain at 7:52pm

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Meeting adjourned: