

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, June 1, 2026 @ 5:15 PM
Council Chambers, First Floor of City Hall

MEETING MINUTES

City Councilors Present: Leonard, Beck, Fish, Deane, Faloon, Walker, Mallar

City Staff Present: Krieg, Collette, Gunderman, Lear, O'Donnell

Chair Leonard called the meeting to order at 6:19 P.M.

1. Proposed Code Amendments

A. Historic Preservation Process

Planning Officer Collette presented to the Committee and provided an update on the Historic Preservation process. Collette explained that ordinance changes have been implemented based on workshops with the Historic Preservation Commission as well as feedback from the Maine Preservation Commission and the City's legal staff.

Chair Leonard asked the Committee for questions or comments.

Councilor Beck asked about an example of an applicant considering asphalt versus slate in a historic preservation project. Planning Officer Collette responded that the Commission should have increased flexibility in evaluating materials that are appropriate to use.

Chair Leonard opened public comment.

Rick Violette, a general contractor in Bangor and an owner in the Broadway Historic District, expressed that while he appreciates the attempt to make the ordinance clearer, he does not believe that is being accomplished with this change. He expressed that the ordinance requiring applicants to match materials when "technically and economically feasible" without defining this feasibility allows the Commission to still require same-material replacement. He voiced concern over a burden on applicants with having to prove hardship to the Commission. Violette said that if the street view of a new material matches in appearance as the original, the material should be acceptable, and that the ordinance lacks precedent.

Chair Leonard asked Planning Officer Collette how the ordinance could make character-defining traits clearer. Collette expressed the desire to conduct more workshops with the Commission to determine and define character-defining features for each district for the second round of ordinance changes. Community and Economic Development Director Krieg added that the National Park Service defines character-defining features and believes a district-by-district analysis will be helpful.

Chair Leonard expressed wanting to move the proposed changes forward as a stepping stone, but would like to see further updates.

Councilor Fish asked if the decision could be postponed in order to allow time to compare the stakeholder memo and the ordinance. Planning Officer Collette responded that while it is not time sensitive, the current ordinance requires an affirmative vote of 4 Commission Members to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness, which provides a challenge due to meeting attendance. Chair Leonard expressed wanting the changes to pass in order to allow the Historic Preservation Commission to respond to applications in a timely fashion. Leonard asked if the entire ordinance needs to pass in full or if it could partially be moved forward. Collette responded it could be revised to only encompass the number of members needed to approve applications.

Chair Leonard asked Councilor Fish if this would address her concern – she confirmed.

Chair Leonard asked the Committee if there are any issues with the amended change -- there were none.

Chair Leonard asked the Committee for any further questions.

Councilor Beck asked that if the ordinance is solving an issue but the Committee believes there is more improvement to be done, if it could be passed as-is and revisited at a later time to further improve it. Chair Leonard responded it could be tabled for a special workshop. Planning Officer Collette said that she plans to include more workshops and feedback with the upcoming round of ordinance updates to better define character-defining features, as well as add guidelines for new construction in historic districts. Community and Economic Development Director Krieg added she believes the proposed change addresses recent challenges. Chair Leonard said that, unless the Committee finds otherwise, he would like to see the proposed changes recommended as is.

Chair Leonard asked the Committee for further questions and discussion – there were none.

Councilor Beck motioned to send the full recommendation as is to full City Council. Seconded by Councilor Faloon. Roll call vote conducted – 3 in favor (Beck, Faloon, Leonard), 2 opposed (Fish, Mallar). Motion passed.

2. Presentation of Solar Feasibility Report

Chair Leonard introduced the agenda item.

Sustainability Intern Mooney presented findings on solar feasibility on all City rooftops and some parking lots to explore capacity and potential cost savings. Mooney found that no economic benefit was anticipated unless outside funding was received. She noted that if the electricity rate is set higher in future contracts, it may then become economically beneficial to pursue rooftop solar. She recommended alternatives such as power purchase agreements and applying for grant funding.

Chair Leonard expressed shock at the anticipated savings and his value of solar energy to help make Bangor safer from an energy consumption perspective.

Planning Officer Collette shared that with grant funding, solar would provide savings immediately. She asked the Committee if they are interested in staff pursuing grant funding for a solar project. Chair Leonard expressed his support. Councilor Faloon asked if Community Action Grants are from the state – Collette confirmed. Councilor

Faloon asked if there are grants through the Efficiency Main Trust – Collette responded not at this time.

Councilor Fish expressed surprise about the anticipated savings and that the report is helpful in decision-making. She said she believes is still too early to see a cost-effective benefit but it is helpful to have the option on the table.

Councilor Beck asked if the total consumption listed includes the Cross Insurance Center – Sustainability Intern Mooney answered it does not.

Councilor Beck expressed interest in learning more about saving potential for the City with Community Solar as an option. Planning Officer Collette responded more research would have to be completed. Sustainability Intern Mooney added that since the schools are participating, there may be potential for the City to participate, but the estimated savings have not been calculated. Chair Leonard recommended this research be completed. Councilor Beck said he is in favor of exploring Community Solar.

Councilor Fish asked about savings beyond the first year, and what potential ongoing financial impacts may be present. Planning Officer Collette responded that since Community Solar is subscription-based, savings would be based on the solar they receive and how much energy the City uses, so it would be variable. Collette explained that with Power Purchasing Agreements, it is possible to achieve savings, but the rates have not been calculated.

Chair Leonard highlighted importance of creating a flexible energy grid for the City and continue looking into alternate options.

Councilor Faloon asked if the fixed rate is in regards to supply – Sustainability Intern Mooney responded yes. Faloon recommended considering that supply prices may go up, as the gas and oil industry prices could impact electric costs, which may create more savings at a later date.

Chair Leonard stated the only current direction is a future conversation surrounding Community Solar.

3. Possible Acceptance of Open Space in a Subdivision known as Roseledge

Chair Leonard introduced the agenda item.

Planning Officer Collette presented about the agenda item, explaining that the recently approved subdivision is amenable to deeding 15 acres of open space to the City. She recommended that Council votes to accept the open space, which would need to occur prior to the applicant receiving final subdivision approval.

Chair Leonard asked the Committee for any comments or questions.

Member Beck asked what stipulations are associated with accepting open spaces. Planning Officer Collette responded that there will not be management obligations, as the space is mostly wetlands.

Member Faloon asked if there is any flood risk. Planning Officer Collette responded that the applicant submitted a flood risk map, the area is not in a flood risk zone, and the wetlands help mitigate flood risk.

Member Beck asked if there is liability to the City if someone gets injured on the property. Assistant City Manager O'Donnell responded no more liability than any other City owned property.

Chair Leonard asked the Committee for any other comments – there were none.

Councilor Fish moved to recommend to full City Council. Seconded by Councilor Beck. Roll call vote conducted – all in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

4. Downtown Bangor Partnership – Annual Report and Budget Discussion

Chair Leonard introduced the agenda item.

Downtown Bangor Partnership Director Lundy presented on business growth. She shared that the longevity study showed that businesses in downtown such as restaurants and retail are performing above the national average. Lundy added that another building under development will help diversify the tax base. She expressed the goal of improving communication of the Ambassador program's impact to the public.

Chair Leonard highlighted the time and effort required to receive the Ambassadors, as well as commended the work he has witness them complete in the community.

Councilor Faloon asked when the Streetplus contract expires. Downtown Bangor Partnership Director Lundy answered that the upcoming fiscal year is the third and final year of the contract. Lundy expressed that while she hopes the downtown will no longer be in the position to need the same services a year from now, it will have to be evaluated closer to the end of the contract. Faloon commented that the exploration of a Constable Program with the Police Chief and the new Housing Committee will hopefully aide the challenges downtown. Lundy agreed that Constable Programs are great, but that cities like Portland that have implemented such programs also maintain their Streetplus program. She added that she finds Ambassadors to be wholistic, whereas City services are more siloed.

Chair Leonard said he wants to ensure services are being provided regardless of the avenue. He expressed that if a Constable Program is being considered, his concern is supplementing any services that would not be covered under that approach.

Councilor Beck asked if PlacerAI is in the budget, and if so, how much it costs. Downtown Bangor Partnership Director Lundy answered that \$1,000 has been paid toward PlacerAI out of the current budget. She expressed the tool would be helpful in analyzing data that has already been collected.

Councilor Fish expressed that while the Ambassador program's prevention is hard to quantify, she believes the recent report did well at capturing activity.

Downtown Bangor Partnership Director Lundy shared that the organization does more beyond the Ambassador program, through volunteer hours, community building, and the enhancement of shared public spaces.

Chair Leonard asked for Committee for questions and comments – there were none.

Community and Economic Development Director Krieg shared that the next City Council meeting would include a public hearing about this agenda item.

Councilor Beck motioned to recommend the report and budget to full City Council. Seconded by Faloon. Roll call vote conducted – all in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

Councilor Beck added he would like to have a spreadsheet displaying what Streetplus does by category. Downtown Bangor Partnership Director Lundy responded that data displayed in heat maps and point maps receive positive feedback.

5. Discussion of Possible Moratorium on Certain Uses: Needle Exchange and Chemical Dependency Clinics

Chair Leonard introduced the agenda item.

Chair Leonard invited Willie Hurley, Executive Director of Needlepoint Sanctuary, to help answer Committee questions.

Councilor Fish presented on the drafted moratorium, expressing the desire to increase transparency and accountability. She shared wanting to elaborate with guidelines that would further facilitate collaboration with other municipalities and stakeholders.

Chair Leonard asked the Committee for questions.

Councilor Faloon discussed research displaying that needle exchange programs are not associated with an increase in crime. She added that stopping needle exchange programs is associated with an increase in syringe sharing and fear of arrest as well as a decrease in HIV prevention and overdoses resources. Councilor Fish responded that the moratorium intends to expand research, not close existing programs. She discussed exploring nearby communities' ability to increase their offered services to collaborate with Bangor.

City Manager Lear invited Public Health Director Gunderman to the discussion.

Public Health Director Gunderman expressed that syringe services are important in public health prevention of diseases like HIV and Hepatitis C, but there is a challenge in measuring prevention.

Councilor Deane discussed seeing Councilor Fish's reasoning for the moratorium, but holding concerns over being limited in finding another provider if the existing services are not able to fulfill their duties. Councilor Fish responded that the City has great current providers and new resources such as the Advisory Committee on Homelessness. She discussed proposing the moratorium to receive more time to work with the homeless community and incorporate more accountability, transparency, and information.

Public Health Director Gunderman asked what information should be collected for further understanding for the City's strategies. She added that new organizations pursuing certification do so through the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, so the City does not have an avenue in the certification process to provide their perspective.

Needlepoint Sanctuary Director Hurley discussed that, with no economic incentive and a lengthy certification process, it is unlikely an outside entity would open a new syringe service program. He added there is currently a federal ban on funding syringes, and that the City could work with programs like Needlepoint to accomplish the objectives without the moratorium. Hurley expressed interest in entering a memorandum of understanding with the City around processes such as expanding outreach.

Chair Leonard expressed hesitation on the moratorium due to potential legal exposure, as protected individuals have a federal disability. He expressed support for facilitating a larger discussion that includes multiple parties.

Public Health Director Gunderman shared that a current strategic priority is the bring together Needlepoint, Wabanaki, the Public Health Department, and Streetplus to discuss how to better collaborate on needle waste and public outreach.

Councilor Fish discussed that although Bangor is a service center, it is not the only community with vulnerable individuals that need syringe services. She expressed the desire to expand attention from and collaboration with other communities, as Bangor's resources are limited. Fish added that if the avenue to do that is not a moratorium, there is still action required to increase transparency, information, boundaries, and bring other municipalities into the conversation.

Public Health Director Gunderman asked if a list of other syringe services programs in the state and where they are located would be helpful – Councilor Fish responded that potentially, but her focus is more on what other communities should be offering.

Councilor Beck asked what the effect would be of the moratorium during an HIV outbreak, and if medically assisted treatment is connected to HIV treatment. Public Health Director Gunderman responded that the moratorium would prevent the Public Health Department from completing their application. She expressed worry towards a restriction and limited flexibility when the department already has an evidence-based tool to address HIV and Hepatitis C. Needlepoint Sanctuary Director Hurley added that other organizations may not start syringe service programs due to public backlash. Gunderman added that syringe service programs also offer counseling, testing for HIV and Hepatitis C, and referral services for education.

Chair Leonard expressed that he would not support tabling the agenda item, as he believes the conversation is better suited to a workshop or Legislative Committee.

Councilor Fish offered that the moratorium could be reworded to include exceptions for the Public Health Department. She shared she believes there is a need for sending a message to residents that the City hears them in relation to the needle situation, as it is out of control. She added that the moratorium would not hurt the providers Bangor currently has, and she would like to have the agenda item tabled.

Councilor Beck expressed that he would like to start the conversation over without the moratorium. He moved to send recommendation to full City Council.

Councilor Fish asked that if the moratorium is tabled or not passed, when will a discussion be had to take action. Chair Leonard responded that if the motion fails, it should be included in more conversations, but does not feel that the moratorium is a good legal decision. He added that her goals could be achieved outside of a moratorium. Councilor Faloon added how similar actions have been considered discrimination against individuals seeking treatment to recover from addiction.

Councilor Fish asked to clarify that moratoriums are legal. City Manager Lear responded that although legal did review this moratorium, she is not sure they specifically reviewed it through the lens of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Councilor Fish referenced that other towns have implemented moratoriums without issues. Chair Leonard responded that while it is not illegal for municipalities to pass laws that go against federal law, such laws would not be enforceable if passed.

Councilor Beck noted that the syringe service providers combined have collected more needles than they have distributed, so other solutions should be explored.

Chair Leonard reminded the Committee of Councilor Beck's motion to recommend to full City Council. Seconded by Councilor Fish. Roll call vote conducted – 2 in favor (Fish, Mallar), 3 opposed (Beck, Faloon, Leonard). Motion failed.

Public Health Director Gunderman added that if City Council has any questions or needs any clarifications, the Public Health Department can be working with local organizations to gather data and to help answer any questions.

Councilor Faloon added there may be more needles in households due to injectable weight loss drugs as well.

6. Executive Session: Acquisition of real property or economic development 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(C)

Councilor Beck moved that the Committee enter Executive Session regarding Acquisition of Real Property or Economic Development under 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(C). Seconded by Faloon. Roll call vote conducted – all in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

7. Possible Actions on Executive Session Items

Councilor Fish moved that the Committee accepts staff recommendation to move to full City Council for the restructure of a Community Development loan. Seconded by Councilor Beck. Roll call vote conducted – all in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 P.M.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted,

Kayleigh Rienas
Development Assistant
Community & Economic Development Department