

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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

MEETING MINUTES

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

City Staff Present: Krieg, Collette

Councilor Carson called the meeting to order at 5:52 P.M.

Councilor Faloon moved that Councilor Carson chair the Committee meeting. Seconded by Councilor Fish. No objection – motion passed.

1. Floor Area Ratio Removal from Downtown Development District (DDD)

Chair Carson introduced the agenda item.

Planning Officer Collette described Floor Area Ratio (FAR), explaining it is the floor area of a building on a lot divided by the horizontal area of the lot. She discussed the FAR of prominent buildings downtown to provide context. Collette described the proposal to remove the FAR dimensional control from the Downtown Development District (DDD) to increase flexibility for developers downtown and align with policies encouraging development and increased housing supply in the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilor Faloon asked if there is a maximum height – Planning Officer Collette responded not downtown. Faloon asked if having a maximum height could serve as a replacement to the FAR requirements due to potential impacts on downtown – Collette noted it is a good policy discussion to have, and discussed the Historic Preservation Commission's role in preservation downtown. Collette discussed the proposal in the new code to not have maximum heights, except for developments within a certain distance to residential districts.

Councilor Deane asked what the tallest building downtown is currently – Planning Officer Collette responded likely the Camden National Bank with seven to eight stories. Collette discussed the height and setback requirements in various zones.

Councilor Fish asked if the change is intended for development, housing, or both – Planning Officer Collette responded any type of development.

Councilor Beck expressed that other processes, such as Planning Board, would prevent the Council from worrying about skyscrapers. Planning Officer Collette discussed that most developments downtown will have to go to the Historic Preservation Commission. Collette discussed that if a building outside of the historic districts met all code requirements, a developer hypothetically could propose a skyscraper, but staff has not seen a demand for skyscrapers. Beck expressed that he believes eliminating FAR is a good step, and he would like to have a further conversation about potential height limits.

Councilor Mallar asked when to expect the completion of the Comprehensive Plan – Community & Economic Development Director Krieg clarified the Land Development Code updates. Planning Officer Collette responded late next year. Mallar asked if it would be beneficial to wait to have the discussion along with the code updates. Krieg responded that there is a project downtown awaiting the FAR change in order to proceed. Councilor Fish asked if height limitations could have exceptions with approval. Krieg discussed the creation of a special permit process where there is an allowed height, and anything additional would require a Conditional Use permit.

Councilor Beck expressed interest in hearing from the Fire Department in conversations surrounding height.

Planning Officer Collette asked if the Committee would like staff to incorporate a height limit with the ordinance change. Chair Carson expressed he is not in favor of adding a height limit and would like to see more data, and he would like to engage the Fire Department and Bangor International Airport in the conversation.

Councilor Faloon moved to forward staff recommendation to full Council. Seconded by Councilor Fish. Vote unless doubted, no doubt.

2. Discuss Proposed New Planning Fees

Chair Carson introduced the agenda item.

Planning Officer Collette discussed the proposed fees, including mailing and stormwater permitting fees.

Councilor Faloon moved to forward staff recommendation to full Council. Seconded by Councilor Beck.

3. Discuss Proposed Climate Rebate Program for Residents

Chair Carson introduced the agenda item.

Planning Officer Collette discussed the proposed program, which would utilize Climate Action Funds intended to implement the Penobscot Climate Action Plan. She discussed that helping residents retrofit their homes would be one of the highest impact toolkits, as buildings make up the largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in the City. Collette noted it has high potential to help residents increase resilience to power outages and high fuel costs.

Planning Officer Collette discussed the proposal to use \$50,000 from the Climate Action Fund to provide rebates on weatherization, heat pumps, and possibly solar. She explained that the rebates would work in concert with existing rebates from Efficiency Maine and Community Development Block Grants to provide gap financing. She discussed the structure of the potential rebate program, such as tiering the rebate to provide greater benefit to lower income households. Collette discussed the potential of incorporating energy audits for households.

Councilor Fish discussed that solar installation may use a large portion of the funds due to cost. She noted the usefulness of energy audits. Fish discussed that bikes may not fit

into the category, as many elderly residents need energy efficiency in different avenues. Planning Officer Collette noted limiting this program to home heating upgrades. Collette discussed exploring rebates for plug-in solar to address the cost concerns and help renters.

Chair Carson asked about using a portion of the funds to assist residents in obtaining the item that would be rebated to eliminate barriers. Planning Officer Collette discussed how Efficiency Maine's process includes contractors taking the rebate into account and submitting paperwork for reimbursement, so the cost is taken off at the beginning. She expressed that staff will work with Efficiency Maine and contractors to explore how to incorporate a similar process.

Councilor Mallar asked how much money is in the Climate Action Plan – Planning Officer Collette responded that it is pending, but it should be around \$200,000.

Councilor Faloon moved staff recommendation for the proposed climate rebate program for residents. Seconded by Councilor Fish.

Meeting adjourned at 6:18 P.M.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted,

Kayleigh Rienas
Development Assistant
Community & Economic Development Department