

CITY OF LEWISTON
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES for July 27, 2026

- I. **ROLL CALL:** The meeting was held in the City Council Chambers on the first floor of City Hall and was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Chairperson, Shanna Cox chaired the meeting.

Members in Attendance: Lucy Bisson, Shanna Cox, Michael Marcotte, Penthea Burns and Zoë Lidstrom.

Members Absent: Alexander Pine and Amy Smith

Associate Member in Attendance: Darren Gallant

Associate Member Absent: Heidi Bertels

Chairperson Cox appointed Darren Gallant to full voting member for this meeting.

Staff Present: Jonathan Connors, Director, Shelley Norton, Deputy Director, and Linda Tripp, Administrative Assistant

- II. **ADJUSTMENT TO THE AGENDA:** None

- III. **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Staff read a summary list of emails sent to the planning board email since the last meeting.

Staff handed out a 7/21/26 Memorandum from Jon Connor providing an update on the development of a vacant building ordinance and rental registration.

- IV. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None

- V. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

- a. The Planning Board making a recommendation to the city council on the acquisition of a 1.44-acre portion of 9 Foss Road for the construction of a road to bypass the existing bridge on Jordan Road.

Shelley Norton provided the board with a review of the request, then she introduced Jeff Beaulé, City Engineer. Jeff explained to the board how the city arrived at the decision to bypass the bridge and construct the bypass road. Michael Marcotte inquired if in the future the bridge was to be removed and Jeff answered yes, it is part of the plan.

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Lucy Bisson** pursuant to Article VII, Section 4(h) of the Zoning and Land Use Code to send a favorable recommendation to the City Council for the acquisition of a 1.44-acre portion of 9 Foss Road.

Second by **Darren Gallant**.

VOTED: 6-0 (Passed)

- b. Update on the status of the Safety and Mobility Study for Main Street, Sabattus Street, Canal Street and downtown Lisbon Street by Toole Design.

Lucy Gibson, Principal Traffic Engineer and Carl Eppich, Principal Planner, both of Toole Design, joined in presenting before the board. Lucy provided the board with the areas of focus for the study and the project scope as well as examples of past work completed within the community. She provided statistics on a variety of concerns that citizens have with regards to safety. Much data was shared regarding capacity and congestion. Lucy then shared reviewed their recommendations for implementation for each road segment, which were individually reviewed and considered. Lucy then welcomed questions from the board. Zoë Lidstrom inquired how the decision to allocate bicycle lanes would be decided. Lucy answered that many things are factored in such as the volume of driveways and the maintenance that might be required. Jeff Beaulé informed the board that as concerns are created, they are addressed, and a decent buffer between parking and bike travel lanes would absolutely be necessary. Several discussions including future plans and future use of specific properties possibly affected took place.

Shanna Cox called for a 5-minute recess then she resumed the meeting.

Shanna Cox welcomed public comments.

Elizabeth Eames of Ward 3 expressed concern for tractor trailers getting stuck when attempting to turn from Ash Street on to Lisbon Street. She stated that she hopes that improvements can be made to allow for better access. She also wanted to be sure that plans for the area take into consideration the new future use of 287 Main Street by the Lewiston School Department.

No additional public spoke.

- c. Presentation and public forum on the Outer Lisbon Street Safety & Mobility Plan by ATRC/Toole Design.

Carl Eppich reviewed the purpose and goals of the safety study then provided an overview of the volume of vehicular crashes and locations. Existing Public Transit and truck volume for various areas/corridors was reviewed. Several draft concepts for a variety of travel improvements throughout the city were shared, discussed and considered. Carl welcomed questions from the board. A discussion about implementation procedures took place. Jeff Beaulé stated that while budgeting is big part of it all, he believes recommendations on

phasing in and prioritizing would be a great place to start. Carl suggested while coordinating with existing projects, working from the downtown out is a good option. Lucy Bisson suggested Lisbon Street and Russell Street would be a priority due to upcoming development in the area. Penthea Burns stated that anything that will slow down traffic on Lisbon Street and minimize incidents near Alfred Plourde Parkway interest her most along with East Avenue and Russell Street. Zoë Lidstrom inquired if raised crosswalks benefit an area and Carl answered that they do have a positive impact but are not ideal for all areas. Shanna Cox expressed concern for frustrated drivers at locations where school buses stop for extended periods of time as well as senior housing developments currently in process. She feels that street trees maybe could and should be used to assist with efforts to narrow the visible field as drivers approach.

Shanna Cox welcomed public comment.

Elizabeth Eames of Ward 3 inquired if drivers would be able to identify all lanes of traffic/use once snow falls and covers the ground. Carl Eppich answered that there would be a learning curve to maintain and properly care for the new areas.

No additional public spoke.

Jon Connor asked that as changes are made to attempt to slow down traffic, he wonders if consideration has been given to drivers attempting to circumvent the new infrastructure, as well as the impact it will have on the affected neighborhoods. Carl Eppich answered that they had not, but that a clearer understanding as things move on will hopefully provide the opportunity to address potential problems.

d. Discussion on the process between planning board, city staff, and council.

Shanna Cox began by saying that the discussion to be had about this agenda item is not intended to disparage any staff members or the city as a whole. She encouraged all those present to be thoughtful and respectful regarding opinions of staff, City Council and those looking to partner and invest in our city. She stated that at a recent City Council meeting that was held following a Planning Board meeting, she felt that respecting the board and making sure that process is thoughtful and that information is shared, wasn't met. She said that she is seeking transparency and remedy. She informed Jon Connor that she wants him to specifically address how requests from the Planning Board to other departments or the City Council are handled.

Jon Connor provided a review of his memo to the board, then he welcomed all board members to clearly communicate exactly what they feel they need to

make well informed decisions. He expressed his desire and willingness to provide the kind of information desired and required.

Shanna stated that when the Red Shop was on the Planning Board agenda, the board was not provided with all available information, then it was on the City Council agenda, and they received a lot of information without the negative recommendation from the Planning Board. The rationale was that a technical disposition was not requested, and she felt that that was dismissive of the Planning Board.

Lucy Bisson said she feels that joint meetings with the City Council and the Planning Board should take place at least a few times a year. She said that the actions taken with the Red Shop make her feel as though the intention was to sneak it around the Planning Board. She explained how frustrating it is for the board to address and make recommendations without all available data.

Michael Marcotte says it is insulting to be requested to make decisions without all the available information. He stated that Planning Board executive sessions have taken place many times in the past. He found the whole Red Shop disposition upsetting and insulting to the entire community. He feels that Lewiston will need to be considered a place of economic energy if it is going to succeed. He said he wants executive sessions with City Council when important issues arise, and that he feels disrespected.

Pentheia Burns said that she likes the idea of the Planning Board and City Council having joint meetings periodically. She said that an advisory role without critical data provides speed bumps. She feels that implementation to foster relationships and communication will provide opportunities instead of a time of crisis.

Shanna said that she believes an orientation packet for City Council members that includes relationship data with the Planning Board would be beneficial. She also suggested a "meet and greet" session with members of the two boards. She feels a very important role within the city being minimized. Shanna said that often a discussion intended to be shared with the City Council dies in the council chambers. She said the Planning Board spends valuable time on critical decision making and that she believes it goes unnoticed. She finds it embarrassing and unacceptable that two boards willing to work together do not have open lines of communication. Shanna inquired that when the board makes a request, should she follow up to make sure it happens? Jon Connor answered no, she should not need to follow up. She spoke of outstanding requests that remain open and unfulfilled. Shanna suggested that packets prepared for future Planning Board meetings include any previous meeting requests detailed under correspondence. She feels that timeliness of delivering information is important. Jon Connor agreed and said

that challenges arise when an agenda item does not exist on a very controlled and regimented agenda. A lengthy discussion regarding internal processes took place.

Shanna requested the board be provided with information as to how to appropriately deal with any staff concerns that they may have. Jon agreed that would be done.

e. Memorandum on the No Name Pond Overlay and staff interpretation.

Jon Connor provided the board with an update with regards to implementation as well as a review of the process taken. He said he feels the ordinance has been strengthened. Shanna Cox feels it remains unclear to her and that the language remains hard to understand and does not provide the desired clarity. Jon said that with the addition of the added language under number seven, he feels it is clear. Lucy Bisson stated a layperson should be able to read the ordinance and find the clarity that is necessary. Zoë Lidstrom said that the defined use of the word buffer is still an issue for her. Shanna feels the board was asked to provide clarity, which in her opinion did not happen. Penthea Burns said that consistently stating desired goals/outcomes is most helpful. It was discussed that the language of this ordinance was still unclear and it was mentioned that this should be brought back before the PB to refine/redefine the language at a future date.

f. Michael Marcotte spoke of the many city boards and efforts over the years and said he wonders about the outcomes of those efforts. He requested any archived information regarding dispositions for Mill 5, and then said he also would like to see a bibliography of all reports and studies showing timelines and outcomes. Shanna Cox said it might already exist and maybe only a link would need to be provided. Jon Connor said staff would work to address his request, and it was agreed that data from the year 2000 forward should suffice.

Jon Connor said that efforts by staff looking for a recommendation from the Planning Board on disposition for Bates Mill 5 have proved to be fruitless. A discussion providing a variety of possibilities to locate data was held and staff agreed to continue the search.

g. Jon Connor provided a handout regarding vacant buildings due to board inquiries on the subject. He agreed to get the information provided on the handout to the public. Lucy Bisson requested that short-term housing and Airbnb be considered as well. Jon stated that those fell under the rental registration program and that it is currently being worked on. Shanna Cox stated that Amy Smith will be looking for the outcome of efforts regarding rental registration and Airbnb's in the near future.

VI. READING OF MINUTES:

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Lucy Bisson** to accept the June 22, 2026, draft minutes as presented. Second by **Zoë Lidstrom**.

VOTED: 6-0

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

The following motion was made to adjourn.

MOTION: by **Lucy Bisson** that this meeting adjourns at 9:20 p.m. Second by **Penthea Burns**.

VOTED: 6-0 (Passed)

The next regularly scheduled meeting is for Monday, August 10, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Zoë Lidstrom, Secretary