



HCPC NEWSLETTER

Hancock County Planning Commission

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Fiscal Year 2012-2013

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PLANNING BOARD NEWS

by Tom Martin

CHANGES IN SHORELAND ZONING

As of May 5, 2012 amendments to the Chapter 1000, *State of Maine Guidelines for Municipal Shoreland Zoning Ordinance* took effect. These Guidelines serve as the “model shoreland zoning ordinance” for municipalities and establish minimum shoreland zoning requirements statewide.

The amended Guidelines remove the requirement to regulate Resource Protection District zoning around wetlands that contain waterfowl and wading bird habitat. The amendments were done in part due to overlapping jurisdiction of these habitat areas with a separate law, the Natural Resources Protection Act, which will continue to offer some level of protection for these resources.

Additionally, these amendments give landowners more flexibility in the use of their land. Municipalities may choose to remove Resource Protection District zoning adjacent to these wetland habitat areas provided that there is no other condition that would otherwise require a Resource Protection District to remain in such locations (e.g. areas of 2 or more acres of steep slopes or wetland within the shoreland zone, floodplain of rivers and coastal wetlands, and areas of severe bank erosion). Please note that these wetlands must still be shoreland zone protected with a 250-foot shoreland zone. This amendment simply allows the zoning district to be something other than Resource Protection- most commonly a Limited Residential District. *Please ensure any local amendments are consistent with approved comprehensive plans.*

Conversely, a municipality may continue to regulate these areas with a Resource Protection District. The

State is not mandating that municipalities amend their local shoreland zoning ordinance and map to be consistent with this recent rule change. However, should your municipality amend its ordinance and/or map, please remember to forward the required attested copy of the amendments to the department for review and approval.

Timber Harvesting:

For those municipalities that chose either Option 1, the repeal of timber harvesting, or Option 2, the adoption of the statewide timber harvesting standards, this change in the administration and enforcement of timber harvesting in the shoreland zone will become effective on January 1, 2013. In addition, statutory changes during the last legislative session created additional flexibility regarding timber harvesting. For those municipalities that have either chosen Option 3 or have not made any choice regarding timber harvesting, but have retained the DEP-generated standards, a request can be made to the Division of Forestry, to assist in the administration and enforcement of these standards. Requests need to be submitted to the Director, Division of Forestry, Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, 22 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0022. These requests will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Pursuing this option may also require ordinance amendments to reflect the role of the Division of Forestry in the administration of the timber harvesting standards. Feel free to contact Tom Martin (tmartin@hpcme.org) or 667-7131 if you have any questions.

CDBG NEWS

by Tom Martin

FINAL 2013 PROGRAM RULES RELEASED

The final rules for the 2013 Community Development Block Grant program have been posted at: <http://www.maine.gov/decd/meocd/>. The Letters of Intent and application forms are also on that site. Those without Internet service feel free to contact the HCPC at 667-7131 for details. HCPC can help towns without charge with the various steps of the application process, including:

1. Explaining what is eligible under the various grant competitions and how your project might meet the income qualification requirements, and the steps involved in conducting a household income survey that is consistent with state standards. Income surveys are required for projects serving a targeted area of town;
2. Formulating effective citizen outreach strategies and attending public hearings;
3. Identifying matching sources of funds and explain what is needed for letters of commitment;
4. Offering in-depth review of application drafts and preparing detailed application outlines. Under certain circumstances we can be involved in the active writing of the application;
5. Providing sample public hearing notices and helping with related application filing requirements (remember that a minor error in packaging an application could lead to it not being reviewed by the Maine Office of Community Development staff). *Remember that applications must be at the front desk of the Office of Community Development by the application due date. It is not sufficient to have them in the mail;* and
6. Attending meetings to provide a general overview of the program and determine a town's specific technical assistance needs.

Feel free to contact Tom Martin at 667-7131 or tmartin@hpcme.org if you have any questions on a CDBG-related matter.

GRANT NEWS

by Tom Martin

HCPC RECEIVES WATER AND WASTEWATER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING GRANT

The primary focus of this grant is to provide training sessions to Code Enforcement Officers (CEO's) and Local Plumbing Inspectors (LPI's) on water and waste water issues. A secondary focus is to help towns identify concentrations of poorly functioning

wells and septic systems. This will allow towns to direct technical assistance (such as new wells) to areas with the most need.

HCPC will be organizing a workshop on identification of threats to drinking water including both individual wells and small public water systems. The date of this workshop has yet to be determined. We plan to coordinate the timing with other pending workshops on coastal zone issues and the farmland registration act. Contact Tom Martin for details.

HCPC staff is available to meet with individual planning boards, CEO's and LPI's to discuss specific water quality problems and identify possible solutions. These could include, but are not limited to, seeking grant money for system replacement, development of alternative systems and the drafting of land use regulations that promote land development practices that minimize threats to water quality. Staff will also work with the Maine Drinking Water Program to address problems faced by public water systems with a high degree of risk factors.

SOLID WASTE AND WATER QUALITY NEWS

By Tom Martin

SOLID WASTE, RECYCLING, and COMPOSTING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES ARE NOW AVAILABLE

HCPC is once again providing solid waste technical assistance services without charge. With increasing tipping fees at the PERC regional incineration facility, recycling and other forms of waste diversion are becoming more attractive options. For more details on our services, see <http://www.hpcme.org/environment.html>. The highlights of our services include:

1. Organizing the Annual Household Hazardous Waste and Universal Waste Collection

We will be contacting towns to assess their interest in participating in the summer 2013 collection. *While towns will be charged for disposal costs, there will be no administrative fee assessed for this*

collection. We will keep towns informed on the status of this collection through mailings and web postings. *We hope all towns will avail themselves of this important service.*

2. Help Towns Increase Recycling Rates, Comply With DEP Operating Standards, and Inform the Public

Our services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- assisting with transfer station improvements that increase recycling and reduce the amount of waste that is hauled to an incinerator or disposed of in a landfill.
- developing sound Construction and Demolition Debris (CDD) management strategies. We are exploring alternatives for items in hard to dispose of in low volumes such as asphalt shingles.
- designing and producing brochures and posters for community waste management and/or recycling programs. This is an important way to keep the public informed.
- working with hotels and owners of other transient accommodations in developing recycling and other waste diversion programs.
- Preparing or amending transfer station operations manuals, job descriptions, annual recycling reports, local solid waste and recycling ordinances, and policies. We have worked closely with DEP in identifying the needs of local transfer stations.

3. Composting Assistance

Composting programs can save disposal and hauling costs. The types of food scraps and other organic matter that can be composted are often the wet, heavy trash that increases the weight of your municipal waste! About one-third of the solid waste stream consists of organic matter. Some, such as shellfish, may have serious odor problems. Farmers and landscape companies are always seeking quality sources of compost. We can work with the DEP and other state agencies to ensure that all permitting requirements are met and that facilities are designed

in a manner that avoids odor and pest problems. Specific services include, but are not limited to:

- help in planning and permitting a municipal facility. This can be as simple as yard and leaf site or a more complex post-consumer food residuals site. We can help you assess what is practical and cost-effective for your community based on your current hauling and disposal costs and volume and types of waste generated;
- working with both small and major generators of organic waste in finding an environmentally sound method of composting. For example, we could link shellfish waste generators to local compost producers;
- organizing a workshop on backyard composting;
- working with restaurants, campgrounds and owners of transient rental units in developing a food composting program. (This can be combined with a recycling initiative); and
- sponsoring a compost bin sale. Contact Maine Resource Recovery Association at 942-6772 or <http://www.mrra.net> . It sells durable compost bins in bulk. Or call HCPC, we plan to solicit interest in a county-wide sale in the spring of 2013.

TRANSPORTATION NEWS

by Jim Fisher

Active Communities Environments Teams (ACETs)

Transportation has been a major catalyst for economic growth, tourism, access to work, markets and services. Recent trends suggest that our future competitiveness for year round employment and seasonal tourism will depend upon our ability to provide out-of-car experiences. Particularly telling is the flight of young adults from rural areas to urban centers. Many have voted with their feet, preferring proximity and walking for transportation and the virtual world of cell phones and the internet for connectivity over greater distances.

Creating Active Community Environments in Hancock County should be a part of our program to

attract and retain a new generation of community members, but also to sustain the health of those of us that are aging in place. To this end, the Hancock County Planning Commission and Healthy Acadia encourage neighborhoods, villages, towns and even multi-town organizations to organize ACETs – Active Community Environment Teams. ACETs, like recreation committees and bicycle-pedestrian committees work on local issues such as planning sidewalks, recreational trails, opening schools for adult exercise programs, sponsoring walking clubs or other health advocacy activities. ACET partners can include concerned parents, businesses wanting to spruce-up the downtown, sports clubs and coaches and elected leaders.

Community Transformation Grants have been awarded throughout Maine to encourage public health. The funds help to pay for planners and public health advocates to meet with your town to identify ways to create active environments that will help achieve the triple bottom-line of economic growth, community development and public health. We are also helping to organize Maine's 6th Active Communities Conference that will take place on Tuesday, May 7th in Waterville. Please contact [Jim Fisher](#) at HCPC if you have a committee doing this kind of work or would like to create one or would like to know more about the Active Communities Conference.

HEALTH NEWS

by Jim Fisher

Healthy Acadia Publishes Strategic Health Plan

Healthy Acadia has published Hancock County's first Strategic Health plan. Staff members at HCPC have been integral to the planning process and will be engaged over the coming years to assist with implementation. The plan suggests goals in five areas, with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific) Objectives. Here's a quick overview:

Vision for Hancock County: Hancock County is home to diverse, vibrant communities where

healthful resources are available and people work together for the common good.

GOAL 1 - Local Food: Sustain people & rural communities

Strategic Vision: We build on our tradition of sustainable agriculture and fisheries to assure healthy local foods are an easy, affordable and popular choice in Hancock County.

Primary SMART Objectives:

•By 2016, increase by 20 the number of community outlets providing increased access to healthy, affordable, locally harvested foods.

•By 2016, increase by 10 the number of Hancock County schools that provide students with new or expanded Farm to School and healthy food experiences.

GOAL 2 - Movement: Physical activity in the daily lives of all

Strategic Vision: We build our towns and organize community systems to create ample opportunities for walking, biking and social movement. Physical activity is a viable option for recreation and transportation.

Primary Smart Objectives:

•By 2016, 4 schools will adopt programs or policies that support walking and bicycling.

•By 2016, 4 community locations will be created or expanded for daily walking, cycling or other forms of physical activity.

GOAL 3 - Healthful Services: Empowering independence with support for basic needs

Strategic Vision: We connect people of all ages with quality, affordable health and social services regardless of income. We age well with dignity, comfort and choice.

Primary Smart Objectives:

•By 2016, there will be a 25% increase in the number of rides provided to and from health and social service appointments for individuals in need by 2016.

•By 2016, the number of low-income children receiving preventive oral exams or treatment will increase by 1000.

GOAL 4 - Positive Social Development: Building resilient people of all ages, surrounded by strengths

Strategic Vision: We provide the positive supports necessary for every child to aspire, learn and grow safely into healthy, resilient and contributing community members. Substance abuse, domestic violence and other social ills are declining while educational attainment is on the rise.

Primary Smart Objectives:

•By 2016, 10 schools will adopt or expand comprehensive health policies & programs that provide supports for kids to thrive.

•By 2016, reduce by 15% the rate of alcohol and substance abuse among youth and adults.

GOAL 5 - Healthy Environments: Building healthy indoor and outdoor spaces for healthy people

Strategic Vision: We respect, protect and conserve our natural resources & built environments so they protect, preserve and sustain healthy people. Our air, land, water and indoor spaces are clean and free from toxins.

Primary Smart Objectives:

•By 2016, increase by 300 the number of homes or work places that have reduced health risks to occupants due to lead, radon, tobacco smoke, arsenic and other contaminants.

•By 2016, increase by 300 the number of homes or work places that have reduced energy loss and greater energy efficiency.

In addition to publishing the Strategic Health Plan, Healthy Acadia has a new, interactive website www.healthyacadia.org where you can learn more about programs promoting public health in Hancock County. HCPC will be particularly engaged as the interface between Healthy Acadia and town governments. Our role will include meeting with local leaders, defining projects that work for particular towns, such as identifying sites for community or school gardens, building sidewalks, paths and places for recreation and exercise,

reducing the risk of exposure to toxic waste, encouraging tobacco-free parks and recreation areas and more. Contact Jim Fisher at HCPC if you have questions or ideas for improving the health of your community.

GIS NEWS

by Jim Fisher

Topographic Mapping Next Generation

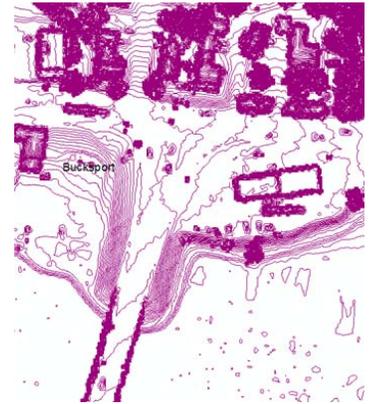
HCPC serves as the Regional Center for Geographic Information for Hancock County in addition to our historic role as a center for census data. A recent addition to our data library has been a complete set of LIDAR images for coastal Hancock County. LIDAR, standing for Light Detection and Ranging produces detailed topographic information about the bare-earth as well as the tree canopy.



We are now able to assist planning boards with much more detailed information such as possible risks of flooding, heights of tree cover or drainage patterns. The following map shows a parcel located next to tidal water. The floodplain map shows that the structure is just above the predicted flooding

area. Using the LIDAR data we are able to draw 2' contour lines to give a more accurate picture of the areas around the house that may flood, even though they do not appear in the flood plain. Life before LIDAR meant relying on topographic maps with 10 and even 20 foot contour intervals that were often inaccurate even at that.

In another application, we can interpret elevations of the built and natural environment above the bare earth. The following two maps show a familiar area of Bucksport near to the bridge that crosses to Verona Island. The first illustration shows the buildings and bridge, not from a visual image, but only as an interpretation of their height. Thus the fuzzy circles at the top of the map are actually tree tops. The numbers in the illustration are actual elevations.



The data underlying the image can also be translated into topographic lines, shown in the second map. This unusual interpretation shows the steep slopes leading up to the bridge and the vertical walls of the buildings.

These are just two examples of analysis that we can perform using our ever improving stock of mapping data. We encourage planning boards and town committees to contact us with their planning questions, particularly when there are questions of location, elevation, flooding and other possible hazards.

Hancock County Planning Commission is a partner with local and county government to: protect our heritage and resources, plan for the future and promote a sound economy for the people of Hancock County.

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