

Minutes of the Damariscotta Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC)

4:30 - 6:00 pm May 11, 2020

In Attendance : Robert Faunce, Haas Tobey, Bruce Rockwood, Ann Pinkham, Chris Roberts, Rachel Collamore, Ann Jackson

1. Review of draft agenda, approved (in reverse order)
2. Minutes from April 13-14, 2020, approved.
3. In keeping with “social distancing” guidelines, we are meeting virtually via the Zoom.com app.
4. Formula Businesses : Bob Faunce sent us the Proposed Formula Business Amendments to the Land Use Ordinance. The definition will be added to §101.4 and §101.4.D.1 which will be amended by adding "Formula Businesses" to the schedule of uses. The “Purpose of the Amendments” section will be included also. Bob will do some work on the language in the first paragraph of the definition and resend it to us to approve at our next meeting. We briefly discussed whether formula businesses should be allowed in all of the C2 district and decided that they should.
5. Forest Resources : We began an exploratory discussion about land set aside for tree growth. In order to get tax benefits for tree growth a land owner needs to make a plan with a forester that is updated every 10 years. We wondered if the town of Damariscotta has access to those plans? Do we know what land/properties in our town are used for this ? Who monitors the plans ? Ann Pinkham pointed out that tree growth must balance harvesting with taking care of wildlife and wildlife habitats. Is this something that a Local Conservation Commission would look into ? We don’t want to put the cart before the horse and wonder if LUAC should gather more information on this or wait to see if we need a town Conservation Commission. Bob will look into what town properties have “tree growth” designations, how long they have been in tree growth and see if the town can get copies of plans. The following links list all the rules and regulations for tree growth designations and the 10 year plans :
https://www.maine.gov/decf/mfs/tree_growth (Bulletin 19 ME Tree Growth)
<https://maineforestry.net/tree-growth>
6. View Sheds: Bob gave us updated copies of the View Sheds spreadsheet. The goal is to have a comprehensive inventory of views within the town of Damariscotta so we can 1. Identify any threats to the views, 2. Discover how we can prevent or minimize the threats and 3. Find mechanisms to do that. We want to keep the best views open or unchanged and take action to minimize impacts to them. We need to look at ways for future owners to preserve views, possibly through standards for future building locations and incentives that look at road frontage, lot sizes, set- backs and buffers. Rachel pointed out that a view might include woods etc... that shield the view from something, like Rt.1.
7. Light Pollution: We continued an exploratory discussion about light pollution. Ronn Orenstein sent information about the website <https://www.darksky.org/> which has a document entitled Model Lighting Ordinance Language that might have some helpful information. The town of Damariscotta will be converting streetlights to L.E.D. lights. That will give us some new capabilities with shading, dimming at certain times and controlling lighting remotely. We will continue to look at lighted signs.

8. Economic Development Committee: At our last meeting Bob said he would look into the possibility of creating a town Economic Development Committee. He spoke with Matt Lutkus about this. Matt said he “would like an economic development committee if it is a working committee that can take a leadership role in fostering economic development in Damariscotta rather than a committee relying mostly on staff support, which is already spread thin among a lot of projects and initiatives”. It would need to be a focused, self-starting group of knowledgeable and forward thinking people, possibly from the finance, business and real estate communities. The Chamber of Commerce has an economic development committee that we will look into. We also wondered if a new focus for such a committee might be on “recovery” after this pandemic.

9. Bob also talked with Matt Lutkus about our questions about broadband service and whether it was being looked into or pursued community-wide. He said that “he would like to assign to the town’s summer intern a role in getting more broadband extensions in town. Perhaps this could dovetail with the planning commission’s efforts on furthering broadband development in the county.” Ronn Orenstein recommended reaching out to Mary Ellen Barnes for updated information about county-wide discussions about broadband.

Next meeting: Monday, July 20, 2020 4:30 - 6:00 (via Zoom)

Other Dark Sky links [Bruce mentioned he had these on file from a previous discussion.]

<https://www.lrc.rpi.edu/programs/nlpip/lightinganswers/lightpollution/lightPollutionAddressed.asp>

<https://skyandtelescope.org/astronomy-news/ama-addresses-light-pollution/>

<https://www.buildings.com/article-details/articleid/10814/title/budget-friendly-ways-to-address-light-pollution>

<https://www.iau.org/news/pressreleases/detail/iau1504/>