



## GARDINER CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

### GARDINER CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

June 4, 2025 @ 6:00PM

1. ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**City Council Present:** Mayor Hart, Councilor Cone, Councilor Greenleaf, Councilor Cusick, Councilor Kimball, Councilor Babcock, Councilor Grant, Councilor Dolley.

**City Employees Present:** Robert Peabody- City Manager, Denise Brown- Finance Director, Kathy Culter- City Clerk, Alyssa Jones- Deputy City Clerk, John Cameron – Public Work Director, Melissa Lindley -Economic Development Director, Todd Pilsbury- Chief of Police, Rick Sieburg- Fire Chief, Kris McNiell ~ Code Enforcement officer, Stephen Aievoli- Wastewater Superintendent, Dawn Thistle- Head Librarian.

**Others Present:** Jay Simanski, George Trask, Martha & Robert Harvey Webster, Debby Willis, Kathy Brown, Mark Warren.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (anything not on the agenda) **No Correspondence.**

George Trask ~ introduced himself and had more of a personal matter regarding his feelings toward the city manager, all are welcome to speak publicly and therefore it is in the public record, but all personal matters will be dealt with through executive session.

3. PETITIONS / PUBLIC HEARINGS PETITIONS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a) Public Hearing regarding a Hazard Mitigation Grant for the Harrison Avenue - Cobbossee Stream bank stabilization

**Mayor Hart opened the public hearing at 6:03 pm. There being no comment, she closed the hearing at 6:03pm.**

- b) Public Hearing regarding a victualers license renewal for Rotary Club

**Mayor Hart opened the public hearing at 6:03pm. There being no comment, she closed the hearing at 6:03pm.**

- c) Public Hearing regarding a liquor license renewal for Table Bar

**Mayor Hart opened the public hearing at 6:04pm. There being no comment, she closed the hearing at 6:04pm.**

- d) Public Hearing regarding a victualers license renewal for Dominos

**Mayor Hart opened the public hearing at 6:04pm. There being no comment, she closed the hearing at 6:04pm.**

- e) Public Hearing regarding a possible Zone change for Map 034 Lots 073, 074 and 076/Robinson St.

**Mayor Hart opened the public hearing at 6:04pm. Comments~ Mark Warren, spoke with council as to why he would like the zone extended 200 ft and changed from in town**

*residential to in town commercial. Bob and Martha Harvey Webster -We are against the zone change. Eight recent store fronts are vacant. Gardiner doesn't need more commercial space. Current area is high residential. Dawn Thistle helped them go down and look at the old plans, land use conversion. We looked at potential use, permit or pass through. Some of the possible uses are grow facilities, Dollar Store, gas station ~ Debbie Willis spoke and said the Planning Board didn't want to approve this when it was proposed. Selling the land, this is what is prepared for. It is a lot of vacant space, what could go there. It wasn't presented as a project, but to make more money on the sale of the land.*

*No correspondence*

*Mayor Hart closed the hearing at 6:16pm.*

- f) Public Hearing regarding a New Cannabis Cultivation License for Jing Kang Yao- JK's Gardening.

*Mayor Hart opened the public hearing at 6:16 pm. There being no comment, she closed the hearing at 6:16pm.*

- g) Public Hearing regarding a New Cannabis Cultivation License for Bikang Huang.

*Mayor Hart opened the public hearing at 6:16 pm. She closed the hearing at 6:18pm.*

*Comments ~ George Trask, voiced opposition to this license, noting that it wouldn't be making the city better to have these businesses.*

#### 4. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Consideration to apply for a Hazard Mitigation Grant for the Harrison Avenue - Cobbossee Stream bank stabilization

**Councilor Cusick moved to approve the City Manager to submit an application for a Hazard Mitigation Grant for the Harrison Avenue - Cobbossee Stream bank stabilization and use up to \$150,000 in Tax Increment Finance funds towards the 25% local match. Councilor Grant seconded the motion. No Further Discussion. Unanimously approved.**

- b) Consideration regarding a victualers license renewal for Rotary Club

**Councilor Greenleaf moved to approve a Victualer's License for Gardiner Rotary Club. Councilor Babcock seconded the motion. No Further Discussion. Unanimously approved.**

- c) Consideration of approval of a Liquor License for Table Bar

**Councilor Dolley moved to approve the Liquor License for Table Bar. Councilor Kimball seconded the motion. No Further Discussion. Unanimously approved.**

- d) Consideration regarding a victualers license renewal for Dominos

**Councilor Cusick moved to approve a Victualer's License for Dominos. Councilor Babcock seconded the motion. No Further Discussion. Unanimously approved.**

- e) Second Read of Zoning change for Map 034 Lots 073, 074, and 076/Robinson St.

**Councilor Grant moved to approve the Zoning change to City Tax Map 034 Lots 073,074, and 076 from High Density Residential to Intown Commercial. Councilor Greenleaf seconded the motion. Unanimously opposed.**

- f) Consideration of approving a New Cannabis Cultivation License for Jing Kang Yao- JK's Gardening

**Councilor Greenleaf moved to approve the Cannabis Cultivation license for JK's Gardening. Councilor Grant seconded the motion. No Further Discussion. Unanimously opposed.**

- g) Consideration of approving a New Cannabis Cultivation License for Bikang Huang  
**Councilor Cusick moved to approve the Cannabis Cultivation license for Bikang Huang. Councilor Kimball seconded the motion. No Further Discussion. Unanimously opposed. Councilor Greenleaf would like to thank the Chief for the letter he sent.**
- h) Highland Terrace Crosswalk Request ~ **No action taken.**
- i) Zoning review request for The Fraternal Order of Eagles ~ **Vigorous head nodding to send this to Ordinance Review Committee.**
- j) Consideration of a Graduation Block Party at the Waterfront on June 14, 2025 (Updated)  
**Councilor Cusick moved to approve the large event permit for MSAD 11 Graduation Block Party on June 14<sup>th</sup> 2025. Councilor Kimball seconded the motion. No Further Discussion. Unanimously approved. ~ Chief everything all good? Yes we had a follow-up meeting to dictate what the school will do vs the city. Councilor Cone thanked the Chief for following up, said this is a great activity.**
- k) Discussion of the FY26 Proposed Budget with public input and set dates for the First and Second Reads

**Discussion~ Denise Finance Director. Four options. Councilor Greenleaf ~ thank you for giving us those numbers. Councilor Cone ~ Councilor Dolley~ asked for details about the options and how duties would be split. The Finance Director said GA would need to be moved as it takes up a lot of time. The Planning Coordinator would take some of the duties from the Economic Development Director, which would allow Melissa to focus more on building relationships with businesses. Council said they are not ready to hire more people only to have to lay them off next year. We don't have a crystal ball to see where things will be next year. Councilor Greenleaf asked what the cost would be to the budget for option c.**

**Councilor Cusick moved to approve and incorporate Option C, seconded by Councilor Babcock, 7 votes in the affirmative, one vote opposed.**

**Councilor Grant moved to approve posting the public hearing for the budget, seconded by Councilor Dolley, Unanimous Vote**

Consideration of accepting the City Council meeting minutes from May 14, 2025, and May 21, 2025

**Councilor Grant moved to approve the City Council meeting minutes for May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Councilor Kimball seconded the motion. No Further Discussion. Unanimously approved.**

- l) Consideration of Comprehensive Plan Committee Appointments  
Mayor Hart named the following people to this committee. Christian Fox, Thatcher Larrabee, Jay Simanski, Deby Willis, Andrew Love, Cathy Galgano, Pam Mitchell.  
**Councilor Cone moved to appoint the candidates that Mayor Hart presented to the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Councilor Greenleaf seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.**

5. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS – **N/A**

6. CITY MANAGER REPORT

**General**

The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) intersection paving at Gardiner-Randolph work continues.

**Harrison Avenue Project**

With Council's approval of the City's share of the mitigation costs, we will be submitting the required paperwork to Maine Emergency Management Agency for the mitigation portion of the repairs. Staff are working with Weston & Sampson to prepare the necessary documentation.

**Arcade Parking Lot**

I have nothing new to report.

**Dearborn Park**

The Park is now a construction site with Public Works portion of the project being completed. Todd Berube will be moving his equipment today or tomorrow.

**Wastewater Phase 2**

The Wastewater Superintendent has provided a summary update for the status of the funding applications and project design:

- The Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) application was submitted; Award notifications will go out later in June 2025.
- Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) applications were submitted, anticipating knowing more in the next few months.
  - The Preliminary Engineering Report has been sent to USDA Rural Development for comment. Pending comments from USDA RD, the application for USDA funding should be submitted later this week. It could take several months to receive notification if approved for funding.
  - The engineering team at Hoyle & Tanner have moved into the final design for the project. Their electrical and mechanical engineering consultants have started on their design as well.
    - 50% design anticipated August 2025
    - 95% design anticipated December 2025
    - Construction anticipated July 2026

**Public Works Department**

The paving company plans on starting in the business park on Wednesday the 4th. They're going to be jumping around a little bit, paving some in the business park and then going over to Orchard St. and then to West Hill Terrace.

**Legal Representation**

As has been reported in the press, Eaton Peabody will cease to exist by the end of this month. The City will continue to work with the staff attorneys we have been using for the near future and will have the opportunity to continue to do so, just not under the Eaton Peabody umbrella. Being represented by a firm with in-house expertise in the varied needs of a municipality is beneficial. It would be my recommendation that the City consider a request for proposals for legal counsel. I look forward to the Council's and Department Heads' thoughts on this recommendation.

The mayor stated that she had received complaints from the business community about the paving staging, taking up 25 parking spots in the city and leaving a mess.

John Cameron Public Works Director ~ there are not many spaces to park that much equipment in the city, they were supposed to be done a week ago, but hopefully this week they will be done, and they will be held responsible to clean up their mess. Will take note to not let them do that again.

Mayor Hart ~ In regard to the legal representation, I know we have lost our comprehension team so I would say lets get RFP's out so we can have some coverage. *Everyone in agreement, those will be sent out soon.*

## 7. COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE UPDATES

**Mayor Hart~ I do have a question on the DOT letter, there is mention that the municipality may require the contractor to obtain a satisfactory bond pursuant to the statute, to cover the cost of any damage that might occur as a result of the over limit loads. Can we make sure that we request that bond? *City Manager Peabody~ yes. I share everyone's thanks for that process I know Denise started in November, thank you!***

**Councilor Grant ~ I have nothing to add, except I appreciate the request that was put into Maine DOT about Costello Road. I'm sure the residents appreciate that as well. I echo Councilor Cusick's concern, I understand that sometimes the choice is no choice, but we might have some problems with that. Hopefully it is well marked. Thank you all for your work on the budget.**

**Councilor Dolley~ yes, it's nice to be at the end of budget season, this must have been a very challenging budget knowing there are cuts on both state and federal levels along with all the continued uncertainty ahead. I'm going to come back to streetlights, the resident that I have heard from has been trying to get his street light issue resolved for approximately five months now. ~ *John~ as of three weeks ago I thought all streetlights were working, I will give him a call and personally follow up.***

**Councilor Babcock~ Hear hear to what all the previous councilors have said. Thank you for all your heard work and for keeping the city looking good. We are heading into summer, and it looks wonderful.**

**Councilor Kimball~ Thank you to all the department heads. I appreciate all your work. To follow up on the crosswalk for Highland Ave, I got my first piece of mail from a constituent, and they are very adamant on the crosswalk being done. Thank you.**

Councilor Cusick~ I read the letter that we received back from DOT about the detour on River Rd. I guess I have a question for John. When you and Andy looked at that, that was the best option was to send cars up a dirt road with no striping? *John Cameron, Public Works Director~ it's tough to say yes, but that's what happened. Back when Andy was here DOT presented us with a detour option of the dirt road vs what we brought to them with the other option being a 5-8-mile detour. They didn't like that option, so needless to say it was signed.* Cusick~ In the future it would be nice if we looked at these types of things more carefully. Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who participated in the Memorial Day parade. Chief your staff was great, blocking everything off. Thank you to all.

Councilor Greenleaf~ Hear hear to what Councilor Cone just said, but I also look forward to getting an estimate on the crosswalk for Highland Ave. I have had a lot of messages about that and it is a very busy area and a lot of people walk there.

Councilor Cone~ Thank you to the department heads and Denise for all the work on budget. Thank you to Mayor Hart for the speech you gave at the end of the Memorial Day parade it was lovely.

#### 8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a) Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C): Regarding Real Estate Matter  
**Action: Councilor Cusick moved to enter into executive session at 7:28PM. Councilor Kimball seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Exited Session At 7:46PM with nothing to report.**
- b) Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(A): Regarding Personnel Matter  
**Action: Councilor Cusick moved to enter into executive session at 7:47PM. Councilor Kimball seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Exited Session At 8:09PM with nothing to report.**

#### 9. ADJOURN

**Action: Councilor Kimball moved to adjourn at 8:09 PM. Councilor Cone seconded the motion. No Further Discussion. Unanimously approved.**

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#### Upcoming Meeting Dates

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| June 11, 2025     | September 17, 2025 |
| June 18, 2025     | October 1, 2025    |
| July 2, 2025      | October 15, 2025   |
| July 16, 2025     | November 5, 2025   |
| August 6, 2025    | November 19, 2025  |
| August 20, 2025   | December 3, 2025   |
| September 3, 2025 | December 17, 2025  |