

**Town of Rockport Planning Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, September 25, 2025**

Meeting was held in the Rockport Library, Rockport Room (lower level).

**Board Present:** Jeffrey Leclair, Tom Laurent, Jan Rosenbaum, Rob Dybas, Peter Sarno

**Board Absent:** Sam Clark

**Staff Present:** Orion Thomas, Director of Planning and Development  
John Viehman, Select Board Liaison

Meeting recording link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6vjYtc73Ko>

**Agenda**

1. [00:00:24] Call meeting to order
2. [00:01:54] Public comments on non-agenda items
3. [00:02:07] Approve minutes
  - a. 08.21.2025
4. [00:05:34] **Change of Use Application** for the parcel located at **315 Commercial St, Rockport, ME 04856**. This parcel is identified as **Tax Map 020 Block 097**, which is owned by Tonya Holt and Ryan Watts of Sea Hag Cider.
5. [00:29:32] **Site Plan Revision** application for the parcel(s) located at **535 West St. Rockport, ME 04856**. This parcel is identified as **Tax Map 025 Lot 101 & 101-100**, which is owned by **Mid-Coast Recreation Center, Inc. (MRC)**. This application is being represented by **Andrew Hedrich, of Gartley & Dorsky Engineering & Surveying**.
6. **NOT PRESENTED**  
**Subdivision Review – Pre-application** for the parcel located at **Granite Way, Rockport, ME 04856**. This parcel is identified as **Tax Map 026 Block 005 Lot 002**, which is owned by Mid-Coast Regional Housing Trust, Inc and is represented by Jonathan M. Goss, President.
7. [00:53:08] **Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law - Subdivision Review – Major – application** for the parcel located at **Commercial St. Rockport, ME 04856**. This parcel is identified as **Tax Map 027 Block 163 Lot 001**, which is owned by Mid-Coast Habitat for Humanity.

8. [00:59:18] Recurring items
  - a. [Comprehensive Plan](#)
9. [01:08:43] Other Business
  - a. Yearly Training workshop to schedule
10. [01:13:45] Adjourn

**Agenda Item #1: Call Meeting to order at 5:34 pm**

[00:00:24]

Chair Leclair provided an update to the agenda that Agenda Item #6, the subdivision pre-application for Granite Way is not ready to be presented.

Director Thomas also advised the Planning Board of a spam issue, where applicants are being sent invoices signed by him. This is currently being addressed.

**Agenda Item #2: Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items**

[00:01:54]

No Comments received for non-agenda items.

**Agenda Item #3: Approval of minutes for August 21, 2025**

[00:02:07]

**Motion:** Mr. Rosenbaum moved to approve the August 21, 2025, minutes as amended.

**Seconded:** Mr. Laurent seconded.

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

**Vote:** 4-0-1

**Abstention:** Mr. Dybas was not present at the August 21, 2025, meeting.

**Agenda Item #4: Change of Use Application for the parcel located at 315 Commercial St, Rockport, ME 04856. This parcel is identified as Tax Map 020 Block 097, which is owned by Tonya Holt and Ryan Watts of Sea Hag Cider.**

[00:05:34]

PRESENTATION:

Mr. Ryan Watts of Sea Hag Cider presented a history of the business. Over the past two years, they have had a steady, slow growth. They ferment hard cider and have a tasting room on the premises. Sales primarily occur on the property and through a few local vendors. The plan was to turn the whole house into a tasting room. The main house also

includes the offices for Sea Hag, and the production of cider is in the garage. The property also has an apartment above the garage.

Sea Hag Cider can comfortably accommodate 48 people. They have a relationship with a neighboring property for overflow parking. Through the state they can file liquor licenses in BABLO where they can serve customers outside in the fenced area.

Over time, there are plans to replace the existing seven (7) fermenters in the garage with 10-barrel systems, increasing the capacity.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: [00:10:01]**

Chair Leclair opened the floor to public comment at 5:44 pm. There were no comments in person or online, and no written comments were received. Public comments were closed at 5:45pm.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST: none**

**CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS FROM THE BOARD and DELIBERATION:**

Chair Leclair asked if this was a change from Residential/Commercial to just Commercial. Mr. Watts responded that they were originally classified as Home Occupation because the property was 50% residential and 50% business use. During the growth process, they have been in contact with Planning and Codes. A majority of their sales are local, and they are starting to attract tourists. The goal is to be the local place for residents and visitors.

Mr. Laurent asked what the zone the location was in. Director Thomas responded that they are in zone 906. Mr. Laurent asked if they are in a Commercial/Residential zone, do they still have to do a change of use? Director Thomas responded that since it was originally residential with a home occupation, the applicability in 1303, where 2b is the conversion of a residential building to commercial use, prevented an issue for the Code Officer to issue any permits.

Mr. Dybas then inquired if this was a code enforcement issue. Director Thomas confirmed with Mr. Watts that there were not going to be any changes to the site. Mr. Watts responded that nothing is changing on the site at this time.

Mr. Rosenbaum asked why the change of use was going through the planning board. When he reviewed the documents and referred to 1303 applicability, there are four (4) criteria to be met, which he felt they did not meet any of them. Director Thomas mentioned that the reason for bringing this before the planning board is how Chapter 1303 is currently written. There is a change proposed in the November ballot to clarify applicability moving forward. Therefore, the planning board has the option to say that they do not meet the applicability, and they can go to the permit office.

Mr. Rosenbaum asked if they were living in it right now and whether it is a commercial building right now. Mr. Watts stated that the change is that they are no longer living on the property. It is no longer a home occupation. They are looking to make the change from Residential Home Occupation to Commercial.

Mr. Sarno confirmed that the property is partially residential and commercial, does going all commercial effect any parking regs? Director Thomas responded that the police chief,

fire chief and public works did not find any concerns. Director Thomas referred to table 803 in Chapter 800 of the LUO.

Chair Leclair commented that if this was originally a home occupation, and the only change is that the owners no longer live there, then it does not meet the threshold to be reviewed. If they plan to cook meals and do other things that were not covered under the occupation, then that would be a commercial change of use.

There was discussion on permitted uses the property has had in the past. There were no public comments, and no comments on the abutter letters.

Mr. Laurent mentioned that a concern is parking, even with the agreement to park across the street that encourages pedestrian traffic crossing Commercial St. Mr. Watts clarified that the agreement to park is next door.

Chair Leclair asked the board if there were any further comments. There being none, Chair Leclair mentioned that this does not reach the threshold for review as a complete change of use that would require a site plan review.

**Motion:** Mr. Rosenbaum moved that Sag Harbor Cider does not reach the threshold of applicability and does not require a full site plan review.

**Seconded:** Mr. Sarno seconded.

**Discussion:** Mr. Laurent commented that if there are significant intensity of use issues, then that would be a signal to revisit the planning board (for example: parking, changing the hours of operation, expansion, operating a restaurant.) Mr. Watts responded that they plan to stay within the scope of their licensing.

**Vote:** 5-0-0

**Agenda Item #5: Site Plan Revision application for the parcel(s) located at 535 West St. Rockport, ME 04856. This parcel is identified as Tax Map 025 Lot 101 & 101-100, which is owned by Mid-Coast Recreation Center, Inc. (MRC). This application is being represented by Andrew Hedrich, of Gartley & Dorsky Engineering & Surveying.**

**[00:29:32]**

Chair Leclair reminded the board that this is a revision to a previously approved site plan that is currently under construction.

#### PRESENTATION:

Andrew Hedrich of Gartley & Dorsky and Rick Bresnahan from the MRC were at the meeting to discuss the site plan revision. In March 2025, they obtained a site plan review amendment to the existing development at MRC that included a new building with indoor tennis courts and pickleball courts and exterior tennis courts. Since the review it was realized that the lights did not meet the requirements for a tennis court (lights need to be a

brighter intensity and higher). There are two options available: (1) to install larger lights about 40ft tall or (2) put in a bunch of multiple lights along the sides of the courts.

The request is to install the larger lights, about 40ft tall at the corners. Since the poles are higher than 25ft, a waiver is being requested from the town. More information is included in the packet, including a photometric plan from the electrical designer showing how the light diminishes as you get beyond the tennis courts. The lights are shielded, dark sky fixtures and they are downward facing. The existing trees are more than 40ft and prevent the light poles from being seen from Route 90.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: [00:32:26]**

Chair Leclair opened the floor to public comment at 6:06:26 pm. There were no comments in person or online, and no written comments were received. Public comment was closed at 6:06:34 pm

**CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS FROM THE BOARD and DELIBERATION: [00:32:35]**

After doing some research, Mr. Rosenbaum found that professional courts required 40ft lights and regular courts had a standard of 25ft lights. He inquired as to why they thought they needed the higher poles. Mr. Bresnahan responded that the MRC is applying for a grant from the USTA to build the courts and the grant requires 40ft light poles.

Mr. Hedrich continued that these four poles would light all the courts. If the 25ft poles were to be installed, there would need to be about six (6) poles per court placed between the courts with barriers to prevent them from being run into, and the courts would need to be expanded to accommodate the extra lights. Therefore, the most economical and efficient way without modifying or expanding the courts further into the wetlands would be to install the four (4) 40ft poles.

Chair Leclair clarified with Mr. Hedrich that the option for installing the 25ft poles would incur an expense of more building within the wetland by permit. Mr. Hedrich confirmed that the shorter poles would be an expense to the development and wetland impacts. They could also run the risk of being denied the permits when they reapply for the adjustments.

Mr. Laurent then asked what the seasonality plan is for keeping the outdoor courts open. This information would come from the MRC, as well as the hours of operation. For example, during the summer months, how often will the lights be used? Mr. Bresnahan responded the timing would be based off the programs that are developed. During the summer months, the courts might be used till 9pm.

Mr. Laurent also asked if the USTA has been asked for a waiver for the poles. Mr. Bresnahan said they are giving no waivers.

Mr. Dybas asked if there was going to be a set time for the lights to be on, since in the past they had to warm up before they were bright enough. Mr. Bresnahan responded that the lights would follow the demand of the programs. The lights are LED and can either be turned on/off or put on a timer.

Mr. Rosenbaum inquired about the lumen generation. Mr. Hedrich referred to the information from the electrical engineer in the photometric plan. Mr. Rosenbaum asked who the engineer is. Mr. Hedrich responded that it is Bennett Engineering in Bath.

Mr. Sarno inquired if this request triggered another notification to the abutters and if there were any responses. Director Thomas responded that letters were sent to the abutters and there were no responses.

Chair Leclair referenced the diagram showing the light cut-off and stated that the cut-off area needs to happen at least at the property line. Mr. Hedrich said that the cut-off area is a few hundred feet away from the property line and will also be screened by the trees.

Chair Leclair referenced back to the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) regarding light fixtures. It does mention the height restriction but does not go into detail as to why. Is it the height of the mast or the light spilling out into areas where it does not belong? But it does say it should not extend past the property line.

Chair Leclair stated that Mr. Rosenbaum had a concern about the dark sky. The fixtures are dark sky compliant – they are covered on top, and the light only shines downward. Mr. Hedrich also added that the lights are very specific to areas where they are aimed. The lights are controlled.

Chair Leclair asked if there was any other concern the town might have of allowed masts with lights on them. There was a brief discussion, and the 40ft light poles are shorter than the current telephone poles and existing trees. Mr. Hedrich also added that when the MRC was originally built, it was set back 200+ ft back from the road and they are not close to the abutters. You can only see the lights if you come onto the MRC property.

Mr. Dybas asked about lighting for the pickle ball courts. Mr. Hedrich responded that those courts are inside the new building.

With there being no other concerns from the Planning Board, Chair Leclair asked for a motion to approve the revision of the site plan application for the MRC.

Director Thomas commented that the waiver needs to be reviewed and approved first, then the site plan can be approved with the waiver. [00:50:26]

Mr. Laurent asked about the timeline needed for approval. Mr. Hedrich responded that the plans are currently going through the grant process, and approval is based on the acceptance of this requirement. Once approved by the grant, they have one year to complete.

Chair Leclair made a recommendation for a motion, that the board approves a waiver for the lighting requirement under section 801.7.d.iii. The prior motion was tabled till after the vote on the waiver

**Motion:** Mr. Sarno moved to approve a waiver for the lighting requirement under section 801.7.D.iii.

**Seconded:** Mr. Dybas seconded.

**Discussion:** No further discussion on the second motion.

**Vote:** 4-0-1

Abstention: Mr. Rosenbaum abstained due to personal reasons.

**Motion:** Mr. Sarno moved to approve the revision to the site plan application for the MRC with the approved waiver of section 801.7.D.iii

**Seconded:** Mr. Dybas seconded.

**Discussion:** No further discussion on the first motion.

**Vote:** 4-0-1

Abstention: Mr. Rosenbaum abstained due to personal reasons.

**Agenda Item #7: Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law - Subdivision Review – Major – application for the parcel located at Commercial St. Rockport, ME 04856. This parcel is identified as Tax Map 027 Block 163 Lot 001, which is owned by Mid-Coast Habitat for Humanity.**

**[00:53:08]**

Chair Leclair that this is for the subdivision known as Compass Point.

The Planning Board discussed, reviewed, and approved the findings of facts.

**Motion:** Mr. Laurent moved to approve the Findings of Facts and Conclusions of Law for the subdivision review referred to as Compass Point Subdivision as amended.

**Seconded:** Mr. Rosenbaum seconded.

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

**Vote:** 4-0-1

**Agenda Item #8: Recurring Items**

**[00:59:18]**

**a. Comprehensive Plan**

Char Leclair, Jan Rosenbaum, and John Viehman are on the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee. The committee has started meeting and will be putting together tasks for action items for various groups of staff within the town and other ways of implementing the plan. There will be a process of tracking the implementation and how things are done. The committee will be making recommendations to the select board and other various committees. In the meantime, Chair Leclair has requested that the planning board continue to review the Comprehensive Plan, as it is the spirit of the town.

**Agenda Item #9: Other Business**

[01:08:43]

**a. Yearly Training workshop to schedule**

Director Thomas advised the board that LD1829 requires planning boards to have a yearly training workshop. The training can be done in a few ways. Director Thomas recommends using our legal services to provide information for us to have a workshop. There is a planning board training available through the Maine Municipal Association (MMA), but it would be nice to have training specific to Rockport.

**b. Planning Board members**

The Planning Board is looking for another member and two (2) alternates.

**Agenda Item #10: Adjournment**

[01:13:45]

**Motion:** Mr. Rosenbaum moved to adjourn the meeting.

**Seconded:** Mr. Sarno seconded.

**Discussion:** No further discussion.

**Vote:** 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 6:47 pm.