Town of Rockport Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 22, 2026

Meeting held in the Opera House GCPR.

Board Present:	Jeffrey Leclair, Tom Laurent, Jan Rosenbaum, Rob Dybas, Peter Sarno Sam Clark (arrived at item 5a)
Board Absent:	
Staff Present:	Orion Thomas, Director of Planning and Development John Viehman, Select Board Liaison Geoff Parker, Audio and Visual Technician

Meeting recording link: https://youtube.com/live/H3Jh4lrRAg0?feature=share

Agenda

1. **[00:00:06]** Call meeting to order
2. **[00:00:43]** Public comments on non-agenda items
3. **[00:00:56]** Approve minutes
    a. December 11, 2025
4. **[00:04:42]** Action items: none
5. **[00:05:21]** Discussion
    a. Building height note in Section 918 for a new location
    b. Subdivision Ordinance
    c. Zoning map
6. **[01:33:46]** Recurring items
    a. Comprehensive Plan
7. **[01:36:29]** Adjourn to Workshop re: future ordinance amendments

Agenda Item #1: Call Meeting to order

[00:00:06]

Meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm and a quorum was established.

Chair Leclair asked if there were any adjustments to the agenda. There were none.

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

[00:00:43]

No Comments received for non-agenda items.

Agenda Item #3: Approval of minutes for December 11, 2025.

[00:00:56]

Motion: Mr. Sarno moved to approve the December 11, 2025 minutes as amended.

Seconded: Mr. Laurent seconded.

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote: 4-0-1

Abstention: Mr. Rosenbaum was not present at the 12.11.2025 meeting.

Agenda Item #4: Action items – none

[00:04:42]

No items to discuss at this time. Director Thomas has been having conversations with engineers and some developers that may be submitting their packages to the Planning Board in the future.

Agenda Item #5: Discussion

[00:05:21]

The Planning Board has requested to receive an explanation memo with the meeting packet to provide context on discussion items in the future.

a. Building height note in Section 918 for a new location **[00:05:34]**

Chair Leclair referred the group to the Land Use Ordinance (LUO). Last year the definition of building height was changed. There has been a request for clarity on revised definition.

Director Thomas continued the conversation referring to the previous versions of the LUO having "Notes" under the tables. Last year those "Notes" were moved to the applicable zone sections. However, the "Building Height Note" was not moved. Director Thomas is proposing to have the "Note" added to each Zone in the "Permitted Uses and Standards" section as a subset with its current language. The members discussed the options and agreed to Director Thomas' suggestion.

There was a discussion as to how to measure the heights of buildings. Director Thomas reviewed the LUO definition: "The vertical distance measured from the original grade to the highest point of the roof surface, unless otherwise specified in this ordinance". Currently the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) takes an average from the original grade. It has been requested that the LUO be amended to provide some clarity.

Public Comments: **[00:35:13]**

> Geoff Parker provided some back history about builders building up properties several years before building so they could build upwards. The current Comprehensive Plan includes a strong desire to keep the ridgelines unaltered as much as possible. The idea is not to have a house break the horizon of trees from a distance.

The Planning Board further discussed how to clarify the definition and suggest: "The vertical distance measured from the (average) original grade, adjacent to the foundation, to the highest point of the roof surface, unless otherwise specified in this ordinance".

Director Thomas will type up a draft for a vote at the next meeting.

b. Subdivision Ordinance **[00:41:31]**

Director Thomas has been working on some revisions to the subdivision ordinance removing sections that are redundant and cleaning it up, making it more like a site plan review. The Planning Board discussed their concerns and agreed that Director Thomas can continue on his edits.

c. Zoning map **[01:03:06]**

Director Thomas shared with the Planning Board a recommendation from the Economic Development Committee (EDC). He created a map using an overlay of the growth zone, and wherever there were zones other than rural zone, they were proposed to change.

1. Change a few lots from 908 Rural to 904 Residential because they are within the growth zone;
2. Simonton's Corner – merge the split lots into their corresponding zones;
3. Expansion in the 907 zone along West Street (Hwy 90);
4. Eastward area does not conform to the 908 zone. Previously it was a zone 903 and the recommendation is to rezone back to 903 – Coastal Residential;
5. Rockville area – rezoning the split lots from 908 to 902 so they conform.
6. Corner or Route 1 and 90 – rezone mixed business / residential. This would allow for all properties that touch Route 90 would allow commercial.

Mr. Clark expressed concern about non-conforming lots in West Rockport, currently in the 908 zone. Director Thomas will review to see if the area should be recommended to be rezoned.

Regarding the next steps, Director Thomas will submit a recommendation for the changes to the zone map at the February meeting. He will notify landowners and abutters that a zone change is being proposed and post public notices. The Planning Board will then make their recommendation to the Select Board by April, who will then prepare the warrants for the Town to vote on in June.

Timeline for ballot:

120 days prior to Order
90 days prior to Questions
60 day prior to Final Questions

Agenda Item #6: Recurring items

[01:33:46]

a. Comprehensive Plan

The CPITF has been meeting with various committees on incorporating the parts within their work plans. There has not been much resistance, and it is believed that this comp plan will be integrated within a faster timeline. Chair Leclair asked if other committees have task items that are going to come to the Planning Board for approval.
Mr. Rosenbaum mentioned that he would try to compile some information. Chair Leclair mentioned that if committees have items for the Planning Board to review, they can be invited to join their workshops.

Agenda Item #7: Adjournment to Workshop re: future ordinance amendments

[01:36:29]

Motion: Mr. Rosenbaum moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded: Mr. Clark seconded.

Discussion: No further discussion.

Vote: 6-0-0

Meeting was adjourned at 7:09 pm.