# Town of Rockport Planning Board
# Meeting Minutes
# Thursday, April 30, 2026

Meeting held in the Opera House GCPR.

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| **Board Present:** | Jeffrey Leclair, Sam Clark, Tom Laurent, Jan Rosenbaum, Carter Skemp, Peter Sarno |
| **Board Absent:** | Rob Dybas |
| **Staff Present:** | Orion Thomas, Director of Planning and Development<br>John Viehman, Select Board Liaison<br>Geoff Parker, Audio and Visual Technician |

Meeting recording link:

https://youtube.com/live/4nP0o9K9njQ?feature=share

## Agenda

1. **[00:00:00]** Call meeting to order

2. **[00:01:06]** Public comments on non-agenda items

3. **[00:01:20]** Approve minutes
    a. March 26, 2026

4. **[00:02:52]** **Site Plan Pre-Application Review** for two multi-family residential buildings with twelve-units in each, located at **3 Cross Street**. This parcel is identified as **Tax Map 027 Lot 023,** which is under contract by Lake City Holdings, LLC. This application is being represented by **Gartley & Dorsky.**

5. **[01:02:26]** Recurring items
    a. Comprehensive Plan

6. **[01:05:55]** Other Business

7. **[01:16:25]** Adjourn to Workshop re: ordinance amendments

**Agenda Item #1: Call Meeting to order**

**[00:00:00]**

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

Mr. Leclair provided an overview of the agenda. At the end of the meeting the Planning Board will adjourn into a workshop (which will not be televised), but the public is welcome to attend.

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

**[00:01:06]**

No Comments received for non-agenda items.

**Agenda Item #3: Approval of minutes from March 26, 2026**

**[00:01:20]**

Mr. Laurent commented that he is impressed with the minutes but has noticed that "mentioned" was used frequently and requested that it be replaced with "said".

**Motion**: Mr. Laurent moved to approve the March 26, 2026 minutes as corrected.

**Seconded**: Mr. Sarno seconded.

**Discussion**: No further discussion.

**Vote**: 4-0-2

Abstention: Mr. Clark and Mr. Skemp were not present at the 3.26.2026 meeting.

**Agenda Item #4: Site Plan Pre-Application Review** for two multi-family residential buildings with twelve-units in each, located at **3 Cross Street**. This parcel is identified as **Tax Map 027 Lot 023,** which is under contract by Lake City Holdings, LLC. This application is being represented by **Gartley & Dorsky.**

**[00:02:52]**

Chair Leclair advised the applicants that the Planning Board does not make any decisions tonight but will make suggestions as to what they would like to see in the application or share how they feel about the applicant's requests.

PRESENTATION:

The site plan pre-application was presented to the Planning Board by Ed Libby and Caleb Lincoln of Lake City Holdings, LLC; Mary Jane Young from the Lesher Foundation; and Will Gartley and Stacy-Ann Gordon-Barber from Gartley & Dorsky.

Mr. Lincoln provided an overview of Lake City Holdings. They focus on Mid Coast Maine projects serving 50%-120% Area Median Income (AMI). Recently they finished an 18-unit family apartment complex restricted to 80% AMI at 7 Madelyn Ln in Rockport.

They had 100% occupancy within 15 days of approval. That project was funded as a partnership with Lake City Holdings, LLC, the Bresnahan Family and the Lesher Family Foundation and they are planning on working together again on the project located at 3 Cross St. This project has 24-units targeting the "missing middle" at 100% AMI, by filling the gap left by subsidy programs focused on 80% AMI or below.

Ms. Young is the main director of the Lesher Family Foundation. This project will be the third affordable housing project they have supported in Rockport, and they are excited to support this project with the Bresnahan's. The Foundation feels that the project aligns with the 2024 MCOG study, aiming to ensure Rockport has housing for all income levels, including the "missing middle". The other housing projects they have supported are Madelyn Lane and Compass Point with Habitat for Humanity, which serves those with 30-80% AMI.

Mr. Gartley provided a summary of the project proposal that was submitted to the Planning Board. The project is a residential development of two (2) buildings with 12 units, for a total of 24 units. The site utilizes existing infrastructure (water, sewer and power) and has an existing entrance on Cross Street. The property will be divided into two (2) parcels, with cross-easements for parking. They are seeking feedback from the Planning Board on submitting the application for a Site Plan Review vs a Subdivision Review, confirmation on the building height and grade, and confirmation of parking to be 1.5 spaces per unit and if a waiver needs to be submitted.

Mr. Laurent asked about the size of the units and if they would be rented under a lease. Mr. Lincoln responded that the units would be leased and would be a mix of 1- and 2-bedroom apartments, being approximately 700sf for a 1-bedroom and 1,000sf for a 2-bedroom.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: **[00:14:07]**

Chair Leclair asked the planning board members if they had a conflict of interest with this project. There were none.

PUBLIC COMMENT: **[00:14:16]**

Chair Leclair opened the floor to public comment at 5:44pm.

Jeff Brazee is a Rockport resident (lives on Mill St) and works for Maine Coast Heritage Trust on the recent Erickson Homestead project across the street. He is concerned with the intersection and has visual and architectural style concerns.

Mr. Lincoln confirmed that as part of the planning process they make an effort to reflect local neighborhood character, balancing budget constraints and neighborhood compatibility.

There were no additional comments in person or online. Public comment was closed at 5:46pm.

CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS FROM THE BOARD: **[00:16:43]**

Mr. Clark noted that the site plan indicated the covering of an existing well and asked if they had been in contact with Maine Water to verify if they would be able to handle the number of units being added to their system. Mr. Gartley confirmed that they have been in

contact with Maine Water and will include a letter in their application. Chair Leclair also asked if it was the same for sewer. Mr. Garley indicated that it was the same for sewer and that the buildings will also be sprinkled, confirming the need to switch to city water.

Mr. Skemp asked if these were the architectural drawings for the project. Mr. Lincoln confirmed that the provided elevation drawings represent the proposed building's dimension and design, though some details, such as color and specific entrance layout, are subject to change.

Mr. Skemp asked if this project falls under a subdivision review. Chair Leclair said that they review both site plan review and subdivision review for this municipality following the local ordinance and state law. He asked the planning board how they interpret the state law and asked Director Thomas for his opinion.

Director Thomas stated that based on the ordinance we have today, this project would fall under the subdivision review. However, the state has a statute that would allow this project to follow a site plan review. After consulting with the town attorney, he believes this would trigger a site plan review instead of a subdivision review.

Mr. Gartley explained that the project is a division of a parcel, but they are not creating lots. Therefore, most of the Subdivision Ordinance does not apply to this project, but the project could fall under the site plan review. Mr. Libby also explained that they have been in this position before with other planning boards, where this type of project would be traditionally considered a subdivision. However, when you look at the statute, a site plan review has more criteria that must be met.

Chair Leclair asked Director Thomas who makes the determination of whether a project goes through a site plan review or a subdivision review. Director Thomas responded that it would aid the applicant if the Planning Board confirmed that they would accept a site plan review rather than a subdivision review. Director Thomas also added that apartment complexes are more commercial versus residential (like a condominium unit), because of the turnover. He also added that he thought a site plan review might be better than a subdivision review for this type of development.

Chair Leclair asked the Planning Board if anyone was uncomfortable doing a site plan review rather than a subdivision review. Mr. Skemp asked for a brief description between the two reviews. Chair Leclair responded that the site plan review is stricter than a subdivision review. A site plan review covers broader aspects such as traffic impact, proximity to intersections, parking and land use, going beyond subdivision's focus on lot configurations and utility connections. Regarding a site walk, it is required for a subdivision review, but it is optional for a site plan review. After a brief discussion, the Planning Board felt comfortable proceeding with a site plan review and doing a site walk.

**[00:31:59]** Mr. Aaron Englander, was late to the meeting and had an additional public comment to add regarding the project. He is a representative of Maine Coast Heritage Trust and manages the Aldemere Farm and Ericson Fields. As a community stakeholder, he feels this is an important project. They've been working with the housing trust across the street and are an advocate for developing housing in the area. He is advocating for careful planning and advised protecting the artisanal well. He would also like to see a landscape architect help with the foundation of the project. Mr. Englander knows this is a

big change, but if time is taken and due diligence is done to review the long-term impacts, he feels this would be a great project for the community.

Mr. Rosenbaum expressed concerns regarding the traffic on Cross Street and the need for an updated traffic survey. Mr. Gartley responded that the project does not meet DOT's requirements for a traffic study. However, part of their submission will include data on anticipated trips both hourly and daily, traffic and parking requirements, and access to the property lining up with the project across the street.

Mr. Libby also followed up on the traffic concerns on Sundays that were mentioned during the public comment. The subject property currently houses a church, which is moving, eliminating current traffic patterns.

Mr. Clark inquired if there was a known planned use for the existing building after the church leaves. Mr. Lincoln responded that there are no plans at this time and Ms. Young said that the Foundation does not own it.

Chair Leclair mentioned that the ordinance allows them to request a traffic study, but it does not require one for this type of project.

Chair Leclair asked the applicant if they were applying under the PUD section of the ordinance. Mr. Gartley said they were not. Chair Leclair clarified that the project will be reviewed as multi-family housing, since they would be at 100% AMI.

Chair Leclair briefly discussed the parking waiver request that is covered in the parking section of the Land Use Ordinance (Section 803.1.g.i.) and asked the Planning Board if they had any concerns. Mr. Sarno expressed his opposition and commented that moderate-income housing often involves multiple residents per unit, each requiring individual transportation to work, and raised concerns regarding the lack of overflow parking for guests or vendors.

Mr. Sarno asked how building height is determined and is there a definition for Rockport. Chair Leclair responded that there is a proposal before the voters this June to change the definition from original grade to average original grade. He further explained that average original grade is calculated as the average elevation between the highest and lowest points at the building footprint. The flexibility of the definition gives the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) discretion to interpret the grade on sloped sites. The maximum height allowed is 34 feet, with up to 42 feet allowed for roof pitches greater than 8:12. Therefore the applicant will need to file a waiver request if any roof pitch is less than 8:12 but exceeds the 34 feet in height.

Mr. Laurent inquired about the layout of the parking lot and how it correlates between the two properties. Mr. Gartley responded that the intent is for the properties to share the entrance and connect the parking lots as a loop to prevent a dead end. When the deeds to the properties are transferred, they will include cross-over easements stating the use, the allowed use, and the responsibilities of the property owners.

Mr. Skemp asked about the new state laws encouraging lower parking minimums. Chair Leclair mentioned that the developer would have a hard time marketing the units if there was not adequate parking. There is an option for this project where additional spaces could be leased and/or expand the parking lot if needed. He also mentioned that the Planning

Board has been discussing in workshops the possible elimination of parking requirements from the ordinance and having the developer handle the parking needs.

Chair Leclair asked if there was a plan to connect to the proposed sidewalk on West St. providing the ability to walk to the schools or village in the future. Mr. Lincoln responded that there are no immediate plans to extend sidewalks on Cross St. connecting this development to the town or school, but support exists for future infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Garley and his team will work on the application for site plan review.

Chair Leclair also commented that as part of the review, the Planning Board references the Rockport Forward 2025 Comprehensive Plan, and he feels that the project supports the goals for housing development and community growth. The Planning Board encourages applicants to demonstrate adherence to the comprehensive plan in their submission.

Mr. Libby asked about scheduling a site visit. Chair Leclair responded that a site visit will be scheduled once the application is received.

The Planning Board took a break from 6:36 pm - 6:38pm.

**Agenda Item #5:** Recurring items

**[01:02:26]**

a. Comprehensive Plan

Director Thomas thanked Chair Leclair for referencing the Planning Boards use of the Comprehensive Plan when reviewing applications. He will include in the application an item for the applicant to provide a statement as to how the project meets the Town's Comprehensive Plan. He's also working on adding updates to the strategies with CPITF. He also mentioned that the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) will be fully implementing the Comp Plan after the changes are approved by the June ballot.

Chair Leclair asked if any committees were requesting changes to the LUO. Director Thomas said that there were none at this time. He mentioned that the Economic Development Committee recently finished doing a survey of businesses and are processing the information. Depending on the data collected, it might lead to more of a professional development program with a third-party vendor.

**Agenda Item #6: Other Business**

**[01:05:55]**

a. Joint workshop with the Select Board, Planning Board and Economic Development Committee (EDC) to cover housing issues.
May 28, 2026 from 3p-5p, in person and Teams/Zoom

   The Planning Board will host the workshop with the Select Board and EDC. There will be two (2) workshops. Mr. Viehmann and Chair Leclair will work on the agenda for the workshop. The workshop will be advertised and open to the public.

b. Next meeting dates
   a. May 28, 2026
   b. June 25, 2026
   c. July 23, 2026
   d. August 27, 2026

   Chair Leclair asked if anyone had any conflicts with the dates and reminded the Planning Board to respond to calendar invitations.

c. Mr. Laurent inquired about the status of the Rocky Road project and how to access it. No one had any information, and there was a discussion on how to access.

**Agenda Item #7: Adjournment** to workshop

**[01:16:25]**

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| **Motion**: | Mr. Clark moved to adjourn the meeting and move to the workshop. |
| **Seconded**: | Mr. Rosenbaum seconded. |
| **Vote**: | 6-0-0 |

Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.