

Freeport Insider

What's on at Planning Board, Coastal Waters, etc
A weekly news source about Town Hall.

21 September 2023 – No.2

TOWN COUNCIL

Council okays grants! For electric bicycles etc for renovating commercial space for fun and beautiful downtown amenities. Also considers requiring registration of all moorings.

CENTRAL CORE DISTRICT WORKING GROUP

Delete color overlay district, and other topics.

COASTAL WATERS

No report.

PLANNING BOARD

No report.

PROJECT REVIEW BOARD

Quiet meeting.

SOCIAL AND RACIAL EQUITY

No report. Next meeting 27th.

SUSTAINABILITY

No report. Next meeting 25th.

HOUSING

No report.

PEOPLE

Communications coordinator sought.

EVENTS

Anti-hate gathering 22nd, 4PM, Town Hall.

-

Town calendar September & October

FROM THE EDITOR

A river of information

This week I discovered that the Town website gives as well as the agenda, access to the pdfs containing information for the discussion listed. For the Town Council, for the Project Review Board, and possibly other bodies. Not yet, alas, for the Central Core Working Group.

How to find your way there? Another

discovery! The Town calendars have links to the agenda and the submissions.

Go to:

<https://www.freeportmaine.com/calendar/month/2023-09>

Click on a meeting, and the link opens to the page for that particular body. The page provides a link to the agenda, and to the pdfs for the meeting – if available.

This is terrific! My hat is off to whomever creates this. I do wish that the language explaining how to do this were easier to find, and clearer.

Tips, rumors, interesting stories, feedback?

E-mail me or call me!

- Chalmers Hardenbergh, editor

TOWN COUNCIL

<https://www.freeportmaine.com/town-council>

Meetings: Twice monthly, Tuesdays 6PM, check website

Agendas: Posted at website and calendar (click on mtg)

Minutes: Late! Last posted for 7/11/23

19 September. ***THE COUNCIL WORKED THROUGH 11 AGENDA ITEMS.***

MOORINGS

The Council set a public hearing 3 October to discuss amendments to Chapter 31, Coastal Waters Ordinance to add language to address mooring assignments outside the Harraseeket River Anchorage.

Harbor Master Charlie Tetreau explained a need to register all moorings in Freeport waters, noting the town is the only one on Casco Bay not to do so. The existence of 40 aquaculture sites in Freeport is complicating matters, as mooring users complain about the proximity of aquaculture.

Mark Morissey, chair of the Coastal Waters Commission, told the Council that the CWC held a hearing on the proposed ordinance amendments. Most of the overflow crowd at his hearing were riparian property owners fearing the Town would bar their moorings. Instead, the CWC is suggesting that the Town charge \$50 per mooring. [See CWC minutes 22-09-14.]

Council members noted that any fees would probably be set separately from the ordinance change,

which would require the registration.

The Town currently receives \$75,000 from mooring fees. Councilor Dan Piltch noted that did not nearly cover the cost of the harbor master and other port workers.

STORMWATER ORDINANCE CHANGES

The Council set a public hearing 3 October to discuss amendments to Town ordinances relative to enforcement of stormwater management systems.

Town Engineer Adam Bliss explained that the Maine Department of Environmental Protection has told the Town that its ordinances must include a requirement of inspection for all “devices” to handle storm water, such as culverts and ditches.

The inspections are already occurring. New developments include agreements with the developer to inspect the devices annually. Code Enforcement Officer Nick Adams ensures this occurs.

Councillor Darrel Fournier noted MDEP was placing another requirement on the Town, but not adding funding for it.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Brett Richardson, executive director of the Freeport Economic Development Corporation¹, told the Council about the launch of the Fitup Grants program and the pending launch of the Momentum Grants program. [See graphics on each.]

Fitup Grants

Per FEDC website, 'Fit-Up provides matching funds for local businesses to improve Downtown commercial spaces to enhance business vitality, diversify Freeport's offerings, activate underutilized spaces, and enhance the experience of residents and visitors.'

'Typical Fit-Up projects receive up to \$10,000 in Fit-Up funding. The minimum grant award is \$2,500. A total of \$60,000 is available. A 1-to-1, dollar for dollar match is required for all grants.

'The first Fit-Up funding cycle will include an application period between October 1 and November 15, 2023, with awards announced in early December 2023. If funds remain available after the first cycle, the

¹The FECD states on its website that it is 'a private, non-profit corporation that provides free and confidential assistance to current businesses looking to establish or expand in Freeport, Maine. We pursue the economic development goals set by the Freeport community.' It is linked to the municipality because the Town Manager serves on its board *ex officio* and it has a councilor (currently Dan Piltch) as liaison. {website}

Momentum Activates Public Spaces

Momentum unleashes the creativity of residents and community organizations to help design the future of Freeport's Downtown with new amenities and installations that add beauty and fun activities.

Available Funding

- Typical grants are \$2,500 to \$5,000
- \$40,000 total is available
- Matching contributions encouraged



Eligible Projects

Public art installations, pocket parks, equipment for public games and activities, planters and furniture in the public realm, and lighting and accessibility upgrades to bring new spaces to life.



Program Goals

- Activate public space & streetscapes
- Expand experiential uses
- Beautify high-visibility areas
- Encourage community engagement



Apply for Fit-Up Funds

Apply between November 15 and December 31, 2023.

Awards announced in early 2024

Access Application Below:

Contact: Brett Richardson, Freeport Economic Development Corporation



Grant Committee will review new applications until all funds are committed to projects.' {website}

Grants committee. Richardson requested, and the Council approved, the creation of a four-person committee to decide on the grant applications: the town manager, Councilor Jake Danielle, FEDC Board member Rebecca Lizotte, and resident Richard Gorvett. [The last operates Deep Wave, where 'I help leaders, and coalitions of leaders, build more vital, resilient and impactful businesses, organizations and communities.' {linkedin}]

Momentum Grants

Richardson requested, and the Council approved, the creation of the 'Freeport Downtown Momentum Grant

Fit-Up Helps Activate Downtown Spaces

Fit-Up assists local property owners and businesses to redevelop, restore, renovate, and reconfigure commercial spaces throughout Freeport's Downtown.

Available Funding

- Typical grants are \$10,000
- \$60,000 total is available
- 1-to-1 match required



Eligible Projects

Redevelop underutilized spaces with utility connections, improve accessibility, reconfigure spaces, code compliance updates, and related activities



Program Goals

- Cultivate a local food scene
- Create spaces for local makers & retail
- Support experiential services & activities
- Catalyze investment Downtown



Apply for Fit-Up Funds

Apply between October 1 and November 15, 2023.

Awards announced in early December 2023.

Access Application Below:

Program' to 'grant funds to empower residents and local organizations to execute high-visibility projects that enhance the experience of residents and visitors and add vitality to the Downtown.'

'Momentum provides funding to unleash the

creative spirit of Freeport residents and organizations to actively participate in creating the future of Freeport's Downtown. Momentum grants will help to activate and beautify public spaces, provide amenities that encourage residents and visitors to linger Downtown, test new initiatives and offerings in order to gather community feedback, engage local youth, and create opportunities for residents who typically do not participate in Town budgeting processes to help implement the Downtown Vision Plan.

Funding levels for Momentum projects are determined at the discretion of the Momentum Committee. Typical Momentum projects will be

COMMUNITY VOICES FORUM

In response to recent events, you're invited to join together with your neighbors and stand united against all forms of hate and discrimination.

Let us demonstrate that our community wholeheartedly embraces inclusivity as we strongly affirm there is absolutely no room for the use of hateful language or imagery in our town.

JOIN US FRIDAY!

SEPTEMBER 22
4:00 PM

FREEPORT TOWN
HALL



between \$2,500 to \$5,000 in Momentum funding. A total of \$40,000 is available.

Momentum grants will be distributed on a quarterly cycle, with an average of \$10,000 available per quarter. The first Momentum funding cycle will

What are the Current Rebates?

The table below outlines the current Electrify Everything! rebates qualified residents can get in addition to [Efficiency Maine](#) rebates. To receive these rebates, you must provide the City with proof of your Efficiency Maine rebate.

Equipment/Service	Electrify Everything! Rebate
Air Source Heat Pump	\$1,200
Hot Water Heat Pump	\$400
Air Sealing with Energy Assessment	\$100
Insulation	20% of project cost up to \$2,000
New or Used Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV)^	\$2,000
New or Used Plug-In Electric Hybrid Vehicle (PEHV)^	\$2,000

**Opportunity for renters*
^New or Used BEV or PEHV may be purchased in or out-of-state from reputable dealer

**SOUTH PORTLAND
REBATE PROGRAM
(adopted by Freeport)**

The table below outlines the additional Electrify Everything! rebates. To receive these rebates, you must provide the City with receipt proof of purchase.

Equipment	Electrify Everything! Rebate
Electric Bike (E-Bike)	\$500 (as of April 1, 2023)
E-Cargo Bike	\$800 (as of April 1, 2023)
Electric Lawn Mower	\$300 (as of April 1, 2023)
Electric Leaf Blower	\$100
Electric String Trimmer*	\$50 (as of April 1, 2023)

**Rebate Available After April 1, 2023*

offer up to \$20,000 total and will include an application period between November 15 and December 31, 2023, with awards announced in early

2024. No matching funds are required but donations and in-kind contributions are encouraged.' {submission to Town Council}

Councilor John Egan congratulated Richardson on his “10th or 12th brilliant idea.” Richardson has had “an enormous impact” in the 18 months he has served as FEDC executive director.

ELECTRIFY EVERYTHING ! GRANTS
The Council voted to expand the Electrify Everything! grants program, funded by federal funds and run by the Town, to cover equipment. Earlier, it was limited to heat pumps, insulation, energy audits, and weatherization.

Bob Stevens of Freeport Climate Action Now told the Council that the grants as established by the Council in February had not been successful. Only \$7,736 was paid out. He attributed that mostly to not enough publicity, and to the exclusion of equipment.

South Portland success. South Portland, on which Freeport modeled its program, has paid out all its \$270,000. Stevens noted it has a full-time sustainability director and assistant to handle the program. Of South Portland's \$270,000, \$16,000 was paid for publicity, including a town-wide mailing “and the results were dramatic.” Some 92 air heat pumps, 19 water heat pumps, 89 e-bikes, 132 mowers, 35 leaf blowers, 37

string trimmers, and 13 electric vehicles were supported.

Expansion. The Council passed an amendment to the program which expanded it to the equipment which South Portland covers [see graphic], including electric vehicles getting a rebate of \$2000. The amendment also increased eligibility from 90% (\$70,380) to 100% of area median income (\$78,200 for a one- person household up to \$147,450 for an eight-person household).

Councilor Fournier objected to including equipment, saying his support for the program had been gained by its concentration on heat pumps to help those most needy. Councilor Bradley said he thought the objective was to reduce fossil fuel emissions, not protect “social equity.” and that covering equipment would help reduce fossil fuel emissions. He also suggested that if the program's \$40,000 funds were not soon expended, that the eligibility be open to everyone. Councilor Daniele raised the possibility that someone could use the rebate to purchase equipment and then move out of town with it. In the end he joined Council Chair Piltch and Councilors Egan, Bradley and Pillsbury in voting to approve the program expansion and raise the income eligibility level, Councilors Fournier and Lawrence voting no. {*Insider* coverage; attachments to agenda submitted by Stevens; e-mail about amount from Stevens 21.Sept.23}

HATE CRIMES

In response to the four incidents listed by Ella Tabasky [see 18 September *Insider*], the Council discussed whether to hold a public forum on Friday 22 September outside Town Hall, as suggested by Councillor John Egan. Councilors debated four courses of action: do nothing, because publicizing the incidents only egged on the racists; take positive action such as requiring awareness in the schools; take negative action such as a fine for ordinance violation or cleaning up the graffiti; and taking notice of the incidents.

Ella Tabasky testified that general wisdom is *do something* to show that the Town and the residents deem hate crimes unacceptable.² Doing nothing shows the perpetrators that the Town sees the incidents as not objectionable.

² In response to a question from Councilor Lawrence, Woodbury said that the swastikas and slurs are hate crimes even if committed as a lark, because they are intended to put fear into the hearts of the groups targeted.

Carol Wishcamper and Sarah Woodbury, both residents, underscored the need for the Council to do something.

TOWN MANAGER SELECTION

Following two earlier executive sessions interviewing candidates, the Council in executive session at 21h00 discussed the matter this evening. [To make the actual choice? Or followup interviews? Editor]

CENTRAL CORE DISTRICT

20 September. **THE WORKING GROUP DISCUSSED AREAS FOR POSSIBLE QUICK ACTION.** Caroline Pelletier, interim town manager and town planner, said members needed to come up with actions by the end of next week, because in order to enact changes the Town Council needs one meeting to set a public hearing, and the next meeting to hold it.

If as suggested the changes come before the current Council (before the 7 November election), the two meetings would be 3 and 17 October. However, Councillor Egan pointed out that councillors could schedule a special meeting if need be, before the election.

Not zoning amendments, only Design Review

Pelletier underscored that amendments to zoning ordinances needed to go through the Planning Board, which could not happen in time. That left changes to the Design Review Ordinance which the CCWG could suggest and the Council enact in the weeks remaining.

Possible deletion of color overlay district

Guy Blanchard of the Historical Society said his group discussed the question of color. CCWG members pointed out that even if the color overlay district (where the Town must okay the color used on a building) were deleted, and references to the Color Overlay District were removed from the Design Review Ordinance, color could still be regulated by the PRB [see box].

Contribute or Non-contribute standard

Members discussed whether to amend the Ordinance to remove the classification of buildings into A, B, and C and use language similar to what the Town of Bar Harbor uses: 'Buildings or structures at which events occur or have occurred that **contribute** to, are identified with, or significantly represent or exemplify

FROM THE DESIGN REVIEW ORDINANCE

Section I.A: 'District 1 is comprised predominantly of buildings which were constructed before 1930. It includes the Main Street Historic District, many significant historic buildings representing a variety of architectural styles, other buildings which contribute to the historic setting, and a number of contemporary buildings. District 2 is predominantly residential with a few businesses and is wedged between the Main Street Historic District and the Harraseeket Historic District.

Section V.A: The Project Review Board shall issue certificates for work in the Design Review District, including 'Color changes to the exterior of Class A, B, or C buildings within the Color Overlay District only if the color is not included on the palette of historical colors of any paint manufacturer.'

Section VIII.C.7: 'In the Color Overlay District colors shall be compatible with historic buildings and the colors should not dominate the architectural features of the building and other buildings around it.'

the broad cultural, political, economic, military, social, or sociological history of Bar Harbor and/or the nation.' [See <https://ecode360.com/8376383>.]

Adjust the boundaries of the districts

One member suggested that they consider adjusting the southern District 1 boundary north to West Street. Ford Reiche said he would like to shrink the historic district boundaries, make the rules within the district more restrictive as the public wants, and make them more liberal outside the boundaries.

Could Town staff handle some particulars?

Members also appeared ready, as part of streamlining, to delegate some of the review tasks to staff, rather than have the PRB or other bodies handle it.

Tasks for meeting on 27 September

Reiche and member Susan Nourse will look at changes to the boundaries and report back. Members Sam Kapala and Brett Richardson will make a list of possible “low-hanging fruit” changes from the suggestions submitted to the CCWG this meeting. Pelletier will provide before the next meeting maps of the various districts and also data from a 2019 survey of Freeport buildings. {*Insider* coverage via Zoom}

More from Project Review Board meeting

On 20 September Pelletier told the PRB that members of the CCWG were the chairs of other Town bodies, and were supposed to spread news about it “back to their committees.”

Public input. She told the PRB that the Town was recording the audio of the CCWG. If members of the public had comments on the CCWG, they could send her an e-mail and she would provide the comments to the CCWG.

Disseminated materials. One PRB member asked if they could see the materials disseminated to the CCWG and Pelletier said she “would find a way to distribute that information.” {*Insider* coverage via Zoom}

PROJECT REVIEW BOARD

<https://www.freeportmaine.com/planning/pages/board-information-project-review-board>

Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of each month 630PM.

20 September. ***THE BOARD HAD A QUIET NIGHT.***

UPDATES OF RELEVANCE

Members heard an update from Interim Town Manager and Town Planner Caroline Pelletier about meetings of other bodies relevant to the PRB.

Planning Board

It updated ordinances as required by LD 2003 [see 18 September issue].

Downtown Vision Task Force Implementation Group

This group held no meeting in September. [And the Town calendar lists no meetings in October.]

Town of Freeport Climate Action Plan

The Town Council is setting targets for greenhouse gas emissions, and will take up the topic on 3 October. [See 18 September issue, Sustainability Advisory Board.]

Central Core Working Group

[See that section.]

Comprehensive Plan Update

The Town had issued an RFP for the work, which will cost over \$100,000. Four companies had responded. A committee composed of two PRB members, two staff, and two councilors will review the proposals on 21 September and 25 September. The committee's recommendation will go to the Town Council for final approval.

APPROVALS GRANTED

- For Wilbur's Chocolate at 174 Lower Main Street: a Design Review Certificate for additional solar panels.
 - For Tri-Town Little League: a Site Plan Amendment to add new dugouts and relocate areas of fencing at the baseball and softball fields at Hunter Road Fields.
- {Insider coverage}

HOUSING

AD HOC HOUSING COMMITTEE

Meetings: Last meeting 13 September cancelled.

Agendas: Unknown.

Minutes: Unknown.

The Town does have a Housing Committee. However, the website, aside from a statement about its meeting on 13 September (subsequently cancelled), has nothing. The "Committee" is not listed under "Departments" or "Boards". It is apparently a committee of the Town Council?

The Committee is not the same as the Freeport Housing Trust, an independent charitable organization.

13 September. ***THE TOWN HAS AT LEAST FIVE EFFORTS ON HOUSING.***

PLANNING BOARD

Zoning revisions were forwarded to the Town Council. [See 18 September issue.]

PROJECT REVIEW BOARD

Awaiting At least two downtown housing projects. [See 18 September issue.]

TOWN COUNCIL: VARNEY HEIGHTS

2022

The Council is entertaining a request for a tax increment finance status for an affordable housing project on Varney Road. *Coverage in future issue.*

CENTRAL CORE DISTRICT WORKING G.
See that section.

AD HOC HOUSING COMMITTEE
Awaiting CCWG action?

TOWN HALL SEPTEMBER 2023			
4 Labor Day	5 Town Council Meeting 5:00pm Library Board of Trustees 6:00pm	6 Planning Board 6:00pm	7 Tree Task Force 6:30pm
11 Board of Appeals - Meeting Cancelled 6:30pm	12 Complete Streets Committee Meeting 7:30am to 9:00am Special Town Council Meeting 2:45pm to 9:00pm Planning Board Meeting 6:00pm Conservation Commission 6:30pm	13 Central Core District Working Group 12:30pm Coastal Waters Commission 6:00pm Housing Committee Meeting - CANCELLED 6:30pm	14
18 Police Advisory Committee 6:00pm Winslow Park Commission -Cancelled 6:30pm Freeport Sewer District Board of Trustees 7:00pm	19 Town Council Meeting 6:00pm	20 Central Core District Working Group 12:30pm Project Review Board 6:00pm	21 Shellfish Committee Meeting 6:30pm
25 Freeport Sustainability Advisory Board 6:30pm to 8:00pm	26 FEDC Board Meeting 7:45am to 9:00pm	27 Central Core District Working Group 12:30pm Social and Racial Equity Committee 6:30pm	28

PEOPLE

TOWN MANAGER SELECTION

Town Council held an executive session on 19 September after its regular meeting. No word on results.

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

The Town is requesting applications by 4 October for a full-time 'communication and community engagement coordinator'. The person will 'successfully develop, maintain, and communicate town-wide messages in an effective, creative, and timely manner.' {Town website}

EVENTS

Anti-hate gathering Friday 4PM in front of Town Hall. See flyer above.

TOWN HALL OCTOBER 2023

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
2	3	4	5
Board of Appeals 6:30pm	Library Board of Trustees 6:00pm Town Council Meeting 6:00pm	Central Core District Working Group 12:30pm Planning Board 6:00pm	Tree Task Force Meeting 4:30pm Tree Task Force 6:00pm
9	10	11	12
Indigenous People's Day Winslow Park Commission 6:30pm	Complete Streets Committee Meeting 7:30am to 9:00am Conservation Commission 6:30pm	Central Core District Working Group 12:30pm Coastal Waters Commission 6:00pm	Shellfish Committee Meeting 6:30pm
16	17	18	19
Police Advisory Committee 6:00pm Freeport Sustainability Advisory Board 6:30pm	Town Council Meeting 6:00pm	Central Core District Working Group 12:30pm Project Review Board 6:00pm	
23	24	25	26
		Central Core District Working Group 12:30pm	
30	31	1	2
Freeport Sustainability Advisory Board (FSAB) 6:30pm	FEDC Board Meeting 7:45am to 9:00pm		

FREEPORT INSIDER

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Chalmers Hardenbergh, publisher and editor

Coverage

The newsletter covers official doings of the Town of Freeport, Maine, with other stories the editor is moved to write about.

[undecided]

Advertising

Welcome!

Frequency

Weekly

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