

Town of Otis
Planning Board Meeting Minutes November 10, 2025

Call to order 7:00 PM

- Roll Call:
Mark Anthony-Chair
Ross Knowles
John Fletcher

- Approval of October 20, 2025 minutes
Ross motion to accept, John second, all in favor.
- Discussion on 14 S. Main Street – Terranova Property Land Use
Ross, we all know this property and surrounding houses are abandoned. Part of revitalization is the center of our town. We know the property has contamination issues. The building is in poor condition. Taxes are 15 years behind, ~\$89,000 on the property. Property is in limbo with the town until someone gives them authorization the okay to take the property for taxes. The town has not taken the property because they would then be responsible for the contamination clean up. The contamination appears to be widespread beyond just the Terranova property. Property owners have been served legal notices about the property taxes and contamination. A construction company recently did some catch basin site work on the property to the south of Terranova's, during that work they found gasoline contamination in the soils on that property. It is clean that the entire area is a clean up site and is contributing to the abandoned properties.

Mark, sounds like the area still has active contamination.

Ross, town does not want to take the property because they likely can't handle the cost of the clean up but something needs to be done.

Stacy, there were several gas stations in the center of town, not just Terranova's. There could possibly be contamination from other gas stations that were in the area. I don't know how they have determined what the source of that contamination is. This property is considered a brownfield, which is dealt with by a separate department at DEP that deals with brownfield sites. Working with UCONN on some research surrounding this issue. We are also aware of some grant options for clean up options for either the town or a private buyer. We first need to assess the current condition of the contamination. Almost everyone's wells are contaminated along that area of Rt 8 with road salt. If we want to revitalize this area and support the property owners in this area we need clean water.

Ross, the state does have clean up funds available for brownfield sites. Terranova site is classified as a tier 1 brownfield site. Contaminants found are associated with gasoline. This would be astronomically expensive for the town to take over this project and we

don't even know the level of contamination at this point. We should be looking at grant opportunities from both DEP and EPA.

Stacy, some of the wells up hill of Rt 8 are not contaminated. Some core samples have been taken already and UCONN is working on this right now to look at the extent of contamination.

Mark, this is defiantly the first step to revitalizing the area.

Stacy, need to figure out the steps to move forward logically so that we limit the risk to the town while also moving forward in a positive direction.

Mark, what kind of feedback has the revitalization committee gotten from the public

Stacy, some hesitation because it is too big of a project but I think once we have a plan and are able to outline steps to take, we can show people a plan and give them a better understanding

Ross, if we don't do anything to clean it up who will, the issues need to be addressed. There are many other abandoned properties in town.

Stacy, there has been progress in recouping back taxes that had not been pursued in the past.

- Discussion on Seasonal Community Designation

Mark, think its important for us to wait for them to come out with the detailed regulations. Select board has asked we give a recommendation but we do not have all the information right now. I currently don't see anything in here that hurts the residents.

Ross, concern in there on what it says the town 'must' do, doesn't like the state requiring us to do anything.

Mark, yes there is strings attached

Ross, discuss housing for town employees, and artists, if you're a digital creator you are considered an artist which can just be someone posting on Facebook which opens up the door to anybody

Mark, we can define who falls under this artist category as written in this section on having affordable or attainable housing for artists. We can also apply for a waiver if we have hardship meeting certain requirements.

Stacy, one thing that has not been mentioned was some grants lost because average income in Otis going up in Otis because we do not have people with lower income able to live here. These grants we lost, we rely on these for our schools and other needs in town.

Mark, town employees are not making this higher income that we see in our average and they need to be able to afford to live in town. The few people who have come with higher incomes are moving our average quite a bit because we have a small population.

- Any other business old or new.

Stacy, would like to recommend looking into people who work in areas that we are looking to focus on in the master planning and reaching out. To include in the master plan. Such as water, trails, exc on specific topics that we know we would want to focus on in out planning. Getting people from fire and EMS to get involved to make sure their concerns are getting addressed in the plan.

- Mark motion to adjourn 8:09 PM, John Second, All in favor.