

Town of Otis
Planning Board Meeting Minutes February 9, 2026

Call to order 7:00 PM

- Roll Call:
Mark Anthony-Chair
Ross Knowles
Gordon Middleton

- Approval of January 12, 2026 minutes
Not able to approve minutes without quorum.
- Public Hearing: Special Permit Towhee Trail
Matt from SK Designs. Submitted for a special permit for a driveway that exceeds 10% grade. Existing lot has 20-25% grade. Proposing a maximum 15% grade for driveway. Spoke with Fire Chief, met on site and made modifications to have the driveway be 15ft wide instead of 12ft based on his recommendation. Fire chief also recommended house has an automatic sprinkler system due to access concerns for the fire truck. Applicant is asking for a continuance to have more time to consider comments from Fire Chief.

Mark Anthony, have we received comments from the police department.

Matt SK, I have not received a response from anyone other than fire chief.

Mark Anthony, Should the driveway be asphalt?

Matt SK, OWL has their own bylaws that address some of this. Driveway is cut into the property; it will be like a valley. There are drainage ditches at the bottom and swales along the sides for runoff.

Mark Anthony, how far is house from end of driveway?

Matt SK, there will need to be stairs up to the house past the driveway. This is a difficult site for everything.

Ross, there are many houses in that area with difficult and steep driveways, so it is not unusual for OWL.

Matt SK, again not asking for approval tonight, asking for a continuance so we can discuss more with property owner.

Mark Anthony, with the continuance we ask that you get comment from the police department and EMS before the next meeting.

Mark Anthony, what is the plan for the water runoff

Matt SK, driveway is a cut so water will be directed downhill down the driveway towards the road. A majority of the water will be directed to Towhee Trail.

Mark, motion to continue the public hearing to March 9, 2026 meeting, Ross second, all in favor.

- Continued Master Plan Discussion:

Mark, will attend the bid opening then Brandi will prepare packages for the bid review committee.

- Continued Discussion on Seasonal Community Designation

Ross, why would permanent residents pay less than second homeowners

Stacy, inflation of home prices is caused by amount of second homeowners in seasonal communities.

Ross, home prices are not affected by second homeowners it is affected by construction costs.

Stacy, we have more second homeowners buying properties that permanent residents can afford. This is the thought process behind giving a tax break, to level out the playing field to help support permanent residents.

Ross, does not make sense to him to blame second homeowners on the cost of housing.

Mark, what is the drawback to shifting more of the tax burden to second homeowners?

Ross, it would draw down prices on second homes. Why would we pick on second homeowners?

Stacy, the benefit would be to attract more permanent residents by making it more affordable to live here.

Ross, they should work for it and not get it handed to them with tax breaks.

Mark, the other alternative is that we become entirely seasonal and there is no permanent residents here to support the community year-round.

Stacey, median age of residents is increasing.

Ross, that is because young people are not having kids. Changing the tax burden will not bring young families here.

Mark, the town owns a lot of land near big pond. This would be an excellent area to build on, why is the town still holding on to this?

Mark, would like to come to a resolution on the seasonal community designation soon and give our recommendation to the select board. I would like all board members to be present to vote on this. Currently I don't see anything that would prohibit me from supporting it because you can pick and choose what you implement.

Stacey, there is a benefit in terms of grading for grants, seasonal communities get put to the top of the pile.

Mark, we cannot afford to revitalize downtown without state and federal grants.

Ross, my opinion is that state projects do not help revitalize a town. We need to clean up the houses that are falling down and enforce people to clean up their properties. No one will invest in the town if it looks terrible and state money won't fix it.

Mark, maybe you should have an offline conversation with the building inspector on what we are able to do about enforcement and on why we do things and why we don't. That is who would know what we are able to do about these properties. What does it mean for the town to condemn a property.

Stacey, had a great discussion with Larry on this, there are rebuilding implications for owners or people who buy the property after.

Mark, you risk losing the right to your existing footprint if torn down without a rebuild plan.

Stacey, if that's the case maybe the bylaws should be reviewed to change this if that is the reason these buildings are not being taken down.

- Any other business old or new.

Ross, Terranova's. Spoke with Brian Moore who is the PM working on determining contamination levels of the property, have taken samples but do not have results yet. They will need to take 3-4 more samples over the course of a year, they need to have data over 12 month period to show stabilization of what the contamination is.

Stacey, habitat for humanity is coming to the next revitalization committee.

- Mark motion to adjourn 8:33 PM, Ross Second, All in favor.