

Town of Otis
Planning Board Meeting Minutes May 11, 2026

Call to order 7:03 PM

- Roll Call:
Mark Anthony-Chair
Ross Knowles
Gordon Middleton
Hal Kobrin
John Fletcher

- Approval of April 13, 2026 minutes
Gordon motion to accept, Hal second, all in favor.
- Public Hearing: Special Permit Towhee Trail
-Susan the applicant is on Zoom, has been making many designs for this house, requesting to withdrawal the application so she can reevaluate and do a redesign and come back in the future with a new plan

Hal motion to withdrawal without prejudice, Mark second, all in favor.

- Town of Otis Easement Plan: Reservoir Road
We reviewed and approved this last year, no changes have been made since that time

John motion to approve, Gordon second, all in favor

- Continued Discussion on Seasonal Community Designation
Hal, if we adopt this there is infrastructure money, this is something that would greatly benefit our town, money to go toward water, sewer, exc

Mark, the town is one of the biggest land owners in town, town can use town own land and put in housing trust

Ross, once the land goes into a trust what do we do with it

Mark, you would need to have developers come in, the town will not do engineering and plans and build, they just give incentive by making the land available and setting up program

Ross, concerns me that the affordable housing act is complicated and unclear

Hal, you don't have to do everything available through the plans, it is just tools that are available for you to use, if the town chooses, there is multiple options here and many different tools for the town to use,

Mark, housing trust, can regionalize it if we wanted and combine resources with neighboring towns

Hal, but we don't have to do it, we can pick and choose which programs benefit us and what we want to use

Mark, if seasonal communities pass, it does not make the tax exemption go into effect, this has been available for us since 1980s and the town has had no interest in it, we do not have to put the tax exemptions into effect if we choose to accept the seasonal communities, they are separate legislations

Ross, where do we benefit with the seasonal communities, we are so different from the cape, we would not want to do things the same as towns on the cape

Hal, we do not have to do things the same way as the cape, the town would still benefit from improved infrastructure,

Ross, most of the people on the lake do not live here year-round, does not put year round stress on systems, the town doesn't want to grow, we are steady in our population,

Hal, we are mixing things up here, the tax exemption is a separate issue from the seasonal communities,

Mark, this RTE (residential tax exemption) does not increase taxes, it just shifts the burden, and also would not impact some people because there is a cutoff at a certain dollar amount,

Ross, why would they do this

Mark, the incentive is to bring full time residents to seasonal communities

Mark, nothing will get done without the tools to do things, like build housing for residents, this is a tool available in the seasonal communities

Hal, people don't want the town to change, correct, we want the culture of the town to stay the same, but people do want services, they want infrastructure, we are not talking about tax incentives, we are talking about tools to give our residents better services (water, sewer, housing, exc). This town has never picked up the RTE, and it has been available to us since 1980, it is not something our town is looking to adopt. We should come up with bullet points on how we can use this seasonal designation, what tools would benefit to us, and what tools maybe don't fit us and we will choose to decline, there is too much information to communicate clearly to the public

Mark, we will have to make changes to our bylaws and zoning bylaws and vote on these things to enact certain things, like tiny homes, we can put restrictions on things

Mark, we would want to see the model bylaws to evaluate and adapt to Otis specific bylaws

Public Comment David D, I wear a lot of different hats, homeowner, marina owner, building homes, seasonal community designation offers up tools, labor is our hardest thing to get, if we can do anything to bring in families that would be great, RTE is very divisive and does not increase tax revenue

Mark, because there are some town bylaws that would be required as part of seasonal community designation, we would want to have these bylaws prepared so that we can present to the town and show them what it would look like if we accept the seasonal community designation

DD, Stockbridge has had a housing trust in place for a long time, would be interested to look at what they're doing

Mark, will keep seasonal communities on the agenda to keep discussing and get more information, discuss with surrounding towns

Hal, time between now and next may for next years town meeting, we will have plenty of time to get more information and feel comfortable

Ross, don't want to lose control of the town to the state, don't want the state to come in and shut the lake down

Hal, infrastructure for water, sewer, exc, to support businesses in town

Ross, that's the type of infrastructure I am on board with, support grown of local businesses

Hal, we did identify this as an issue in prior master plans, the issue of why these things don't get done is money, we need to resources, and to get funding for these larger infrastructure projects they want to see a plan, which is why the master plan is so important,

- Continued Master Plan Discussion

Mark, planning board is responsible for creating the master plan, we have the contract with BRPC, tomorrow select board is finalizing steering committee members, we need two members, Mark is not running for reelection, one member should be chair, I will be stepping down as chair tomorrow because we cannot wait until after the election, I think Hal has the most experience on this, has done the master plan before, and also thing Hal can keep control of this process and keep the planning board in charge of the planning, mark things Hal should be chair

Ross, has only been here a year and a half, we all have been here for a short time, Hal has been here longer has most experience

Ross motion to make Hal chair of PB effective tomorrow 5/12/26, Gordon second, all in favor.

Hal, it will be additional time and hours to be on the steering committee, who can take the time here to contribute,

Mark, Travis will be on committee

Ross, if he is elected to finance there would be two from finance

Gordon, is also on zoning

John, is the only other board member not on another board.

Mark, motion to recommend Hal & John to be the planning board representatives on the Master plan steering committee, Gordon second, all in favor.

- Any other business old or new.

Ross, update on Terranova's, ground is still contaminated, lost of work ahead, no resolution soon.

Stacy, options we have are to wait until the ground cleans itself or let 21J run its course, then we have a better case for state money.

- Hal motion to adjourn 8:15 PM, John Second, All in favor.