

**GARDINER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AGENDA SUPPLEMENT**

Item Number: 5.2

Agenda Topic: Consideration of Common Plan

For The Agenda of: July 30th, 2008

Date Submitted: July 25th, 2008

Submitted to: Jeff Kobrock, City Manager

Submitted by: Jason Simcock, Planning & Development Director

Background Information:

On May 7th, the City Council heard a presentation on the draft Master Plan for the Common. As mentioned at the Council meeting, residents and city officials have been working together towards finalizing a plan for the Common, since January. The plan was developed over an interactive public process, and includes design recommendations regarding landscaping, lighting, the playground, gazebo, paths, fencing, and many other amenities in the Common. The Plan also includes discussion on how to include the OC Woodman site.

A few questions were raised at the May 7th meeting that required follow-up, primarily regarding pedestrian safety and the methods used for data collection. There was also some discussion on parking. Information generated in response to these questions will be added to the plan and appendices. A consultant from the Wright Pierce consulting “bundled projects” team will also be on hand to discuss the follow-up items with the Council on the 30th.

To help explain the public input process, a summary of the Questionnaire used for the public workshop has been added, and can be viewed on the City’s website, or by going to http://www.gardinermaine.com/Public_Documents/GardinerME_EcDev/common/Commonworkshopsurveyresultstally.pdf. There has also been a summary of the process that was used specifically regarding the issue of the playground location, which is available on the City’s website, or by going to http://www.gardinermaine.com/Public_Documents/GardinerME_EcDev/common/Discussionplaygroundlocation.pdf.

Regarding pedestrian and traffic safety issues, the plan has been updated to include more detail on pedestrian safety improvements. According to Wright-Pierce engineering, while the existing layout of Common park is an example of traffic calming, improvements can be made to create higher visibility at the various pedestrian crossing areas that connect the Common to its surrounding neighborhoods. The crossings on Route 201, in particular, are addressed in the Plan, and suggestions for design improvements are included. Discussion with a local traffic engineer confirmed that design enhancements (new crosswalk design), and possibly slight realignment, will be the only way to address pedestrian safety on Route 201.

As a part of the master planning effort, the consultant team evaluated present parking demand against availability of spaces. Based on our observations, peak parking demand associated with the Common appears to be tied to specific events. Over the course of the study period, the most

significant draw was the Farmers' market that is conducted on the common on Wednesday afternoons during the summer months. Observations of parking patterns during operation of the Farmers' Market suggested that adequate on-street parking exists on those streets directly adjacent to the Common as well as abutting side streets. In addition, it appears that the parking network could accommodate significant growth of the Market without demand exceeding supply.

Historically the O.C. Woodman parcel has provided overflow parking capacity associated with events in the area of the Common. The Plan suggests that fencing for this parcel be accomplished in such a way as to allow the area to continue to operate in this fashion on a periodic, as needed basis.

The City has entered the next round of LWCF grant funding, to help fund the replacement of the playground. Interestingly, the City applied for these funds for the original playground in 1989. With an approved plan, the city staff will have the support to put together a competitive grant application for funding a new (reduced size) playground near the same playground location. For more background information on the Common park planning process, including the Master Plan itself, please visit the City's website by going to http://www.gardinermaine.com/Public_Documents/GardinerME_EcDev/common/Planning%20Process%20for%20the%20Common.

Recommended Action: In order for the City to begin implementing action items, called for in the Common Plan, it is recommended for the Council to approve the Plan.