

Town Planning

In January of 1969, Denmark adopted a Planning Board whose seven members were charged with overseeing the development of the Town. The intent of the planned development was to ensure that Denmark would, in the 21st century, remain a desirable community in which to reside. Due to an oversight, the Planning Board, though active, was not formally accepted as an elected body until 1976.

Below are excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan written by the Planning Board in 1971 and 1972. These reflect the thinking of the Board at that time as to what the future of the town might be.

Comprehensive Plan - Denmark, Maine

Introduction

We, the Planning Board of the Town of Denmark, have prepared this plan in order to help the town come to grips with the problem of growth and development. This plan should be understood as a statement of goals and not as an expression of present or future laws. It has been formulated under today's circumstances and should be amended as necessary in accordance with future requirements.

Historical

Denmark has been a farming community throughout much of its history. Most farms were small. They had less than 20 cows, but still managed to raise most of their own produce. At least two farms had over a hundred cattle, but these, along with most of the smaller farms, are now gone. At one time, the town had nine mills, three of which were on Moose Brook. These are gone now, too.

Land Use

Denmark is a 36 square mile rural community located in the southwestern part of Oxford County. There is one village center in town which contains one general store, a small factory which repairs electric motors, a print shop, and a furniture shop. Altogether these businesses employ about 17 to 20 people. Most people find employment outside the town, although at certain times of the year the girls' camps and the wood lots provide additional employment for residents.

The town has a great deal of shore frontage along the many lakes and ponds within its boundaries. These include Moose, Hancock, Sand, Long and Granger Ponds, the shores of which are relatively developed with private cottages; and smaller ponds such as Pickerel, Perley, Little Moose, Beaver, Boston and Horseshoe Ponds, all with little or no development. Pleasant Mountain is located on the shore of Moose Pond. There is a great view of the surrounding countryside from its 2,000 foot high peak. Pleasant Mountain Ski Area, on the north side of the mountain, is in the town of Bridgton. A large part of the town is in woodland.

In the whole the town presents a quiet, rural atmosphere which attracts many summer residents. The Planning Board would like to encourage seasonal growth, but only if the town adopts strict controls to ensure that such growth will be properly designed, built and located so as not to injure the natural qualities of the town.

In addition to the town's natural beauty, Denmark has a good school system, and provides for many municipal services. Considering that the national trend is for more and more people to move from urban to rural areas, the town is attractive to many developers and promoters, not just for seasonal development but year round as well. Anticipating that the town will grow in the future, we would like to establish

the necessary controls in order to preserve the predominately rural nature of the town. To this end, we recommend that new development occur in planned communities which will not detract from natural scenic beauty, and that unsightly strip development along our rural highways, lakes and streams be prohibited. All development should be located so as to be consistent with soil conditions and to provide green areas and open space for privacy, sightliness and recreation.

In addition, the quality and diversity of development should be controlled by requiring adequate lot sizes and suitable setbacks with roads and utilities properly designed and installed according to proper standards so that no burden will develop for the town in future years. Logging operations, for example, should leave a screen of growth along all public roads and frontage on lakes and ponds. Industrial development, should it ever occur, must be controlled in order to prevent pollution and to encourage the kind of development which adapts itself to the community without disrupting it.

In short, we believe that zoning, subdivision and building controls are needed to insure that all new development occurs in harmony with the town and that the many attractive rural qualities of the town are preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Conservation

At the Town Meeting in March, 1973, the voters of Denmark approved the appointment, by the Selectmen, of a five member Conservation Commission. This was followed by voter approval of the Denmark Zoning Ordinance in June, 1974. This Ordinance was prepared by the Planning Board and provided for zoned development of Denmark. Additionally, the Ordinance provided for a five member Zoning Board of Appeals, a Code Enforcement Officer, and applicable penalties. This Ordinance contained provisions for amendments as needed.

Also in 1973, the State Legislature enacted legislation to establish the Saco River Corridor Commission. The purpose of the Act is to regulate the use of land and water along the Saco. The Commission is charged with implementing the Saco River Corridor Act. Commission members are appointed by municipal officers - one member and one alternate from each municipality whose jurisdiction includes lands or bodies of water encompassed by the Corridor. The town of Denmark is one of those municipalities entitled to representation on the Commission.

Submitted by Rita LaMountain

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