

LURC Reform Commission

Meeting Minutes – October 6, 2011

Location: Solon Fire Department – Solon, ME

LURC Reform Commission Members in attendance:

- Bill Beardsley (Chair); Sarah Medina (Vice-Chair); Duane Lander; Chris Gardner; Elbridge Cleaves; Don White; Don Kleiner; Durward Humphrey; Gary Lamb; Lynda Quinn; Judy East; Tom Rumpf; Hank McPherson.

DOC Staff in attendance:

- Dan Burke; Jeanne Curran.

Members of the Public in attendance:

- Jeff Romano (MCHT); Tom Abello (TNC); Larry Post (Somerset County); Cathy Johnson (NRCM); Jenn Gray (ME Audubon); Alexandra Fields (Environment Maine); Lindsay Bourgoine (AMC); Steve Tatko (NRCM); Chris Cote (Sen. Pres. Office); Jeff Reardon (Trout Unlimited); Ashley Gorczyca (ME Audubon); Gordon Mott; John H. Cashwell (JHC Consulting); Jon Pottle (Eaton Peabody); Patrick Strauch (MFPC); Elizabeth Swain (Barton&Gingold); Fred Hardy (Franklin County); Ruby Hardy; Ted Johnston (Wagner Forest Management); Alison Truesdale (LandForms); Rep. Terry Hayes (H. Dist. 94); Jeff McCabe (H. Dist. 85); Rep. Bob Duchesne (H. Dist. 13); Rep. Brad Moulton (H. Dist. 149); Karen Moulton; Carlisle McLean (Governor's Office); Cathy Mattson (FMM); Freemont Tibbetts; Paul Averill Liebow (NRCM/PSR); Rod Falla (LURC); Dave Miller (CVT); Bart Hague (COLA); Samantha Horn-Olsen (LURC); Catherine Carroll (LURC); Joe Albuit; Gwen Hilton (LURC); Buzz Lamb; Roger Sherman (Sen. Dist. 34); Scott D. Monroe (The Morning Sentinel); Gardner Defoe; Howard Trotzky; William Reid; Margaret Reid; James Hastings; Sam Horine; Joe Dionne; Bill Houston; Barry London; Richard Searls; Bob Haynes.

Bill Beardsley

- Called meeting to order and introduced Rep. Jeff McCabe.

Rep. Jeff McCabe

- Thanked members of the public for attending, especially local residents.

Bill Beardsley

- Moved to have minutes from September 22, 2011 meeting approved. (Group unanimously approved).

Tom Rumpf

- Suggested moving presentations for the day to the front of the agenda. (Group agreed).

Recommendations from Elizabeth Swain

Bill Beardsley

- Introduced Elizabeth Swain as the first presenter. She was a former LURC Commissioner and Chair and is very knowledgeable about LURC. She is president of Barton & Gingold.

Elizabeth Swain

- Began by looking at LURC's statutory mandate – to protect wilderness attributes. LURC staff is mission driven, which is not a surprise. This mission is to protect from development. As a result, LURC has become cloistered and hostile towards landowners and residents, who have been marginalized and discounted. The LURC Commissioners are walled off from landowners and residents because of ex parte communication rules. The result is a commission that is out of touch. The appointment process is backwards – need to look for good judgment and less personal opinion. Applicants often use the word

“chilling” to describe investment climate in the UT. This is destroying its quality of place. Thus, the call to abolish LURC as a state agency. If these issues are addressed, many of the problems and complaints will be resolved.

- Laid out specific suggestions for LURC reform:
 - Keep LURC as a statewide agency. Move headquarters to Bangor. Strengthen regional offices by recruiting staff from the area.
 - Build in increased accountability. The director should be reviewed by the Commission or DOC Commissioner. Charge the executive office and legislature with oversight. No one sees LURC operate except for the applicants.
 - Revise ex parte rules. Commission should not be cloistered. Restrictions should be triggered when public hearings begin but not before. Should never apply in rulemakings. Fresh discourse will help the process. Consider a workshop format so early project concepts can be discussed without expenditure of time and money.
 - Revise enabling legislation. There should be some deference to the communities on the fringe of the jurisdiction when planning for remote vs. developed areas. Currently only areas developed in 1971 are zoned for development. The adjacency principle allows for only minor expansion. This is outmoded. There needs to be well-planned growth, potentially with input from county governments.
 - Lead a rezoning effort to implement the planning process. Areas around fringe communities could be rezoned as suitable for development. This effort should maintain jurisdiction wide standards. Counties would still be free to develop different plans for growth and preservation depending on their vision. The “adjacency” and “demonstrated need” tests should both be abolished.
 - Transfer industrial projects to the DEP. Technical issues would be more appropriate for experts. A small agency should not be overseeing both porch additions and multimillion dollar wind projects.
 - Examine structure of LURC. Being a LURC commissioner is a thankless, time-consuming job. Opinions and personal values often slip into deliberations. Consider a professional board with three members or a lay board with a professional chair.
 - Create a seat in LURC for a county official upon appeal.

Hank McPherson

- Has the attitude at LURC changed over the years?

Elizabeth Swain

- LURC takes their mission very seriously. It’s not the fault of the existing staff or Commission. It’s very insular. After 30 years, we now know where to tweak it.

Gary Lamb

- Should the director of LURC be a political appointment?

Elizabeth Swain

- Yes. As it stands now, a majority of LURC commissioners must consent to the appointment of the director by the Commissioner or Conservation. The Commissioner of Conservation should be able to appoint without this consent.

Chris Gardner

- Should LURC commissioners be elected? Are we afraid of putting this back into the hands of the people?

Elizabeth Swain

- Commissioners might not run for office given the thankless nature of the job. A better option would be to recruit or appoint representatives from the jurisdiction that would bring experience and good judgment. Elections would become too political. We elect people to do our bidding for us.

Don Kleiner

- How do you prevent a professional board from becoming insular?

Elizabeth Swain

- If planning and permitting were a full time job, commissioners would have more time to devote to the process. Changing the ex parte communication rules would also help prevent this.

Durward Humphrey

- Could you elaborate on an independent appeals process?

Elizabeth Swain

- If a staff or commission decision can be appealed to an entity with county representation or outside perspectives, the commissioner's decision-making process might be more thorough. Didn't recommend an independent body, just a seat on the commission for a county representative when/if an appeal is made.

Tom Rumpf

- Why aren't there more proactive zoning efforts? Is this because there is not sufficient staff?

Elizabeth

- When there is motivation there is staff.

Don White

- How should we deal with inequalities established by zoning, special protection districts, etc? Landowners with these zones on their land get the value stripped away.

Elizabeth Swain

- From an equity standpoint, some landowners do get unequal treatment. There is not a perfect balance.

Tom Rumpf

- Any thoughts on revising the concept plan process?

Elizabeth Swain

- Have input from the landowners. Set up workshops to openly discuss options. This might make concept plans more appealing. A professional commission can spend more time on what is needed and what landowners want.

Bill Beardsley

- Landowners want to see is a more prescriptive process. They don't want a negotiation process.

Elizabeth Swain

- True, applicants want predictability. LURC standards are so subjective that almost any decision can be justified. Subjectivity on this scale is not helpful.

Duane Lander

- How do we take care of the permittee who gets harassed and held up on a small project?

Elizabeth Swain

- Strengthen the regional offices and caliber of the staff. Fairness is a big issue. Small applicants won't feel hassled if the staff is there is help with meeting the criteria for approval. Applicants should not be able complete a project not in compliance and then pay for permit by paying off fines for those violations.

Recommendations from Environmental and Planning Organizations

Jenn Gray

- Members of the coalition have been pleasantly surprised by the consensus statement.
- Five general recommendations:

- Increase local input. Assist and educate towns and plantations now under LURC to assume local control by withdrawing from LURC jurisdiction. Almost 4,000 of the UT's 12,000 population lives in towns that could withdraw and assume local control. Facilitate regional planning and zoning in areas that request it.
- Improve appeals. Appoint the commissioner closest to a denied project to act as a liaison to meet with staff and applicants, complete site visits, and make recommendations to full commission. This would improve relationships.
- Increase local representation. Require that at least five commissioners come from the five counties with UT. Require commission to hold monthly meetings in or nearby to UT.
- Improve permit processing time. Expand use of permit-by-rule, particularly small or accessory projects. Expand the money back guarantee to applications besides residential projects. These expansions would decrease staff time.
- Improve customer service. Provide regular training to staff to ensure consistent application of regulations. Make application forms and website more user-friendly. Provide model applications for reference purposes. Create position for an ombudsman to assist applicants. Assist realtors selling land in the UT to help educate buyers. Give information to service centers on LURC's processes.
- These proposals represent a good faith effort to address issues and improve LURC to serve the interests of Maine people.

Gary Lamb

- By suggesting regional planning and zoning, you are not suggesting a county by county scheme?

Jenn Gray

- No. Not sure if delineations would break down that easily along county lines. There could be situations where planning should cross over those political boundaries.

Don White

- Sticking with local input, how could the public have input in terms of the ballot box?

Jenn Gray

- Communities have the option to assume local control. Some have chosen to have LURC take over.
- This proposal would not change the appointment process. It would only increase the representation. It does not suggest commissioners should be elected.

Hank McPherson

- Do you think towns that use LURC now should be able to withdraw without LURC approval? The planning and process involved in withdrawing is a huge hurdle for small communities to clear.
- Should the appeals process be independent of LURC? Under the current system, denied applicants are forced to appeal to the body that just denied them, which is futile.

Jenn Gray

- Proposal does not recommend changing the process to leave LURC jurisdiction. Just advocating that LURC inform townships that the option exists.
- The Commission doesn't have to rubber stamp a staff decision. Having a commissioner act as a liaison in appeals could help in the process garner some good will.

Chris Gardner

- Could you see expanding withdrawal from LURC to a county level?

Jenn Gray

- Not aware of any process for a county to do this. Something to follow up on.

Tom Rumpf

- Some applicants seem unclear about the criteria they have to meet, particularly regarding concept plans.

Jenn Gray

- Land use standards are generally more subjective but there may be room to firm things up.

Duane Lander

- There is a need to address inconsistencies in the system. There should be more local control, at least 50% of the responsibility for planning and zoning to the counties.

Sarah Medina

- Expressed concern about the extra work needed for some of these suggestions. Are they just good ideas or will they actually make a difference?
- Is there a list of things that can be done by permit by rule? Really need to look at how these suggestions will operate.

Judy East

- Expressed concern about expense of a professional board and/or including an ombudsman in an appeals process.

Durward Humphrey

- Expressed concern about what is being done to increase development in areas that don't have infrastructure and services.

Jenn Gray

- Areas that do not have services typically do not have much growth pressure. Growth occurs where services are already available. Planning and zoning efforts need to look at where growth is forecasted.

Don White

- Like to hear thoughts on the enabling statute and LURC's mission. These do not speak to economic development or growth.

Jenn Gray

- Today's proposal were more about reforming what is already in existence, not creating a new mission for LURC. This could be a future discussion for us.

Bill Beardsley

- How much influence should the counties have?

Jen Gray

- Local and regional representative should be fully engaged. The concern is process. What are the standards and who should participate? This is an important part of LURC. If there is a way to engage more fully local community members, it would make any changes more meaningful.

Gary Lamb

- Is intervener status too easily attained?

Jenn Gray

- Not too easily. Interveners are important. Plum Creek was extreme example. There might be ways to tighten it up but opportunities for those with concerns should be preserved.

Don Kleiner

- Does LURC not need significant structural change?

Jenn Gray

- Dramatic structural changes have not been offered as of yet. We'd be happy to engage in that process.

Sarah Medina

- If this group came up with some questions, would your group be willing to come back with input?

Jenn Gray

- Yes.

Discussion of Revised Purpose Statement

Bill Beardsley

- Note: ACF Committee needs interim report by October 28.
- Do we feel that this is beginning to reflect the issues that the group agrees need to be changed?

Tom Rumpf

- Much of consensus statement is covered. Focus was on balancing resource protection with development and incorporating the need for local input and impact.

Elbridge Cleaves

- This looks like a good shot at balance.

Bill Beardsley

- Need to put this on the website as a working document.

Chris Gardner

- Need to work on changing mindsets. There is a lot of “prevent.”

Sarah Medina

- Revisions seem to strike a good balance. Need to be mindful about wordsmithing. This language fits the times.

Bill Beardsley

- Can Chris give a statement on core elements of local planning from a county perspective? Don White, planning from a landowners perspective?

Chris Gardner

- The original Gifford bill allowed for the transfer of responsibility over local projects to the counties, allowing for an advisory council to sort out any transition details. Folks came in and said any transition needed to be well thought out.
- The counties became the vehicle. They didn't want the broad state level issues. Forestry, wildlife, environmental permitting could all be taken care of at the state level. The counties wanted to handle and make decisions effecting local people and communities, the small residential or commercial projects. This would be akin to the municipal planning and zoning model.
- The counties service so many other aspects of daily life within their borders. Programs and services already exist. The issue became so polarized however, that the cry to abolish LURC rose out of it.

Don Kleiner

- Concerned whether counties a big enough political unit? Is there a way to band county governments together?

Chris Gardner

- County governments are big enough. The financial capabilities are there. Maybe there is a chance for counties to band together. There are allowances. There should be communication between counties for regional planning purposes.
- Maine has a value system that echoes the issues that we are faced with reforming today. This value system is reflected at all levels of government. It is a tie that binds. One of these issues is local input. Ultimately, under a central planning model, everything will go back to Augusta. That is a problem.

Elbridge Cleaves

- Related experience of a bridge project, where seven different permitting agencies were involved. LURC helped coordinate the agencies. Concerned about how this coordination would work for an applicant at the county level. Coordination of statewide permitting is valuable.

Chris Gardner

- The process would be similar to what happens in municipalities. Coordination occurs at this level.

Bill Beardsley

- Could Judy write this position up?

Judy East

- There is a big difference between large and small projects with gradations throughout. Where should a line be drawn if we talk about splitting responsibility for large and small projects between local and state entities?

Chris Gardner

- That would not be easy, but such gradations occur all the time when municipalities deal with planning and permitting.

Don White

- From a landowner/investor perspective, it all comes down to who has input in the process. The landowners have been marginalized. The commissioners are isolated. The landowners should have the most say.
- Under the current system, without adjacency, a landowner is out of luck. This is not so much about development, but about the right to develop. It comes back to protecting value for the landowner.

Tom Rumpf

- Landowners are not out of luck if they do not meet the adjacency principle. Concept planning is an option.

Elbridge Cleaves

- Disturbed that good faith applicants and good projects that do not disturb public values are often discouraged by the process that they do not even apply or the highest use or best projects end up getting scrapped for a lesser one because the applicant was disenfranchised with the process.

Break from 12:05 to 12:30

Recommendations from Current LURC Chair and Staff

Gwen Hilton

- Current LURC Chair. Presentation is not an official recommendation from LURC.
- Strong desire to improve relationship with and respond to needs of jurisdiction.
- Reform Commission should make recommendations as straightforward as possible – complicated changes could potentially hinder economic progress.
- Preserve the citizen board – transparent and fair by design; changes with each administration.
- Increase number of commissioners.
- General concurs with consensus statement – should focus on long-term economic viability.
- These recommendations focus on three areas: customer service and communications; local input and impact; and long-term economic viability (improving the approach to planning and development).

Samantha Horn-Olsen

- Division Manager, Planning
- Less than 1% is zoned for development. Need to look at where development should be located and how big of an area should be designated for development. Need to avoid a Wild West mentality while increasing economic development – LURC now is a reactive agency. When people want to develop, they

submit proposals and LURC moves to change the zoning. The other side of coin would be a proactive approach, much like prospective zoning

- Need to look at what community wants, what the market wants, where development can be supported, where development will not disrupt forestry activities or sensitive resources.
 - Many options:
 - Proactive: regional planning and zoning; transfer of development rights; better approach to concept planning
 - Reactive: increasing flexibility in the adjacency criteria; streamlining subdivision options

Rod Falla

- Acting Division Manager, Permitting and Compliance
- Based in Greenville, regularly visits other regional offices.
- Permitting is a reactive process. Applicants must fit their projects into Chapter 10 of LURC's Rules.
- Improve consistency by issuing policy guidance memos.
- LURC is currently stretched thin because of wind power projects.
- Institute public outreach sessions to get input on improving customer service.
- Make residential permits more user-friendly; 10 day decision guarantee
- Employ common sense to find practical solutions to permitting and compliance issues.
- Be prompt and predicable when resolving non-compliant projects.
- Over the long term, working with the Planning Division to revise Chapter 10.

Gwen Hilton

- LURC has skilled employees who are dedicated.
- The Commissioners are calling the shots. The commission now is more active than in the past. New commissioners will reflect different things.

Hank McPherson

- Do you think that this scrutiny of LURC is deserved?

Gwen Hilton

- Need to continually look for better ways to do things. Preference would be for things outlined today.

Tom Rumpf

- Intrigued about increasing number of commissioners.

Gwen Hilton

- Having on seven commissioners limits the diversity of opinions. More would increase this.

Sarah Medina

- Ex parte communication rules insulate the commission from the public. You seem to think that this is not the case. Thoughts on how commissioners are in touch with the public other than public hearings.?

Gwen Hilton

- Very difficult to comply with ex parte rules.

Gary Lamb

- Are review criteria too subjective? Shouldn't criteria be less subjective?
- Wouldn't more commissioners giving more opinions add to this subjectivity?

Samantha Horn-Olsen

- Permit applications should be tightened if they are vague. In policy and planning situations, more perspectives may be valuable.

Judy East

- Informal work sessions are used by many planning boards in municipalities, but LURC only seems to use formal public hearings. Could alternatives be used?

Samantha Horn-Olsen

- Been looking at options. The question would be how to incorporate any into the administrative record.

Don White

- Should planning, permitting, enforcement, and appeals be under one roof?

Gwen Hilton

- There is separation.

Rod Falla

- Maybe a local appeals board would be a feasible idea.
- Different regions or counties could have different perspectives, ideals. Permitting and compliance – different development situations in different areas.

Bill Beardsley

- Looking at appeals, could an independent appeals board reverse a decision of the commission, or would it just bring it back to the commission for further consideration. How much clout might that board have?

Rod Falla

- Small projects, like accessory structures, could simply be reversed. Large projects would have to go back to the commission.

Bill Beardsley

- Where would the line be drawn between small and large?

Samantha Horn-Olsen

- In larger projects, planning and permitting staff often interact. Regional entities could be included. The function of appeals is an understandable concern. Appeals can be insular. If there is a larger commission, some members could only be on for appeals.

Chris Gardner

- Should counties be able to withdraw from LURC jurisdictions?

Gwen Hilton

- There is huge difference between towns and counties.

Samantha Horn-Olsen

- Regions within the state are different. There is an opportunity to do regional planning.

Hank McPherson

- The legislature has deemed that the LURC statute and rules need to accommodate economic development. In the planning process, how does risk assessment and market forces play into the process?

Samantha Horn-Olsen

- LURC doesn't have staff trained in economic development. There has been talk about increase communication between DECD.

Hank McPherson

- No one is going to spend money to develop land that has no ROW. Developers won't go to where they can't make a profit.

Bill Beardsley

- One issue that has come up – standing. Landowners get crowded out because everyone has status. Who should have intervener status?

Rod Falla

- At the small, residential project level, there should not be intervener status.

Gwen Hilton

- The way LURC operates now, intervener status policy is pretty generous.

Tom Rumpf

- How do you feel about having counties petition the commission to work on prospective zoning or a comprehensive regional plan?

Gwen Hilton

- The idea is worth considering. If there is an indication that an area is interested in doing prospective zoning, then the commission should seek to facilitate discussions between the commission and that region or county.

Samantha Horn-Olsen

- LURC is enthusiastic about indentifying areas for development.

Elbridge Cleaves

- Regarding lack of staff resources. One of the options is to do less.

Rod Falla

- A combination of more resources and a few rule changes would solve many of the problems faced by LURC and made evident by the public outcry.

Judy East

- Washington County is preparing a regional plan now. They got federal funding. There is an opportunity to have input on what the vision is and what the desires are in the county.

Duane Lander

- Need to make sure this process accommodates small projects and landowners.

Rod Falla

- Absolutely. Getting those types of permits out the door quickly is and should remain a priority. There should also be policy guidance that brings consistency into the process. Private property should be respected. Landowners should be able to do what they want with their lands. LURC is working to do this.

Samantha Horn-Olsen

- LURC is working on permit-by-rule scenarios. There are more opportunities for this through customer service and rule changes.

Durward Humphrey

- Permit-by-rule is great. But take the average citizen into consideration. Now, they are dependent on LURC and attorneys for interpretation. Need to find an opportunity to bring consistency to planning language so there is less interpretation needed?

Gwen Hilton

- LURC can be more user-friendly. The language used can be better.

Rod Falla

- That's my personal goal with this job. Planning and permitting staff should be working together.

Don Kleiner

- This is one of the key problems. A good way to prevent development is to make it so complicated that applicants get confused or discouraged.

Gary Lamb

- For major projects, it would be hard not to involve attorneys and technical staff.

Sarah Medina

- Is turnover on the commission good?

Gwen Hilton

- A citizen board allows administrations to appoint those with similar viewpoints.

Break: from 2:05 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Bill Townsend

- Long-time attorney in Skowhegan. Former LURC Commissioner who worked on the interim standards.
- Experiences with LURC have been positive. Never any rude interactions.
- Strong supporter of LURC and implementing land use planning on a statewide level. All major rivers in the state originate in the UT.
- Whatever policy emerges, it must be integrated. There is always room for improvement.
- Much of what was discussed today, he agrees with. Need a closer presence to the local community. Consider rotating staff hours to shire towns.
- There is opportunity for a relationship between LURC and specialists. There should be uniformity between standards. Should be better understanding between wide variety of professionals as to what LURC is all about. Attorneys, engineers, soil scientists. Yearly meeting to disseminate info on LURC.
- Times have changed since LURC began. We have to change with them. LURC should be equipped with the resources to handle that change.

Judy East

- Suggested that planning associations and Maine State Bar Association should coordinate.

Hank McPherson

- How do landowners fit into the idea of what should happen to LURC?

Bill Townsend

- Landowners have an interest. All the LURC staff should be ambassadors to guide projects through the process.

Public Comment

Gordon Mott – Lakeville

- Forester, resident, land manager, has worked in the North Woods since 1976.
- Wants to expand interest in engaging in organized towns and plantations close to the jurisdiction as an element through which we can get local representation.
- Electing LURC commissioners could work as would regional planning.

David Miller – UT resident

- Involved in LURC and the CLUP update.
- Amazed (in a good way) at what LURC has done. Concerned about needing UT residents on LURC Commission. Does not want the UT to be destroyed.
- CLUP already states that developed areas should be expanded.

Fremont Tibbetts – Rumford

- Anti-wind. Has spent time and money on a series of self-produced DVDs of his flyovers at various wind projects across the state. They are ruining Maine's landscape.

Howard Trotsky

- LURC should not be dismantled but improved. The North Woods is a public resource. LURC is running scared.
- What is stopping development now is the global economy, not LURC.

Bart Hague

- Retired public works and environmental planner.
- Emphasize and retain statewide planning functions of LURC. Should be strengthened.
- Not something that should be devolved to the counties. Believes they don't have the resources or the will.
- Concerned about sprawl. Development should be focused in a sensible manner.

Gardner Defoe

- Outdoor Educator (skiing and canoeing) who regularly uses the Allagash and St. Johns regions.
- State must continue to utilize and protect natural resources. That means keeping LURC intact.
- The Allagash no longer the canoeing destination it once was. Young folks return to see what they saw as youngsters and it is not there anymore.

Jeff Reardon – Manchester

- Trout Unlimited
- Has had many interactions with LURC. Would rather apply to LURC than DEP.
- Liked the idea of regional service centers.
- Good planning regionally should be done. Hesitant that counties are the best entities for the job.
- Concerned about the idea of divorcing wildlife and forestry from LURC. The two areas are interconnected but the rules are completely different between agencies, so there needs to be consistency.

Ashley Gorczyca–

- Maine Audubon reading a written statement by Nancy Bliss, a resident.
- Advocating for a revamped LURC. Keep the North Woods under the oversight of a statewide agency that can preserve the unique area that is the North Woods.

Bill Beardlsey

- If we were in a western state, that sentiment would be referring to public lands held in trust for all. Here in Maine, the North Woods are almost entirely privately held. This remains a crucial distinction.

Buzz Lamb

- Worked with lots of companies who provided the jobs in Maine. LURC did not create the economic problem. Two dominant themes are economic development and landowner rights.
- Land use planning – very important to provide for growth but there are other problems regarding economic development, like education.
- Keep the footprint of development as low as possible.
- Wilderness deserves improving. A resource based economy will become more important. The wood products industry should be strong and value-added.
- Regional planning is worth investigating. Must find a way to keep money in Maine. To do that we identify what industries work in the state, given its resources and population.
- Eliminating LURC and its staff would represent a tremendous loss of institutional planning knowledge.

Joan Farnsworth

- Loves the North Woods. It is up to this group to protect this special area.

Fred Hardy

- County Commissioner from Franklin County
- Need regional offices closer to the UT. Important that LURC commissioners come from counties with UT or better yet, from the UT themselves.
- There is a pervasive fear of development in the UT.

Duane Lander

- Greenville was thriving back in the 1900s. After LURC, things changed. Populations have plummeted since the 1970s.

Elbridge Cleaves

- Lots of remote lakes and areas in the UT are under conservations easements, so the development is not necessarily being stymied by LURC.

Break from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Allie Fields

- Environment Maine
- Presented ten video segments from citizens filmed at the Common Ground Fair. Most described themselves as enjoying outdoor recreation in various places in the North Woods. The general theme was pro-preservation to protect those recreation opportunities for future generations. Many stated that the region's economic woes would pass with time.
- Point of the videos were to emphasize the uniqueness of the jurisdiction.

Don White

- Most people do not realize how much land is conserved in the UT. There are plenty of already preserved recreational opportunities. Use of public parks have been dropping because of it.

Bill Houston – Kingfield

- Has served on planning board and appeals board in Kingfield. Teaches outdoor leadership classes. A Maine Guide.
- Believes in making a living from the outdoors. The North Woods are shrinking. Outward Bound has moved out of Greenville because they can't find a remote enough area. Residents have chosen to live here because of the quality of life. LURC serves a critical role. Things were not fine before LURC and there needs to be a statewide organization with oversight. This is a resource of statewide significance. All Mainers have a stake.
- There is development gone wild without regulation. Strongly encourage group to keep LURC. No one else has the expertise. A dramatic change would result from better staffing and funding.
- No structural changes to recommend at this time.

Bill Beardsley

- Do you think planning and appeals should be separate?

Bill Houston

- There is always value in having a system of checks and balances.

Durward Humphrey

- How do you decide how much land to take out of the development equation?

Bill Houston

- Important function of LURC is to decide where the development is to take place. There has been development pressure.

Don White

- One dwelling per township per decade. That doesn't seem like tremendous pressure.

Bill Houston

- The patterns of landownership have changed.

Don White and Sarah Medina

- But what has changed on the ground?

Don Kleiner

- Is there some sympathy for a regional voice? Any suggestions on how to structure that?

Bill Houston

- Nervous of county government involvement.
- Adding membership from UT should occur. Getting volunteers is hard when most people live outside of the jurisdiction.

Barry London

- Teacher – lives in Carrabasset Valley, owns property in UT, served on the planning board.
- Believes in keeping LURC but implementing change.
- With projects before the planning board, developers were providing good jobs but did not seem to understand the word no.
- LURC should be expanded in numbers. They are overworked and get criticized for it.
- Not in favor of National Park nor Plum Creek philosophies. Perhaps a National Forest model where logging activities would still be allowed.
- People should not be locked out of outdoor recreational activities.
- Liked the idea of an independent appeals process.
- Appointments should be staggered further so that Governors cannot sway the commission. Don't know if they should be elected.
- Seems like southern maine has a voice in northern maine, but that's not the case the other way around.

Bob Haynes

- Consulting forester
- Working with LURC has been good in terms of forestry.
- Things are changing – gates are going up. The mentality is they can get shut but wont as long the land is treated with respect. Allow access to the private property. Land users need to know that land need to be respected.
- Focus development along corridors where infrastructure already exists or could easily be extended.
- Structurally keep LURC the way it is.

Sarah Medina

- What about moving forestry oversight to MFS?

Bob Haynes

- It would make sense if they have the expertise.

Durward Humphrey

- Should a landowner who wants total preservation have the same amount of standing as one who wants to develop?

Bob Haynes

- Most important value is open space. Corridors of development would be more effective, but widespred preservation can be disastrous.
- Landowners should have the right to do what they want will their land.

Richard Searls

- How do you value the spiritual aspect of walking in the woods? Having a regulatory agency like LURC is valuable. Leaving it the vested interests doesn't always work. There should be some caring agency that has oversight.

Bill

Who should that caring agency be – neighbors, politicians?