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Meeting tonight

# Thomaston selectmen to hold public hearing on former prison site redevelopment

By Emily Sapienza  
VillageSoup/Knox County Times Reporter

THOMASTON (April 14): The Thomaston Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing Monday, April 14 to receive both written and oral comments from residents on the proposed redevelopment plan for the former Maine State Prison site, now known as the Thomaston Green.

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The hearing will begin at 7 p.m. in Watts Hall in Thomaston, prior to the board of selectmen's meeting.

Thomaston residents will have a chance to comment on proposed changes to the zoning map and the land use development ordinance needed for the project to proceed, said Town Manager Valmore Blastow Jr. last month.



The latest site plan for the Thomaston Green. (Image courtesy of Developers Collaborative)

The plan would require changing the zoning of the site from a residential R2 district to a village mixed use district, which is also known as an R-3A, according to the public notice for the hearing.

"Anytime you change a zone you must have a public hearing," said town clerk Joan Linscott last month.

The purpose of the R-3A district is to "encourage a high quality, moderate density neighborhood that complements the physical, aesthetic and social quality of Thomaston's village area," states the Thomaston Land Use and Development Ordinance.

The current master plan includes a residential care facility, public open green space, a multi-unit residential development, space for some retail, and a community center, said Blastow.

Residents may comment on the uses of the development, not its actual design, Blastow said.

The idea, he said, is to create a new neighborhood that has connectivity among the various components.

"It has real economic potential in a lot of ways," he said, but added that it is too soon to say what kinds of retail businesses might move into the development.

The master plan will also have to be passed by Thomaston voters at the polls on June 10, said Linscott, so getting as much of their input as possible at the hearing will heighten the chance of the plan passing at the polls.

"The more input you get and the more they say they like the plan or they don't, the more likely it is to pass," she said.

Written comments on the zoning changes or master plan may be sent to board of selectmen Chairman William Hahn at P.O. Box 299, Thomaston, ME 04861. Comments may also be dropped off at the Thomaston Town Office at 170 Main St.

In other business Monday night, the board of selectmen will review the 2008-2009 municipal budget for final approval and placement on the town meeting warrant.

The selectmen plan to set this year's town meeting for June 10, with a continuation date of June 16.

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