

MMA/MEGUG Municipal Technology Conference | Bangor Civic Center

March 3, 2011 | 2:45 to 3:45

Maine GeoParcels Panel Discussion Session

Introduction of Nancy Armetrout by Aimee Dubois, MEGUG President

Introduction of Panel Members by Nancy Armetrout

Explanation of the changes from the Integrated Land Record System (ILRS) now called Maine GeoParcels. Panel Members for today's GeoParcels discussion are: David Sawyer (Town of Windham), Sarah Tucker (Town of Bethel), Megan Tylka (City of Auburn), and Steven Weed (Town of Bar Harbor).

[Please Reference Power Point Presentation for Maine GeoParcels Panel Discussion](#)

Briefing by Panelists

David Sawyer (Assessor and GIS Coordinator for the Town of Windham)

- Dave explained the use of GIS system in the town of Windham
- Town views GIS as part of the *infrastructure*
- Information is better: tangible for discussion purposes
- Proactive (example was then given on a neighborhood group meeting for updating town plan, zoning changes, residents able to better analyze data with hard copies in hand)
- GIS infrastructure in place helps plan for unexpected town crisis (again, an example was given regarding a situation where ground contamination could be resolved by easily looking at a map vs. having to research the situation at time the crisis was occurring)
- Expressed that Assessing issues do not stop at town line. Market area research is easier if towns work together for regional planning. State wide GIS infrastructure would be beneficial for all; encouraged town and state wide usage.

Steven Weed (Tax Assessor for Town of Bar Harbor)

Steve expressed an overlap in what Dave has already stated, as they both see benefits of the GIS systems in the Assessing departments. Steve continues to work with requests all the time, due to the fact that information is "public record". Suggested that towns need to collaborate and make information available in one place; easily accessible to acquire information if it is centrally located. When researching a project one typically has to look beyond town boundaries, which takes more effort to call multiple municipalities.

Chuckled as he said....*it is all about the 3 C's: Consolidation, Cooperation & Collaboration*

Sarah Tucker (Assessing Assistant and GIS Technician for Town of Bethel)

Population of Bethel is approximately 2,500. In 2006, they were the recipients of a grant to upgrade to level 2 mapping. Reaping the benefits of enhanced technology; they have since put another \$20,000 into the program and are now using Level 3 mapping systems. Sarah also mentioned that they do not have an interactive website, and GEOParcels would be a very helpful resource for them.

Megan Tylka (Geospatial Database Manager for the City of Auburn)

Megan is currently working with a representative from each of the 5 surrounding organizations which they refer to as AVGIS (Androscoggin Valley GIS): City of Auburn, Auburn Water and Sewer District, City of Lewiston, Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), and recent addition with the Town of Lisbon. Megan expressed that she is seeing the benefits of larger scale collaboration.

Floor Opens:

Tom Marcotte (MDOT): *What about zoning? Why not put zoning into the mix? Do we have zoning information to be added to site?*

- zoning is part of the equation, but there are levels of priority
- all in agreement that they are undergoing small steps to accomplish this project; zoning is good information, but not there yet
- Gretchen expressed the complexity of zoning and creating that “universal” zoning layer is more difficult because of the differences between towns. Similar exercise as a land use layer.
- John Root, City of Rockland, discussed keeping it simple with Res/DT/Bus/etc and creates a link referencing the town specific sites.

Question from Audience: *Any idea of % of Towns/Cities that are using this type of GIS data and would have it readily available?*

-Question was not directly answered, it was redirected into further questions/discussions....

Gretchen Heldmann (Town of Hampden): *We have a list of what towns have digital parcels, but we do not have a list of what towns have a staff person that manages/maintains the GIS, whether a full time GIS Coordinator or a dual-purpose person such as Assessor/GIS Coordinator, vs. what towns contract out for that maintenance. We could certainly try and put that together.*

In small towns it is difficult to convince policy makers, would it be helpful to put a presentation together to convince your select board? Suggested creating and sharing a power point to show the benefits of GIS. Would need to know who to we send info to? All in agreement this would be beneficial.

Land use? Who is it relevant to? Dave Sawyer (panelist) stated that *the Assessor and Code work close together to avoid administrative management issues. Know your data and where it is coming from. Code needs to work with planning and with Assessing. Each office interprets it a little differently.*

John Root (City of Rockland), *Standardization of land use peaks his interest. Need to have standard regs between towns.*

Steven Weed (panelist), with "Vision" you can create standardized RES/COMM/Industrial codes

David Sawyer (panelist), *Shared a comment about a brain storming session that he was involved with 20 years ago, with the discussion point being "Universal land use codes. " Mapping companies can build a system cost effectively; the biggest costs are management and keeping the system up to date.*

Megan Tylka (panelist) responded with *Maine needs to think on a more regional level. We can implement these systems, but they need funding for ongoing maintenance. If we look at a regional picture, we are more apt to achieve the financial picture, which is necessary to keep the program successful.*

Question from Audience: *Has anyone looked at other states to see what is being done?*

- Yes, short discussion was had and Massachusetts has been reviewed.
- Observation of pending lawsuits: fee for view of documents on County Registry of Deeds websites

Question from Audience: *Why don't you supply a web-based editor [to update parcels or zoning via the internet]?"*

Nancy Armetrout: *Need to balance how far we can take this viewer and with how much the private sector can legally provide.*

Gentleman from Audience: *Are there monies available for broadband parcel research? NSF grant for parcel work with Greater Bangor and Greater Portland areas. Trying not to overlap work in process.*

Nancy Armetrout mentioned *Mike Smith's work and the MEGIS broadband grant, so with that, the GeoParcels, and the NSF work, all three are working together to be coordinated.*

State classification, parcel standards are updated and try to get a minimal amount of info for systems to function without causing an uproar regarding ownership information. Required fields but do not need to populate all.

Question from Audience: *Any issues with privacy?*

When issue arises, it is quickly resolved by changing it from property owners name to "Resident". Panel agreed that minimal calls come in for privacy issues with the name or photo online.

Still need to solve the multi-use and multi-zone issues for individual parcels.

Meeting adjourned at 3:36 with a round of applause for the four panelists