Dear Members of the Council,

This summer, I had the privilege of serving as an intern in the planning and economic development offices for the town of Lisbon. I started in May, and the past few months have flown by as I have been busy working on several projects related to the town's infrastructure, public safety, and economic development.

One main focus has been supporting the development of a new consolidated public safety building to replace the existing police and fire stations. I began this project by researching the public safety building committees and facilities in comparable Maine towns to gather insights on timelines, milestones, and best practices. I then joined Police Chief Ryan McGee and Fire Chief Nate LeClair on multiple ride-alongs to survey potential sites, examine deficiencies in the current facilities, and understand land and space needs for the new development. With this information, I worked on developing a template for the website dedicated to the public safety building project, referencing the space-needs analysis that had already been conducted, and displaying plans for the future of this ongoing development. For the public safety building committee, I analyzed various land parcels and identified over 30 suitable sites for the new facility, focusing on topography, size, and accessibility, which I believe were presented at the committee meetings.

Another significant aspect of my internship involved mapping and documenting the town's critical infrastructure. I had limited experience with GIS software, so I taught myself how to use Marplot—EPA's disaster response GIS mapping tool—and used this software to compile and map layers of essential town assets, including healthcare facilities, public safety buildings, utilities, and buried assets such as water mains. This project aimed to create a comprehensive view of the town's critical infrastructure to support emergency response planning and to enhance the town's ability to plan for critical infrastructure projects. I believe these files will eventually be integrated into the town's public mapping system.

Finally, I contributed to several projects in the broad category of economic and community development under the guidance of Ross Cunningham. One of my projects included organizing and updating the town's business directory, ensuring it included accurate and comprehensive information on local businesses. I conducted research on a handful of specific properties, including historical deed analyses to understand the property divisions in town. Additionally, I played a role in organizing and facilitating community events such as Ross' successful "Tasty Tuesdays" food truck nights. My tasks included setup, coordination, and cleanup, as well as engaging with community members and vendors to ensure successful events.

This 12-week internship has provided me with valuable insights into planning and economic development. I have gained a heightened understanding of the behind-the-scenes of municipal government, as well as the importance of community engagement and interpersonal connections in all aspects of public-sector work. I am grateful I had the opportunity to contribute to the town of Lisbon and would like to thank the town council as well as my supervisors, Sarah Bennett and Ross Cunningham, for all of their guidance and support throughout this internship.

Best,
Oscar Herrera