

Planning Board May 7, 2013

Present were: Chair Ernie Allain, Members Mark Evans, Greg Estrella, David Morin, Ex-Officio Sue Tremblay, Alternate members Richard Cassidy, Lori Langlois, and John White

Members Excused: Martha Creegan, Aline Boucher, Tom McCue, and Lucie Remillard

Others present: Barbara Tetreault, Edith Tucker, Sally Manikian

Chair Allain opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and appointed Mr. Cassidy a voting member.

Minutes

Mr. Morin moved to approve the minutes of the April meeting; Mr. Estrella seconded and the motion carried.

Public Comments – there were no comments

Driveway Access Regulations

Public Hearing – Chair Allain opened the public hearing at 6:35; there were no comments and Chair Allain closed the hearing at 6:37.

Mr. Estrella made note that Section IV Permits Required has an error and with the noted change on page 2, “by” to “from” the NH Department of Transportation in line 5; **Mr. Morin moved to accept the driveway regulation as presented with the noted change; Mr. Estrella seconded and the motion carried.**

Mount Jasper Request for Recommendation

Ms. Laflamme explained that the proposal by the snowmobile club to work on the trail in the area of Mt. Jasper/Cates Hill came about as a result of the work being done by the Mount Jasper Committee. The work was planned for the future but the potential to collaborate accelerated the process. Sally Manikian explained that the snowmobile trail would be re-routed and a parking area would be developed on Cates Hill that would serve a dual purpose as a trailhead for the Jasper Trail and for snowmobile use.

The Committee reviewed two possibilities with one being gaining access to Mt. Jasper from the back of the cemetery on Cates Hill and the other is to create a trail head at the former entrance to the now closed city landfill. After getting feedback from surrounding landowners and others, it is not the recommendation of the group to put a trailhead behind the cemetery. A trail from Cates Hill Landfill will add about ¼ mile one way to the hike to Mt. Jasper; however the terrain is much better. The new road crossing will be north of the existing crossing and it will move the trail away from the wetland. The group will ask the City Council to move the gate to allow the trailhead and instead of fencing, large boulders will be placed to keep atvs out. In places the walking trail to Jasper will be on the snowmobile trail and in others it will parallel the snowmobile trail.

Watershed to Wildlife will have a meeting June 13 at 6:00 p.m. to present their final report in which improvements to the Mt Jasper trail will be outlined. The recommendation is that ATV's are not allowed on the trail. Ms. Laflamme confirmed that she would report the Planning Board's approval of the recommendation and that there are no concerns as long as preserving the integrity of the landfill continues to be a priority.

Ms. Manikian stated that the Mt. Jasper Subcommittee met to accept comments on the Watershed to Wildlife report and added comments related to ATV use on the property. With the general consensus of the committee, the input from the State Archeologist Richard Boisvert and, the cultural opinion of Mike Eastman, it was agreed that Mt. Jasper is not a good area for ATV use. The slope, terrain, wetland, and ledge, contribute to the inability to sustain a trail.

Ms. Manikian went on to say that there are several work projects that will be completed this summer by JAG, the Enriched Learning Center and volunteer labor including a kiosk at the base of Jasper and possible benches along the trail. Cultural interpretive signage along the route to identify flora, fauna and the Abenaki connection. Ms. Manikian left the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Ms. Laflamme indicated that she will ask for an updated draft report to post on the city's web site. The work being done is being funded from grant money from Neil and Louise Tillotson and an anonymous donation from the Charitable Foundation.

Hutchins Street

Ms. Laflamme indicated that realigning Hutchins Street is an upcoming project that will straighten out the sharp turn at Bridge, Hutchins and Maynesboro Streets. It has been suggested that a second phase be added to the project for Hutchins Street to the 12th Street Bridge where the truck route is very narrow. Ideally the route should be on a priority list for major improvement. Mr. Morin voiced that Hutchins Street continues to be a major truck route used by the industrial park, hospital, correctional institutions and soon to be used by the biomass plant. Ms. Laflamme noted that it may be time to think of putting a project in the TIP, especially since it could take many years for it to move up the priority list.

There was mention of the Chalet Brook Bridge Project that the State seemed to have planned on but it was never started. Ms. Laflamme noted that she will check with DOT.

Lot Merger

The City of Berlin is requesting a lot merger of lots on Mason/Granite Streets, Map 119; Lot 128 and Map 119; Lot 129. The merged lot will be used for a community park to include community gardens. **Mr. Morin moved with a second from Mr. Cassidy to approve the lot merger of Map 119; Lot 128 and Map 119; Lot 129 owned by the City of Berlin.**

Other - none

Public Comments - none

Member Comments

Mr. Morin asked for an update on the Route 110 Project. Ms. Laflamme explained that the detention pond was an issue and DOT is now working things out with the owners of Valley Creek Eatery so that the project remains on schedule. All property has been purchased; demolition is done and a request for bids should be out this summer with start-up of the work in the fall.

Planner Comments

Ms. Laflamme mentioned training that will occur in Concord May 11.

Ms. Laflamme gave a quick update about the projects ongoing in downtown:

1. May 17 will be the Downtown Day of Caring.
2. Moving Downtown Forward will pay to fix the roof on the gazebo and to paint the tennis courts.
3. 3 Glen Avenue will be demolished in the coming weeks and there is a plan to add parking for the Holiday Center and some municipal parking.
4. Shrubbery at Green Square will come out and something low growing will be put in its place.
5. Banners are being printed for the downtown and they should be up by summer.
6. PSNH has given permission for a welcome sign on their property at Glen Avenue.
7. A ledgepack path that matches the paths in the park will be created leading to the kiosk.
8. The sign project is ongoing where signs in the downtown area will be updated.

Asked if there will be parking on the western side of Glen Avenue for the kiosk, Ms. Laflamme stated that there needs to be a plan in place for benefit road tolls, then an ordinance will be proposed to the City Council.

The Farmer's Market will be in the same location as last year and it starts June 27.

Adjournment

Mr. Morin moved with a second from Mr. Cassidy to adjourn the meeting. It ended at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Ex-Officio