

## **Planning Board**

### **June 3, 2014**

**Members Present:** Chair Ernie Allain, Members Greg Estrella, Tom McCue, Mark Evans, Aline Boucher, Martha Creegan and Lori Langlois, Ex-Officio members Lucie Remillard, Sue Tremblay, Alternate Members Richard Cassidy, John White

**Members Excused:** none

**Others present:** Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun; Pamela Laflamme, Community Development Director

**Public Comments** – none

### **Minutes**

Ms. Remillard moved with a second from Mr. Estrella to accept the minutes of the April & May meetings. So moved, the motion carried.

### **Update on DOT Mitigation Projects**

In the Route 110 project budget there is \$800,000 to mitigate the architecturally historic homes that were torn down due to the project. Adding large grassy areas is too much for recreation and parks to care for; however there will be a grass area in front of the PD where there can be a historic marker and small park area.

The Historical Society came up with an idea to use funds to do a thorough historic look at Berlin but whatever is proposed would have to have the approval of Federal Highways under the Section 106 program. The only mitigation that has been decided on is historic markers to acknowledge the historic character of the neighborhood.

Ms. Laflamme noted that we don't have to spend all the money and there would be savings since the city is responsible for 20%. There was a question about whether the money could be used to restore the remaining houses of historic value and Ms. Laflamme stated that DOT is not looking for a program that would last for an extended period of time.

### **EPA Chlor Alkali Superfund Site**

Ms. Laflamme reported that there is 5,550 pages of data which EPA put into a summary that gives an overview of the status of the project. The Cell House was demolished and capped; however it still leaks mercury. The EPA continues its remediation work and a report is to be issued sometime this year.

Mr. Estrella asked if the Superfund site would affect the Hutchins Street road project and Ms. Laflamme replied that the alternate route would have been on the site; however our attorney has advised the City that at this time it not wise to look at the alternate route prior

to a cleanup by the EPA, which is estimated in the millions. The City will not be moving the roadway onto that property and are looking to rebuild it in its current location.

The EPA has collected samples from Pontook Dam to the Shelburne dam. The EPA has found that it is a risk to human health to eat fish from the river below the Sawmill dam here in Berlin. The next steps will take another year.

Mr. McCue asked if any future uses were discussed. Ms. Laflamme reported that the land could be used for recreational trails; river-walk around the property with an Overlook of Brookfield Power including interpretive signage on how the hydro works. The property is central and next to utilities and amenities; it is not inconceivable that other industry would be allowed there.

### **Main Street and Riverwalk**

Ms. Laflamme stated that next year the city will be rehabilitating Main Street. There is an idea to construct an addition to the Riverwalk from the Northern Forest Heritage Park to the Twelfth St Bridge as part of the project. The City will apply for Transportation Alternative Program funding. New legislation has created one pool of funding for all transportation projects.

The minimum project amount is \$200,000 and the maximum is \$800,000. Letters of intent are due soon and the City has project that is designed but it needs to be scaled back from a price tag of \$4 million to somewhere in the funding window. There will be a need Council support and the City will need to provide the 20% of the project costs. The board will send a letter of support for the Riverwalk project.

Ms. Langlois asked about the boat landing. Ms. Laflamme replied that there are plans for a boat launch with funding acquired through Land and Water Conservation Funds. It will likely be a launch for canoes and kayaks since there is not much parking for a vehicle with a trailer.

### **Moving Downtown Forward**

Ms. Laflamme reported that the Fire Department is working on painting the fence surrounding the tennis courts on Pleasant Street and fixed the roof at the gazebo. Mayor Grenier has been working with veterans to come up with ways to rearrange the memorials at Veteran's Park to give the park more usability. A new city sign will be put on the property; it is large granite sign that will have place for flowers and a rock wall at the base.

The problem of people loitering may be solved by piping classical music into areas where there has been trouble with loitering. Signage that the Police Department can enforce has been added to Bickford Park. There is a new power panel in Gill Park that will provide a second source of power for events. The Main Street Program is paying for Leslie Paine to

do the Glen Avenue flowers as well as some Main Street garden areas. Ms. Laflamme thanked all who participated in Downtown Day of Caring.

Mr. McCue asked what is happening with the movie theatre. Ms. Laflamme said that it was bought for \$7,500 and that she has heard the buyer is looking for grants to make improvements.

Ms. Laflamme went on to say that there is an effort to move the kiosk to a gathering spot that is popular to ATV's. Businesses may be more likely to purchase advertising from the Chamber of Commerce if it is in a more visible location.

Ms. Creegan commented that she feels education is needed for drivers to deal with ATV's on the road. She confirmed that they are right to be driving in the line of traffic.

Other – there were no items

### **Public Comments**

Barbara Tetreault confirmed that the money for the welcome sign is coming from Moving Downtown Forward and that there is no estimate on the price yet.

### **Member Comments**

Mr. McCue commented that the wall at the Holiday Center needs to be fenced.

### **Planner Comments**

Mr. Laflamme confirmed attendance for the July 1 Planning Board meeting. She asked if the Board could meet Thursday August 14 for the August meeting and the Board agreed.

Next Thursday, June 12, 2014 the North Country Council will present their Regional Coordinated Transit Plan update here at City Hall.

There is a State Energy Strategy Meeting at White Mountains Community College on July 10 at 6PM.

Ms. Laflamme passed out a survey of North Country planning boards that is being compiled by North Country Council.

There being no further business, Mrs. Boucher moved to adjourn; Ms. Remillard seconded and the motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:05 p.m.

