

DERRY TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Derry Municipal Center

Tuesday, December 15, 2009
7:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Metts, Councilors: Wetherbee, Carney, Coyle, Benson and Chirichiello.
Absent: Councilor Fairbanks.

- Annual Meeting with Chairs of Boards & Commission

Planning Board / Dave Granese

The Planning Board has been working on the Master Plan. They have had 33 meetings and workshops thus far. They are working on the "Signage Ordinance."

Councilors asked various questions, open space subdivision plans or cluster ordinance, signage ordinance, sub division regulations, business inquiries.

George Sioras – The Open Space ordinance is with the Town Attorney for final review. Planning Board will hold a public hearing before forwarding the ordinance to the Town Council. Subdivision regulations are being looked at. The board still has a few changes of use to go through. The Technical Review Board will work with applicants and retailers to help get through the process. Medical Building and Tire Warehouse is moving along.

Conservation / Margie Ives

The CTAP open space plan has approved and adopted by the Planning Board. This open space plan is to be included in the Master Plan. The Cole Marsh dam has been replaced; Broadview Farm Community Gardens had 41 plots this year. They are looking to expand the area. The Cole Marsh, Broadview Farm and Webber Forest conservation areas are being used heavily for walking, cross country skiing, and other uses. The Police Department was able to break up a group of vandals at various properties. There have been a lot of Dredge & Fill Permits issued this year. Margie Ives envisions the Derry Garden Club and Parks & Recreation working together to get rid of bittersweet and burning bush as they are invasive plants. Doug Rathburn has the new aerial mapping of the town's prime wetlands and they will be working on updating the forestry management plan.

Councilors asked questions regarding milfoil, and active recreation land use versus keeping land as open space.

Margie replied that the active recreation is in the Master Plan, and both Beaver Lake and Island Pond have milfoil and knot weed.

Zoning/ Alan Virr

The Zoning Board is a judicial board therefore operate under state statute and rigorous guidelines. The case load has been low and they haven't had enough cases to assist with training new members. There are state law criteria for zoning variances taking place in January 2010.

Time frame to finish Master Plan is 85 – 95% done. There are three more chapters and it should be ready in January 2010.

Heritage Commission & Derry Housing were not present

- **Downtown Marketing Plan**

Civic Profile Downtown Committee member Gordan Graham gave a hand out the committee's report to Town Council. They are in agreement with the Downtown Marketing Plan.

Darren Mochrie – RKG gave a presentation on the Downtown Marketing Plan. He gave an outline of the program's plan and scope, issues & vision for demographics & economic conditions, retail demand analysis, land use & assessments & real estate market.

There are general upkeep/maintenance concerns in the downtown area, there is no consistent theme. The downtown should be a "Gateway" to Derry.

Recommendations:

- Create an organization to implement the recommendation
- Create a downtown Merchants Association
- Fund and hire a downtown coordinator
- Fund and create a facades improvement plan (CDBG grants)
- Work with property owners & community group to utilize empty storefronts
- Add ways to find signage for downtown
- Improve parking lot maintenance
- Encourage development and seek educational or other institutional users to the downtown
- Work with Friendship Center officials to find an alternate location
- Work with local merchants to improve atmosphere

Council questions and remarks:

What steps is the staff taking to address signage, lighting, and parking?

There is a need to put together a plan step 1 – 4 with cost and an implementation plan. There is a need to give serious consideration to put this into action by priority. Blighted buildings in downtown were questioned.

Mr. Stenhouse – This going to be the toughest budget in years. We need to have funding in place. After each snowstorm downtown should be cleared. This funding is not in place. The Opera House parking is important. PD is in a reactive mode during the busiest hours what this means are those officers go from call to call which allows for little time for the officers to do proactive police work. Thus we do not have enough officers to have a constant downtown presence. The town does have a section in its code that deals with blight however the buildings we are speaking about do not meet that definition.

Darren suggested using the Profile Committee as the Downtown Group.

- **Economic Development Update – Arnett Development Group**

Stuart Arnett – There are three projects that are assigned to him which are the TIF District, three downtown parcels, and the Marketing and Communication Plan. He has had some informational sessions on the downtown parcels and the TIF District. The three empty lots near the Depot Steakhouse and former railroad bed that the Town owns - the preliminary design work is done. He has talked with the DEDC on the lot they own and they are willing to work that lot into the plan. He has had conversations with parking for the Opera House.

Marketing & Communication Plan - there is an outreach session with State Legislature planned. A preliminary draft assessment on the Farmer's Market has been done. He is working on the

Enterprise Application. Revolving Loan Fund from last session is gearing up quickly. There has been discussion with a group called Metro. It is an outreach of the Chamber of Commerce in Manchester. The goal there is to encourage a regional entity to make sure there is no duplication being done.

Mr. Stenhouse - there may be a couple of loan applications from businesses wishing to locate or expand in Derry. He will be sending Town Council some ideas and suggestions concerning the Derry Revolving Loan Committee that Laurel Bistany and he have come up with.

Margie Ives questioned transportation as there are people who do not drive at night. This would bring more people downtown at night. The Friendship Center is located downtown as that is where these people live. It provides a good service. There are groups that do contribute to beautifying the downtown like the Garden Club. Get an action plan and prioritize the steps. A thought would be to take these recommendations and figure out who is going to put this in order.

Council Comments: CART is working on direct routes. Original plan, delineated map should be on website, priorities should be determined and a price tag, questioned how to promote TIF District with website or newsletter.

Stuart is talking with business owners and realtors to assemble data.

Betsy Burtis – regarding the revolving loan fund, she stated emerging business people are females and they have a less traditional business background and she feels there should be gender balance on the oversight committee. She hoped the town could find funding for storefront revitalization in the downtown. She wondered if there would be a way to earmark some of the loan funding. Mr. Stenhouse explained that the Economic Loan funds must be used to create jobs.

Workshop adjourned @ 9:10 p.m.