

**Planning Board Meeting
April 5, 2011**

Present were: Chair Francoise Cusson, Members Lucien Langlois, David Morin, Ernie Allain, Ralph Collins (6:55 p.m.); Ex-Officio Members Tom McCue, Sue Tremblay; Alternate Members, Greg Estrella, Richard Cassidy, Martha Cregan

Members Excused: Aline Boucher, Laura Jamison; absent were Julie Cooney and Associate Member Andre Duchesne

Others Present: Barbara Tetreault, *Berlin Daily Sun*; Pamela Laflamme, City Planner

Chair Cusson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and appointed Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Estrella and Ms. Cregan voting members for this meeting.

Public Comments - There were no comments.

Minutes

Mr. Morin noted that in the Boundary Line Adjustment for Alan & Paula McClain and Raymond & Leila Villeneuve, there were no zoning inconsistencies. With this change, Mr. Morin moved to approve the minutes as amended; Mr. Allain seconded and the motion carried.

Lot Merger

Ms. Laflamme explained that Amy Holt wants to combine two lots on Ramsey Street (Map 127; Lot 42.1 and Map 128; Lot 21) for tax purposes, this would be effective for the April 2012 tax year. Mr. Morin moved with a second from Mr. Estrella to allow the lot merger of Map 127; Lot 42.1 and Map 128; Lot 21 on Ramsey Street. So moved, the motion carried.

Board Terms and Officers

Ms. Laflamme informed the Board that new terms for Mr. Morin as a regular member and Mr. Cassidy as an Alternate member were approved by Council to expire 4/30/2014. Ms. Cooney's term is up and she has decided not to seek re-appointment.

Mr. Morin moved to recommend to fill Ms. Cooney's seat with Mr. Estrella for a three year term to end April, 2014; Mr. Langlois seconded and the motion carried.

There are now two open Alternate positions.

Officers

Ms. Cusson explained that she has had to miss meetings and she does not feel she can make the commitment she feels is necessary for the chairperson. She would like to stay on as a voting member.

Ms. Cusson nominated Mr. Allain to be the Chair of the Planning Board; Mr. Langlois seconded the nomination. In the vote, Mr. Allain was unanimously elected chair.

Ms. Cusson nominated Mr. Morin to be Vice Chair; Mr. Estrella seconded the nomination and in the vote that followed, Mr. Morin was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

In her exiting remarks, Ms. Cusson thanked the board for being a wonderful and easy group to work with. She said the board is moving the city in the right direction.

Local Energy Subcommittee

Ms. Laflamme said that she is working with a group who are interested in energy. They include Cimbria Badenhause, Seth Quarrier, Sally Manikian, Noah Bourassa, and Peg Heaney, some of whom have experience with solar and wind energy. Ralph Collins participated, as well as and Kate Hartnett wants to be a part of the committee but she is a resident of Deerfield with a secondary residence here. Ms. Laflamme noted that the group could be a committee of the Planning Board until they get their mission together and then they could go to the Council for designation as the City's Energy Committee. There were no objections to having an Energy Committee of the Planning Board.

NCC Representatives

North Country Council is asking for the City's representatives to their Board as well as the Transportation Committee. At this time, Mr. McCue and Lucie Remillard are Board representatives. Bev Raymond, CAP's Transportation Director would continue on the Transportation Committee. Ms. Creegan expressed interest as well.

Route 110 Phase II Mitigation Activities

Ms. Laflamme informed the Board that there will be a Route 110 Design Charrette on April 29 & 30 at the Recreation Center. A group of professionals, (planners, architects, engineers, landscape architects) will interact with citizens to discuss the new route. Jeff Taylor was hired by the DOT to facilitate. There is nothing formal for the Planning Board to do. Mr. Collins entered the meeting at this time. At 1:00 p.m. on the 29th there will be a one hour walking tour of the affected area; then from 2-4 and 7-9 there will be listening sessions and on Saturday, April 30th from 8:30 to 2:20 the Charrette team will work on recommendations, then from 2:30 to 4, they will present those recommendations.

Ms. Laflamme also noted a public forum to take place Saturday, May 14 9:30 to Noon at the City Hall Auditorium. "Why this Place Matters" will speak to the architecture and history of the neighborhood. An architectural historian will talk about historic elements and things to do to recreate historic details. Jeff Taylor will be there as well as Poof Tardif who will be collecting living histories. Mr. McCue commented that it would be good if folks from other parts of town were there as well.

Yet another meeting will be held from 9:30 to Noon on Saturday September 17 will be at the Northern Forest Heritage Park and will speak to preserving historic houses, and energy efficiency in historic houses.

Downtown Master Plan

Ms. Laflamme reported that a downtown master plan would look at development and design strategy to move the downtown forward. It will be funded by way of a grant from the Tillotson Foundation of \$55,000; \$5,000 from the Main Street Program; \$10,000 from existing city funds that were set aside for the Master Plan; \$5000 from PSNH; an additional \$5,000 from PSNH to include Tondreau. The focus of the plan will be streetscaping, making the downtown feel like a campus. Another layer will be the regional branding initiative that depicts Berlin as the likely shopping place for the region.

This plan will help the downtown to get ready to be grand market place. It will work to identify four different economic development strategies:

1. Market potential in the downtown and what could be realized. What types of business do we need to attract critical mass?

2. Competitive environment: how downtown competes against the Wal-Mart's of world; what tourists are looking for?
3. What are likely outcomes of re-use of buildings? What would it really cost?
4. Strategic opportunities for Berlin and how to go after opportunities to expand current retail businesses. What do we want the downtown to look like, retail to office to business.

The study will include data collection; community input meetings, with landscape and strong design worked in. A committee consisting of representatives from PSNH, BIDPA, WREN, two Main Street people; three property owners; two planning board members. Mr. Morin, Mr. Allain, Mr. McCue, Mr. Collins and Ms. Cusson expressed interest. Mr. McCue commented that the downtown is critical to the future of Berlin. Ms. Laflamme added that as branding catches on, we want to be in charge of how we are perceived.

Other

Ms. Laflamme explained that CAP has offered to hold a conservation easement to Mt. Jasper. The idea was presented to the City Council and they wanted to see the language of the easement prior to approval. Because Berlin has no conservation commission, creation of the easement goes to the Planning Board.

Ms. Cregan asked if the Planning Board will be putting together the language. Ms. Laflamme indicated that the Board will indicate concepts such as atv's or not; would existing snow machine trails be allowed; the actual easement will likely be drafted by the City Attorney. The idea is to get flexible language because it is clear that everyone wants to enjoy similar experiences as to what is enjoyed now.

Ms. Laflamme stated that drawings for a Berlin Water Works expansion project will be here for design review at the next meeting.

Public Comments

Ms. Tetreault asked if the 110 Charrette is by Plan NH and Ms. Laflamme noted that it is part of the mitigation for Route 110 contracted by NHDOT.

Member Comments

Mr. Langlois asked about shoreland protection and Ms. Laflamme stated that it is not finished; captioning is most tedious.

Mr. Collins reported that he went to a Local Energy Committee Conference held at Merrimack Valley High School. He is talking to people about coming here for a gathering involving energy.

Mr. McCue mentioned that Drive in the 50's will be held June 2 as well as the dedication of Bickford Park. Ms. Laflamme also affirmed that Mr. McClain is still working on his idea of a hotel on Route 110.

Planner Comments - there were no comments

Adjournment

Mr. Morin moved with a second from Mr. Collins to adjourn. The meeting ended at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay