

February 5, 2019 Planning Board

Present were: Regular Members, Lori Langlois, Greg Estrella, Richard Cassidy, Lane Strahan, Helene Rayborn, Naomi Levesque, Ex-Officio member Lucie Remillard, Alternate Member Aline Boucher,

Regular Member Tom McCue, Christina Lefebvre, and Ex-Officio Member Bryan Chevarie were excused.

Others Present: Pamela Laflamme, Community Development Director; Suzanne Wasileski and Lise Barrette.

Public Comments

None

Approval of January Minutes

Ms. Laflamme noted an error in listing Lane Strahan as an Alternate Member where she is now a Regular Member. Mr. Estrella noted that in the last line on the 2nd page the word 'master' is missing an s. Ms. Rayborn made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2019 meeting as amended. Mr. Cassidy seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

Site Plan Review – David Poulin (412 Glen Avenue, Tax Map 116, Lot 12) – York Land Services

This matter was not ready to be voted on at this meeting. This is an official notification that public notices will not be resent. The site plan review will be tabled until the March 5, 2019 meeting.

Community Profiles –

Ms. Laflamme noted that the 10 Year Master Plan will be ten years old next year. To help set a foundation for the creation of the Master Plan, we are looking at the University of NH Cooperative Extension through their Community Profiles program. There will be a steering committee assembled which will work with UNH to facilitate a broad scale community meeting to focus on the 10 Components which are outlined in the list which was handed out (see attached). They hope to reach largest variety of groups of people as possible. UNH will run the event, and the committee will help put the event together. It is hoped to be a positive experience to bring in people for visioning in the community. Some recommended groups of people were: new community members, long time community members, retired, young, one's in education or health care, the chamber, and local legislators. It was recommended to narrow it down to 15-20 people. She is asking about 30 people, but knows that they cannot all commit. Mr. McCue as chair of the Planning Board has agreed to be part of this group and she is also waiting for Ms. Langlois to get back to her.

At this time, they are planning a facilitated community meeting in October. UNH will then submit a report. Mr. Cassidy asked if it was possible to have a live stream for people who are not able to make it in person. Ms. Laflamme made a note of it to look into.

Ms. Strahan asked how it will be brought out to the community, how will people be reached. Ms. Laflamme explained that was one of the reasons they wanted a wide variety of people from different parts of the community involved on the committee to help with spreading the word. Ms. Remillard wanted to know if the Mayor has helped pick these people in order that the City continues to follow the same direction it's going. Ms. Laflamme has shared the list with the Mayor but he did not select the list.

As part of developing the Master Plan Ms. Laflamme plans on utilizing work BIDPA is doing. BIDPA has put out a Request for Proposals for developing an Economic Development and Marketing Strategy. The work will focus on looking at other rural communities in transition, dealing with tourism and change, a shrinking population and the northern forest region. The funds being used for the work are BIDPA's funds which are not from the general fund but money that comes from their reserves which comes from leases and sales. They received seven proposals and they will be interviewing three firms next week. Whoever is selected will be going also look at the City's ordinances to be sure they align with our goals, and that our strategies align with the county. They will lead, prepare and facilitate workshop(s) with business and community leaders. They will be looking for missing skillsets, in bringing new jobs in the area, in retaining jobs and growing current jobs. There will be timelines set with goals and targets. It will take approximately six months to put it together.

This will line up with the UNH community profile to be done in the fall. This will give the City two good pieces of information to use to make a master plan. Mr. Estrella asked if there will be a periodical review to assess the goals. Ms. Laflamme said there will be performance measures that BIDPA will be checking regularly. They are taking pragmatic approaches. The current Master plan is used a whole lot more than the last one and we are required to have one.

Mr. Estrella noted that it should also line up with what's attainable with the resources we have. Ms. Laflamme says we have some great people to work with from UNH, one is from North Country Council and another she's known for several years. They are very excited about this and plan to make it more community driven than in the past.

Short Term Rental Updates -

Ms. Laflamme said there is Legislation in front of Senate at this time, she is not sure of the current status of the legislation. Mr. McCue has been following this and Ms. Laflamme was going to ask him to give an update this evening. Ms. Laflamme read over the legislation and made a note that you can prohibit short term rentals through the Zoning ordinance. This will be discussed more next meeting. Laconia has decided to send any complaints to the ZBA and it tends to get shutdown. In our community, we've had some garbage, noise, and parking complaints which have been dealt with it. The short term rentals we have in Berlin

are rated pretty high online. We have approximately 16 of them. Ms. Remillard stated that the Planning Board had decided in the past to wait and see how it turns out. There was some discussion about surrounding communities and how they've dealt with things and how they plan to make changes. Mr. Cassidy discussed an example he was familiar with in our community on Cascade Hill.

Project Updates

We did not get funded for the Hutchins St sidewalk. Northumberland received funding and will be getting new sidewalks. Mr. Cassidy noted that we can resubmit next year. Ms. Laflamme confirmed we likely will. Ms. Levesque discussed some of the efforts made and that might have been made to aid in the effort.

Ms. Rayborn mentioned she saw the article about the Riverwalk approval. Ms. Laflamme confirmed that it's been approved but it's not allowed to go out to bid until at least July which is not the best time for bids. Also, they are not allowed to start construction until October which is not possible with our weather, so construction won't begin until 2020.

Ms. Laflamme shared her side project for the library. The NH Preservation Alliance has granted \$4,500.00 to the City towards a Comprehensive Assessment of the Library building. We are currently advertising a Request for Proposals. Our library is one of the two or three Carnegie libraries still open and being used as a library and it needs updating and rehabbing. There are lots of grant money out there to look into. She has already received a few calls about the project.

Other – Unmerger – Map 127 Lot 109

This is for the property at 179 Finland Street and the discrepancies between the old map and new map. On the old map it shows two properties, Map 33 Lots 59 and 60; the new map lists it as one property M/L 127-109. Cartographic had created new maps in the 90's and tended to find lots side by side and merged them on the new maps. The owner is in process of a sale and the title company wants to see it put back into two lots before it's sold. Pursuant to NH RSA 673:39 aa, II the lots can be restored to their original configuration as they were merged by the City and not at the owner's request. There was a brief discussion about the property's history, questions were asked and answered.

Ms. Remillard made a motion to restore the current Map 127 Lot 109 to the original Map 33, Lots 59 and 60, which will now be known as Map 127, Lots 109 and 109.1. Mr. Cassidy seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

Public Comments

None

Member Comments

Ms. Levesque asked for updates on the food coop and the greenhouse.

Ms. Laflamme noted that for the Greenhouse, there is a legislation being proposed to create the ability for communities to allow for payment in lieu of taxes for combined heat and power agriculture projects. At this time, it's only an option for renewable energy projects. If legislation passes, North Country Growers would ask the City to adopt it and it would give investors the ability to put a budget for taxes together for the next 20 years.

Ms. Laflamme said the Food Coop is moving along. Ms. Levesque asked if there has been a location decided upon yet. Ms. Laflamme said there hasn't as it is early in the process. The committee is putting all the pieces in place and has the benefit of having the Littleton Coop general manager on the committee. Kim Votta from Lancaster has been hired through a grant as the project manager.

Ms. Remillard asked if some options for places have been discussed. Ms. Laflamme said you need to sell so many memberships first and then start looking for locations. You have to have capital to borrow money to purchase land or a building. Ms. Levesque asked that in theory, it won't happen within a year. Ms. Laflamme said it won't because it's community owned and it takes much longer to set up. Most Coops take about 36 months until they can actually open. We've only been at it for 14 months now.

Ms. Strahan asked what the required amount of memberships is until things get moving. Ms. Laflamme says the rule of thumb is to sell between 800 – 1000 memberships. This would give enough of a down payment to leverage capital to fund the project. Members can also loan money which happened in Littleton where they were able to open quicker.

Mr. Cassidy asked what the snow budget looked like at this time. No one knew the answer.

Ms. Remillard did not have anything to report at this time. Discussion ensued about how difficult a winter it has been.

Planner Comments

None

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Remillard made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Langlois. All in favor, the motion carried. The meeting ended at 7:35 pm.

The next Planning Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 5, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lise Barrette