

June 7, 2017
Planning Board

Present were: Regular Members Tom McCue, Lori Langlois, Greg Estrella, Aline Boucher, Helene Rayborn, Richard Cassidy Ex-Officio Member Jen Myers, Alternate Naomi Levesque

Ex-officio Member Lucie Remillard was excused for the evening

Others Present: Pamela Laflamme, Community Development Director; Michel Salek, Code Enforcement Officer; Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun

Public Comments – no one spoke

Approval of May Minutes

Ms. Rayborn moved with a second from Ms. Langlois to approve the May 2017 minutes as written. So moved, the motion carried.

Mr. McCue appointed Ms. Leveque as a voting member for the evening.

Lot Line Adjustment – City of Berlin & Chapman Development

In 2015, prior to the City selling Map 104 Lot 17 to Mr. Chapman, they did a minor subdivision to create a one acre parcel at the northwesterly end of the property; Map 104 Lot 17.1, that the City would retain as a parking area. As part of the sale agreement with Mr. Chapman there was an intent to do a lot line adjustment to include the 1.66 acres of Mr. Chapman's property at the rear of Map 104 Lot 17.1. As this was never completed, it needs to be corrected and done now. York Land Services has done a survey for the new lot line. The new 2.89 acre lot will be the City's. The parcel is very wet, but there is some room to make more parking, leave as a buffer or create some trail.

Mr. Bob Chapman asked if the parking is for anyone. Yes, it is a municipal lot. Ms. Langlois questioned whether or not the City would have to keep it as parking. No. However there is not a lot of parking out there up by the state park itself. Over the winter a lot of people were coming up with snow machines trailers. It was getting plowed by an abutter and was getting a lot of use.

Mr. Chapman stated that if the City ever does anything with it [the lot] or decides to sell it, he would like to have the first right to buy it back. Ms. Laflamme will take that request back to City Council.

Ms. Laflamme stated that the plan is complete as submitted. Ms. Langlois made a motion to accept the plan as complete, seconded by Ms. Boucher. So moved, the motion carried.

Mr. McCue opened the Public Hearing at 6:42pm.

No one spoke.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:42pm.

Ms. Langlois made a motion to approve the lot line adjustment between the City of Berlin and Chapman Development NH LLC as submitted, seconded by Ms. Boucher. All in favor, the motion passed.

Site Plan Review- Conceptual Consultation – Jericho Gateway Family Campground

Ms. Laflamme reminded the board that all commentary this evening from the board and the developer is non-binding. The board can ask as many questions as they'd like, Mr. Clorite can ask as many as he'd like. Nothing can be approved tonight.

Mr. Clorite gave a brief history of the property and his ownership. In 2011 he bought the property. It has been kept open for recreation in his six years as owner. As the popularity of the property has grown he has taken steps to protect the property. One of these is taking reservations so that he knows who is on the property. He has not posted, but does ask hunters to ask for permission. He has also placed a portable toilet at the property for use year round. He is at the point now, the use has grown to the point that he has a pop-up camper out on the property for the season so it is considered a seasonal unit. It is a camper on wheels. At this point he feels there is too much use of the property. There is one abandoned house on the property which is storage. The development of the campground has been slow going. He currently has 20 camp sites, without disturbing the ground or any soils.

He'd like to give the city more oversight of what he's doing and submit a temporary site plan review. It is something he plans to utilize for two years until he can get to the full scale campground of 200 sites. The bulk of the property will be available for outdoor recreational use. The campground will comprise of 60-80 acres. He is in the process of getting a driveway permit (the current driveway is an old log yard landing) to access the property. The woods roads could probably be upgraded and not be considered disturbing the soils, as long as he doesn't have to make them wider. He would like to submit a site plan review at the next meeting or when the engineers have plans ready.

Ms. Laflamme stated that the SPR isn't really temporary. Mr. Clorite would be legalizing his current use of the property. A Site Plan will make it clear that he is properly and fully permitted for what is happening at the property.

Mr. Clorite continued that because he is not going to disturb soils, he would like a waiver for the two foot contour map requirement. He has a two meter contour map already. He

has hired HEB Engineers and feels that they can work with that to show the board what is currently existing. He won't change soils or hydrology. The plan he will submit will comply with all other requirements.

He will remove twenty (20) acres out of current use to be accommodating what is in current use. This will be fifteen (15) acres out of current use and an additional five (5) acres for curtilage around other areas.

The existing campground is out to campsites shown as 13, 5 & 20 and 10 on the attached map. He doesn't use the others and for the purposes of this they will not be used. He doesn't want to take that much area out of current use. The drawing shows what would be pulled out of current use. He can accommodate a couple of remote campers on the property, so they would get an acre each.

Areas shown as Hideaway, Pig Pen, Hawg Traugh, A's are seasonal sites. B is where the portable toilets are. The previous log landing is what he uses as a parking area. The area labeled Rusty's Ridge was utilized by people camping during the two ATV festivals.

People currently enter from the parking area where there is a thirty foot (30') driveway. Mr. Clorite also has archeological and geological data dating way back for the property.

Mr. Salek asked about the for sale sign at the property. Mr. Clorite replied that he and his wife were heavily weighing their options when Ms. Laflamme and Mr. Wheeler, the City Manager contacted him about the status of the property.

Mr. Clorite stated that the camping is free of charge and that he doesn't charge anything for use. People can leave donations. Some of them have been coming since 2011. The popularity of the site has grown and he is filling a need for lack of lodging in Berlin.

He plans on completing the engineering and submitting a new site plan review in two years, 2019/2020. He will be submitting something prior to building and will probably develop the property in three phases.

The camp sites are not physically marked at the sites, just on the map. To keep people from fighting over the area this is what he came up with and gives them the number of a site to go to. When asked how one would know how to get to a specific numbered site, Mr. Clorite said he gives everyone a map similar to what was handed out and one is also posted at a wooden kiosk at the property for reference. When asked how one would explain where they were if they had to report an emergency while camping. Mr. Clorite stated that you would give them the location, the property address, which is the number on the mailbox at the house on the property and explain that you were so many hundred feet up the road from that location and then direct them to the campsite.

He does get a fire permit every year for the campsites. He acknowledges that his roads will not take an emergency vehicle right now.

Ms. Langlois questioned if the blue B indicated on the map was just the one portable toilet. Mr. Clorite replied that he will put in whatever is required for the number of people staying at the site. He does have a 250 gallon tank of potable water at the property for extinguishing campfires, just for convenience.

He does not plan any sewer or water at this time. The portable toilets are there for convenience.

The plan is to keep it primarily tent sites. During festivals he does use the lawn area which can accommodate three or four trailers. Because the property is so large, the campground won't be near any other property lines.

Mr. McCue stated that the board is always concerned with all of the other agencies who are involved. With campgrounds, DES generally has a lot of involvement. He relayed that Mr. Clorite's engineer could be helpful as he makes his way through that part of the process. He also commented that the board will require that any other state, local, federal permits are in order. Mr. McCue stated that Mr. Clorite may also want to contact the Berlin Fire and Police Departments and that it would be a good to start working with them now, even on the smaller scale.

Mr. McCue stated that ordinarily when the Planning Board has been presented with a SPR, particularly for a campground, they are more comfortable with seeing an entire project showing the years of build out within it. What Mr. Clorite is proposing is not necessarily something they are used to dealing with. He mentioned again that the engineer might be able to help Mr. Clorite with these particulars. Ultimately, liability for the city is what the Planning Board is concerned with and want to shield it from.

Mr. Clorite stated that he'd like to bring the use to a level to address public safety concerns. He would also keep it open for recreational activity and maintain continuity of people using the property so that when he does develop it he will have returning clientele.

"Currently with property under current use, I am covered under the state for allowing private camping. It is arguable that my current involvement may challenge that which is why I am here."

With the main body of the campground he'd like to use solar. He'd like to keep everything spread out and not disturb the area. For what he is submitting it is essentially no power, no

water, no facilities above what he is offering now. He is planning to add three or four inches of gravel to the roads for trucks and trailers that haul ATVs.

Because the roads cannot accommodate the size of some trailers, if campers can't bring it to their site, they can park it at the log landing and drive in.

Ms. Langlois asked if there had been any problems with people tenting without reservations. Yes, this last Memorial Day weekend. When he realized they were there without reservations, he made them check in and went over the property rules. It is free use. They are not open for business. Most people call Mr. Clorite and he sends an email as a receipt and attaches the common courtesy rules; however, there aren't any set rules.

Mr. Estrella inquired about the winter months. Mr. Clorite plows the entry for his own use. He has also put up some hidden cameras. He checks the property almost daily. He does snow removal in the main parking area.

In regards to drainage and runoff; it all runs downhill because he hasn't disturbed anything. The back part of the parking area gets pretty soft, so he has logs there so people don't get stuck.

The abandoned house is the only address for the property, he does receive mail there. He lived there [near the house] for two months in a camper in 2013 when he and his wife first moved to Berlin.

There is about seven hundred feet (700') from site #1 to #5. Some of sites are close together but may have brush that separate them. There are some that sort of run together that are used by bigger parties.

Mr. Clorite will submit a Mylar with the SPR and it will be detailed according to the requirements. He would like to ask for the waiver for the two foot (2') contour map.

Ms. Langlois asked if he has any problem with anyone off the trail (OHRV right of way). He does not consider it a problem if they come onto his land. He prefers to give written permission, but he won't give fuss about it.

Mr. McCue commented that it would be helpful if the board were given some lead time when the SPR is submitted, prior to the monthly meeting he planned to present at. He also stated, "I just want to be clear with the scope of what you are trying to do, what you are asking for, that's what you will be approved for. Anything off of that will not be. Just keep in mind that you will only be approved for what you bring into us."

Mr. Clorite met with DES in 2011 when he bought the property. They are pretty clear with what they allow. He feels that the level at what it is, DES will have very little to say. Unless he were to bring in water.

Mr. McCue stated that there may be a point that Mr. Clorite may have to have campers sign waivers. He also stated that the applicant for this Site Plan Review should be Mr. Clorite's company as they are the owner. He questioned if Mr. Clorite was aware that his company, Jericho Gateway LLC is not currently in good standing with the state.

Ms. Langlois wondered if there had been any trouble since the property is so remote. Mr. Clorite replied only once and they left when they were approached. He patrols the property on his 4-wheeler and side-by-side. He cuts his own personal firewood and firewood for the campers on the land. He has not asked any law enforcement to patrol except when he had someone leave a mess at the front (entrance) and asked for help to figure out what had happened.

Ms. Levesque asked if it was because of the current land use that Mr. Clorite doesn't propose a number at each site. No, he changes the labels depending on use and what seems to make sense. They are fluid. Labeling the camp sites would definitely be a part of legitimizing what he's doing and running it more like a business.

City Owned Parcels Project

Ms. Laflamme has narrowed down the list of 150 to about 35 parcels of land. These are what she thinks don't need any input from staff but do need to be viewed. It would be really great if board members would go look at them. There are a few of them grouped together. The group chose to volunteer who would look at which parcels. Please visit these parcels between now and next month's meeting and report back with any remarks.

Planning Board Membership

Ms. Creegan has resigned. Ms. Levesque will fill the regular membership slot. Ms. Levesque will serve the two (2) years remaining as she is filling an unexpired term, which will expire April 2019.

We are currently seeking members to fill the alternate slots. There is a list and we will be pursuing them to consider membership.

Project Updates

Ms. Laflamme went to the Department of Transportation today to get approval to move forward with Riverwalk project. She is hopeful to start the process to put out bids for design engineers soon. The City would like to construct the Riverwalk next summer. It is categorized as a transportation alternative project. Ms. Laflamme is putting the project on a 12 month track. Route 16 will finish this fall and the goal is to follow it up with the

Riverwalk next summer. There are things that could hold it up, but there are other things in our favor that could speed it along. Members asked if it will be strictly a Riverwalk or if there are plans for a boat launch. Yes, lots of features go with it. Natural boat launch, gazebo or two, decorative lighting, etc. These details will be fleshed out during the design phase.

This Saturday North Country Council will meet in Littleton from 9am – 12pm for a Planning Board workshop.

Welcome sign—Ms. Laflamme met with Sylvia Poulin and they are now waiting for one thing from the architect. She will be ordering granite sometime in the next week; then will put out a bid for a general contractor. They hope to have it all come together and be built by the end of summer, early fall.

Snow melt – The City will find out sometime in the next 2 to 3 weeks if the feasibility money along with the money for the new skateboard park was granted.

Other – No one spoke

Public Comments – No one spoke

Member Comments — Ms. Rayborn is getting a piano for downtown/Main Street and wondered how to move forward with have it place. Ms. Laflamme suggested that Ms. Rayborn talk with Sylvia Poulin about where she thinks a good location might be for it.

There was also thoughtful discussion regarding the number of mosquitos this year. The City does not spray for them.

Planner Comments – Reminder for next month, Council has moved their meeting to from July 3 to July 5, so we will meet Thursday, July 6.

There being no further business to come before the Board Ms. Boucher moved to adjourn; Mr. Cassidy seconded and the motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:19pm

Jen Myers
Administrative Clerk