

**May 7, 2019**  
**Planning Board**

**Present were:** Regular Members, Tom McCue, Lori Langlois, Greg Estrella, Richard Cassidy, Christina Lefebvre, Tony Valliere, Naomi Levesque, Susanne Wasileski, Lane Strahan, and Ex-Officio member Lucie Remillard.

Regular Member Helene Rayborn, Alternate Member Aline Boucher, and Ex-Officio Member Bryan Chevarie were excused.

**Others Present:** Pamela Laflamme, Community Development Director and Lise Barrette.

**Public Comments**

None

**Approval of April Minutes**

Mr. McCue noted an error on Page 2 Other, Lot Merger, second paragraph should state "...with the condition that the ownership name be changed to one identical ownership" instead of structure. Ms. Laflamme noted an error on Page 1 in which is should say "Approval of March Minutes" not December.

**Ms. Langlois made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2019 meeting as amended. Ms. Remillard seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.**

**Zoning Discussion – Highland Park Avenue**

Ms. Laflamme explained that it was discovered that the RR and RS zones run through certain properties along the Highland Park Avenue area. A map was used to show the proposed boundary for the two zones. There are four affected private property owners and one City property. The private properties include a parcel owned by Bob Goddard, where the house is in the RS zone and the rest of his land is in the RR zone. There are several properties owned by ShadowRidge LLC along Highland Park Avenue that are split between the two zones and they realized that where they want to possibly put their house would be in RS and the rest of their land they plan to develop will be in the RR zone. A property owned by Robert Theberge is also split between the two zones where the house is in one zone and the land in another. The Bryant property is also a split lot between their house and farm.

The City property at the end of Highland Park Ave is steep and wet so that there shouldn't be anyone using that lot to be developed for single family use purposes. The affected properties would now be included in the RR zone. Mr. Chevarie did experiment with changing the zone in the assessing program and it did not change the property values, so it looks like this will be a nonissue. Ms. Laflamme feels that there would not be any objections to changing the zoning boundary due to value issues.

Ms. Remillard asked if it would affect any other abutters. Ms. Laflamme indicated that it wouldn't.

Ms. Remillard asked if the City lot was previously in the RS zone. Ms. Laflamme said yes, the City had it by tax deed since the 70's and it is currently in the RS zone.

Ms. Laflamme stated that if everyone is in agreement, she will take it to the council outlining the planning board recommendations.

**A motion to make a recommendation to the City Council to change the boundary line between the RR zone and RS zone as discussed was made Ms. Lefebvre. Ms. Strahan seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.**

### **Project Updates**

Skateboard park – Remaining construction will begin on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and the project is hoped to be wrapped up by the end of June. Ms. Laflamme continues to work with Colleen Poulin and Christy Langlois to get some community involvement with kids. We are over budget with our in-kind matching funds. The Neil Louise Tillotson fund requires a \$25,000 in-kind match, we have spent about \$40,000 in-kind match so far. We don't have extra money at this time for extras such as colored concrete, or landscaping. There is a possibility of doing some fundraising for these extras through Colleen and Christy. We are also reaching out to Coleman Concrete to see if they would like make a donation for some colored concrete.

Ms. Levesque asked if the park has a formal name. At this time, it doesn't, but it something that will be looked at in the future.

Downtown infrastructure, streets and heated streets – Staff is looking into applying for a Federal Highways grant. Staff from the Senator's office will be speaking to us next week to give us their thoughts on what to highlight in our application.

Mt Jasper ordinance – The ordinance is looking at being revised due to cultural sensitivity. It was agreed by the City Council that the Abenaki Nation will be notified of any sort of site work or changing of the landscape on the property behind the High School. Mike Eastman has been out there and has sent the city several pictures of a camp site/living space at the base of the mountain. We are going to add to the ordinance that no camping is allowed as well as no fires allowed. This will give the Police Department an easier time to enforce it those rules. In the early 1800's there was a big fire on Mt Jasper, what's there now is new growth since then. Ms. Laflamme will bring it to council as an ordinance change for their next meeting.

Library – The city has acquired an architect and engineers to start a building assessment for the library. We have a plan to apply for grant funding.

Economic Development Strategy – BIDPA has received the first draft of a base economic assessment. The consultants will be here in a few weeks to meet with business owners and community leaders.

US Census – Ms. Laflamme will be meeting with their representative on Monday to discuss better strategies for acquiring an accurate count in Berlin.

NH Preservation Alliance Annual Conference – This will be held on May 31<sup>st</sup> in Littleton. If anyone is interested let Ms. Laflamme know, she plans on attending. She will email the information to anyone who is interested.

Welcome sign – Eric Grenier and Sylvia Poulin will be looking at ways to make it easier to read. Mr. Estrella mentioned that the lights don't seem to light up the sign too much, this could be the angle and it needs to be reset.

### **Other**

There is one seat left for an alternate member for a one-year term which will expire in April of 2020. If anyone knows someone interested let them know.

Mr. Estrella asked about the specific numbers for the savings the city will receive after the installation of the new LED lighting. Ms. Laflamme says Eric Grenier has numbers and she will get them.

Mr. Estrella asked about the painting of the yellow center lines on the streets. This will be scheduled soon, although we are limited as to when it can be done because of the need for good weather. The center yellow lines and the side white lines are contracted, crosswalks are done by Public Works.

Mr. Estrella asked who is responsible for the reflectors on the Route 16 bump outs, some of them are bent. This is the City's responsibility.

Mr. McCue asked about the previous issue with the site plan for David Poulin on Glen Avenue. Burke York has completed the survey, and is waiting for us to approve it. The City Attorney will be drawing up the deed after the survey is approved by staff. Mr. Poulin had approval for construction before he came to the Planning Board with the site plan so Michel Salek is letting him finish the work he had previously approved.

Mr. Estrella asked about whether the ineffective drains on the Route 16 project will be fixed. Jay Poulin of HEB is aware of the problem.

The North Country Council has money set aside for our region but it's not a lot. DOT changed the formula for how they determine project costs. We submitted our primary project at an estimate of \$3.8 million. DOT said that based on the Route 110 project, Berlin's costs should be about \$9.6 million. Berlin's project would take all of DOT's money for the region and then some, so DOT recommended that NCC take Berlin's project out of the mix. The City argued that if the DOT uses a figure of \$8 million a mile, they should set aside more money for the North Country. There are about 52 communities in the NCC region so that would come out to only a one-mile project in our region. It was also argued by the City that using the Route 110 project is not a good comparison. Route 110 involved the takings of 33 properties and a complete road realignment. The recent Route 16 would have been a better comparison.

Ms. Lefebvre has been asked what the costs of maintaining heated streets are compared to snow removal. Ms. Laflamme will email her that information. You have to factor that the Public Works will not have to spend as much time removing snow and plowing downtown, therefore, they will be able to spend more time on other areas of town.

**Public Comments**

None

**Member Comments**

None

**Planner Comments**

None

**Adjournment**

**There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Remillard made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Lefebvre. All in favor, the motion carried. The meeting ended at 7:15 pm.**

The next Planning Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 4, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lise Barrette