

**November 9, 2021
Planning Board**

Present were: Regular Members: Chair Lori Langlois, Tom McCue and Brian Valerino; **Ex-Officio members:** Lucie Remillard and Lise Barrette; **Alternate Members:** Dan Whittet, Theodore Bosen and Jennifer Lazzaro.

Excused were: Suzanne Wasileski and Anthony Valliere

Others Present: Pamela Laflamme, Community Development Director; Michel Salek, Building Inspector; William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun; Burke York, York Land Services; Dave and Laurie Redston of Timberland Adventures Inc.; Tara Reardon, NH Community Loan Fund (via Zoom) and members of the public.

Chair Langlois appointed Alternate Members, Dan Whittet, Theodore Bosen and Jennifer Lazzaro as voting members.

Public Comments

None

Approval of October 2021 minutes

Mr. McCue made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 2021 meeting. Ms. Remillard seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried. Mr. Valerino abstained.

Site Plan Review – Timberland Adventures Inc., Tax Map 407 Lot 15 (continued from October 5, 2021 meeting)

Ms. Laflamme updated the members as to what has been done over the past year with this Site Plan Review. There were two parcels, Tax Map 407 Lots 15 and 15.2 which have been merged back in February of 2020. The application for a ten-cabin campground by Timberland Adventures was accepted as complete and the application has been open on and on the table for some time. The public hearing has already been held. Permit applications were submitted to DES for use as a campground and approved. Timberland Adventures had some issues with the abutter on the use of Head Pond Road which recently been resolved. The City has agreed to extend the compact line on Route 110 which will allow Timberland Adventures to have two access points for ATV's onto their land. It is now being brought to the board to review and vote on the Site Plan.

Mr. York shared the plan and explained that there have been some renditions due to conversations with the Fire Department. The two lots merged have created a 10.28-acre lot. Mr. York pointed out the gravel entrance road off of Head Pond Road. The gravel road loops around and allows for Fire Department access. In the middle of the site there will be a grass island for activities. Each site will have a cabin, a picnic area with a picnic table, and a large parking space for a truck and trailer. There will be private well and septic. The area surrounding the cabin site will remain wooded as a natural barrier. Each cabin will have individual baths. There will be a host site at the entrance. The lighting for each cabin will be pointing downward.

Ms. Laflamme shared the drainage plans that were put together with the former Public Works Director.

There was more discussion around the issues with the abutter and Head Pond Road. There was an agreement worked out between the parties, the roadway remains as it was, as presented and as surveyed. Mr. McCue asked if this agreement will be registered at the Registry to avoid any future issues. Mr. Redston said that it is written that the agreement is to be recorded.

Ms. Remillard asked if it would ever change to year-round sites. Mr. Redston said probably not, it will remain as seasonal.

Mr. Whittet asked if there was a traffic study done. Ms. Laflamme explained that it was not needed.

Mr. McCue made a motion to approve the Site Plan for Timberland Adventures, Map 407 Lot 15 with the condition that all necessary Federal, State and Local permits, as well as the settlement agreement pertaining to Head Pond Road are filed with the Planning Department. Mr. Bosen seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

Minor Subdivision – Draft Review with the Planning Board – Tax Map 130 Lot 156, 194 & 196 Grafton Street, Larrivee

Mr. York shared the plans which showed that there are currently two houses on Map 130 Lot 156. The original boundary lines went along with the abutting lots off of Rockingham Street. The two lots were merged because of where the houses were. The owners are now looking at subdividing the lots according to where the houses are located. This would be along the stone wall between the houses. After the split, Lot A on the corner, would have 4,927 square feet with frontage of approximately 100 feet on Sullivan Street, and approximately 50 feet on Grafton Street. Lot B would have 5,215 square feet with approximately 50 feet of frontage on Grafton Street. The carport on Lot B shows that it's partially on Lot A because it sits on the wall, but it will belong to Lot B. The owners of Lot B will not be allowed to ever build a garage or living space where the carport is.

Before the Planning Board approves the subdivision, the Zoning Board will need to grant a variance where the cross easements will be referenced.

Ms. Remillard made a motion to hear the application for the subdivision after a variance is obtained by the Zoning Board, Mr. Whittet seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

Site Plan Review– Great Lakes Hydro America LLC and the Brookfield Renewable Energy Group, Tax map 128 Lot 264, 972 Main Street, new construction – Battery Storage Facility (continued from October 5, 2021 meeting) -Review of Conditions and Final Approval

Ms. Laflamme handed out a printout of what she is recommending for the Planning Board concerning their decision to grant the Site Plan and Special Use Permit for Great Lakes

Hydro of America. She read the following recommended conditions for the final approval:

1. The project shall comply with NFPA 855, which was encouraged by the Fire Department.
2. The project shall have a system wide DC disconnect. The DC disconnect shall be readily accessible, located at least 10 feet from the nearest battery enclosure and co-located with the system wide AC disconnects.
3. The Planning Board delegates to the City Attorney the negotiation of financial security for a decommissioning plan that shall be submitted and approved by the Fire & Code Departments.
4. Slats will be installed in the fencing as discussed at the October 2021 Planning Board meeting to screen the property.
5. The City reserves the right to hire an independent engineer to review the UL 9540A test results and require changes to the equipment as part of the permitting process as overseen by the Fire & Code Departments. We will first consult with Great Lakes Hydro of America LLC before the hiring of said independent engineer to agree on scope and price.
6. Any federal, state, and local permits that need to be obtained will be copied to the Planning Department and placed on file.

Mr. Bosen asked about the Planning Board delegating the City Attorney to negotiate financial security for a decommissioning plan. His concern is that the bond would not be set high enough to be efficient in completing the decommissioning. There was some discussion around this issue and some other examples were brought up of projects that were done the same way in the past. The City Attorney has much experience in this field.

Mr. Whittet made a motion to approve the Site Plan for a 14MW Battery Storage Facility with the aforementioned conditions and the Special Use Permit for Renewable Energy submitted to the Planning Board by Great Lakes Hydro of America LLC for property located at Tax Map 128 Lot 264, 742 Main Street. Mr. McCue seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

Presentation on Manufactured Housing – NH Community Loan Fund via Zoom

Ms. Tara Reardon from the NH Community Loan Fund presented information about manufactured housing. She has worked with many Manufactured Housing Parks and NH Resident Owned Communities throughout NH and said it is a great solution to affordable housing. These homes are built to HUD codes since 1976. The building inspector would not have to inspect them because they are inspected by HUD to meet codes before leaving the factory. As they are built in a factory, they are not affected by the weather like other stick-built homes built in the elements. They come in many sizes, they are affordable, energy efficient, easy to heat, it's easy to add on a wheelchair ramp if needed and it appreciates in value. Ms. Reardon shared some photos of different manufactured housing pointing out the difference between foundations and appearances. Ms. Reardon has seen fully installed single wide manufactured homes anywhere from \$70,000 to \$75,000; a double wide at \$100,000 and a 500 square foot 1 bedroom for \$60,000.

Mr. Whittet asked whether there were any manufactured home factories in NH. Ms. Reardon said there aren't any in NH but there are some in Maine and New York and as far as Pennsylvania. There are many dealers for manufactured housing in NH.

Mr. Whittet also asked for clarification of a manufactured home vs. a modular home. Ms. Reardon said that a manufactured home comes in a one or two sections, have steel beams underneath and are transported on a chassis. Modular homes come in pieces and get assembled at the site. Modular homes do not have steel beams and are transported on a trailer bed.

Mr. McCue explained that Berlin currently only allows manufactured homes in a park and that the Planning Board was currently looking at allowing them in certain zones in the community. Ms. Reardon says she has done mortgages for people who put manufactured homes on their own land and it wasn't uncommon.

Mr. Bosen discussed his previous concerns of the historical character of these homes being valued as personal property that depreciates. After some research he now sees that NH regards these homes as real estate that is assessed and can appreciate. Ms. Reardon explained that some states have the option of valuing manufactured homes as personal property or real estate. She explained that our zoning regulations can control whether the wheels and hitch can remain on the home or not.

Ms. Remillard asked what other good conditions could be added to our ordinance. Ms. Reardon said that some places limit the age to ten years, some limit the size, some include wording about frost walls or footings.

Mr. Salek asked about the life cycle of a manufactured home vs a stick-built home. Ms. Reardon says it should be about the same if they are maintained the same.

There will be further discussion by the Planning Board at a future meeting to make a recommendation to the City Council.

Discussion – Proposed Zoning Changes – setbacks/minimum lot size/manufactured housing; signage

Ms. Laflamme shared the proposed language for the Zoning Ordinance Signage chapter as already laid out by the subcommittee that has been working on the signage for a couple years now: Their proposed language would allow one off premise sign per parcel; freestanding or on structure; single or double sided; 200 square feet per façade, 400 square feet total; non-residential zones only; square footage to be counted separately from allowable on-premise signage; 10 foot setback from property lines; need to have at least 100 feet of frontage on a city street.

Ms. Laflamme shared that we are currently being asked to consider allowing two billboard signs per property. Some possible considerations that can be added to this language were discussed. The ordinance could allow for frontage considerations – one billboard for the first 100 feet of frontage and second one if one has another 100 feet frontage for a total of two billboard/off premise signs total. It could also be based on double frontage lots only – if each frontage is at least 100 feet. There was some discussion on of a corner lot with 200 feet total frontage vs a lot with one side of 200 feet frontage.

Mr. Bosen expressed that he would like to see us restrict the signage to non-internally lit signs. This is a semi-rural area and the extent to which we light it up distracts from value and night sky views. Ms. Laflamme explained that we already have a separate section of the ordinance that deal with electronic signage.

Vote -Transfer of Ownership for a Permitted Excavation, Tax Map 410 Lot 3; Previous Approval given to Allen Bouthillier/Granite State Holdings, LLC, August 1, 2017

Ms. Laflamme explained that this is concerning a current gravel pit on Route 110, Tax Map 410 Lot 3. There was an approval for a permitted excavation given to the previous owner, but the lot has since been sold. We are now being asked to transfer the permit to the new owner, Four Wheeler Holdings, LLC.

Ms. Remillard made a motion to transfer the Permitted Excavation to the new owner, Four Wheeler Holdings, LLC. Mr. Whittet seconded it. All in favor, motion carried.

Other

Ms. Laflamme said that the Planning Board will again be hearing the CIP in December to take a vote which will then be presented to the Council. This is required by statute.

Project Updates/Planner Comments

Ms. Laflamme explained that they are working with the DOT to move along with the project so they can put it out to bid to begin work next construction season.

Ms. Laflamme discussed the I & I Sewer and Drainage project and that they will be taking down some flat roofed dilapidated structures in the city as part of the project. Since some of these structures are historical, the city is required to do some sort of related historic project. There will be a room dedicated for this project at the new Berlin and Coos County Historical Society location on High Street.

Ms. Laflamme mentioned the bid for a qualified Engineer for Design and Engineering for the water and sewer extension on Route 110 would also be happening soon.

Public Comments

None

Member Comments

Mr. McCue asked about the Rules of Procedure that were previously worked on and whether we will be looking at those again. Ms. Laflamme explained that at this time she will not have the time to do so since she is going to be working as the Interim City Manager after December 3, 2021.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the board, Mr. McCue made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Remillard. All in favor, the motion carried.

The meeting ended at 8:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lise Barrette

* Note: These minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the Planning Board by motion.