

## **April 4, 2023 Planning Board**

**Present were: Regular Members:** Vice-Chair Tom McCue, Henry Noel, Anthony Valliere, Dan Whittet, Larry Laflamme; **Ex-Officio Member:** Lucie Remillard, Lise Barrette; **Alternate Members:** Jeffrey Quackenbush, Lori Korzen.

**Excused were Regular Members:** Chair Lori Langlois, Karen Collins; **Alternate Member:** Micah Bachner.

**Others Present:** Pamela Laflamme, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

Vice-Chair McCue will be acting Chair in Ms. Langlois' absence. Mr. McCue called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Mr. McCue appointed Alternate Members Lori Korzen and Jeffrey Quackenbush as voting members to replace the two absent members.

### **Public Comments**

None

### **Approval of March 7, 2023 Minutes**

On page 2 under the Findings of Fact, the third bullet should say it Meets the standard for minimum sub-division. Mr. Laflamme made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2023 meeting with the correction. Mr. Whittet seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

### **Public Comments**

None

### **Zoning Ordinance discussion – Manufactured Housing Chapter Update**

Ms. Laflamme shared that the ordinance changes were brought to the City Council and it was well supported. It will be on the agenda again for more discussion, a Public Hearing and final vote on April 17<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Whittet shared his concern of the historical architecture in certain neighborhoods throughout the City and what affect it would have to allow Manufactured Housing in those neighborhoods. He feels we need to keep this in mind when working on the Master Plan in the future.

Mr. Quackenbush expressed his concern of how Manufactured Housing would bring down the equity of the community. He feels Manufactured Housing is not a good investment over time due to its construction, unlike the old well-built houses.

Ms. Remillard said that old homes are big, very expensive to repair and maintain, and not energy efficient. Manufactured Homes allow for a more affordable opportunity for people to own their own home.

Ms. Korzen says she can see both sides of the argument and asked where the specific historical properties were. She expressed that it may be something we can look into in the future to find a way to protect them.

Mr. Laflamme would like to invite members to view the homes at the Northwoods Mobile Home Park and Riverside Heights and how nice they are and how well kept everything is at these locations.

Ms. Laflamme shared that this new ordinance has come about to create more affordable housing opportunities due to the housing shortage. Some residents have approached the City asking for the ability to put up Manufactured Housing within City limits. It is something that the Board has discussed and has voted on.

Ms. Barrette says that she feels the need for more housing far outweighs the issue of the possible dilapidated housing over time or the historical neighborhoods. Most neighborhoods have dilapidated houses in them already. It's something we already voted on and she feels the Board should follow through with it.

Mr. McCue talked about the past neighborhood stabilization program where many houses were demolished and many more will be soon. When the Route 110 project was happening there was a big hold up because of a couple large historical apartment buildings.

Ms. Remillard asked if it will be required to be owner occupied or to not be allowed to be an Air BnB/short term rental. Ms. Laflamme says that is not something we can regulate.

Mr. McCue will be attending the Public Hearing on April 17<sup>th</sup> to represent the Planning Board.

#### **Housing Opportunity Grant – NH Housing - update**

Ms. Laflamme shared that Resilience Planning will now have Angela Vincent working for them, so she will be taking on the lead for our project on regulatory development. She plans on submitting the application to NH Housing this week and hopes to start the process in May.

In May, Ms. Langlois and Ms. Laflamme will be participating in the Housing Academy which is a requirement.

Mr. Quackenbush made a motion to proceed with the Housing Opportunity Grant with NH Housing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> phases. Mr. Noel seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

Mr. Noel shared that there was a decision to cut the current budget of the NH Housing program from 30 million to 15 million.

#### **Vote for Chair & Vice Chair for upcoming year**

Ms. Laflamme shared that Ms. Langlois would like everyone to know she is willing to continue on as Chair but if anyone would like to step up she would be fine with that.

Mr. McCue shared that he feels the same, he would be fine if someone would like to step up to be Vice Chair.

Mr. Whittet nominated Ms. Langlois to continue to act as Chair. Mr. Laflamme seconded it. Ms. Remillard nominated Mr. McCue to continue to act as Vice Chair. Mr. Laflamme seconded it. All in favor, motions carried.

**Other:**

None

**Public Comments:**

None

**Member Comments**

Mr. Quackenbush shared the Berlin Centennial Book he found at the antique store on Wight Street. He pointed out that our 200-year anniversary of the City of Berlin is only six years away. Creating a Bi-Centennial Book would be a great idea to start thinking about. It's something the Historical Society may be interested in working on and Ms. Laflamme knows of a historian in Berlin that she can contact to see if she would be interested in writing a historical piece.

Ms. Laflamme said the City Council would be the ones that would have to create a committee to begin working on this. Ms. Remillard said she would talk to the mayor and bringing it to council.

Mr. Laflamme shared that there is a Museum of the White Mountains in Plymouth which has rotating exhibits. There is a display of glass slides on the history of Brown Company at the Plymouth library as well.

**Planner Comments and Project Updates**

Ms. Laflamme talked about the I & I project of last year that involved the demolishing of old housing. Part of the agreement was that the City would do a mitigation portion of the project regarding the properties that were torn down. It was decided that a permanent exhibit would be created in a dedicated room at the Berlin Historical Society. A mitigation portion must also be done for the upcoming demolition project of seven buildings. Ms. Laflamme will be advertising soon for an architectural historic consultant to complete this display. The six buildings that will be demolished are: 827 Western Ave., 98 Hillside Ave., 609 Hillsboro St., 422 Champlain St., 373 Champlain St., 37 Cambridge St. and 426 Burgess St.

**Adjournment**

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

The Planning Board meeting ended at 7:28 pm.