

September 6, 2023
Planning Board

Present were: Regular Members: Chair Lori Langlois, Vice-Chair Tom McCue, Henry Noel, Dan Whittet, Karen Collins, and Larry Laflamme; **Ex-Officio Member:** Lucie Remillard and Lise Barrette; **Alternate Members:** Jeffrey Quackenbush and Micah Bachner

Others Present: Pamela Laflamme, Director of Strategic Initiatives; Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun; Arnold and Debra Davis; Burke York, York Land Services, LLC; and Joshua Rodriguez.

Chair Langlois called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Public Comments

None

Approval of August 1, 2023 Minutes

Mr. McCue made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2023 meeting as submitted. Ms. Collins seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

Boundary Line Adjustment, City of Berlin and Arnold & Debra Davis, Tax Map 135 Lot 7 and Tax Map 136 Lot 4

Mr. McCue made a motion to accept the Boundary Line Adjustment Application as complete. Ms. Remillard seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

Mr. York shared and explained the plans with the Planning Board. Arnold and Debra Davis currently own the lot at the end of Wood Street near Horne Field. They own Map 136 Lot 4. The portion they would like to purchase from the City of Berlin is behind their lot which is a wooded unused section of Horne Field and abuts Bean Brook. Different aspects of the plans were discussed.

Ms. Langlois recessed the meeting and opened the Public Hearing at 6:38pm. After no public comments were heard, she closed the Public Hearing and resumed the Planning Board meeting.

Ms. Barrette inquired about where the trails near the river were located on the plans. It was explained that this Boundary Line Adjustment doesn't really affect the majority of the trails. The trails are not used very much anymore and are overgrown.

Mr. Quackenbush asked about why the City Council decided to sell this property and not leave it as public land. There was lots of discussion around this issue but it was made clear that the issue of selling City land is a discussion for the City council. There will be a Public Hearing on the matter at the next City Council meeting and then a final decision will be made. The Planning Board is only to decide whether the Boundary Line Adjustment meets the requirements.

The current lot at 9 Wood Street is approximately 7,000 sq/ft and the piece they wish to purchase is 10,802 sq/ft. Mr. Laflamme asked to confirm if there would still be at least 5 ½ acres left to the City lot which is Horne Field. Yes, there would be. It was also noted that this zone is Business General.

Mr. York went over the notes one through seven on the plan for clarification.

Ms. Remillard made a motion to approve the Boundary Line Adjustment Plan as presented with the condition that the Plan not be recorded until the Berlin City Council makes their final approval. Mr. McCue seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

Board members discussed the following Findings of Fact:

- **This will create more area for Map 136 Lot 4 which is currently an odd shaped lot.**
- **It does not take away from the current uses of Horne Field such as the tennis courts, ball field and the boat launch.**
- **The lots are appropriately zoned for the Boundary Line Adjustment**

Mr. McCue made a motion to approve the Findings of Fact. Ms. Remillard seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

This matter will go to the City Council at their next meeting on September 18th. They will then make their final decision.

Lot Merger, New Berlin Properties Management, LLC- Map 135 Lot 219 and Map 135 Lot 225.10

The City sold 56 Pershing Street, Map 135 lot 219 in 2022. The lot behind, Map 135 Lot 225.10 was originally part of the tax deed process, they were both owned by the same owner. It should have been sold with Map 135 lot 219 but was overlooked at the time. The new owner, New Berlin Properties Management, LLC, was interested in the property. All the abutters were notified and New Berlin Properties Management, LLC were the only ones who showed interest. They have recently purchased Map 135 Lot 225.10 from the City and now would like to merge the two lots.

Ms. Remillard made a motion to accept the lot merger as presented. Mr. Laflamme seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

Board members discussed the following Findings of Fact:

- **The two lots are adjacent**
- **Both lots are in common ownership**
- **The Zoning Ordinance supports the merger.**

Mr. McCue made a motion to approve the Findings of Fact. Mr. Laflamme seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

Housing Opportunity Grant Follow-up

Ms. Laflamme shared that Barrett Planning Group is currently looking at our ordinances for Site Plans, Zoning, Subdivisions, Driveways and Sewer connections. On Friday, October 20th and Saturday, October 21st we will be having a Public Event. They are looking at having Friday evening at a different venue than on Saturday morning where food will be served. There will be a draft form for people to make comments on and to have a discussion within the community. Times and locations will be decided upon in the future.

Other

Ms. Laflamme shared that Ms. Lucie Remillard has given her resignation from the Berlin City Council which is effective at the end of September. Ms. Remillard has served on the Planning Board for approximately ten years. The Council will be appointing a new member to replace Ms. Remillard on the Council and will also be appointing a new member to the Planning Board. A very big Thank You was given to Ms. Remillard from all.

Signatures for the Boundary Line Adjustment, City of Berlin and Arnold & Debra Davis

Mr. Burke asked for someone to make a motion to approve Ms. Laflamme to sign the mylar of the Plan once it's been approved from the Council. He will also be making a slight change in the mylar to darken one of the zones so it will scan better at the Registry.

Ms. Remillard made a motion to have Ms. Laflamme sign the mylar after its been adjusted and approved by the City Council. Mr. Laflamme seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

Ms. Laflamme has been asked by the Berlin Public Library to share their project they are working on with PBS. It's called Our Home Town of Berlin. They will be open for anyone in the community to tell their stories with a Berlin theme. She will forward the flyer to all and is asking for everyone to share.

Public Comments

None

Member Comments

Mr. Quackenbush shared an update on the Energy Committee. They have been working through some legal documents and actively pursuing their goals. He shared a program for using solar systems on City buildings which would give net credits and would be at no cost. This program is being researched a little further. There is another grant from the NH Department of Energy coming out in March for small roof top solar projects for the City. This grant pays 95% of the systems cost. The committee plans on making an inventory of properties that could benefit from this grant in Berlin and surrounding communities to begin the process.

There was some discussion around the current status of Burgess BioPower. As this is a very complicated issue, some people are working on a short summary of the issues to inform and correct misinformation. Many entities are working on this issue.

Mr. Laflamme brought up that our Downtown Restructuring Project is in the ten-year plan for the NH Department of Transportation. The NH DOT will be here in the auditorium for a meeting on September 19th at 3pm.

Ms. Laflamme shared that there is a Land Use Law Lecture Series which she has already shared to all through email. It's being offered to the Planning Board and Zoning Board members. If anyone wishes to attend please speak with Ms. Laflamme to discuss course payment.

Mr. Quackenbush asked if there have been any recent discussions about the Bi-Centennial celebration of Berlin. Ms. Laflamme has talked to the Historical Society about it. It is unsure who would take on this project, either the City Council or volunteers.

Ms. Collins asked about the office portion of the Aubuchon's building and some developments being made there. She asked where she could have a public garden developed for clients of the organization she works for. A couple of places were discussed, but the Vodoukis Park is already in the works for developing a disc golf area. Friendship Park was another suggestion made. Ms. Collins also asked about signage. These issues can be discussed further with Ms. Laflamme in the future.

Mr. McCue pointed out that with the issue of the Biomass and their current status, Planning Board members need to be careful to not get involved in any kind of lobbying involving the issue. If it does close, this will have an impact on the Master Plan which does involve the Planning Board, but everyone should have discretion when discussing the issues.

Project Updates

None

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the board, Mr. Laflamme made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Collins seconded it. All in favor, the motion carried.

The Planning Board meeting ended at 7:34 pm.