

November 14, 2017
Planning Board

Present were: Regular Members Tom McCue, Greg Estrella, Aline Boucher, Richard Cassidy, Naomi Levesque, Helene Rayborn, Lucie Remillard, and Bryan Chevarie. Alternate Member Christina Lefebvre.

Others Present: Pamela Laflamme, Community Development Director; Lanetha Strahan and Kendall Strahan, public.

Public Comments – No one spoke

Approval of October Minutes

Ms. Boucher moved to accept the October minutes as written with a second from Mr. Estrella. So moved, the motion carried.

Lot Line Adjustment – City of Berlin & Daniel G Hebert Jr & Lisa Gravel, Co-Trustees of the Daniel G Hebert Jr Revocable Trust

Ms. Laflamme distributed copies of a surveyed plan outlining a lot line adjustment between land that is owned by the City of Berlin and Map 118-Lot 159 – 124 Glen Avenue – owned by Daniel G Hebert Jr & Lisa Gravel, Co-Trustees of the Daniel G Hebert Jr Revocable Trust. A Sherwin Williams paint and paint supply store currently operates at this location. It has recently been discovered through deed research that parts of what is considered to be Brown Street and Monty Road are actually located inside of 124 Glen Avenue's lot boundaries. This adjustment will remove these areas from the applicant's parcel and add them to the existing street right-of-way the City already maintains.

Ms. Remillard inquired about any financial considerations that were discussed during this process. Ms. Laflamme explained that the applicants find it to be in their interest to have this adjustment completed for a variety of reasons. The City has waived the Planning Board application fee in an effort to be fair to the taxpayer, however, other significant fees such as land surveying and related recording costs were borne by the applicants.

Ms. Laflamme verified that the Planning Board application for this lot line adjustment is complete. Ms. Langlois made a motion to accept the application as presented with a second from Mr. Cassidy. All in favor, the motion carried.

Mr. McCue noted that number ten in the "General Notes" section incorrectly references Monty Road as Monty Way. He then opened the conversation to any members of the public who wished to join the discussion on this matter. There was no input provided by the public. Ms. Remillard made a motion to approve the lot line adjustment on the condition that number ten in the plan's "General Notes" section is modified to reflect the appropriate

name for Monty Road instead of Monty Way. The motion was seconded by Ms. Levesque, all in favor the motion carried.

Lot Mergers

Map 125-Lots 29.20, 29.30 & 58

It was discovered during the 2015 tax year that Map 125-Lot 29 had been involuntarily merged after the City was petitioned to review the merging by the owners of the parcel. Consequently, the parcel was unmerged and Map 125-Lots 29.10, 29.20, and 29.30 were created for the 2016 tax year. The owner of Map 125-Lot 58 (46 Dustin Street) has since purchased Map 125-Lots 29.20 and 29.30 and wishes to merge them into his main parcel. The address for all three parcels will be 46 Dustin Street and these changes will be reflected in the 2018 tax year.

Mr. Estrella made a motion to approve the merging of Map 125-Lots 29.20, 29.30 & 58, seconded by Ms. Boucher. All in favor, the motion carried.

Map 112-Lots 83 & 84

Map 112-Lot 84 is the site of a single family home and Lot 83 is a vacant, yet potentially buildable, lot. The owners of these parcels wish to combine the lots for tax purposes. The vacant lot will be merged into the larger lot where the residential structure already exists and the entirety of the newly-merged parcel will have an address of 39 Haskell Street. These changes will be reflected in the 2018 tax year.

Ms. Rayborn made a motion to approve the merging of Map 112-Lots 83 & 84, seconded by Ms. Levesque. All in favor, the motion carried.

Map 120-Lots 16 & 17

Map 120-Lot 16 (formerly 167 Willow Street) was tax deeded in May, 2015. The building was subsequently razed by the City. In October, 2017 this parcel was sold to a direct abutter with the condition that this parcel be merged with their main lot. The vacant lot will be merged into Map 120-Lot 17 and will have an address of 171 Willow Street. These changes will be reflected in the 2018 tax year.

Ms. Remillard made a motion to approve the merging of Map 120-Lots 16 & 17, seconded by Ms. Boucher. All in favor, the motion carried.

Map 130-Lots 10 & 11

Map 130-Lot 10 (formerly 630 Rockingham Street) was tax deeded in April, 2013. The building was subsequently razed by the City. In October, 2017 this parcel was sold to a direct abutter with the condition that this parcel be merged with their main lot. The vacant lot will be merged into Map 130-Lot 11 and will have an address of 628 Rockingham Street. These changes will be reflected in the 2018 tax year.

Ms. Boucher made a motion to approve the merging of Map 120-Lots 10 & 11, seconded by Ms. Rayborn. All in favor, the motion carried.

Map 128-Lots 176 & 211

Map 128-Lot 211 (formerly 22-24 Birch Street) was tax deeded in June, 2011. The building was subsequently razed by the City. In November, 2017 this parcel was sold to a direct abutter with the condition that this parcel be merged with their main lot. The vacant lot will be merged into Map 128-Lot 176, which currently has a three-unit home located on it, and will have an address of 29-33 Peavey Lane.

It was noted that the shape of this newly-created parcel is unique, yet the two parcels share enough property line footage to be considered appropriate for merging purposes. The group discussed the potential benefits that additional off-street (private) parking can have in this part of the City if the owner of these lots utilizes the extra space in such a way.

An additional caveat is that the deed transferring ownership from the City to the taxpayer has not yet been recorded at the Coos County Registry of Deeds. The form denoting the Planning Board's approval of the merging of the lots will not be forwarded to the Registry until the corresponding deed has been recorded.

Ms. Boucher made a motion to approve the merging of Map 128-Lots 176 & 211 on the condition that the deed transferring ownership of Map 128-Lot 211 to the taxpayer is recorded at the Coos County Registry of Deeds, seconded by Mr. Cassidy. All in favor, the motion carried.

Project Updates

Hawkers and Peddlers – The Board discussed the City's hawker and peddler's licensing procedure during the October meeting. Ms. Laflamme explained that City Council is now discussing the topic for separate reasons and it would be wise for this board to suspend further discussion until the result of Council's dialog is known.

Solar Committee – Mayor Grenier has indicated that Monday, November 27th will be the day that the Planning Board and City Council joint committee will meet at 8 am.

Route 16 – Ms. Laflamme explained that Brown School had a significant problem with their sewer system that has since been rectified. The remedy necessitated that crews cut into the new pavement. It's great that the problem is fixed, however, it is unfortunate that the new asphalt had to be disturbed.

Route 110 – The mitigation contract was awarded to Ray’s Electric. The group discussed general elements of the project. The plan is for work to begin this upcoming spring.

Skate Park – Four companies have been interviewed and their project ideas examined. Ms. Laflamme expressed that she is extremely impressed with most of the proposals. Almost all of these companies have indicated that the park should be completed within six to eight weeks once construction begins. It is anticipated to be completed this upcoming summer.

Food Co-op – The group discussed the importance of having a strong steering committee involved with a project of this nature. It was stressed that this is not a City-driven mission. The Board is willing to facilitate this endeavor if they believe they can be helpful because it can potentially prove to be valuable to our community. Ms. Rayborn expressed her interest in being involved with the project.

ATVs in the news – New Hampshire Public Radio has been doing segments on motorized recreation. Ms. Laflamme explained that a lot of the coverage involves activity in Berlin and other parts of the North Country.

Airbnb – There are unique conflicts that can stem from short-term rentals. The group was in agreement that it would be wise to be proactive about these issues – whether it be noise complaints, increased traffic and parking concerns, etcetera. Ms. Lefebvre indicated that she has ideas regarding Airbnb that she wants to discuss with Ms. Laflamme and the group in more detail. Ms. Remillard commented that the group should review the City’s stance on boarding houses at the same time.

Other – No one spoke

Public Comments – No one spoke

Member Comments

Ms. Laflamme asked Lanetha Strahan about potentially joining the Board as an alternate member. The usual meeting times and responsibilities were discussed. Ms. Laflamme will follow up with Ms. Strahan regarding her interest in joining the group.

Mr. Estrella asked when the City plans to make a decision on the winning bid for the skate park. Ms. Laflamme indicated that the City Manager hopes to enter into a contract in the upcoming weeks. Mr. Estrella also inquired about the Request for Qualifications for the heated main street project. It was explained that the City is not yet at that stage of the process. We are still determining the feasibility of the financial aspect of the venture.

Mr. Cassidy asked if the parcel on East Milan Road has been sold to North Country Growers for the greenhouse project yet. Ms. Laflamme explained that the sale has not yet gone

through. They are currently in the process of getting an extension from the United States Department of Agriculture in regards to the guarantee of their loan.

Ms. Rayborn asked why the stoplight on the Twelfth Street Bridge is not yet operational. Ms. Remillard said it is her understanding that the lights will be back on very shortly, perhaps next week.

The group also discussed the signage for the speed limit in school zones, particularly the area around Brown School. It was noted that the lights on these signs are controlled inside the school. The Board also discussed if the verbiage on the signs could be improved.

In regards to the Route 16 project, Mr. McCue added that he had sent an inquiry to Eversource about a telephone pole that is slated to be removed. He was impressed with their response. Pole replacement is a separate project from the paving and reconstruction.

Mr. Chevarie gave an update on HB-324, a piece of state legislation that would force all towns and cities in the State to rely on the Department of Revenue Administration's assessed values for utilities. This would be extremely problematic for the City's budget if passed. Although not yet finalized, it appears that a commission will be established to study the issue along with a moratorium on changes to local valuation methodologies until April 1, 2021.

Planner Comments – None

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Rayborn moved to adjourn; Ms. Levesque seconded and the motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bryan Chevarie