

## **June 5, 2018**

### **Planning Board**

**Present were:** Regular Members Tom McCue, Lori Langlois, Greg Estrella, Richard Cassidy, Helene Rayborn, Christina Lefebvre, Naomi Levesque, Alternate Member Lane Strahan, Ex-Officio Member Lucie Remillard, and Ex-Officio Member Bryan Chevarie

Aline Boucher was excused

**Others Present:** Pamela Laflamme, Community Development Director; Jim Wheeler, City Manager; Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Sun; Jay Poulin, HEB Engineers; Jeff Hyland, Ironwood Design Group; Eric Grenier, HEB Engineers; Corrinne Cascadden, Superintendent of Schools; members of the public

### **Public Comments**

None

### **Approval of May Minutes**

Ms. Levesque stated that she was not at the May meeting, however, she read the draft minutes and wanted to comment on the book trade program. She has seen them in other communities and they are usually located in parks or at the recreation department. Ms. Rayborn made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Estrella seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

### **Presentation - Family Resource Center's Project Youth Berlin Middle School Afterschool Program**

Ms. Levesque introduced the middle-school students and outlined the project various students have been working on throughout the school year. A map of the City was presented along with a PowerPoint presentation. The children highlighted different aspects and locations of the City that they enjoy, and also things and places they don't like or find to be dangerous. Additionally, the group identified a wish list of items they think would be safe and fun for children in Berlin. Members of the Board and the presenters discussed miscellaneous details about their endeavor and the prioritization of things they would like to see addressed. The group discussed fundraising ideas briefly.

### **Berlin High School Access Road update – HEB Engineers**

Jay Poulin of HEB Engineers explained that he wanted to give the Board a progress update regarding the access road that they're building at Berlin High School. The project is still in the preliminary design stage, however, they have submitted a wetland permit application and as part of the process they have to notify abutters of the undertaking. Improving access to the portion of the building that the Mini Mounties occupy is a primary goal of this aspect of the project.

Mr. Poulin explained that extending Jasper Street would provide a small parking area and turnaround for the Mini Mountie program. The Fire Department also does not have access around the perimeter of the school and this extension would aid on that front. This is why HEB is considering fire hydrants, a water line, etcetera in their plans. Wetland permit applications are valid for five years, so there is time to break up the project into phases.

Ms. Remillard asked what the feedback from abutters has been like thus far. Mr. Poulin indicated that they had to notify every abutter of the sizable BHS parcel and there are only a few property owners who are in close proximity to the project area. Some are nervous about increased traffic on Jasper Street but understand the need for the overall project. Mr. McCue asked if they will conduct a traffic study. Mr. Poulin stated that they can estimate based on the enrollment figures of the Mini Mounties and the program's schedule. Ms. Cascadden stated that the maximum enrollment is 50 students.

### **Route 16 Riverwalk Project – Local Concerns and Public Input Session (7:00PM)**

*Note: The meeting up until this point was held in the Council Chambers, third floor of City Hall. At this time everybody moved down into the Auditorium for the rest of the meeting as a matter of convenience to accommodate the crowd.*

Mr. Poulin of HEB Engineers and Mr. Hyland, Landscape Architect of Ironwood Design Group, introduced themselves and their roles in the Riverwalk project. Mr. Poulin gave a brief history of the project and the sources of funding. The Riverwalk will be approximately 4,000 linear feet and will be located on land owned by the City lying between the Androscoggin River and Route 16 from the Service Credit Union Heritage Park to the Twelfth Street Bridge. An overview of the grant requirements that must be followed was covered. The design process is anticipated to be the summer through fall months of 2018. Bidding will occur in the winter or spring of 2019 and construction is expected to be carried out in the summer through fall timeframe of 2019.

Mr. Hyland gave an overview of potential design features for the Riverwalk, including both active and passive recreation activities. He noted that this project could be a great economic engine for business in the community. Aspects of the design such as lighting, flooding, and similar issues were discussed. Mr. Poulin stated that there may be a significant cost associated with connecting the walk to the Twelfth Street Bridge. It may be more effective to use these funds for other features of the project.

The public hearing portion of the meeting was opened at this time.

Mr. McCue stated that whenever a community tries to get groups of people to increase traffic and presence in a certain section of a community a primary concern is the respect for the people that live in that area. We need to consider how people are going to access

this Riverwalk and ensure that we have capacity to handle the extra parking and related issues.

Anne Kopp of 1689 Riverside Drive stated that she lives near the Twelfth Street Bridge and is concerned about the impact invasive plant species will have on the project. Mr. Hyland explained that they have identified the invasive species and they are in support of eliminating it. This type of issue is both a challenge and long-term maintenance component of the project.

Ted Bosen of 13 Bisson Road stated that this project could be the first piece of a longer-term plan to incorporate the Riverwalk with the land across the river in order to create a loop. The Bridge Street pedestrian bridge could be used and perhaps the abandoned railroad bridge that is located farther down the river near the Heritage Park. This could be instrumental as part of a grand vision for the area.

Peter Higbee of 250 Norway Street stated that what Mr. Bosen said is great and should be something considered by the design team. He often walks these loops that are created by the various bridges throughout the City.

Sylvia Poulin of 29 Grandview Drive and the Berlin Main Street Program stated that there are many others who also take advantage of these walking routes.

Bronson Frizzell of 25 Twelfth Street and President of the Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce stated that incorporating swinging benches would be a good idea, along with kayak take-ins and take-outs. The Chamber is of the opinion that locating these near the Heritage Park would be wise. Additionally, installing light posts or some other unit that can provide power for vendors would be helpful.

Andrew Kopp of 1689 Riverside Drive stated that he'd like officials to consider adding trash and recycling receptacles to the area since there is usually a sizable amount of debris left behind after events.

Don Piper of 32 Hermanson Street asked who owns the property directly across from the Heritage Park near the pedestrian bridge. He believes it would be nice to include a structure on the side of the bridge that would allow for fishing. The current fencing makes fishing from the bridge impossible.

Mr. McCue asked what impact the dams have on water levels in the area. Mr. Poulin stated that that the dams allow the water level to be controlled to a certain degree.

Laura Boucher of 1169 Main Street stated that she is concerned about the lighting of the project near the dam and cautioned the group that too much lighting can adversely affect the nighttime views.

Dick Merrill of 56 Charron Avenue stated that he loves what is being dreamed up at this meeting. He recommended that the City honor Jean Boucher's contribution to the area as he was instrumental in clearing trees and old fencing from the site.

Shawn Marquis of Finland Street expressed his excitement for the project. He thinks the Riverwalk should accentuate the river and the rich history of the waterway.

There was more discussion of lighting and Mr. McCue explained that the Board is cognizant of the issue as they plan and develop projects.

Dan Landry of 1945 Hutchins Street stated that he feels the Androscoggin River is one of the most underutilized rivers in the state. He talked of the great fishing and kayaking that it offers.

The public hearing was closed at this time.

Ms. Remillard stated that it is in the City's interest to have the project developed in a way that entails low maintenance costs going forward.

Ms. Langlois stated that she has heard from citizens that are concerned that the project will include fencing that will obstruct the wonderful river views.

Ms. Lefebvre stated that she is in favor of the artistic ideas that have been discussed. She also wanted to stress the importance of having sections that are child-centric and also areas that will be less utilized by children.

Ms. Levesque asked if incorporating the boat ramp that already exists at Horne field would be wise. A discussion regarding boat launches ensued.

Ms. Strahan stated that she is excited for this project. She stressed that it would be nice to have design elements incorporated throughout the Riverwalk instead of located in only one or two spots.

Mr. Estrella stated that some of the sections of the Riverwalk are very close to the shoreline. Talk of the flood zone ensued.

Ms. Poulin asked if the grant funding could be used for the opposite side of the river. Mr. Poulin confirmed that the funds must be used for this location and not the eastern side of the river, however, it's beneficial to have future plans in mind when designing this project.

Mr. Wheeler stated that he is thrilled that the Riverwalk design discussion has sparked this master planning mindset.

Mr. Poulin stated that a survey will be available soon for more input on the project.

**Public Comments:** *Note: This agenda item was moved up by Chair McCue*

There were no public comments at this time.

### **Project Updates**

Ms. Laflamme said she will give project updates at the July meeting.

### **Other**

Ms. Laflamme stated the next Planning Board meeting will be on July 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Member Comments**

Ms. Rayborn spurred a discussion about the responsibility of cleaning rubbish from the river and who it falls upon.

### **Planner Comments**

None

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Rayborn moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Cassidy. All in favor, the motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bryan Chevarie