

March 1, 2022 Planning Board

Present were: Regular Members: Chair Lori Langlois, Tom McCue, Suzanne Wasileski, Dan Whittet, and Theodore Bosen, **Ex-Officio members:** Lucie Remillard and Lise Barrette; **Alternate Members:** Henry Noel and Amy George.

Excused were: Regular members: Anthony Valliere and Brian Valerino; **Alternate Members:** Jennifer Lazzaro, Karen Collins and Jeffrey Quackenbush

Others Present: Pamela Laflamme, Community Development Director, William Carroll, Daily Sun; and Mike and Amber Bachner, Great North Woods Disc Golf.

Chair Langlois called the meeting to order and appointed Alternate Members Henry Noel and Amy George, as voting members.

Public Comments

None

Approval of February 2022 minutes

Mr. McCue made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 2022 meeting. Mr. Whittet seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment continued Discussions

Ms. Laflamme explained that neither Michel Salek or herself has any updates on the Recreational Vehicles or the Manufactured Housing at this time. She shared that she has been invited to speak about Manufactured Housing at the New England Chapter of the American Planning Association because of her recent experience dealing with the subject. Ms. Laflamme also shared that she has always wanted to start fresh and rewrite the Zoning Ordinance and that there is currently an initiative in the Legislature for rewriting Zoning Ordinances.

Other

Mike and Amber Bachner shared their ideas for the Great North Woods Disc Golf. Mr. Bachner began by sharing some samples of what the discs look like. He explained that the discs are thrown like frisbees into a basket made out of chains and he gave some history on this sports growth. Further details on the game was given including what is needed to play, acreage size for each hole which is flexible, costs and possible partnerships. Mr. Bachner's long term vision is to have a 9-hole course up and running with tournaments, to manufacture and sell bags for carrying the discs, and renting and/or selling used discs. He's already mapped out some possible locations that are City lots He believes this can help the City of Berlin by utilizing a Private Public Partnership with the City. This would make it employee and city owned, but employee operated. He has four phases planned. 1) Building a top-grade course, establishing a club, and holding competitions. 2) Establish Public Private Partnership with Berlin, begin manufacturing bags, sponsoring players at

competitions. 3) Build driving range with small shop to sell supplies, selling and renting used discs. 4) Create 9-Hole course running through town to integrate downtown areas.

Mr. McCue shared that Phase 1 and probably Phase 4 would fall under the Planning Board's jurisdiction. The City Council may be able to help with tax issues for development but not for raising capital for the business. He doesn't believe a Private Public Partnership with the City would work because municipalities are governed by the legislature as to what power they have. Being a partner in a business does not fall within a municipalities power.

Mr. Whittet asked about who handles having events downtown. This is handled through the City Clerk and the City Council.

Mr. Bosen asked if there was a visual where he could see what this sport entails. A YouTube video was brought up on the screen for everyone to watch. There was some discussion around the sport and how it's done.

Ms. Remillard asked about the closest Disc Golf Parks from Berlin. There is one in Maine which is private and some down in southern NH.

Mr. Bosen asked about what was special about the bags Mr. Bachner wants to design. Mr. Bachner explained that he wanted to make them more user friendly in size and space for discs and other sports equipment that is needed for the sport.

Ms. George thinks it's a great idea and we have lots of parks around town that may be available. She was wondering if there was a possibility to integrate with the youth and the Recreation & Parks Department. Mr. Bachner said this is something that he would welcome.

Mr. McCue asked about the installation of the baskets. They would be permanently installed and they are built to withstand weathering.

Mr. Noel asked if there was a danger to this sport and if people ever got hurt. Mr. Bachner says he has a risk assessment because there is always that possibility of someone getting hurt since it takes place in parks.

Ms. Remillard says she's impressed with the idea and it could possibility be integrated with the ATV tourism. She hopes he has a business plan and can meet with possible investors. Ms. Laflamme says she has some contacts of possible investors to give Mr. Bachner and she's also thinking that there is adequate space up on Route 110.

Public Comments

None

Member Comments

Mr. McCue said he was very happy to see the Riverwalk bid request in the newspaper. He also brought up the North Country Council Regional Housing Needs Assessment that Ms.

Laflamme emailed to everyone. There was further discussion concerning housing needs throughout NH, and the differences between southern NH and northern NH.

Mr. Whittet shared that he has looked into whether there were any businesses in NH that built manufactured housing and he has found one, Benson Wood, located in southern NH. He gave some additional information concerning alternate designs and high efficiency buildings involving NetZero.

Ms. Langlois made everyone aware of the Spring Conference information that Ms. Laflamme emailed to all. Ms. Laflamme said that it will be done a little differently this year in that they will be splitting out into different sessions. She also mentioned that the City Attorney will be coming up to do a Zoning Board training and the Planning Board could also be included.

Mr. Barrette asked about where the Short-Term Rentals issue stands in Berlin at this time. Ms. Laflamme explained that it had gone back to the City Council with the Planning Board stating it was not a Planning Board matter. Conway is taking the case to the Supreme Court and we will see how that turns out. Mr. Bosen said that there is a new law that has passed the Senate and is going to the House. It will allow single and two-family lots to set up a short-term rental with some sort of permitting in place.

Mr. Whittet asked whether the Downtown Reconstruction Project through the RAISE grant program includes energy efficiency like charging stations. Ms. Laflamme assured that it does. Mr. Whittet offered any sort of help involving energy savings.

Planner Comments and Project Updates

Ms. Laflamme gave some information involving Downtown Re-Construction and the RAISE grant that is due in April. With these funds we will be able to get an engineer for design and they are all aware of other energy funding that may be available. It's an innovative project involving the snow melt system and other energy efficient initiatives.

We have a new City Manager beginning May 2nd.

Ms. Laflamme gave credit to Rodney Bartlett from MRI for his efforts for the Riverwalk. He has contacts with the Department of Transportation that has helped in getting the project moving. The project is out for bid, there is a pre-bid conference next week and bids are due on the 24th.

Mr. Bartlett has also helped with other projects like the Route 110 Extension and working with FEMA on some other projects.

April is membership month and there a few members whose time is coming up at the end of April. She will be contacting them soon to see if they are interested in continuing their membership.

Mr. Luksza extends his thanks to everyone for listening to his proposals last month although he wasn't able to attend.

Mr. McCue asked about 121 Main Street. Ms. Laflamme said it is still on hold.

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 7:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lise Barrette

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