

BIDPA Meeting July 10, 2019

Members Present: Chair Mike Caron, Roland Olivier, Richard Eastman Dick Huot, Dave Poirier, Peter Higbee, Jay Poulin and Andre Duchesne

Members Excused: Bobby Hill, Gerry Dumoulin, and Diana Nelson

Others Present: Barbara Tetreault; Jim Wheeler, City Manager; Pamela Laflamme, Community Development Director

Call with Camoin Associates: Rachel Selsky from Camoin Associates joined the board by phone to review the three major drafts that they have produced so far. Chair Caron asked about the impact on group quarters on the demographic information that is used for the reports and how much of an impact those numbers have and if they impact things like median income, etc. There was a brief discussion about how each of the correctional facilities have been counted so far and how they will impact the upcoming Census 2020. Ms. Selsky will look into this and get back to staff.

Ms. Selsky asked if there was any feedback on the Economic Base Analysis or the Market Analysis & Rural Assessment reports. She wanted to spend the time reviewing the Economic Drivers and Draft Goals with the board. There was not any at this time. The board was encouraged if to send comments to staff if anything came up following the meeting.

Mr. Huot pointed out that the high tax rate while listed in the challenge list doesn't necessarily translate into a high tax bill. There was a conversation about the quality of the housing stock and the opportunity out there for the real estate market. The Berlin High School Career to Education program was mentioned as an opportunity and the current situation with the State funding around education was mentioned as a challenge.

Ms. Selsky shared that Camoin has developed four key buckets or goals for the community. The first being Outdoor Recreation, the second Downtown, the third, Business and Workforce and lastly, the Quality of Life. She talked about Berlin as a product that we need to sell and that we have to look internally for that. They will be working on putting together a draft action matrix for the next meeting that will have details and specific actions alongside partners and timelines.

The board discussed lodging – it comes up often as the key thing that is missing here in Berlin. This will be a recommendation as well as restaurants. There is indeed a lack of services and places to gather. The Airbnb market is actually helping to sell properties here in the community. Berlin will be competing with Gorham but also with Conway and elsewhere. There will need to be a strategy that can account for the competition.

A discussion about provider recruitment for the prisons and healthcare providers came up and it was mentioned that each organization might have some input that would provide

good insights for that topic. If we have additional feedback to offer, we should do so before August.

June Financial Reports: None. We will see pre-audit information at the next meeting.

121 Main Street –update: The building is largely buttoned up as requested by the Fire Department. Chief Lacasse provided the fire suppression plan to staff before he left at the end of June. It was noted that Main Street may still have some storage in the building and that they will need to remove it so we can have the locks changed. In gathering information about the costs around demolishing the building, HP Cummings indicated that their quote still stands and will likely only increase from their quote in 2017 which was over \$250K. They said it would likely now be closer to \$300K. While the board was discussing this, the quote from Cross Excavation came by email – it was \$250K for just the demolition, it did not include the costs for tipping fees or any hazardous materials – which we know there is asbestos in the basement which will need to be removed and disposed. We are still waiting to hear back from Bob Chapman.

Public Comments: None

Other: None

Member Comments: Mr. Olivier asked about whether or not we could think about allowing for members to call in or use an option to video into meetings when they were unable to attend. Staff will look at purchasing Zoom for that options.

Adjournment: Mr. Higbee made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Poulin, all members voted in favor of the motion. Meeting adjourned.