

September 10, 2019
Planning Board

Present were: Regular Members Tom McCue, Lori Langlois, Greg Estrella, Richard Cassidy, Helene Rayborn, Christina Lefebvre; Alternate Members Lane Strahan and Aline Boucher; and Ex-Officio Members Lucie Remillard and Bryan Chevarie.

Regular Member Naomi Levesque and Alternate Members Tony Valliere and Suzanne Wasileski were excused.

Others Present: Pamela Laflamme, Community Development Director; Michel Salek, Code Enforcement Officer; Eric Grenier, HEB Engineers; Burke York, York Land Services; Mayor Paul Grenier; Steve Kinney, General Manager Capone Iron Corporation; Paul Robitaille, Berlin Sun

Public Comments
None

Approval of August Minutes

Ms. Langlois made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 5, 2019 meeting as written. Ms. Rayborn seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

Site Plan Review – Capone Iron Corporation, Map 140-Lots 20 & 21

Ms. Rayborn made a motion to accept the application as complete as submitted. Mr. Cassidy seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion carried.

Mr. Eric Grenier of HEB Engineers presented a proposed expansion plan for Capone Iron Corporation to the Board. The proposal entails expanding the existing steel facility in the Industrial Park. Specifically, the manufacturing shop, parking, and gravel storage areas would be further developed. The facility would undergo a 16,000 square foot expansion off of the west side of the existing building under this proposal. Mr. Eric Grenier noted that this expansion would be “phase three” of the project and the proposal before the Board on this evening is very similar to the “phase two” expansion that occurred in 2016.

There will be 62,000 square feet of additional gravel storage area in this plan. The group discussed issues related to storm water drainage, lighting, and other miscellaneous topics. The City of Berlin’s ordinances would require this parcel to host 118 parking spots. Capone Iron has submitted a parking requirement waiver along with this site plan as they believe 60 parking spots will be sufficient. Additionally, two environmental permits will be needed – alteration of terrain and wetlands disturbance.

Mr. McCue opened the public hearing at 6:41 pm.

Paul Robitaille of the Berlin Sun asked Steve Kinney of Capone Iron if he anticipated that the facility will necessitate an increase in employment if the expansion is approved. Mr. Kinney responded that they would expect that, along with an increase in sales volume.

Mayor Paul Grenier, 492 Champlain Street, stated that he hoped the Board approves the site plan as the expansion is great news for the City.

There being no further public comments, Mr. McCue closed the public hearing at 6:43 pm and opened the discussion to the Planning Board members.

Mr. Estrella further inquired about the proposed drainage plan. Mr. Eric Grenier explained how this issue will be, and is being, addressed and also stated that water management issues are further addressed during the alteration of terrain permitting process. The two also discussed potential parking issues.

Mr. Cassidy inquired about the traffic flow and trucks coming into and leaving the facility. This proposed expansion will not affect the current traffic patterns coming into or exiting the site.

Ms. Lefebvre asked if the Planning Board considers decommissioning plans when they approve requests like these. Ms. Laflamme stated that the Board typically does not but does in certain situations, however, this is not one of them.

Ms. Strahan asked if Capone Iron would prioritize hiring workers that are local to Berlin. Mr. Kinney stated that they absolutely would and would hire more workers immediately if they can find them.

Ms. Rayborn inquired about snow storage. Mr. Eric Grenier stated that during the winter months some of the gravel area will become snow storage area. Mr. Kinney expressed that they would have snow removed from the property if the storage of it ever became a problem.

Mr. McCue asked if they had been in touch with the Fire Department. Mr. Eric Grenier stated that they will be submitting relevant plans to the Fire Department and Berlin Water Works but have not done so yet.

Ms. Rayborn made a motion to approve the site plan with the contingency that a waiver is granted for the parking spots – as the ordinance calls for 118 spots in this scenario and 60 are needed with three of the 60 being ADA compliant. Ms. Lefebvre seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion carried.

Ms. Laflamme stated that the Planning Board would vote as the Special Use Permit Granting Authority (SUPGA) to potentially approve the construction of the proposed addition. Mr. Chevarie made a motion to approve a Special Use Permit for the Wellhead Protection Overlay zone. Mr. Cassidy seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion carried.

Ms. Langlois made a motion to grant a Special Use Permit for a Special Flood Hazard Overlay Zone. Ms. Rayborn seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion carried.

Minor Subdivision – M&L Foundations, LLC, Map 140-Lot 16

Ms. Lefebvre made a motion to accept the application as complete as submitted. Ms. Rayborn seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion carried.

Burke York of York Land Services distributed plans for the Board to review. There are currently two buildings on this parcel. This subdivision would result in each structure existing on separate parcels. Mr. York noted that all of the setback and zoning requirements are met in this proposed subdivision except for one area in the southwest corner of the lot. The building is 23.8 feet away from the lot line, which is less than the minimum standard, but they have done everything they can feasibly do to comply with the zoning requirements.

Mr. Cassidy made a motion to approve the minor subdivision. Ms. Strahan seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion carried.

Project Updates

Economic Strategy/Community Workshop – Camoin Associates will host a community workshop event at the White Mountain Community College on Wednesday, September 11th at 6:00pm.

Community Profile – UNH Co-op Extension will host a Community Profile Planning Workshop Friday, October 4 and 5, 2019 at Berlin High School. Friday’s session will take place from 5:00-8:30, beginning with a dinner at 5:00. Activities will resume Saturday morning at 8:30 and the event will conclude at noon.

Welcome Sign – Ms. Laflamme noted that they have altered the color of the paint on the welcome sign in an effort to improve the readability of the lettering.

Land Use Conference – There is a conference in Concord on Saturday, October 5th. This is also the same day as the Community Profile Workshop.

Other

Ms. Laflamme explained that the City received a request from a property owner in Berlin regarding changing the zoning regulations. It involves the requirement of keeping a percentage of the first floor of a building for commercial use in the downtown zone instead of allowing it to be turned into residential units. It would be astute to invite relevant feedback from several entities before the Board delves into voting on such a matter. It will be discussed in further detail at a future meeting.

Public Comments

Mr. York stated that parking issues would abound if downtown buildings were allowed to be developed into residential units.

Member Comments

Mr. Cassidy mentioned that the trees which were planted on upper Main Street during the reconstruction of Route 16 appear to be struggling to thrive in the dry weather we've experienced this summer.

Ms. Rayborn inquired what types of control the City has over properties that are not maintained and are an eyesore/health hazard.

Ms. Lefebvre stated that the Airbnb network that currently exists in Berlin could demonstrate to potential hotel investors that travelers are, in fact, staying in Berlin.

Planner Comments

Ms. Laflamme stated that the DOT's draft of the 10 year plan is next Thursday, September 19 at 1:00. North Country Council's next meeting is October 24 at the Town & Country.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Cassidy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Langlois. All in favor, the motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:00 pm.

The next Planning Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 1, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bryan Chevarie