

Economic Development Committee Minutes

3/23/2021 at 5:00 p.m., via remote meeting

Attendees: Marc Meyers, Peter Owen, Susan Bauer, Bruce Poloquin, Sam Poloquin, Michael Mason, Sally Johnstone, Richard Kessler, Christopher Timm, Jon Fitzgerald, Gael Tisack, Sean Ireland, Karla, Jennifer DeChant, Ben Averill, Lindsey Goudreau (notetaker)

Last meeting's minutes: Susan Bauer moved to accept the minutes with no edits, Sally seconded, unanimously approved.

65 Bowery Street Discussion

Presenters: Bruce and Sam Poloquin

Bruce and Sam presented a concept for a future residential complex at the site of 65 Bowery street for the purpose of feedback from the Economic Development Committee. Concept was designed in consideration of the City's Comprehensive Plan document, which outlines the need for more housing. Concept involves buffer from the adjacent wastewater treatment plant, public/accessible greenspace, including public playground, and pier. Bruce states no offers have been made at any price for marine industrial use (current zoning) of the site.

Questions and feedback

- Jennifer DeChant suggested concept for mixed use of the site. Bruce said he is open to that idea if the zoning was changed to accommodate.
- Ben Averill reminded the committee that the Planning Board would go through a permitting process with Bruce to initiate a zoning change. The Economic Development Committee is not a body for approving/denying, supporting/not supporting this concept or process.
- Sally Johnstone asked Bruce to state that the housing would not be subsidized – Bruce said he could not state that and would be open to subsidized housing. It is his vision that the housing be market rate, however.
- Sean Ireland noted that the committee was hearing from Bruce that that the best use of 65 Bowery Street is no longer marine use. Sean hopes that if the concept does go before the Planning Board, the City does its own research. 65 Bowery Street is one of the last deep water access properties on the Kennebec River.
- Bruce invited Jon to talk about why BIW is not interested in the site. Jon said any site not adjacent to the main operation needs adequate transportation, and the back roads to that site are not conducive to constant travel. From BIW's perspective, the best kind of housing that would go into that site would be workforce housing.
- Ben noted that Bruce has made no formal request with the Planning Board to begin the permitting process. There would be a lot of process between City Council and Planning board if a request is made to determine appropriate use of the site.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Ben Averill will send the link to the Comp Plan out again, with a list of instructions for the committee.

COVID-19 Update

Presenter: Marc Meyers

Marc shared that the City has given out 17 Economic Relief Bridge Loans to date. The City is looking at plans for the summer; specifically, there have been inquiries about parklets. The Transportation and Bicycle and Pedestrian Committees will also discuss on 3/24. City Council has empowered the City Manager to be able to be responsive to inquiries about this.

- Aaron Park said that, as a downtown business owner, he is ready to get his parklet up and running. Suggested Main Street Bath send out a survey to business owners about their thoughts on parklets, expanding sidewalks, etc.
- Peter Owen said that the City will be responsive. Like last year, they can try something and adjust it week by week.
- Ben Averill said there is an informal permit process for parklets, but, ideally, City Council would institute a formal permit process if the City plans on allowing parklets into the future.
- Marc shared that the Elm Street Project is slated to begin fall of this year or spring of next.

Workplan Update

Susan Bauer moved discussion of the workplan to the next meeting.

Other business

Susan Bauer moved the discussion of committee leadership elections and growing the membership of the committee to the next meeting.

Next Meeting

Due to scheduling conflicts, the next meeting was re-scheduled to May 4.

Adjourn

Susan Bauer moved to adjourn. Jennifer DeChant seconded, unanimously approved.

Action Items

- Ben Averill to send Comprehensive Plan link to the committee
- Sally Johnstone to facilitate a Main Street Bath survey to business owners about thoughts on parklets, expanded sidelines, etc. in the downtown.