



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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PLANNING BOARD DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

CIP Project Presentations
Thursday, October 23, 2014
8:30 AM
Whipple Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: William Helm (Chair); Paul Gorman (Vice Chair); Peter Bianchi (Board of Selectmen's Representative); Michele Holton (Secretary); Emma Crane; Jeremy Bonin; William Dietrich; and Elizabeth Meller (Alternate).

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF: Lucy St. John, Planning and Zoning Administrator.

Others in Attendance: Richard Lee, Public Works Director; Jay Lyon, Fire Chief; Marion Hafner and Charlie Hafner (Cemetery Commissioners); Mike doCurral, School District and Robert Crane.

Call to Order: Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

Signing of Mylars: Prior to the start of the meeting, the Planning Board members signed the Cherry Hill Subdivision Plan and Kozain Subdivision plans mylars. The mylars would be recorded on Friday, Oct 24th. Staff noted there is not a requirement that they be signed at a meeting. The requirement is that a majority of the Planning Board members sign the mylars.

Overview of CIP Process: Chair Helm provided a brief overview of the CIP process to date.

Cemetery Commission presentation by Marion Hafner and Charlie Hafner

Ms. Hafner provided the following information about the cemeteries. The initial focus of the discussion was about the need to expand the Old Main Street Cemetery. Later in the discussion, the focus of the discussion included information about the Elkins Cemetery.

Old Main Cemetery Discussion:

- In 2-3 years all the lots will be sold for Old Main cemetery.
- Someone may buy 18-20 sites at a time, for a family burial area.
- Cemetery expansion expected to accommodate needs for about 30-40 years
- Cremation rates are changing the rate at which cemeteries fill up.
- Need for a new cemetery somewhere, don't want to get into an urgent situation and not have enough space.
- Wetland analysis will likely need to be completed, estimated cost \$62,000 + \$13,000 for the engineering)
- Desire to save some of the trees along Old Main Street, this is a concern of the local residents.
- One traditional burial site equivalent to 6 cremation sites

- “Niche” example, wall with place for cremation, example similar to what is at the Veteran’s Cemetery was provided. Height of “wall” typically 6-7 feet.
- Old Main Cemetery is not plowed in the winter
- 70% cremations locally, of these about ½ are buried at the cemetery the rest are kept at home or elsewhere
- Sell about 35-50 sites a year, average \$300 a lot
- A niche for a urn is more expensive

Questions:

- ✓ Is the expansion at Old Main needed now, or is there other space in Town, for example at Elkins?
- ✓ Which cemetery would be the best place for the “niche”?
- ✓ Some people want to be buried at Old Main, and not at Elkins.
- ✓ Is there some other Town land or need to purchase land/ or accept a donation for more cemetery land.

School District presentation by Mike doCurren, Director of Facilities

Mr. doCurren provided a brief overview of some of the more recent improvements to the school buildings. He noted there are all new windows at the elementary school. Some future projects will include fire suppression systems, improvements to parking, and roofing improvements, but these projects are currently not included in the budget. He provided a handout, Kearsarge Regional School District Capital Improvement Plan including several pages for the years 2012-2017. These handouts provided information about the SAU Learning Center, James House Pre-School, New London Elementary School, High School, Middle School, Sutton Elementary School, Bradford Elementary School and the Simonds Elementary School.

Discussed the status of the 1941 Building. He noted that recently Colby Sawyer College looked at it. Some options the School District are to rent it, lease it, or demolish it. An estimated demolition cost is \$250,000, but there isn’t money in the budget for this. Currently it is kept at low heat, to minimize cost.

Jay Lyon, Fire Chief commented that degradation of the 1941 Building is cumulative, and more issues will emerge for the unoccupied areas of the building. He explained that currently teachers can only use 20% rather than 50% of the wall space to hang classroom decorations, student’s works projects and other typical materials seen in a classroom due to fire safety issues. State regulations would require a sprinkler system for any new school, and there is no grandfathering. He explained that existing or new schools will need to be sprinklered at some point. He explained that both Whipple Hall and the Town Offices need to have a sprinkler system. Jay Lyon explained that the New London Elementary school is sprinklered in just certain areas, the boiler room and storage room. He also noted that the SAU Learning Center is sprinklered 100% up to the 1941 building to the James House, and areas of to the cafeteria doors, gym and main lobby. Jay Lyon also commented on the roadway behind the current SAU building, one-way in and one-way out, and need to look at circulation if improvements are made.

Improvements to the parking and sidewalks was discussed as there is \$1 million in the years 2015-2016, it was explained that this money is not in the budget. Mike doCurren explained this \$1 million was for parking lot improvements, sidewalks and curbing and doesn’t include any redesign of the parking areas.

Discussed other recent and proposed improvements to the New London Elementary School. The New London Elementary School was built in 1885/86 and is approximately 30 years old. It was noted that this

building has been well maintained over the years, and the School District doesn't see the need a new building anytime soon.

Parking at the New London Elementary School was discussed and how it would be good to work with the Town and others, to cooperatively address some of the parking issues that have been identified by the School District, and parking issues identified as part of the current CIP process.

Review of Projects

Chair Helm explained that the next step in the CIP process would be for the Planning Board to prioritize the projects. It was explained that the Conservation Commission was asked to attend and provide an update or identify any projects. It was noted that this is new process and maybe there is some misunderstanding. The School District projects won't be prioritized by the Planning Board, but as part of the Regional School District the projects selected by the School District may affect the tax rate.

Key issues discussed include the need to support projects related to public safety such as the Public Works and Fire vehicles replacements/upgrades. Several members had toured the Police Station and noted that the conditions were not adequate, using the words "scary", "very unsafe" "appalling" and "shocking" to describe the Police Department building.

Jay Lyon noted that the Fire Station was built in 1972, and expanded in 2004. He noted that there is no need for expansion of the Fire Dept. building. He noted there is a "culture" about maintaining a separate police and fire complex. Chair Helm explained that he, Liz Meller and Lucy St. John toured the Sunapee Safety Complex, and he noted that it essentially runs as two distinct and separate operations.

The discussion focused on various "what-if" scenarios regarding how to address the need for more space, and possible reorganization of space. For example if a particular space is vacated or used for another purposed, some of the space issues could be addressed.

Peter Bianchi commented that it would make sense for one new building for storage, maybe something at the Old Dump or Sewer plant location for the storage of town records, recreation department equipment, and other storage needs. He noted that the existing Police sallyport was not intended to be used for storage. He said the Planning Board can come up with their own ideas on how the storage issues might best be addressed.

Jeremy Bonin commented that some departments need to have their storage issues addressed on site. For example, the Police have particular needs and it would be important for the Police to store their items with Police storage and not in a combined Town storage facility. He noted that the Police and others need more space. He also noted the Police have particular needs to minimize potential conflict between other people in the building and the criminals. Peter Bianchi commented that he doesn't agree the Police Department has needs for space or anything for the Police Department. Jeremy Bonin suggested that the Police Department space be repurposed, as it is not used well and there are many issues with the building.

Emma Crane commented that the Sewer Lagoon project is a problem just waiting to happen. Chair Helm noted that in previous CIP discussion, the Director of Public Works hadn't identified this as a real priority. She also asked about having a hiking trail around the center of Town.

Michelle Holton noted that Whipple Hall is revered, and that good public relationship is required to explain what needs to be done.

Discussed taking several projects off the table as a priority now, but continue discussion on how to address the issues of parking, space issues and long-range planning issues, including the sewer lagoon project. It was noted that the Police sallyport project, is a space issue as well.

Discussed the dispatch consoles. Jay Lyon noted that if improvements are made to the dispatch consoles, should the Police Department ever move, the equipment could be used in the new location, the key issues are related to elevation and being able to receive signals. Peter Bianchi noted that Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator is preparing a list of dispatch equipment. He noted the final outcome of dispatch will be based on the recently completed dispatch report. The need for a long-range plan regarding dispatch was noted and that the current amount \$105,000 is not an accurate figure.

Priority projects were discussed including Fire and Public Works projects that address public safety. Discussed whether the \$50,000 threshold was set to low. The tax map correction project was determined to be a priority project. Dispatching was determined to be the third priority project. The Public Works salt shed was determined to be below a \$75,000 threshold as was the Fire Department SCBA equipment. The cemetery projects was determined not to be a priority at this time.

Several projects were deemed to be more Long-Range Planning issues related to “what-if” scenarios pertaining to storage, and reuse of spaces for other purposes, and need for a more comprehensive review of all of these issues. Several of the projects related to roads, sidewalks and other infrastructure improvements were deemed important, but not a priority. Three sidewalk projects were discussed, sidewalks along Main Street, a loop from Parkside- County- and Pleasant Street, and Seamans Road. Jay Lyon expressed concern about the sidewalk issues, as it really is a safety issue, especially along Seamans Road to the ball fields. He noted this is driven by the number of college students and something needs to be done. The gravel road project was discussed. It was noted that there are people in town who want gravel roads paved and people who don't. Peter Bianchi commented, yes it would be nice to have gravel road paved, as it there would be a savings on maintenance and maintenance equipment, but there has never been a real push to do them all at once. He noted that the gravel roads which have been paved, were identified as safety or as a maintenance issue. Peter Bianchi commented that the gravel roads in New London are exceptional. Bill Helm suggested that the Town should have a public forum to discuss the gravel road issue, as there are maintenance cost, including the need for a \$250,000 grader.

Motion to Adjourn by Bill Helm, seconded by Peter Bianchi. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucy A. St. John, AICP
Planning and Zoning Administrator
Town of New London