



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## PLANNING BOARD DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

**CIP Project Presentations**  
**Thursday, October 9, 2014**  
**8:30 AM**  
**Sydney Crook Conference Room**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** William Helm (Chair); Paul Gorman (Vice Chair); Peter Bianchi (Board of Selectmen's Representative), Jeremy Bonin; William Dietrich; and Elizabeth Meller (Alternate)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Emma Crane and Michele Holton (Secretary).

**STAFF:** Lucy St. John, Planning and Zoning Administrator; Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator and Wendy Johnson, Finance Director.

**Others in Attendance:** Norm Bernaiche, Assessing; Richard Lee, Public Works; Sandra Licks, Library; Bruce Parsons, Library Trustee and Scott Blewitt, Recreation.

**Call to Order:** Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. He announced that there were be presentations from Assessing, Public Works, Library and Recreation.

**Overview of CIP Process:** Chair Helm explained at the Sept 24<sup>th</sup> meeting the Board heard from the Fire Department, Town Administration, Finance, Police Department and the New London Water Precinct. He provided an overview of the process.

### **Assessing Department presentation by Normand Bernaiche, Chief Assessor**

Mr. Bernaiche referred to the "Project Identification Form" for the Tax Map Correction project. He explained that the tax maps include 143 tax sheets showing the Town with parcel lines. He provided a brief history of the tax mapping in the Town of New London.

- 1972- Tax maps were hand drawn.
- 1995- Tax maps were updated in digital format into a seamless composite map.
- 1995 and forward- Global Positioning System (GPS) has been integrated which allows the maps to show the location of new homes and other structures on each parcel.
- 2008- The Town, along with the Town of Sunapee completed new aerial photography. He explained that white targets were placed on the ground to provide for very accurate photos. The tax maps were not compiled using a corrected photo as a base. They look good, but are not an accurate depiction of specific locations or real places on the earth.
- 2010- The State of New Hampshire had aerial photographs flown for the whole state. This data is used for various State Agencies and other (Federal agencies) such as assessing acreage of forest, changes in land use and is used compiling data used in the GRANIT Mapping System. The State will likely do another flyover in 2015-2016. It generally takes a couple years to get data, and there is no guarantee that this will be done.

- \$35,000 has already been identified in prior CIP documents, and the whole project will cost \$75,000.

He explained that in 2010 Peter Stanley, former Planning and Zoning Administrator, and he discussed the need for this project, and it was included in the past CIP documents. Although the tax maps look good, they are misleading as they don't really show the exact boundaries of the parcels. He cited the importance of having correct maps, as New London includes a lot of water front property, and the maps are used in determining land areas, which affect the value of a property. The maps are used by the general public, realtors and many others. Abutter notification is based on these maps. Town boundaries are based on these maps. He cited a few examples of how the maps were used and found to be incorrect:

- ✓ Features shown on a map are really located on another parcel, for example a dock.
- ✓ The Conservation Commission Clark's Pond project on Bog Road negotiated a land transaction and once the survey was done, they learned there was really substantially fewer acreage.
- ✓ Twin Lake Villa- was taxed for 15 acres and found to be 65 acres. These issues could represent a significant lose in tax revenue.

He explained that once this project is completed it won't need to be done again. He noted that Newbury and Sunapee which are part of the Tri-Town Assessing have already completed their Tax Map Correction project. He explained the longer the Town waits, the more expensive this gets and the technology continues to change. The process would be to have Cartographic Associates review deeds, subdivision and site plan which include survey data points, and surveys which may have been completed for any of the parcels. A composite map would then be assembled. He acknowledged that indeed there may be some parcels that gain or lose land area, once all the data is compiled. He noted that many parcels have never been surveyed, and only use deeds which frequently include language such as more or less to describe a lot. He explained that all the deeds would be reviewed, subdivision plans and other information.

Some concerns about the mapping project include:

- ✓ State flyover in 2015-2016. Don't wait as the State isn't necessarily a reliable partner, they may not have the funding, or the flyover dates could change.
- ✓ How can the curvature of the earth be corrected if a lot is small, and only has a small amount of frontage or land area?
- ✓ It might change some deeds and there could be some boundary disputes
- ✓ It might create nonconforming lots
- ✓ Residents may need to apply for variances

Norm Bernaiche stated that this is an important project for the Town and asked that the Planning Board include it in the CIP document.

#### **Public Works presentation by Richard Lee, Public Works Director**

Richard Lee had prepared "Project Identification Forms" for several projects. He also included Tables 9-13 of the current CIP document.

**Equipment Replacement Project:** He referred to Table 9 explaining that several of the equipment items are for replacement of vehicles. Chair Helm reiterated that the goal of the CIP this year is to use a baseline amount of \$50,000 noting that some equipment may meet this criteria and others would fall

under general replacement (operational cost which would be included in a department budget). Richard Lee said the loader (\$140, 000) and trash truck (\$129,000) are high ticket items.

**Town Office Building Parking Lot Project:** He explained that there are currently 16 parking spaces. Lots of times the lot is full and people park in the adjoining church parking lot. This would benefit the whole community and free up spaces on Main Street for the businesses. Stormwater runoff would be addressed by incorporating an infiltration system under the parking area. Chair Helm noted that parking issues have also been identified at Whipple Hall and the Library. Peter Bianchi noted that parking is not a new issue, and that about 25 years ago the Regional Planning Commission did a study. Ms. St. John inquired if lighting or landscaping features are incorporated into the project cost. Richard Lee noted that a sewer line would need to be replaced, if the parking area is expanded no lighting is planned. Estimated cost is roughly \$45,000.

**Gravel Road Paving Project:** Richard Lee explained that this project has been in the CIP for many years. The number one complaint he receives is about the condition of the gravel roads. The current list doesn't address all the roads, only about ½, so the cost will actually be more. He explained that when developing the list of which roads to pave first, safety and maintenance was very important. Some people want gravel roads paved, others don't. He said that if this project would had been funded like he requested years ago, all the gravel roads would be paved by now.

Chair Helm suggested that one approach to getting this project completed would be for the Town to bond the project and pay it off. The cost of maintaining gravel roads compared to just getting them paved was discussed. Richard Lee explained that gravel roads require more maintenance and equipment such as a grader. Peter Bianchi noted that in the current CIP Table 9, the cost of a grader is listed for the year 2020 in the amount of \$170,000, this does not include an inflation cost, and in FY 2012, another \$ 238,434 is identified. Richard Lee explained that some Towns share a road grader, but sometimes the grader is needed at the same time, when one is shared. Richard Lee said the Town has 15 miles of gravel road and 62 miles of paved roads. Richard Lee cited Hall Farm Road as an example, if they chip and seal it they may get another 7-8 years, or sand and seal it to extend the life of the road. All roads need maintenance, but gravel road take more time and more frequent maintenance.

**Old Main Cemetery Expansion Project:** Richard Lee explained that in 4-5 years they will be out of space at the cemetery in the lower section. This estimate is based on the number of lots sold and used each year, but this could be shorter time frame depending on the number of deaths. The area would be where the town pound used to be located. He noted there are some wetlands near the Bog Road section. The Town has three (3) cemeteries- Old Main Street, which is the largest; Elkins, situated between Elkins Road and Route 11; and West Part Cemetery, which is located on County Road near the intersection of Route 103A. The Town Report of 2014 states the space here is nearing capacity and expansion into the woods portion along the back edge is planned in 2014. Staff will contact the Cemetery Commission and ask them to attend the Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

**Sewer Lagoons Closing Project:** Richard Lee explained that Jessie Levine, former Town Administrator and Peter Stanley, former Planning and Zoning Administrator, headed up this project in around 2008-2009. At that time there was a request for an engineering study. He explained that there is a letter from NHDES. The concerns are the proximity to Lyon Brook. The Town needs to get an updated estimate on the cost to close the lagoons. He explained that a couple options have been discussed, one is to cap and then have three (3) test wells which will have to be monitored some period of time, or maybe forever or option 2- to pump out the sludge, cap it and no test wells. Will need to determine where the sludge could

be taken. Peter Bianchi mentioned the Shepard Pit on Mountain Road. Richard Lee suggested the best option would be to close it out, currently there is no pressure from the State, but should the lagoon be breached there would likely be concern from NHDES, due to the proximity to Lyon Brook. He explained that it may get complicated, depending on what agencies at NHDES are involved, and any related requirements that may be imposed.

**Sidewalk Replacement Project- (Seamans Road to Hogan driveway) and Kearsarge School driveway (Main Street to Homan's Corner).**

Richard Lee explained that the sidewalks are in poor condition and are not ADA compliance. He explained that about 15 years ago there was a Town Sidewalk Committee. He explained that Safe Routes to School funding was used for the project on Pleasant Street. Liz Meller asked about what other sidewalk projects are on the horizon, noting that many people use County Road, along Parkside, and Barrett Road and Pleasant Street.

**Salt and Sand Shed Replacement Project:** Richard Lee explained that this project is to replace the existing salt and sand shed with a new metal shed with shed with shed with a plastic cover. He noted there are wetlands behind the shed. The public works area is surrounded by conservation land, and environmental issues are also a concern. He noted it is the environmentally right thing to do. He was asked if he would do anything different if the fire training facility wasn't there. He said no.

Richard Lee noted that Whipple Hall and other Town buildings will have some significant costs issues to address. He also added his support for the presentation made by Normand Bernaiche on the Tax Map Correction Project. He said it is common and expected practice to have sewer lines, water lines, catch basin, and other public infrastructure GPS. This project is needed, as the tax maps shown sewer line going through buildings. You can't use the maps with any reliability. It is also a cost issue, when asking someone to dig up a sewer line, it could be several or more feet off.

**Library presentation by Sandra Licks and Bruce Parsons**

Sandra Licks and Bruce Parsons noted that the Library hasn't submitted any projects. They don't see any expansion or new construction on the horizons due to the more recent improvements to the Library. Much of their expenses are repair and maintenance items, which aren't eligible under the current CIP criteria for submitting a project for consideration. They commented that parking is an issue at the library as well, juggling between children's programs and adult programs. Patrons park on the street or use the Town parking lot. They are concerned with the slope area along Pleasant Street which is eroding. There is also a real safety concern with people crossing mid-block, not in the crosswalk on Pleasant Street. They are suggesting the Town consider planting some shrubbery or putting up a split rail fence to deter people, and direct them to the crosswalk at the corner.

The question was asked, can the area behind the information booth be expanded for parking. They noted that in the summer months 5-6 spaces in the Town parking lot are used by the Barn Playhouse. Peter Bianchi noted that years ago there were discussion about purchasing the land below the library garden (Sandra's residential home), to expand parking. Sandra Licks noted that there is only one handicapped spot, and people complain that there aren't enough spaces close enough to the library. There is also the need to have a place for parents to drop off children and for parents with younger children to park. Liz Meller suggested that there is parking behind the Kidder building. Sandra Licks noted that this is just too far for people to walk and it is private property. It was also noted that the Kidder building is up for sale.

### **Recreation Department presentation by Scott Blewitt**

**Recreation Van Project:** Scott Blewitt explained that the Recreation Department received a 1990s van from Woodcrest about 3-4 years ago. Some bodywork was done and it now has the Town's Recreation Department logo/identification. It is used for summer day camp and after school program. The van will need to be replaced in 4-5 years. He would like a more shuttle-like style van, one that can accommodate a wheelchair lift, as it could be used if there were ever an emergency in town to help transport someone who is in wheelchair.

Some questions and concerns identified by the Board included what is the cost and could it be used by Council of Aging (COA) or others who help provide transportation services for people that need a ride to Dartmouth-Hitchcock. It was noted that COA is concerned about the age of their volunteer drivers.

Kim Hallquist asked Scott Blewitt to explore the idea of a wheelchair van which could be used for emergency planning purposes. The idea of cost sharing with some non-profits was suggested. Scott Blewitt noted that the van would likely cost about \$50,000-\$60,000.

**Community Center Project:** Scott Blewitt explained that the idea for a community center has been discussed over the years, including where Bittersweet is currently located and the 1941 Building. He noted that Whipple Hall is used by many organizations as well as the Town's green space. He explained the need for a gymnasium, multi-rooms of various sizes, open space and parking. He commented that there is a good positive working relationship with the Outing Club.

Some ideas discussed included:

- ✓ The idea for a Public Safety Complex is not new, and if the Town had a Town Safety Complex- could the Fire Station be used for a community center. If it were, in the location of the current Fire Dept., this could spur economic development, concerns about sharing parking.
- ✓ Is there a need for a gymnasium?
- ✓ The doors on the Fire Dept. have already been raised, to accommodate the height of the equipment.
- ✓ What if the 1941 Building were torn down and a new building put in that location.
- ✓ Should it be in the center of town, or further out of Town?
- ✓ Location of TDS site was discussed in the past.
- ✓ Level of cooperation or increased tension between existing groups.
- ✓ Outing Club facilities are great- as the Town has no field, tennis courts, basketball court, soccer fields, etc.
- ✓ Town beaches are the Town's asset.

Several other ideas were discussed including- the beaches and need for parking at the beaches. The continued use of Elkins land for a Post Office, is this the best use for this property. Scott Blewitt noted that the split rail fence at Bucklin is in need of repair, Elkins is not ADA compliant, need for some dock replacement. The rock wall at Elkins was replaced last year. The number of sailboats, kayaks, and now the popular paddleboards used at the beaches. The improvements to the warming hut, and ice skating rink maintenance. There used to be an ice rink at the Outing Club. Sidewalks are in need of repairs in several locations, need to be ADA compliance.

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A key point made is that there is a great relationship with the Outing Club and the Town should be looking at some cooperation ideas to accommodate the various organizations and demographics of the Town. Scott Blewitt noted he is trying to develop some more “senior-adult programs” and the transporting of people from COA and other places has and continues to be an issue.

**Motion to Adjourn** by Bill Helm, seconded by Peter Bianchi. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

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