

Planning & Development Committee
Wednesday, May 21, 2014 – 5:30 p.m.
1st Fl. Council Committee Room – City Hall
-Minutes-

Present: Chair, Councilor Greg Verga; Vice Chair, Councilor Paul Lundberg; Councilor Steven LeBlanc
Absent: None

Also Present: Councilor Paul McGeary; Tom Daniel, Gregg Cademartori, Matt Coogan, Councilor Paul McGeary

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Councilor Steve LeBlanc entered the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Items were taken out of order.

1. Special Events Application re: request to hold Boulevard Concerts on July 3 and August 30, 2014

Brent Tarr, 18 Timberview Drive, speaking on behalf of the Gloucester Fund said for the last five years the Gloucester Fund has put on a concert on July 3 to keep people down the Boulevard between the parade and the fireworks to keep them occupied and in one spot. The concert has grown through the years, and last year periodically traffic would be stopped when the parade ended and the fireworks started due to sheer pedestrian volume. The proposal this year, is that as soon as the parade goes by, to block the Stacy Boulevard from one side to the water side and to keep that closed until the fireworks end or a little longer until the crowd disperses. This is to stop the cars from going down there and detouring. This proposal is mainly for safety reasons as the crowd has spilled out into the street. This would be the same for the August 30th concert for all the Schooner Festival events and the fireworks. **Mr. Tarr** confirmed he had met with the Special Events Committee and that they approved all plans for both events.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Lundberg, seconded by Councilor Verga, the Planning & Development Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 (LeBlanc) absent, to permit the Gloucester Fund to hold a Free concert on Stacy Boulevard in the vicinity of the Blynman Bridge on July 3, 2014 and August 30, 2014, on the condition that the Gloucester Fund obtains all necessary approvals from the Licensing Board, the Board of Health and the Licensing Commission and to ensure that all required documentation and insurance is timely filed with the appropriate City departments. Failure to comply with any conditions precedent may result in revocation of Council approval.

2. RZ2014-001: Thatcher Road #78 from EB (Extensive Business) to R-10 (Medium/High Density Residential)

Attorney Joel Favazza, 111 Main Street, Gloucester, was speaking on behalf of John Flaherty, the managing member of 78 Thatcher Road LLC, and the owner of 78 Thatcher Road, the applicant. He said the application is to rezone 78 Thatcher Road from Extensive Business (EB) to R-10 (Medium/High Density Residential). **Mr. Favazza** said the process was initiated with a rough design as to what would potentially go on the site if the property was rezoned to R-10. A neighborhood meeting was held in April with several dozen neighbors in attendance and also attended by Councilor Paul McGeary, Ward 1 Councilor and Rick Noonan, Chair of the Planning Board. He indicated was a positive result. He said people were curious to see what was going on but no one had a complaint or negative reaction to the idea of the parcel being rezoned to residential. He noted the applicant went before the Planning Board last week and received a positive recommendation from the Board for the rezoning of this property (on file).

Mr. Favazza said the request to rezone this parcel is because the owner has realized that it was time to try something new with the site. He noted that this parcel has historically been zoned business and named some of the past businesses on the site. A large restaurant with outdoor seating with a parking lot now sits on this site. He said currently, except for one other corner parcel on the other side of Witham Street, everything surrounding this parcel is R-10. The application would bring the site into conformance with the R-10 zone, he noted. **Mr. Favazza** said moving the parcel to R-10 and putting up a building that will hold six residential units would comply with all the R-10 regulations. He pointed out that the applicant would still need a multi-family special permit from the City

Council which would mean any final design would come back before the P&D Committee and the City Council for approval.

Councilor Lundberg said that he understood that the existing building is going to be raised and an entirely new building will be put in its place. **Mr. Favazza** said that building and the parking lots will be removed. **Councilor Lundberg** asked if the parking would be consistent with the requirements of the residences under the zoning ordinance. **Mr. Favazza** pointed out on the rough design that the applicant will be using the existing curb cuts and there will be six visitor spaces, a three-car garage and a six-car garage for the six units. Most of the existing parking lot would be reclaimed as green space, he noted. He said the driveway will not be just asphalt and will be something semi-pervious, something maybe greener and that will all be worked out in the final design. **Councilor Verga** asked if the semi-pervious will be something similar to what is on the edges of the site now. **Mr. Favazza** replied it was unknown at this time but suggested it would be similar to what is there now. He also pointed out on the rough design that on the ground level that coming off of Witham Street there will be a six-car garage underneath; and when coming off of Thatcher Road, there will be a three-car garage and six additional parking spaces. He added this was all hypothetical at this point as the property had yet to be rezoned.

Councilor Verga asked if the plan was for a rental, condos, or rental with future condos. **Mr. Favazza** replied there would be six separate condo units.

Councilor McGeary said that he held a neighborhood meeting in April which had a good turnout and that he has received little feedback since that meeting. He said that Mr. Favazza correctly characterized the meeting as it was more interest and curiosity with no opposition from the neighbors voiced at the meeting. There was only one area of specific concern on whether this might have an affect in terms of Brier Neck Crossing and wanted to express this concern as it was put forward. **Councilor McGeary** said that this application has to be judged on its own merit. The other issue raised, because of Brier Neck Crossing, would be considered a major project, and asked Mr. Favazza if he was able to ascertain that information. **Mr. Favazza** responded that he had actually not gone and pulled the information and that would be addressed with the multi-family filing. He pointed out right now they are only going for the rezoning of the parcel and then will move on from there. **Councilor McGeary** noted that at one point the owner of Olivia's came forward and sought a liquor license and the neighbors were in opposition to that. **Councilor McGeary** said that if a liquor license is not involved, the applicant likely deserves to do something with the property. He said that much will depend on the specifics of the plan, but that was a separate issue from the rezoning matter before the Committee. **Councilor McGeary** asked why the applicant was seeking a rezoning of the parcel first instead of the Zoning Board for a variance. Mr. Favazza responded that currently as an EB parcel, the use variance would be an extremely high standard to meet, and that this is the more appropriate method of getting the parcel positioned for a multi-family dwelling.

Councilor Verga asked the Planning Director, **Gregg Cademartori**, about the Planning Board's recommendation. **Mr. Cademartori** said that the Planning Board heard a similar presentation at their public hearing on May 15. There was nobody in the audience other than those representing the application so no one spoke in opposition. One of the things the Board noted was that the R-10 is very consistent. The entire surrounding area is mostly R-10 with the exception of a couple of parcels that are zoned EB on the other side of the street, he noted, and that the EB designation is really more for heavier business uses. He briefly touched upon some possible zoning alternatives, but did say that the R-10 designation would be appropriate, and said he agreed that six units would be a Special Council Permit. The standards would require things like affordability, if this is considered a major project, but there is no other multi-family surrounding this property, he noted.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Lundberg, seconded by Councilor Verga, the Planning & Development Committee under Gloucester Zoning Ordinance Section 1.11 and MGL c. 40A, §5, voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 absent to recommend to the City Council to amend the Gloucester Zoning Ordinance by amending the Gloucester Zoning Map and corresponding zoning districts by rezoning 78 Thatcher Road (Assessors Map 179, Lot 44) from EB (Extensive Business) to R-10 (Medium/High Density Residential).

This matter was advertised for public hearing.

Councilor McGeary left the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Councilor Verga stated for the recorded that Item number 6 on the agenda regarding One Webster Street Special Council permit is continued until June 4, 2014.

3. *Review of the addition of a Senior Planner to the Community Development Staff (Cont'd from 05/07/14)*

Community Development Director, Tom Daniel said that he is joined by the **Planning Director, Gregg Cademartori**, and **Senior Planner, Matt Coogan**. **Mr. Daniel** said this position came up last year during his appointment process, and this position was posted at the same time, and Councilor Ciolino at that time asked about this position. **Mr. Daniel** said that this goes back to when the Community Development Department was reorganized a couple of years ago and there was a commitment to fill certain positions, i.e. an Economic Development Director position and a Senior Planner position that was part of that structure. The expectation had been to fulfill the Economic Development Director position, but when he was hired he brought an economic development background into the Community Development Director position. There was a need to enhance the planning function so the Senior Planner position was advanced at that time. **Matt Coogan** came on board almost a year ago in June and has been doing an excellent job. He is working with the Planning Director and providing support, managing the Green Communities Grant Program, working with the DPW a lot and getting those projects wrapped up, and filing a new grant application for a new project. He has been successful in securing other grants for the City. Another big project that **Mr. Coogan** has managed is the street light purchase from National Grid and that will bring real savings right now to the City, and the next step would be to convert our light fixtures to further reduce energy consumption. **Mr. Daniel** said he is also managing the last phase of the Harborwalk with the monies remaining in the grant for a final wrap up including Fishermen's Wharf. He is also managing the summer cinema series as part of the Harborwalk, which will kick off in June. He has also been a key person in the downtown planning work last summer and fall, and the Railroad Avenue work that is underway right now. **Mr. Coogan** said that he has been here almost a year, and it is a great opportunity professional and personally to take this position. He said the Community Development Department has a great staff. **Mr. Coogan** pointed out that this is a very vibrant community, and it has been great meeting with all the players and volunteers.

Councilor Lundberg commented that there was a concern a year or so ago about the Planning Department adding personnel, but his experience on the six years with the Planning Board, has given him great respect for the quality of work that they do, and the amount it takes to make the right decision all the time.

Councilor Verga said that the specific concern was not Planning, but that the Community Development would hire personnel on a grant, and then they became full-time employees; and the department kept growing and growing. He said the Planning Department was understaffed, and now it is heading in the right direction. He asked **Mr. Daniel** what the plan is for economic development, and was there no need for an Economic Development Director at this point since that was his area of expertise and asked if wanted to bring it back in the future. **Mr. Daniel** said that right now they have a really good team. Tom Gillette of the EDIC is part of their economic development team, and has provided a lot value because he is able to work in a different space from him, and other staff there involved. They have had some really good results from the Innovation House, Mazzetta Group purchasing the Good Harbor Filet, Severn and Wye, and these are just three of the members of the Gloucester community that they have worked very closely with. They are also working with the existing businesses as they look to diversify and grow.

Mr. Cademartori pointed out that he came in 2005; the department experienced a reduction in staff. When the reorganization was done, the qualifications for the Senior Planner position were revamped in order to start to build back the capacity in that office. He said he agreed with **Mr. Daniel** that with the addition of Tom Gillette there is a good synergy regarding the city's economic development efforts. At some point there might be additional needs but right now as to staffing, the department is well outfitted at this point.

4. *Application for License of Flammable and Combustible Liquids, Flammable Gasses and Solids*
Re: 73 Essex Avenue

John Wright, Energy North Group, 73 Essex Avenue said he is applying for the flammable liquids and gases permit. **Councillor Verga** asked **Mr. Wright** if the reason he was here was because it was a transfer of the property. **Mr. Wright** believes this application has to be done because they were under Tony's Mobil flammable liquids permit. **Councilor Verga** asked **Mr. Wright** if there was a grace period because the station was still open. **Mr. Wright** responded that he wasn't really sure as they just realized that when it came time to renew the license it was under the former owner's name. **Councilor Lundberg** asked **Mr. Wright** if this license was just for the LP gas or all gas. **Mr. Wright** responded that it was only for the underground storage. **Councilor Verga** asked **Mr. Wright** if there was a special license for the propane. **Mr. Wright** responded that there was a separate permit that they obtained for the containers of propane gas, and they are store in an enclosed area.

MOTION: On motion by Councilor Lundberg, seconded by Councilor Verga , the Planning & Development Committee voted 2 in favor, 0 opposed 1 (LeBlanc) absent, to recommend that the City Council grant Energy North Inc. a License of Flammable and Combustible Liquids, Flammable Gases and Solids for the property at 73 Essex Avenue for the storage of 26,000 gallons of Combustible Liquids. Said applicant shall pay for the cost of advertising for public hearing and postage for legal notices to all abutters in accordance with Sec. 8-1 of the Code of Ordinances.

This matter will be advertised for public hearing.

4. *CC2014-022(Verga/Lundberg/LeBlanc) Amend GCO Chapter 15, by deleting Sections 15-15 and 15- 16 and adding new Sections 15-1, 15-2, and 15-3 creating a Stage Fort Park Advisory Committee*

Councilor Verga said Stage Fort Park Advisory Committee was a Council Order put forward by the Planning & Development Committee with the goal to set something up like the Magnolia Woods Oversight & Advisory Committee. The question before the Committee is what they want to have for membership. This matter was also on the O&A's agenda on Monday, and he requested a continuance because &D wanted to take this up also. There are also interested parties here who would be a fit for the membership. **Councilor Verga** asked for some information from **George Roark** and **David Dow** from the Friends of Stage Fort Park and **Steve Kaity** from the Rotary Club to speak briefly what their thoughts are on the Committee.

George Roark, 15 Beauport Avenue, Gloucester said he thought to have this Committee is a way to have the people affiliated with the park directly or indirectly down there to have input as far as maintenance to the park and improvements to the park going forward. There are numerous people involved, besides the Friends of Stage Fort Park, the Dog Park, and listed the other groups.

Steve Kaity, 5 Viking Street he is in agreement with **Mr. Roark** that there are numerous entities, stakeholders, and volunteers that have raised a lot of money. The Rotary Club just donated the money to redo the railings on the Gazebo, which they have been the stewards of for the past 20 years, along with the playground. Mr. Kaity said that it would make sense to him to gather some of the stakeholders, hopefully come up with the master plan and not just for one area. With an overall plan, he thought the synergy between all of the stakeholders would be amazing and they could really get things done. **Councilor Lundberg** commented that when they talked about this in previous sessions, they have been honored by the energetic presence of a lot of different groups and what **Mr. Kaity** said is a great goal but sense of ownership to the park and making it better and help not only with the current maintenance and be advocates for that but also have some kind of master plan as it is a unique facility, have everyone come together and make them work together is a noble goal, and we should support them as much as we can. **Councilor Verga** said that we have a goal line that could be used, the 400th anniversary, and we should strive for that.

Councilor LeBlanc said he would like to see this start sooner than later. Why wait until we are up against that goal line? **Mr. Roark** said he would like to mention a couple of other key people who he forgot to mention are David Benjamin, who has been involved in the Bandstand for thirty years, and Bob Ryan regarding Cressy Beach. **Tom Daniel**, Community Development Director reiterated what he said previously in that whatever is done it is important to look at sustainability, the funding mechanism and strategy and that can be a year term maintenance things as well as a longer term maintenance piece. It is critical that this goes hand and hand. He thought it was tremendous of the amount of care, enthusiasm, and dedication everyone here and others have for the park. Facilitating the work of a committee, generally a committee works better when there is a connection to staff, but that is work that needs to be sorted through in terms of asking the DPW to take on that role as well. Having stakeholders engaged is really valuable, looking at the funding strategies and mechanism and organizational structure and internally the connection back to the City needs to be looked at as well.

Councilor Lundberg agreed with **Mr. Daniel** but he said it is important not to let those concerns get in the way of the vision. The fact is that along of people in Gloucester had a vision for Newell Stadium and that was accomplished. **Councilor Lundberg** would like to get the vision up first and see what it takes and it does not necessary need to be just the City's budget. It could be a public/private partnership that worked so well with Newell Stadium. **Mr. Daniel** wanted to be clear that he is not saying no, but wanted to make sure of having a mechanism that you can be sure you can implement.

Councilor Verga said that we have roughly nine years to reach the goal line. We need to work backwards in terms of everyone throws out the ideas of what they want for the ultimate. Instead of just saying, well we will be lucky if we maintain it, so let's not plan it. We need to say instead what do we need to do to get to this and it becomes a public/private partnership because the City financially, even if everyone was on board, cannot pump millions of dollars into it. If we have a plan, we have a number to reach the plan, He reiterated that it is just a means

of getting all of the stakeholders together, coming up with a vision and working with the City on a major goal, which we are looking at in roughly nine years. **Councilor Verga** said this ordinance needs to be referred back to O&A for finalization. What they need to be clear on is that a Chair and Vice Chair be elected members from non-staff. The Planning & Development subcommittee recommendation to O&A is that Board is not to exceed nine members and with the possibility of up to two alternate members. Entities that should be considered and not limited to the Little League, Rotary Club, Garden Park, Dog Park, Farmer's Market, Friends of Stage Fort Park, representative from the DPW, representative from Community Development, City Council Member appointed by the President, At Large members appointed from the community, and possibility of up to two alternate members.

Councilor Verga requested information on whether there still existed an organized bandstand group or committee.

7. Memorandum from Community Development Director re: Fuller Site dated May 5, 2014

Councilor Verga said he pulled the memorandum from the consent agenda to have a discussion on where exactly the city is going with Fuller site, and try to bring it into the public eye before it becomes a finished product. **Tom Daniel, Community Development Director** said the purpose of the memorandum was just an update. He proceeded to explain the Land Disposition process and gave the standing committee an estimated timeline. **Mr. Daniel** said that part of land at the Fuller site is Land Court, and they are getting a survey done so that they can get a legal description from the Land Court. He said that they survey will not be done until July.

There was a discussion between **Councilor Lundberg** and **Mr. Daniel** regarding Land Disposition Process and the Response Time Analysis and what the outcomes would be if the public safety center is not feasible at the Fuller Site. There was a discussion between **Councilor Lundberg** with Planning Director, **Gregg Cademartori** regarding the Gloucester Crossing Development phases and the easements.

There was a discussion between **Councilor LeBlanc** and **Mr. Daniel** regarding the Land Disposition Committee process after they review the additional information requested from the YMCA and the public safety analysis. There was a discussion regarding municipal offices at the Fuller site. **Councilor Verga** said he will not support selling the building at all. However, he said if we are going to sell it, why are we limiting our options to (1) nonprofit and why are they given special treatment? (2) If the Fuller site is going to be sold, why not to the highest bidder? (3) Why are we even considering a lease back of our property? **Councilor Verga** asked **Mr. Daniel** why the City didn't have a master plan. Even if the municipal offices at City Hall are kept, we spend about \$600,000 a year for rental of three locations and now we are talking about selling off a piece of property, and didn't see the logic to that.

Councilor Verga continued to say why wasn't there a master plan to see what is needed, and what the City's desires to see, instead of asking what someone else's desires are. He said that the taxpayers should be considered first. The city is leasing a school because the Fuller School was purposely allowed to fall into disrepair so that it is no longer usable, and along with a second lease for the School's Administration Department. He pointed out that when he was Chairman of the School Committee they were talking about this and seven years later, it is still being talking about with no answers in the offing. He said that he pulled this off the consent agenda, because the YMCA is given more input than the City Council at this point, which was very concerning. He wanted to know what the plan is to get this out to the public realm before the consultant's report telling the public about the finished project. Why let the YMCA go to that extent and have the Council vote it down, why don't we talk about it and why aren't we talking about options for our use? Why is there not a movement to look at how we can do this to get city offices out of Pond Road, to get out the former Charter School, and not be in the poor position where a former catholic school must be leased while a public school is renovated? **Mr. Daniel** reiterated that the YMCA submitted a request, and the Administration has to respond, and that is why they are going through this process now. The public safety center is on its own track. In terms the City Hall/municipal operations and offices, he didn't know what that looked like as the facilities plan was done several years ago. **Councilor Verga** interjected that when the Mass Development Plan was put forward, a municipal option wasn't even considered. They considered the YMCA option only. **Mr. Daniel** said the regarding the municipal offices and spaces, the square footage that would be needed and what offices would be where, that work that needs to be done in knowing what that number is and what it looks like. **Councilor Verga** responded that the report that was done six years ago and **Mr. Daniel** responded that the report needed to be updated. At the end of the Land Disposition process from the YMCA's request, they make a recommendation to the Mayor on what would need to be retained. First and foremost is the public safety center, the other piece is some configuration of City Hall. **Councilor Verga** told **Mr. Daniel** if no one is looking at the municipal piece, what does the Land Disposition Committee have to consider other than the YMCA and the safety center? **Councilor Verga**

said after the Mass Development Plan, the decision was made. **Mr. Daniel** reiterated again Land Disposition Committee process. After that and Request for Proposal (RFP) goes out, responses would be dealt with. **Councilor Verga** expressed his concern that a response from the YMCA will come from a customized RFP where only one entity could possibly meet the conditions in it. **Mr. Daniel** said that there are other objectives and outcomes they would like to see in the RFP.

Councilor Verga said there should be three parallel tracks: one for nonprofits, one for someone who has the money to spend on what the site is actually worth and one for city use and see what it would actually cost. He asked if it would be better to building new city offices and lose the leases the city now holds. He asked what that would look like and asked if a cost/benefit analysis had been conducted.

Councilor Lundberg said what Councilor Verga is asking for should be fairly straightforward; and what **Councilor Verga** is getting at is where as the City what is it that we want. **Councilor Lundberg** said that if the city is spending good money after bad for all this rent, what would it look like to own and build and put all those facilities rental spaces in one city-owned building? He said that is information the Council should have to make a sensible review of the situation. **Councilor Verga** said when the RFP is done for the YMCA the Council should have that information. There is no way they can consider having all the facts if there is only an RFP with no way to go back to ask the other questions. **Councilor Lundberg**, and the committee as a whole, indicated they are looking for some of suggestions to be happening parallel with what is going on. **Councilor Verga** said that when the RFP comes to the Council, he will not vote for it, unless other legitimate ideas had been ruled out. **Tom Daniel** responded that it sounded like the municipal offices need is the core piece and explained the reasons to lease versus owning space. **Councilor Lundberg** and **Councilor Verga** said there may be good reasons for leasing versus owning, but they don't have any of that cost/benefit analysis information right now.

Councilor Verga said he is on the record saying that the day the last students left Fuller School, after the one-year consolidated Fifth Grade, the City should have moved the municipal offices there. The City would have saved over these last seven years about \$700,000 rent alone on Pond Road. **Councilor Lundberg** informed Mr. Daniel that when this timeline unrolls, and when they get to a point that they want to get input from the public, the Committee's expectation is that this a very important piece that needs to be there, and they will have figure that in or the Committee will not be able to pass through this issue.

A motion was made, seconded and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Senos
Assistant City Clerk
Substitute Recorder

DOCUMENTS/ITEMS SUBMITTED AT MEETING: None