

ASHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

March 14, 2018

6:30 pm

Ashland Fire Station

Committee Members:

Steve Felton, Chair, Beno Lamontagne, Cheryl Cox, Susan MacLeod, Fran Newton, *Ex Officio* Selectman;

Others Present: Anthony Adamsky, Eli Badger, Marden Badger, Levi Bradley, Max Corbett, David Toth

Guests: Jeff Hayes, LRPC; Tim Andrews, Nobis Engineering

Meeting called to order at 6:20 pm.

Brownfield results: Tim Andrews summarized the results from the Brownfields 2 report. He mentioned that Alan Peterson from EPA said it was “one of the cleanest brownfields results” he has seen. The building materials were identified as the hazardous materials to be abated. Estimates of financial cost of abatement or demolition are quantifiable. Sub-surface testing revealed one exceedance – arsenic at level 12 with standard measure of 11. Arsenic commonly occurs naturally in our soils and water, Further review indicated that it may be from wood and coal ash used for fill right under the building, and that it not highly likely to leach and pollute the groundwater. When building, demolishing, or removing soil, a soil management plan must go to NHDES and be added to the property deed. If no opportunity to remove the soil, DES requires that the deed stipulates no disturbance, and additional delineation of area of contaminated soil may be necessary. Renovation could include a “surgical removal” of soil, which would also remove the deed encumbrance.

Also detected was 40 parts per trillion (current standard 70 parts per trillion) of PSO's, an emerging contaminate from water-proofing chemicals. The risks are not yet known, but it does bio-accumulate. NHDES has requested another groundwater test for this, and is paying for the test and lab analysis. Sampling will be done when weather permits, and due to limited laboratories for analysis, results may take from 2-6 weeks. Previous samples were taken from the site most likely containing the highest amounts.

The boilerhouse building's issue is petroleum, for which clean-up is covered by the Petroleum Reimbursement Fund.

Question: whether results indicate which would be better option – keep building or demolishing.

Answer: Either is viable, but best to do a structural assessment if plan is to re-use it. An activity use restriction would be formulated -- that is a legal document acknowledging the designated area of contamination and an itemization of restrictions on use that would be added to the property title (as easement for public health). Any changes would have to go through a State approval process.

The assessment found that three-quarters of the building did not have problematic levels, so best to avoid disturbing other the quarter. Again, a decision to remove soil needs a DES-approved Soil Management Plan and removal done with DES oversight.

Question: What exists water and sewer?

Answer: Test areas had shallow bedrock and no apparent lines ever installed. The water issue pertains to flood conditions, when excess water runs off into the lagoons.

“High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation.” Charles Kettering, inventor

Question: Would a complete removal by a developer run into major problems and costs?

Answer: It's an old industrial site and other sources of contamination and more urbanized fill should be anticipated. Best policy – let sleeping dogs lie. If taken down to foundation, any new build on top of it must be structurally approved.

Next Steps: Environmentally, the submission of an application for a clean-up. Town must be prepared to be owner to receive the funds. After clean-up by Town, the next step is to have a plan for re-use, optimally with a developer lined up ready to finish renovation and pay taxes. EPA funds are \$200,000 per building and the costs of clean-up with abatement of materials and any soil removal can be reasonably estimated. Demolition can be covered as clean-up. Deadline for applications is November, decision in May with funds usually available in September. Very competitive grant, so may not be successful first try, but should get started on the process. Ashland has many of the qualifying points – demographics, strong need, fire risk, environmental hazards, economic status, opportunity for job creation. NHDES may also offer similar opportunity with funds. Mike McCluskey is contact. Also look into Northern Borders, CDFA, tax credits, etc.

Structural Analysis can fall under re-use planning for brownfields, but funding more limited. Perhaps a CDFA study for re-use an parking available.

A charrette with PlanNH with prospective developers included should be pursued. Need to prepare participants in advance for maximum productivity. Need funds – \$5,000 for 2 days of workshops.

Legal Issues: Brownfields completion gives “innocent landowner” protection from identified environmental issues with the property. Taking for taxes less risk than buying problem property. The biggest risk previously discussed with surrounding mill property owners and fire department is fire in the vacant building. Still have some outstanding questions on property and process to be answered. Still inquiring about knowledgeable counsel.

Fire Chief Heath will consult with former Berlin Fire Chief regarding dealing with derelict buildings and will participate at the BOS meeting in April.

Action items:

- Follow up on legal answers -- Fran
- Contact PlanNH – Fran
- Contact for legal referrals -- Fran
- Research grant opportunities at Lamson Library – any and all
- Confirm meeting with BOS; Chief Heath, Jeff Hayes, Tim Andrews to attend – Fran
- Confirm Fire Station availability for next meetings – Steve

Meeting adjourned at 7:49 pm.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, April 5, 2018, 6:30 pm at the Fire Station;
Meeting with Board of Selectmen tentatively set for Monday, April 16, 2018, 6:30 pm AES
Library**

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Minutes submitted by Susan MacLeod