

**CITY OF LEWISTON  
PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES for April 9, 2002 - Page 1 of 6**

- I. ROLL CALL:** This meeting was held in the Third Floor Conference Room of Lewiston City Hall, was called to order at 7:05 p.m., and was chaired by Dennis Mason.
- **Members in Attendance:** Dennis Mason, Robert Connors, Kristine Kimball, John Cole, and Rob Robbins.
  - **Staff Present:** Lincoln Jeffers, Business Development Manager; James Lysen, Planning Director, Yvette Bedard, Housing/CD Officer-Community Development; and Doreen Christ, Administrative Secretary-Planning Division
  - **Members Absent:** Roger Lachapelle and Jeffrey Gosselin.
  - **Student Members Absent:** Ethan Chittim and Jen Robustelli.
  - **Others Present:** From the Public Works Department: Chris Branch, Director; Mike Paradis, City Engineer; and Dan Goyette, Project Engineer

**II. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:** To place the East Avenue Retail Development project requesting a “de minimus” change to be heard on this agenda between Items B and C of the Public Works Presentations as a Final Hearing.

**III. CORRESPONDENCE:** A memorandum from Chris Branch, P.E., Director of the Public Works Department to James Lysen, Planning Director dated April 2, 2002 in regards to College, Campus & Central Ave. Traffic Calming Project and a packet regarding W/S Lewiston Properties, LLC Retail Development, Minor Changes to Layout Plan dated April 4, 2002. The following motion was made.

**MOTION:** by **Robert Connors**, seconded by **Rob Robbins** to accept these items and read them at the appropriate time.

**VOTED:** 5-0.

**IV. PUBLIC WORKS PRESENTATIONS:**

**A. College Street/Central Avenue/Campus Avenue Safety Study.** Present at this meeting were **Chris Branch**, Public Works Director; and **Tom Errico**, Senior Traffic Engineer and **Phil Deleon** of Wilbur Smith Associates, (Engineers, Economists & Planners) of Portland, Maine.

Chris Branch provided background on the study. The first of three (3) meetings took place in January 2001. The Final Report was presented to the City Council earlier this year and is now being presented to the Planning Board for input.

Tom Errico presented a slide presentation covering the goals and objectives of the study, which include: 1. Achieving slow speeds for motor vehicles, 2. Reducing collision frequency and severity, 3. Increasing the safety and the perception of safety for non-motorized users of the street(s), 4. Reducing the need for police enforcement, 5. Enhancing the street environment, i.e. streetscaping, 5. Increasing access for all modes of transportation, and 6. Reducing cut-through motor vehicle traffic.

Tom Errico then discussed pedestrian safety and speeds in the area. Any future growth in this area will worsen the conditions to a point where congestion becomes a problem. This item was then turned over to Phil Deleon of Wilbur Smith Associates.

Phil Deleon showed slides of the Central Avenue-South area and segments from Russell Street to Central Avenue. Phil Deleon stated that the recommendations include aesthetics of the roadways, improvements to the streets, pedestrian crossings, etc. He then summarized the recommendations for the following areas.

1. Central Avenue - Russell Street to Campus Avenue.
2. Central/Campus Avenues Intersection.
3. Central-Campus Avenues to Vale Street.
4. College Street - Russell Street to Vale Street.
5. Campus Avenue-Sabattus Street to Central Avenue.
6. Campus Avenue-Central to College Street.

Chris Branch stated that it is the intent to keep traffic on the arterials within the community and out of the neighborhoods.

This item was then opened to the public for input.

**Joe Croteau (12 Davis Street)** questioned whether the one-way north on College Street and one-way on Campus Avenue was considered. Tom Errico stated that it was part of the study and that it was rejected.

**Joseph Derosier (Nichols Street)** suggested starting with the small things first and see if the situation could be corrected first. Why aren't we encouraging Bates College to come up with parking for the students and get the parking off the streets. Dennis Mason agreed with Chris Branch that parking is not included in this study.

**Mark Ferguson (10 Orestis Way)** asked if they are proposing to make improvements on the crosswalks on Bates College - Campus and Central Avenue? Chris Branch responded that this proposal does include substantial improvements to the crosswalks on Central Avenue in the Bates College area.

**Susan Haywood (Nichols Street)** asked, "What are the implications for snow removal on narrowing, median strips and bulb outs? Chris Branch said that the Public Works Department would go around the bulb outs as in the downtown area and there is no problem with snow removal.

**Chad Braswell (38 Davis Street)** asked if there has been any consideration given to perpendicular traffic as to College Street from Vale Street, from Sabattus Street to College Street, from College Street to Bates Street, and from Bates Street to Frye Street to Main Street? Chris Branch said that they are not too concerned with the traffic overflow on Oak Street, since this is not a very heavily traveled street.

**Bob Gladu (88 Russell Street)** asked, "What is the purpose of this meeting? Is this being recommended to the City Council for funding or for public information? Dennis Mason responded that this was to solicit public input. No funding has been discussed as of yet.

The public portion was then closed and opened up to the Planning Board.

Kristine Kimball asked if there were any plans for parking on Bates College's property? **Bob Bremm**, from Bates College, said they have been developing a Neighborhood Alliance to look at parking issues with the neighborhood.

**Robert True (47 Russell Street)** asked how much does this study cost? Chris Branch replied with \$18,000-\$25,000 (rough estimate).

Dennis Mason asked, "If you are going to add three stop signs, raised tables, you are going to eliminate the right-hand turn from Russell Street - where are these vehicles going to go?" Tom Errico stated that diversion is an issue. He said that the intent is to get traffic onto major arterials.

**Mike Paradis** suggested making temporary improvements and then find out what happens to the traffic. Tom Errico commented that maybe they could come out with an alternative improvement plan with vehicle shifting.

Dennis Mason added that he was concerned with where the money is going to be spend and how much it is going to cost.

**Lois Ongley (86 Russell Street)** asked if there is a way to determine if this is local traffic (in a five-block radius) or is it traffic going through the area. Chris Branch said that it can be done by doing traffic counts and determine where the bulk of the traffic is going.

**Mark Duchette (owner of Russell Street Variety, Inc.)** commented that he would rather have the traffic moved from Central Avenue to College Street and get it away from the Middle School.

John Cole stated that there is no authority under the ordinance for the Planning Board to make a recommendation for adoption of this study or otherwise, however, roads do have a big effect on planning.

James Lysen said that the Planning Board's duties allow them to make a review and recommendation on any development plan that affects the development of the City or the Comprehensive Plan. James Lysen then quoted that section of the Code. "*The Planning Board shall prepare and make any Comprehensive Plan as amended and shall review and make recommendations on all investigations, reports, and plans related to the development of planning and development of the City or effecting the Comprehensive Plan.*"

Chris Branch said that this is a traffic calming study. What should we be looking for? Should we discontinue efforts in this location or just accept what we have done and move on. The following motion was made.

**MOTION:** by **John Cole**, seconded by **Rob Robbins** that the Planning Board, as a Board, recommends to the City Council that due consideration be given to the results of the College Street/Central Avenue/Campus Avenue study and that further consideration of traffic calming be given in that particular area.

**VOTED:** 4-0-1 (Mason Abstained).

**James Carignan (Bates College and former City Councilor)** made reference to Franklin, Bardwell, Wood, and the Nichols Streets area. There is currently a proposal on the City Administrator's desk to restrict parking on all these four streets. This is an effort to address the parking. Also, James Carignan mentioned that in the last few years increased parking has been provided at both St. Mary's and Bates College.

**Jan Phillips (40 Jefferson Street)** mentioned that the Russell Street project will be finished before the City

Council acts on this.

**B. Russell Street Traffic Calming Study.** Chris Branch began this discussion. Included in this study was Wilbur Smith Associates and the Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center (ATRC), formerly known as LACTS - a municipal planning organization. This project is the direct result of the Main Street overpass project. No final report has been issued. The study area is west of College Street to Sabattus Street.

Tom Errico did a brief presentation on the traffic analysis, showing existing traffic volume and a speed survey. There are a lot of accidents on Russell Street. With the assumed existing Level of Service Summary - Sabattus/Russell has a rating of E/F. As in the previous presentation, an "E" Level of Service equals serious problems. The traffic volume on Russell Street in 1998 was measured at 18,500.

Phil Deleon went over the recommendations for the *Russell Street Corridor Study* with recommended improvements for:

1. Russell Street/College Street Intersection.
2. Russell Street - College Street to Central Avenue.
3. Russell Street - Central Avenue to East Avenue.
4. Russell Street - East Avenue to Sabattus Street.

These improvements are listed and shown on plans in the "Recommended Street Improvement Summary" which was included in the Planning Board packets.

Chris Branch said that it is proposed to eliminate left-turns onto side streets and driveways to try to accomplish two things. They are: 1. To maximize traffic flow and 2. To slow down traffic. The goal of the committee is to try to eliminate as many left-turns as possible to minimize the travel time to the area without increasing the speed.

**Joe Derosier (Nichols Street)** asked, "How much of my land are you going to take? The response was that this area will be reconstructed, but no land will be taken.

**Mark Duchette (owner of Russell Street Variety)** asked about the elimination of the left-hand turn onto Bardwell Street. Chris Branch said that the committee would have to make that determination. There is not a dedicated left-hand turn there now. This is not going to be posted that there is no left-turn.

**Jane Banks (Department Manager at Central Maine Eye Care)** questioned the area of Central Avenue to East Avenue as to placement of a traffic signal.

**Tom Miller (Robinson Gardens)** said that there is a need for a left-hand turn.

**Lois Ongley (86 Russell Street)** said that she thinks it is very important to have a left-turn lane to Bardwell Street and also that Robinson Gardens needs one.

**Sandy Miller (Robinson Gardens)** stated that more traffic will be added to Central Avenue by eliminating the left lanes. Chris Branch said that they are trying to minimize the amount of left-turns. These comments will be taken and the design will be revised.

Chris Branch stated that \$1.4 million has been funded, with \$750,000 for Russell Street. With the funding currently available, work can be done from the third bridge up to Central Avenue. Additional requested funding would be needed for the remainder.

**Thorndowski (former City of Auburn Planning Board Member)** referenced the pedestrian traffic along Russell Street and said that a flashing light would be helpful when crossing Russell Street to Bardwell Street.

**Robert Gladu (88 Russell Street)** referenced the Advisory Committee listing and stated that there is not one person from the local area. He feels that the problem with parking is being avoided. He also said that the speed should be enforced in these areas and should be posted with signs.

**Chad Braswell (38 Davis Street)** asked if any considerations has been given in reducing the number of lanes and the re-stripping of lanes. Chris Branch said that five lanes are needed to make this work.

**Jan Phillips (40 Jefferson Street)** referenced Central Avenue and East Avenue traffic islands. She said she feels that the raised crosswalks will not address the problem in this area. She would like to see a red light to stop the traffic. Chris Branch said that full lights are being proposed, which are pedestrian-activated.

**Lois Ongley (86 Russell Street)** made reference to College/Bardwell Street. She is concerned with the Fire Department getting access to these properties.

**Caroline Allam (Coordinator for Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center)** asked how this would accommodate bicyclists in getting access. Chris Branch said that they have had discussions with Bates College on a bikeway through their campus. Pettingill Street is a better location for bicyclists. Caroline Allam then asked, "How would you get from the side streets, across Main Street, and then to the path. Chris Branch stated that he could not answer that question at this time. A pedestrian overpass would be very costly.

comments or action necessary.

***Before the remainder of the agenda was presented, the item placed under the Adjustments to the Agenda was heard, that item being the East Avenue Retail Development project requesting a “de minimus” change. Ron Bissonnette, of Isaacson & Raymond, was present at this meeting and gave the following overview and details. Also present at this meeting were Barry Hosmer, Landscape Architect, and John Corbett from W/S Development Associates, LLC.***

The changes made to the Site Plan include: Retail B has been relocated approximately 85 feet to the south and is no longer connected to Retail A. The parking will be reconfigured but will remain as 328 spaces. Retail A has been shifted towards East Avenue by ten feet, as the result of: 1. The drive aisle to the rear of the store being modified from 25 to 24 feet, 2. The end islands within the parking field along East Avenue have been reduced from ten to six feet, 3. The parking spaces perpendicular to East Avenue has been modified from 19 to 18 feet, and 4. The painted islands at the front of the structures was reduced by an overall width of four feet. The retaining wall has been eliminated and will be replaced by a riprap slope, where a fence will be placed at the top, to allow for the berm and plantings. A vendor ramp near the loading area at the southeast corner of Retail A has been added. An exit door has been added at the rear of Retail A near the northeast corner of the building. The transformer pad was relocated for Retail A to the rear wall of the structure. The reconstruction of Marston Street was modified to an overall width of 32 feet. The right-turn exit at East Avenue was modified from a radius of 30 to 35 feet.

John Corbett said, as an update to the Board, that they had a meeting with all the neighbors and discussed the construction schedules. They has also meet with the Leon Levesque, Superintendent of the Lewiston School Department, and the principal of Martel School.

There were no comments and the following motion was made.

**MOTION:** *by Rob Robbins, seconded by John Cole that the Planning Board determines the changes made to the Site Plan for the East Avenue Retail Development on East Avenue to be of a “De minimus” nature, that it meets all the applicable criteria under Article XIII, Section 4, of Appendix A, Zoning and Land Use Code, and authorizes the Planning Board Chair to sign the revised mylar.*

**VOTED:** 5-0.

**C. *Railroad Park to Franklin Pasture Bicycle and Pedestrian Path.*** Chris Branch said that the

City of Lewiston received enhancement funding from the MDOT to look at the development of a bike/pedestrian way from Railroad Park through to the Franklin Pasture area. The City of Lewiston went through a selection process and selected Taylor Associates of Auburn, Maine.

***Jan Wiegman***, on behalf of Taylor Associates was present at this meeting to discuss this item. This item was brought to the Planning Board for comments from the Planning Board and the public and has been been through Preliminary Design Phases and three (3) alternatives have been looked at. There have been two public meetings. The off-road trail is what is wanted. There was also a strong desire to do something with the canals. The green trail was looked at as an option for a trail. The green trail goes 2,000 feet along the canal and can tie back in.

Some of the amenities along the trail that were looked at and recommended in the budget include: a trailhead with a paved area for parking. There may be a kiosk, a bench, or maybe a water fountain. There will be benches along the Franklin Pasture. There will also be informational and interpretive signs.

This alternative was estimated for \$340,000. The overall budget for this is \$350,000.

Chris Branch said a section of Franklin Pasture and Adams Avenue can be done with the above budget. Chris Branch said that a request has been made to the MDOT for additional enhancement money to do the segment along the canal system. Phase I of the construction will be the Franklin Pasture and Adams Avenue and the remainder of the project will come out of the requested enhancement funds. There were no questions from the Board. The public comments is as follows.

- ***Jan Phillips (40 Jefferson Street)*** said that a solution is needed as to the sidewalks. Jan Wiegman responded that sidewalks will be along one side and stripped bike lanes on either side of the road.
- ***Tom Gosselin (a student at Lewiston High School - Age 16)*** asked how long is the trail? The response is that it is about 1-3/4 mile long. It was then asked who will be maintaining this path. LA Trails is proposed to get involved in i.e. Adopt-A-Spot, etc. (Adopt-A -Trail). Jan Wiegman said that the path will be lighted. Chris Branch commented that the more use, the less vandalism.

- ***Susan Hayward (Nichols Street)*** asked how wide is the trail? Jan Wiegman responded that it will be ten feet wide to accommodate bikes in both directions and it will be paved.

- **Caroline Allam (Coordinator for the Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center)** mentioned that a trail is needed like the one in Brunswick/Topsham.
- **Allan Hahnel (LA Trails)** said that this is a two-Phase process. He mentioned Phase I as utilizing the money that has already been allocated and committing to the second phase along the canal, which will be a significant amount of money in the future. LA Trails are pretty excited about this development. This will be an enhancement to the image of the community. This will give an economic advantage to the community. He encourages the City to go forward with this.
- **Mike Lecompte** said that this is a great idea and that he hopes that this is a phase project with the second phase being along the canals.

**D. Park Street Parking Garage.** **Nat Salfas**, from Platz Associates, stated that there are two phases to this design and that it will eventually hold 800 cars. Nat Salfas said the concept behind the design includes a bus station on the corner. Nat Salfas showed the plans and said that he has tried to fit this facility with the architectural setting of the area. There was no public comments. This concluded this presentation.

*Dennis Mason asked the Planning Board to waiver the ruling and continue the remaining items on the agenda.*

The following motion was made.

**MOTION:** by **Robert Connors**, seconded by **Kristine Kimball** to continue Item Nos. V, VI, and VII A. on the agenda.

**VOTED:** 5-0.

**V. FINAL HEARING: Final Hearing concerning a minor amendment to the Water's Edge Subdivision off No Name Pond Road.** **Roger Richard** of Richard & Roy, LLC, owner and developer of the Water's Edge Subdivision was present at this meeting. Dennis Mason summarized this item. In summary, five lots are being combined into four and four lots into three.

**MOTION:** by **John Cole**, seconded by **Kristine Kimball** that the Planning Board finds that the amendment to the Water's Edge Subdivision off No Name Pond Road meets all the necessary approval criteria under Article XIII, Sections 4 and 5 of the Zoning and Land Use Code and that final approval be granted.

**VOTED:** 5-0.

*After this motion was made, Dennis Mason requested the mylars for his signature.*

**VI. PRE-APPLICATION AND DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS HEARING: Pre-Application and Determination of Completeness Hearing on an application by Tri-County Mental Health on a proposed 20,000 square-foot facility at 80 Strawberry Avenue.** Present at this meeting were **Mark Bergeron** of Pinkham & Greer Consulting Engineers, Inc. two members from Tri-County Mental Health, and **Dan Mareno**, Architect. Mark Bergeron said that the Public Works Department has requested a traffic study that basically says what the volumes will be and evaluate the impact on Strawberry Avenue. Mark Bergeron said that he will contact Bill Eaton tomorrow, April 10, 2002 for him to prepare a traffic report. At this point, Dennis Mason requested a letter stating the peak traffic count in and out of the property and the affect on Strawberry Avenue.

A potential Phase II will be the adding of 25 parking spaces. Dennis Mason said that if this is shown on the plans, it can be included as a Phase II. The following motion was made.

**MOTION:** by **Robert Connors**, seconded by **Kristine Kimball** that the Planning Board grants the necessary waivers and modifications, require that a letter from the traffic engineer regarding traffic count be provided, that the application for Tri-County Mental Health at 80 Strawberry Avenue is determined to be complete, and to schedule a Final Hearing at the April 23, 2002 Planning Board Meeting.

**VOTED:** 5-0.

*Rob Robbins recused himself from the Planning Board on the following item.*

**VII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**A. Disposition of City-owned properties to Community Concepts, Inc. in support of their proposed housing project in the Maple, Knox, and Bates Streets area.** Community Concepts, Inc. have been working on this project for about 1-1/2 years. This will put new life into the downtown and change the streetscape by building

16 units of affordable housing that is townhouse-style apartments and 32 on-site parking spaces.

Present at this meeting from Community Concepts, Inc. were **Dennis Lajoie**, Director of Housing & Real Estate Development; **Tom Lewis** (Finance), and **Joe Ponsetti** (Architect) and also **Yvette Bedard**, Housing/CD Officer from the Community Development Department.

They will be providing off-street parking and each unit will have a private first-floor entrance. The townhouses will be modest in scale, connected, with front porches. They will be purchased. There will be four units. Two, two-bedroom for handicapped (flat); twelve, three-bedroom; and two, four-bedroom. There will be some landscaping. It was asked who would be the owner. The response was Community Concepts would be the owner, developer, property manager, and private investor. These units will be two-story with a full basement for additional storage. The following motion was made.

**MOTION:** by **Robert Connors**, seconded by **Kristine Kimball** that the Planning Board send a favorable recommendation to the City Council to dispose of the properties at 56, 57, 60, 63, and 64 Maple Street and 77 Knox Street to Community Concepts, Inc. in support of their proposed housing project.

**VOTED:** 3-0-2 (Robbins/Cole Abstained).

*Due to the lateness of the hour, the following agenda items were not reviewed during this meeting:*

**B.** *Review of a proposal to rezone properties on the west side of Main Street from 660-724 Main Street, west to the Maine Central Railroad, from Community Business (CB) District to Highway Business (HB) District.*

**VIII. READING OF THE MINUTES:** *Reading of the minutes from the 03/26/02 Planning Board Meeting.*

**IX. ADJOURNMENT:** This meeting adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Kimball  
Planning Board Member & Secretary

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