

**CITY OF LEWISTON
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MINUTES for October 12, 1999 - Page 1 of 4**

I. ROLL CALL:

After the presentation on the Final Downtown Master Plan (see attached notes), there was a brief recess from 7:00 - 7:15 p.m. This meeting was then called to order at 7:15 p.m. and chaired by Harry Milliken.

Members In Attendance: Rob Robbins, Harry Milliken, Lewis Zidle, and Mark Paradis.

LMRC Members In Attendance: Colleen Lahey and Dick Metivier.

Staff Present: James Lysen, Planning Director; James Fortune, Planning Coordinator; Gil Arsenault, Deputy Development Director, Gregory Mitchell, Director of Development; and Doreen Asselin, Administrative Assistant.

Members Absent: John Cole, Tom Peters, and Dennis Mason.

Others Present: Jonathan Van Fleet - Lewiston Sun-Journal.

II. CORRESPONDENCE: Letter from Martha G. Kirkpatrick, Commissioner, State of Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) dated October 6, 1999 referencing Approval of Shoreland Area Amendments.

MOTION: by **Rob Robbins**, seconded by **Lewis Zidle** that this correspondence be accepted, as submitted, and placed on file.

VOTED: 4-0.

III. PUBLIC HEARING - A Proposal by Arthur W. Montana of A.R.C.C. Land Surveyors, Inc. on behalf of George Schott to conditionally rezone the front portion of the property at 1046 Main Street (formerly the R.J. Pelletier Lawn and Garden Center) from Neighborhood Conservation "A" (NCA) District to Highway Business (HB) District.

Jim Lysen read the memorandum prepared by Jim Fortune dated October 7, 1999. In summary, at the September 30, 1999 Planning Board Meeting, the Planning Board voted to hold this Public Hearing. George Schott is seeking to conditionally rezone the front portion of his property along Main Street approximately 180 feet in from Main Street. The most recent use of this property had been a legally, non-conforming commercial use. That use has been discontinued for a number of years. Under Article VI, Section 4 (c), a non-conforming use cannot be resumed after it has been discontinued for a period of 12 consecutive months or more. George Schott would like to reuse this property for certain uses in the Highway Business (HB) District. The existing zoning is Neighborhood Conservation "A" (NCA) District, which does not allow for a commercial use of the existing building. This item has been brought to the Planning Board to determine that the rezoning meets the following criteria outlined in Article XVII, Section 5 (4), which is: A. The change is consistent with the comprehensive plan; B. The change establishes rezoned areas that are consistent with the existing and permitted uses within the original district; and C. That all conditions and restrictions imposed relate only to the physical development or operation of the property. It is Staff's opinion that 1046 Main Street meets the criteria outlined above. Planning Board Staff would like a recommendation for this to be included on the City Council Agenda for Tuesday, October 19, 1999.

Also present at this meeting on this item were both George Schott, the applicant, and Arthur Montana of A.R.C.C. Land Surveyors, Inc., on behalf of the applicant. Arthur Montana made a brief presentation. This property was formerly used by R.J. Pelletier Lawn and Garden Center. The lot has an existing one-story “L” shape metal frame and cement block commercial building and a single-story wood-frame detached garage/storage structure. The rear portion of this property was regraded in 1995. He said that this item had come up before the Planning Board several years ago to be rezoned (a cheese factory). He said that commercial uses are somewhat compatible to the uses surrounding this property.

Arthur Montana said that there was an informational neighborhood meeting held on Tuesday, September 7, 1999 at Harleys’-R-US concerning this item. Three (3) area residents were present at this meeting. Scott Lynch was one of the residents present at this meeting. Scott Lynch is an abutting property owner and resides at 18 Nimitz Street. At this meeting, he stated that he has no objections to what is being proposed and is in favor of this project.

On Page Nos. 5 and 6 of the application, there is a listing of the Permitted Uses only. Harry Milliken asked, “What is the home occupation definition?” This use is listed on Page No. 6 of the application. In accordance with the uses proposed, this use was listed since the house could be developed in the back portion. Since this application is only for the front portion, the home occupation use does not apply. There is no residential aspect to this application. It was agreed to remove Item No. 28 on Page No. 6 of the application. This will be listed in the recommendation as being removed from the listing. This item was then opened to the public for comments. There were no comments, therefore this meeting was then turned back to the Planning Board for the following motion.

MOTION: by **Rob Robbins**, seconded by **Mark Paradis** that the Planning Board favorably recommends to the City Council that the application for 1046 Main Street be conditionally rezoned from Neighborhood Conservation “A” (NCA) to Highway Business (HB) District with the exception that Item No. 28 under Permitted Uses of Appendix A, Zoning and Land Use Code, be deleted as part of this application.

VOTED: 4-0.

IV. WORKSHOP: *Amendments to the Urban Enterprise (UE) and Downtown Business (D) Districts including Permitted and Conditional Uses, Space and Bulk Standards, and Required Review Processes.*

Jim Lysen summarized the memorandum prepared by Jim Fortune dated October 7, 1999. This meeting is being held at the request of Planning Board Members at their September 30, 1999 Meeting. This workshop is being held to discuss possible rezoning amendments to the Urban Enterprise (UE), Downtown Business (D), and portions of the Neighborhood Conservation “B” (NCB) Districts adjacent to the downtown area. The purpose of the amendments will be to provide flexibility in the application of space and bulk standards, land use regulations and review processes in the downtown districts in order to encourage the improvement, reuse and redevelopment of this area of the city with appropriate development standards. The actions that are taken by the Planning Board shall be consistent with the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Master Plan. Proposed amendments shall be consistent with the recommendations of the Mayor’s Downtown Renaissance Task Force Master Plan.

Jim Lysen mentioned that mainly the NCB surrounds the downtown. He briefly described and showed on the map at the Planning Board Meeting where the Mill District area expands to and the Downtown District area.

Jim Lysen said that growth to the downtown area needs to be encouraged. We need a more viable downtown. This item has been brought to the Planning Board to provide guidance and direction to the Planning Staff concerning possible amendments to the downtown districts and to assist the Planning Staff in coming up with a matrix of uses, space and bulk standards, etc.

Also, included in the Planning Board packets is the matrix prepared by Jim Fortune. He mentioned that this matrix is now as it exists in our code. Harry Milliken requested that this matrix get mailed out in a mailing to the Mayor's Downtown Renaissance Task Force and the City Council Members.

Rob Robbins asked that, using museums for an example, why are they not permitted in one area (UE - Urban Enterprise) and are in another area (D - Downtown) according to the matrix included in the packets? Jim Lysen's response was that standards can be drafted up to allow uses.

Harry Milliken said (personal opinion) that he would suggest that there be no more used car lots on Lisbon Street. He said that this is a gateway area. Some of his ideas for portions of the Downtown UE District were to have a mixed residential use to the Little Canada area. He said that the waterfront could be dressed up to attract tourists into the downtown area. He said that the Planning Board needs input from the LMRC, the City Council, etc. on uses to be permitted. He said we do not want to make the existing non-conforming. He would like to see amusement for tourists to come down by the waterfront. He said Lisbon Street could be retail use. He also suggested that certain areas could be grandfathered. Some buildings do not accommodate the existing uses. Mills could be removed and replaced with residential houses along the riverfront. He suggested taking advantage of the riverfront. He also mentioned that a barge could go up and down the river. He also suggested taking a look at what Auburn is doing on the other side of the river. Jim Lysen agreed that the two (2) cities should mix in. There is a need to remove obstacles and welcome people to the downtown. The downtown needs to be made attractive. Jim Lysen suggested that we may need sub-districts in the downtown, i.e. districts as the Mill, Courthouse Plaza, Riverfront, Centreville, Western Gateway, Main Street - Medical, Southern Gateway, Residential, etc. (this is listed in the Downtown Master Plan prepared by RKG Associates dated October 1, 1999 and shown on Drawing No. DST, Lewiston Downtown Master Plan District Designation Plan). The UE was created in 1988 and it does not work anymore. Jim Lysen said that this is a transitional period and that we do not want to make this difficult.

Also included in the Planning Board packets were copies of "The Zoning Report" dated June 25, 1999 and July 23, 1999. In these documents, it mentions that blighted areas are difficult to attract investment. They also question, "How do we get traffic out of downtown completely?" They also mention that many larger cities will have sub-zones. Most successful cities have multi-uses. The code can require one thing; the developer can another.

Jim Lysen said a different matrix is needed. He suggested making a list of what we want in the downtown area and then taking away from that list. Harry Milliken suggested identifying certain businesses and asking if they qualify for the riverfront. Need to define the whole district. Harry Milliken said that this is going to be our downtown or a new city. Rob Robbins spoke up and said that he would like a listing of what is already there first. Jim Lysen agreed that the Planning Board Staff could do site visits. Harry Milliken also agreed that there is a need for some sort of inventory of the downtown.

Gil Arsenault said that the UE in the downtown area can be pretty flexible.

It was then agreed that this item be handled in another workshop with a listing of the existing uses. This listing should be made up on an easel with a check off of what should be in the downtown. It should be a vision of what should be there. It was agreed that the Planning Board Staff Members work on a matrix to be presented on an easel. Jim Lysen will work on the sub-district listing. This shall be brought back to the next Planning Board Meeting as another workshop, which is scheduled for Tuesday, October 26, 1999.

NEW ITEM NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA - PLANNING BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1999.

- November 9, 1999: Since there is a conflict with the City Council, this meeting will be held on the Third Floor in Meeting Room "A".
- November 23, 1999: This meeting is regularly scheduled and will remain in the City Council Chambers.
- December 14, 1999: Since there is a conflict with the City Council, this meeting will be held on the Third Floor in Meeting Room "A".

V. READING OF THE MINUTES:

- A. *Draft Minutes of Planning Board Meeting Held on September 9, 1999.*
- B. *Draft Minutes of Planning Board Meeting Held on September 16, 1999.*
- C. *Draft Minutes of Planning Board Meeting Held on September 30, 1999.*

Harry Milliken suggested waiting on the minutes and carrying them to the next Planning Board Meeting, which is scheduled for Tuesday, October 12, 1999.

VI. ADJOURNMENT - The following motion was made to adjourn.

MOTION: by Rob Robbins, seconded by Lewis Zidle to adjourn this meeting at 8:20 p.m.

VOTED: 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Mason, Secretary

**JOINT PLANNING BOARD/CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATION
ON THE
FINAL DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN**

Minutes of Presentation Held on Tuesday, October 12, 1999 at 6:00 p.m.

This presentation began at 6:15 p.m. and was presented by Joyce Bilodeau. Present for this presentation were representatives from the consultant, RKG Associates, the Mayor's Downtown Renaissance Task Force Members (three members), Planning Division Staff, and Planning Board Members (four members).

Jim Lysen opened the presentation by reading his memorandum dated October 8, 1999. He said that the original Draft Master Plan was presented on July 20, 1999. Since that time, the Task Force has met on numerous occasions. The focus of this presentation will be on the summary tables on Page Nos. 6 and 7 and 24-32 of the plan. This area has been fine tuned. The plan reflects an exciting real estate and marketing approach to the revitalization of the downtown.

This presentation is being brought forward to seek a favorable recommendation from the Planning Board to the City Council concerning the adoption of the Downtown Master Plan as a component of the Comprehensive Plan. Jim Lysen thanked the Task Force for their input and then turned the presentation over to Joyce Bilodeau, Co-Chair of the MRDTF.

Joyce Bilodeau referred to Page Nos. 6 and 7 of the Downtown Master Plan. There are 24 actions that are being recommended. She said that the most important action is to continue in the same function. She said that the specific recommendations start on Page No. 16 of the Plan. She said referred to Action No. 3 as being the most crucial action to implementation of the Plan. Action No. 3 is to hire an experience senior level Downtown Development Manager (DDMgr) to function as staff to the MDRTF. She said that this needs to be staffed and that someone needs to be hired. The Lewiston Mill Redevelopment Corporation (LMRC) cannot be successful if they ignore the downtown. With the LMRC Strategic Planning process starting, the MDRTF can step up to help.

Joyce Bilodeau also highlighted Action No. 6. Action No. 6 is to retain an experienced real estate broker to market downtown properties. She said that there is no broker available in the City of Lewiston to perform this task.

Action No. 7 is also very important and that is to continue the program of acquiring and demolishing blighted, vacant properties in a strategic manner, focusing particularly on opportunities to create new development or to enhance the value of existing properties.

She also mentioned Action No. 4 and that is to work with local banks to establish a low interest loan pool for acquisition and redevelopment of property.

After going through these Actions mentioned above, Joyce Bilodeau referred to Drawing No. TR-1C, Lewiston Downtown Master Plan Traffic Plan: Option C. She said that vehicular traffic to the downtown is an impediment to the downtown and that particular attention should be given to this drawing, since this is a major impact to traffic. She would like to hear the Planning Board's opinion on LePage Bakeries. She said in order to keep trucks off of Lisbon Street, this would require City Council action. The overall short-term goals of this plan are: 1. That major arteries to the downtown handle capacity as required

by the increase in development; 2. Improve ingress/egress functionality proprietary to district; 3. Eliminate through trucks on Lisbon Street; 4. Minimize adverse one-way vehicular traffic; and 5. Implement district signage program. Option C includes: 1. Reverse traffic flow on Canal, Lisbon, and Park Streets; 2. Install a light at Canal and Main Streets; 3. Close Canal Street at Lisbon Street and use Locust Street to reverse direction; 4. Extend Locust Street to Park Street; and 5. Lisbon Street to two-way traffic from Canal to Cedar Streets.

Joyce Bilodeau said that our transportation system may not be the best system. She mentioned Action No. 13 on Page No. 7, which is to evaluate the feasibility of a trolley system versus new parking garages. She said that a trolley system would be very inexpensive. The City of Lewiston is eligible for grants. She said that the cost is very low compared to surface or structure parking. She said that the cost comparison would shock you.

Joyce Bilodeau then referred to Action Nos. 15 and 16. Action No. 15 is to have the City Council adopt the downtown plan as a component of the City-wide Comprehensive Plan. Action No. 16 is to undertake the necessary studies as recommended in the District specific actions.

Action Nos. 20 and 21 are to develop additional cultural programs and activities in the downtown and to evaluate the potential usage of SuperPark Legislation/Bonding with Auburn and adjacent communities. This could be used to help fund a hotel/conference center or other similar projects of regional significance. She mentioned that both Lewiston and Auburn would like a motel. She said that the SuperPark Legislation will help to achieve that.

Joyce Bilodeau said that this will be concurrent with LMRC's Strategic Planning process.

This concluded her brief presentation of the Downtown Master Plan. She said she is seeking both Planning Board and City Council review and approval of this document.

Harry Milliken commented that this is the best document he has seen. He said that this document is very valuable to the Planning Board and that the Planning Board will be asking the MDRTF for input on the downtown. This can be used as a great source for uses of the downtown. It will be very interesting to see how the zones line up. He mentioned that since there were three (3) Planning Board Members absent from this meeting that he would like to have this tabled to the Tuesday, October 26, 1999 Planning Board Meeting and also the recommendation concerning the adoption of the Downtown Master Plan as a component of the Comprehensive Plan.

Barry Putnam, City Councilor and MDRTF Member thanked everyone on the Task Force for their efforts.

It was requested that the Planning Board Staff prepare a memorandum to the Planning Board Members to remind them to review the Final Downtown Master Plan and get back to Staff questions that can get funneled before the October 26, 1999 meeting.

The following motion was then made by the Planning Board Members:

MOTION: by Lewis Zidle, seconded by Rob Robbins that the Planning Board table the Presentation on the Final Downtown Master Plan and reschedule this again for the next Planning Board Meeting to be held on Tuesday, October 26, 1999.

VOTED: 4-0.

