

**CITY OF LEWISTON  
PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES for January 23, 2001 - Page 1 of 8**

- I. ROLL CALL:** This meeting was held in the City Council Chambers, was called to order at 7:03 p.m., and was chaired by Dennis Mason.
- **Members In Attendance:** Mark Paradis, Lewis Zidle, Dennis Mason, John Cole, Muriel Minkowsky, Roger Lachapelle, and new Planning Board Student Member Ethan Chittim.
  - **Staff Present:** Gil Arsenault, Deputy Development Director; James Lysen, Planning Director; James Fortune, Planning Coordinator; and Doreen Asselin, Administrative Secretary.
  - **Member Absent:** Rob Robbins.

At this point in time, the Planning Board was introduced to the new Planning Board Student Member *Ethan Chittim*.

- II. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:** There were none.

- III. CORRESPONDENCE:** The following were items included in the Planning Board packets:
- Letter from Historic Preservation Review Board Chair William Clifford - Concerning the preservation of the Elk's Building, 61 Ash Street; and
  - E-mail from Phil Nadeau dated January 19, 2001 in regards to the appointment of a Planning Board Member to the Bio-Solids Stacking Pad Site Committee.

The following is the listing of the correspondence that was distributed at the Planning Board Meeting:

- An invitation to a Public Meeting between the City of Lewiston & the Courthouse Plaza Committee;
- Project Review Forms from the Fire Department, Code Enforcement, and Kenneth Young, Downtown Development Manager in regards to 200-214 Main Street, the Lewiston/Auburn Bus Terminal;
- Project Review Forms from Kenneth Young, Downtown Development Manager, and Becky Conrad, Executive Director of L/A Excels in regards to 91 Maple Street; and
- Project Review Forms from Kenneth Young, Downtown Development Manager, and Becky Conrad, Executive Director of L/A Excels in regards to 264 Blake Street.

*Lewis Zidle arrived at 7:05 p.m.*

The following motion was made on the above listed correspondence.

**MOTION:** by **John Cole**, seconded by **Roger Lachapelle** that the Planning Board moves to accept this correspondence, place it on file, and that it be read later on at the appropriate time.

**VOTED:** 6-0.

*John Cole recused himself from the Planning Board due to a conflict of interest on the following three (3) items.*

- IV. PRE-APPLICATION AND DETERMINATION OF COMPLETENESS HEARING:** *Pre-Application and Determination of Completeness concerning a proposed expansion of the Department of Human Services (DHS) building, 200-214 Main Street.* Jim Fortune read the memorandum that he prepared and was dated January 18, 2001. The following is an overview of

that memorandum.

Taylor Engineering, on behalf of R.P.M. Realty submitted this application for the renovation and expansion of the Department of Human Services (DHS) office building at 200-214 Main Street. Some of the site improvements include a 24,659 square foot building addition on the current site of the bus depot, expansion of the parking lot, utility improvements, regrading of the parking lot, new storm drain structures, and new landscaping. There will be no increase in the number of employees or clients accessing the services at this location with the proposed expansion. DHS will occupy the space in the new addition and a portion of the existing building, formerly the Sears building. The remaining floor space (formerly the J.C. Penney building) will be vacated by the DHS and eventually renovated and leased to new tenants in the future. Because there will be no increase in the number of employees and clients and the traffic from the bus depot will be eliminated, it is estimated that a net decrease in the number of vehicle trips will result from this project.

To date, Planning Board Staff have held two (2) pre-development review meetings with the developer, the Public Works, Fire, and Police Departments to discuss specific requirements for this project. Some of the issues that will need to be discussed during the development review process include storm water management, traffic circulation, and parking.

This project will also require the demolition of the City-owned bus depot and is scheduled to also be discussed later on at this meeting.

On-site traffic circulation will be changed by reconfiguring the existing parking lot and increasing the number of spaces to 207. Based on the total office space (including the former J.C. Penney building), if the total finished floor space is 68,325 square feet for offices, then 221 parking spaces are required by code. However, the 56,614 square feet that will be occupied by DHS will require only 189 parking spaces. A minimum of 14 additional parking spaces will need to be provided before the remainder of the building is totally occupied by other tenants. Another improvement will be the elimination of the curb cut on Main Street, where the buses used to enter and exit. There will be two (2) curbs cuts on Middle Street that will provide a means of ingress and egress to and from the site. This will improve traffic flow on Main Street.

The Police Department had no concerns with this project. The only comment made by the Fire Department was the requirement that the connection be a four inch (4") Stortz connection located on the Main Street side of the building. James Lysen commented that, in discussion with the Public Works Department, they have indicated the application is complete.

Present at this meeting were **Jan Wiegman** from Taylor Engineering Associates, **Roger Michaud** from R.P.M. Realty (the owner), and **Guy Lebreque** and **Dick Curtis**, both from Curtis Walter Stewart Architects.

Jan Wiegman briefly summarized this project. He stated that this is an expansion of the current DHS building and includes three (3) parcels. Two of the parcels are the DHS and the remaining parcel is the bus station. Jan Wiegman showed this project on his plan to the Planning Board Members. The DHS building is proposed to be expanded by 24,659 square feet. DHS will move out of the former J.C. Penney building. 207 parking spaces will be on-site. The new entry to this structure will be at the corner of Middle and Main Streets. Jan Wiegman went on to say that the existing pavement will be re-graded and curbing will be added. Also, eight (8) catch basins will be added. There will be a new waterline and utilities to service this building. The sewer line will be extended. Landscaping will be added. Five (5) trees and 63 shrubs will be added. One (1) loading space will also be added on Chapel Street. In closing, Jan Wiegman said that in regards to traffic impacts, they are not anticipating any additional parking spaces or increase in traffic.

Guy Labrecque, from Curtis Walter Stewart Architects (CWS) did an overall concept and overview of this project. He said that they are trying to find similar brick and has contacted Morin Brick. The current blonde-colored brick on the DHS building will be removed. All of the Main Street side will be brick veneer. There will be no clients entering the upper levels. All the trucks and traffic will be going down Chapel Street. With the purchasing of the Callahan building property, this will provide space for additional parking. The former J.C. Penney's building will be vacated and an owner in a separate project can thus pursue this space. Also mentioned, was that this project is within 500 feet from the City of Lewiston parking lot. James Lysen stated that the City will be providing angled parking which will double the parking on Lowell Street, but will also slow traffic down.

At this point in the discussion, it was mentioned that the entire project should be approved, assuming that the developer finds 14 additional parking spaces. Gil Arsenault mentioned placing a condition to meet the parking requirement. Roger Michaud of R.P.M. Realty mentioned that there is a Purchase and Sale Agreement already binding on the Callahan site and therefore, parking on the Callahan site is part of this project. There are three (3) weeks left to get this plan in shape before the next Planning Board Meeting, which is scheduled for Tuesday, February 13, 2001. It was suggested that this be reflected as part of the project. Gil Arsenault suggested bringing the amendment to the next meeting. Dennis Mason mentioned that there is also no construction schedule in the Planning Board packets. The loading zone also needs to be reconfigured. Dennis Mason asked what will be done i.e. as to a change in traffic signals. Gil Arsenault commented that this project will actually decrease congestion in this area with the elimination of the bus station. There, being no further comments, the following motion was made.

**MOTION:** by **Mark Paradis**, seconded by **Roger Lachapelle** that the Planning Board finds the application on the proposed expansion of the Department of Human Services Office Building, 200-214 Main Street to be complete and grants the necessary waivers and modifications, subject to notifying the abutting property owners and for proof of right, title, or interest, which the application does not contain, and to schedule this project for a final review at the next Planning Board Meeting scheduled for February 13, 2001.

**VOTED:** 5-0.

**John Cole remained recused on the following item.**

**V. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**A. New Business:**

**1. *Review a proposal concerning the possible disposition of the land and building located at 214 Main Street (Lewiston/Auburn Transit Bus Terminal), in conjunction with the DHS expansion.*** James Fortune read his memorandum that he prepared and was dated for January 18, 2001. The bus terminal property located at 214 Main Street is jointly owned by the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn. This property is proposed for sale by Lewiston and Auburn to R.P.M. Realty Trust in order to facilitate the expansion of the Department of Human Services (DHS) office building located on the adjacent parcel at 200 Main Street. The proposed project includes the demolition of the bus terminal, redevelopment of the site with a 24,659 square foot building addition (to 200 Main Street) and expansion of the parking area. Both the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn have agreed in principle to sell the property in support of the DHS expansion project. The bus terminal will be relocated to another appropriate location in the downtown.

Dennis Mason questioned the \$275,000 amount for this sale. The development assistance agreement obligates the City to pay the difference between the \$175,000 that R.P.M. Realty Trust has agreed to pay for the parcel and the appraised value, which is \$275,000. The City would thus owe the difference of \$100,000. This item was brought to the Planning Board to request this review and act on the disposition request at this meeting and recommend to the City Council that 214 Main Street be sold to R.P.M. Realty Trust at the appraised value of \$275,000.

Roger Michaud stated that this needs to happen. The bus terminal has air quality issues. Roger Michaud said that you need to look at square-foot cost. This is an expensive sale of property. He went on to say that this will be an income-producing property. This is where the City, State, and Roger Michaud put up some money. This may also spur some other development.

It was mentioned that LACTS has been looking to relocate the bus terminal facility for a while.

Dennis Mason stated that this will be an improvement to the City. Roger Lachapelle added that this does send a good message. There, being no further comments and no public audience, the following motion was made.

**MOTION:** by Lewis Zidle, seconded by Roger Lachapelle to send a favorable recommendation to the City Council to sell the property located at 214 Main Street, in conjunction with the DHS expansion project, as proposed.

**VOTED:** 5-0-1 (Cole).

*John Cole remained recused for this item also.*

2. *Review a proposal concerning the possible disposition of City-owned properties located at 91 Maple Street and 264 Blake Street, in support of the St. Mary's Hospital's housing initiative.* Jim Fortune read his memorandum dated January 18, 2001. This item has been brought to the Planning Board on the acquisition of two (2) properties from the City, in support of the Sisters of Charity Health System (SOCHS) housing initiative. SOCHS is assembling a parcel of land in downtown Lewiston with the goal to redevelop the parcel with the creation of a low-income, owner-occupied housing development that will foster a healthy downtown neighborhood. This goal is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Downtown Master Plan. SOCHS would like to acquire the two (2) remaining parcels of land bounded by Maple and Blake Streets and owned by the City. 264 Blake Street is a vacant parcel. 91 Maple Street currently has a single-family home, which is expected to be vacant shortly. SOCHS proposal is to demolish the building at 91 Maple Street and combine these two (2) parcels to complete the assemblage of lots needed for their housing project. The conveyance would be from the City of Lewiston to a non-profit corporation called, "Neighborhood Housing Initiative, Inc.". The SOCHS is requesting that these properties be conveyed for \$1.00, free of any liens, claims, or encumbrances.

James Lysen outlined the properties to the Planning Board Members on two (2) different maps. James Lysen went on to say that this is a townhouse-type development. The housing will be two-(2-) story. This housing initiative will be approximately 20 units on 1.4 acres. This is proposed to be owner-occupied, low-moderate housing. James Lysen continued his presentation by saying that according to *James Cassidy*, President of the Sisters of Charity Health System, Inc., \$250,000 has been allocated by SOCHS, which is a Lewiston-based, non-profit corporation that has a strong corporate mission to serve the needs of low-income families. All other properties are secured.

Mark Paradis made reference to the memorandum dated January 12, 2001 written by *Gregory Mitchell*, Director of Development to *Bob Vitas*, the new City Administrator. Mark Paradis' specific reference was made to the first paragraph of this letter which states, "In response

to the attached letter from Jim Cassidy, President of SOCHS, please be advised that the Lewiston City Council, in Executive Session, has committed to donate a total of seven (7) City-owned properties to support the SOCHS housing initiative.” Mark Paradis asked, “Where are the seven (7) properties?” James Lysen’s response was that this project involves just 91 Maple Street and 264 Blake Street, but that there are still five (5) more properties along Maple Street that eventually could be involved in further housing initiatives, which he showed to the Planning Board on the map presented. These properties were tax-acquired and this property was land-banked.

Dennis Mason made the suggestion to Planning Board Staff that this item be shown to the Fire Department early on since access to this site is very challenging.

Muriel Minkowsky expressed concern with the housing being attached too close to one another and that this is okay for adults, not for children. James Lysen also said that there will be a one- (1-) car space with back yards for each unit. In closing, James Lysen also said that this development will be architecturally detailed very nicely.

There were no concerns expressed by the Police and Public Works Departments, *James Andrews*, the Director of Community Development, *Richard Metivier*, the Finance Director for the City of Lewiston, or *Joe Grube* from the Assessing Department. *Carole Ansheles*, the Executive Director from Empower Lewiston, only comment was that the current occupants are provided sufficient time to complete their relocation.

There was no public audience available and no further questions or comments made by the Planning Board. The following motion was made.

**MOTION:** by **Mark Paradis**, seconded by **Roger Lachapelle** that the Planning Board send a favorable recommendation to the City Council to dispose of the properties located at 91 Maple Street and 264 Blake Street, in support of the Sisters of Charity Health System (SOCHS) housing initiative, as proposed.

**VOTED:** 5-0-1 (Cole).

*At this point in the meeting, John Cole rejoined the Planning Board.*

3. ***Preliminary review and discussion concerning the FY2002 Lewiston Capital Improvement Program (LCIP) and schedule a Public Hearing for the LCIP at the February 13, 2001 Planning Board Meeting.*** Mark Paradis was the Planning

Board representative on the Review Committee. He said his only concern was that some Committee Members were not present at these meetings that were held in December 2001. Some of Mark Paradis’ recommendations were: a. To keep moving forward with future phases of projects. He used the Lewiston High School paving request as an example. He said once Phase I is done to keep moving forward to Phase II, etc., and b. The fire truck should have been done long before this for \$317,000. This is for the 1981 Continental Pumper. He said he supports this and would like to make sure that it gets done.

Dennis Mason asked, “What was the plan FY2001?” James Lysen responded that \$18,000,000 FY2002 includes Federal, State, and City. \$8.9 million is within the City of Lewiston. James Lysen also said that the Project Description Forms are, as submitted and have not been changed. He also said that the LCIP will be going through a review process, as requested by new City Administrator, Bob Vitas. Departments will submit what they think they need. Then it goes through the review process. Then there is the financial picture of what can we afford to spend. Then this process goes through the Finance Director and the City Administrator on how and when to fund these requests. Basically it is the department requests that get funneled through the committee.

Mark Paradis referenced the requests made by the Airport . There were 20 requests submitted. Only five (5) of these requests ended up on top (see Section II, Page No. 1). The rest that were scheduled, were bumped up to FY2003-2006.

John Cole feels the Planning Board should support the LCIP that was previously made by the Review Committee.

James Lysen referred to the letter to Mayor Kaileigh Tara dated January 15, 2001. This letter contains a narrative executive summary, which summarizes the whole packet of what is happening in the next year.

Dennis Mason stated that a clarification needs to be made on the Public Works projects, i.e. on equipment purchases. He said this is too unclear. He referred to Section II, Page No. 98 with the asterisk - Purchased with payment. After these comments and concerns were expressed, there being no public audience available, the following motion was made.

**MOTION:** by **Roger Lachapelle**, seconded by **Muriel Minkowsky** that the Planning Board schedule the FY2002 Lewiston Capital Improvement Program (LCIP) for a Public Hearing at the next Planning Board Meeting to be held on February 13, 2001.

**VOTED:** 6-0.

*The following item was presented out of sequence to the agenda.*

**III. CORRESPONDENCE: Historic Preservation Review Board - Concerning the preservation of the Elk's Building, 61 Ash Street.** James Lysen presented this item. He said that this is an historic building built in 1907. The correspondence presented to the Planning Board was the Historic Preservation Review Board's (H.P.R.B.'s) recommendation made at their meeting of January 4, 2001 to retain this building. The H.P.R.B. recommends that any and all efforts should be made to preserve the building and that the H.P.R.B. would work with the owner to access resources to assist in the preservation of the building. The H.P.R.B. would like this building restored, adaptively reused, and incorporated into the redevelopment of the area. On the other hand, the Lewiston Sun-Journal would like to purchase this building for parking. Some of the comments made by Planning Board Members include: a. Mark Paradis said that the proposed development over weighs saving this building. b. Dennis Mason said that maybe the Lewiston Sun-Journal could reuse this building. In closing, James Lysen commented that some buildings are regulated and some are not. Consideration needs to be given as to how this building could be used. The Lewiston Sun-Journal area is surrounded by historic buildings.

The other correspondence item included in the Planning Board packets was the e-mail from **Phil Nadeau** and his request for a Planning Board Member to be a representative to the Bio-Shields Stacking Pad Site Committee. John Cole's response to this request was that this contaminates the impartiality of this Board. The Planning Board needs to rule on this in the future. Gil Arsenault also agreed. John Cole said that the Planning Board has a statutory duty and that the Planning Board may not have a whole lot to contribute to this committee. The Planning Board needs to look at the picture further down the road. He does not feel that the Planning Board should send a representative on this Board. He said that this is not a good practice and he encourages the Planning Board not to send a representative. James Lysen suggested maybe sending a former Planning Board Member. It was agreed that a letter, from the Planning Board Chair, will be written articulating John Cole's concern. John Cole said that he would be glad to draft a letter with Dennis Mason's signature and a copy of that letter forwarded to City Attorney **Robert Hark**.

**B. Old Business:**

**Item No 1. Review changes to the City of Lewiston Planning Board Member's Handbook, Rules of Procedure and Item No. 2. Continue discussion concerning the Planning Board responsibilities associated with providing recommendations on the acquisitions and dispositions of real estate by the City of Lewiston.** The reading of the memorandum prepared by James Fortune and dated January 18, 2001 was waived.

Initially, the request was made for a workshop to be scheduled for the February 13, 2001 Planning Board Meeting to discuss the City's property acquisition and disposition policies. There are several items that need to be discussed at the February 13, 2001 Planning Board Meeting, therefore the workshop to be scheduled on this item will be scheduled for the second meeting in March, which will be Tuesday, March 27, 2001.

However, Article 7, Organizational Rules, to the City of Lewiston Planning Board Member Handbook, will be discussed at the next Planning Board Meeting on February 13, 2001. Planning Board Staff will follow up on the changes made to the Rules of Procedure contained in the Planning Board Member's Handbook, which were updated in the annual review at the Planning Board Meeting on January 9, 2001. This handbook will be revised with all of the changes made at the January 9, 2001 Planning Board Meeting and will be ready for the Planning Board's review on February 13, 2001 and possibly scheduled for a Public Hearing at a later date.

Also discussed briefly was that the correspondence written by Phil Nadeau needs to be responded to concerning changes to the City's acquisition/disposition process.

***The last item on the agenda was then reviewed, as follows:***

**V. READING OF THE MINUTES: Draft of the Minutes from the January 9, 2001 Planning Board Meeting.**

The following changes were made to the minutes:

- On Page No. 4, VII. OTHER BUSINESS, A. New Business: 1. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program: Annual review and approval of the Citizen Participation Plan and Planning Process, second paragraph, , second line, delete the word, "for" and replace it with the word, "like". Also in this same paragraph, delete the entire last sentence. In the third paragraph, reword this paragraph to read, "Jim Andrews stated that there is no problem with how the City allocates the funds to social service agencies, 15 percent of the grant for the year, plus program income, approximately \$200,000 per year, is allowed."
- On Page No. 5, second paragraph, second line, delete the word, "to" and replace it with the word, "the".
- On Page No. 7, second paragraph, first line, after the word, "leave" and before the word, "at", place the word "it".

After the above changes, the following motion was made.

**MOTION:** by **Roger Lachapelle**, seconded by **Muriel Minkowsky** to accept the Planning Board Minutes dated January 9, 2001, as amended.

**VOTED:** 6-0.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT:** This meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Paradis, Secretary

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