

MINUTES of the National Guard Building Reuse Commission
August 4, 2021 @ 4:00 p.m.

Committee Members present:

Councilor David A. Witham, Chairman
Councilor Matt Gerding
Councilor Richard R. Michaud

Staff Members present:

City Manager Bob Belmore
Finance Director Scott Smith
City Clerk Jonathan Slaven
Director of Planning and Community Dev. Michelle Mears
Economic Development Manager, Robin Comstock

Guests present via ZOOM

James Burdin, SRPC
Tim Andrews, Nobis Engineering
Mark Westa, Stevens & Associates
Skye Morse, M&S Development

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Witham at 4:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES, June 15, 2021

Councilor Michaud made a motion to approve the past minutes from June 15, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gerding and passed 3-0.

ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL WITH STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMISSION & CONSULTANTS

Manager Belmore gave a brief update regarding the charge of the Commission to the consultants and stated that the City is in the process of trying to decide what to do with the decommissioned National Guard property and its buildings. James Burdin, SRPC, stated that the phase-1 environmental study is complete and there were no surprises found. Mr. Burdin stated that we are still in the process of beginning phase-2. Manager Belmore noted that the building is set to be turned over either September or October and asked if there were any implications for that timeline. Mr. Burdin stated if that timeline gets pushed back any further than that, the phase-1 study may need to be updated.

Councilor Witham noted he is of the understanding that it is the wish of Council to keep the baseball fields on the property.

Mr. Burdin stated he has been in conversations with City staff and is happy to contribute available grant funds and expertise in order to get the best information for the City to make a decision. He explained that Mark can explore some of the design components of the project. Mr. Westa stated it is a good idea to get a quick design first, narrow down pros/cons, then try and get a rough estimate of costs. Mr. Belmore asked if it makes sense to the consultants to subdivide the ballfields prior to getting into the specifics of the project. Mr. Burdin explained that his reaction is to not jump, but rather explore all the options first. This way we can lump all the costs of the project in together. Mr. Morse concurred, further explaining that any costs we can defer now to wrap into a larger design concept is, in his experience, a better way to go. Councilor Gerding inquired about the number of options the City can expect to receive. Mr. Andrews replied he has seen about 4 or 5 different options with a much more restrictive project. Mr. Belmore asked if it was the will of the Commission to allow the consultants to meet with staff then bring recommendations back. The Commission reached a consensus to have staff meet with consultants and bring back their recommendations.

TRANSFER OF PROPERTY UPDATES

Manager Belmore explained that the transfer of property is scheduled for the September/October timeline and stated it just needs to go through the formality of being reviewed by the Court system to ensure proper transfer of deed, etc. Councilor Witham inquired about keeping heat/electricity on to maintain. Manager Belmore replied that the plan is to keep the buildings at minimum temperature and will be putting in an alarm light to notify us if the power goes out.

Councilor Witham also mentioned we should begin to think about a potential agreement for the baseball fields. Director Mears informed the Commission that she and Recreation Supervisor Davenport have already started preparing a draft agreement and will forward to the City Manager for review when it is ready.

ADJOURN

Councilor Gerding made a motion to adjourn. Councilor Michaud seconded the motion, the motion passed 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk