

**MINUTES OF BUSINESS MEETING
HELD BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 17, 2016**

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Andy Kidd, Acting Chairman
Timothy Bergin

Alternate Members Sitting: Julian Stoppelman
Teresa Ike
Patrick Kennedy

Absent: Eric Prause, Chairman
Jessica Scorso
Michael Stebe

Also Present: Renata Bertotti, Senior Planner
Kyle Shiel, Senior Planner
Karen Logan, Recording Secretary

Time Convened: 7:03 P.M.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Kidd opened the meeting by noting a request to amend the meeting agenda. Ms. Bertotti explained that the Town Attorney's Office requested the addition of the second agenda item under Mandatory Referral Reports, for the purchase of 163 Spruce Street. She said the reason the request came so late was that the purchase deal came together very quickly and the Board of Directors would be considering this during their March 1st meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Stoppelman moved to add the Mandatory Referral (2016-017) for the purchase of 163 Spruce Street to the meeting agenda. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion.

Ms. Ike asked what the ramifications would be if the agenda were changed as requested. Mr. Tim O'Neil, Administrative Staff Attorney and Assistant Town Attorney, explained that it was legal under the statutes for the Commission to add an agenda item on the night of the meeting with a minimum of a two-thirds approval vote.

Mr. Kidd called the vote. All members voted in favor and the motion passed.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER - Purchase of 363 Broad Street – Mandatory Referral Report (2016-013)

Mr. Timothy Devanney, Sr., Chairman of the Redevelopment Agency, presented the background

and details regarding the proposed purchase of the property at 363 Broad Street. The 1.9 acre parcel under consideration consists of a 5,528 sq. ft. commercial building along with parking. The parcel will cost \$605,000 to be appropriated from the approximately \$1.7 million remaining from the original bond fund. The property is critical in connecting Broad Street and Center Springs Park as envisioned in the 2009 Broad Street Redevelopment Plan. Mr. O'Neil added that the negotiations for this parcel have been ongoing for several years and have only recently resulted in an agreement for the Town to purchase the property.

Mr. Stoppelman commented on the number of years this parcel has been a business. He asked about the relative value of the property vs. the cost of the property. Mr. O'Neil responded that he estimated the purchase price of \$605,000 is probably about \$100,000 over the value of the property. He noted that if the Town hadn't reached a purchase agreement with the owner of the property, the Town might have had to take the property by eminent domain and when that happens, the purchaser generally does pay a premium over value.

Mr. Bergin asked for a vision of how the lot would be developed. Mr. Devanney answered that there were a couple of options. Some people believed the whole building should be destroyed. Others felt that the small A-frame portion of the existing building would be a nice welcome center. The topic is still under consideration.

Mr. Bergin asked if there were any challenges concerning remediation of the building, should the decision be made to retain the building or a portion of it. Mr. Devanney responded that he didn't believe there would be any remediation required, but that the site would be tested once the purchase was complete.

Mr. Kidd called for comments from staff. Ms. Bertotti recommended the Commission issue a favorable report, she said. The staff feels this property provides a natural and necessary link between Center Springs Park and Broad Street. She noted that the extension of Center Springs Park is consistent with the following goals and objectives from the Plan of Conservation and Development:

- Goal I: Redevelop and invest in existing and potential corridors and activity nodes. The proposed park will increase the desirability of Broad Street as a recreational destination and increase activity in the area.
- Goal II: Promote vibrant walkable neighborhoods. A connection from the park to Broad Street will create a pedestrian corridor and provide a strong sense of place.
- Goal III: Enhance connectivity between housing, amenities and services. Creating a western entrance from Center Springs Park to Broad Street will increase the connectivity between the residential streets adjacent to the park, the municipal government campus, downtown and existing businesses and services on Broad Street.
- Goal X: Green the urban landscape and existing neighborhoods. Replacing the commercial property with a park introduces planned green space in the center of a maturely developed town core.

Mr. Stoppelman agreed with Ms. Bertotti's assessment of the proposed purchase and felt it would be an asset to the Town. Mr. Kidd also agreed with Ms. Bertotti and Mr. Stoppelman, stating that the purchase would be a great addition to the park and Broad Street.

Mandatory Referral (2016-013)

MOTION: Mr. Kennedy moved to issue a favorable report for the purchase of 363 Broad Street. Mr. Bergin seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

The reason for the approval is the proposal is consistent with the Manchester 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development, and specifically with its Goals I, II, III and X. The proposal is also consistent with existing zoning and the Broad Street Redevelopment Plan.

TOWN OF MANCHESTER – Purchase of 163 Spruce Street – Mandatory Referral Report (2016-017)

Mr. Christopher Silver, Director of the Department of Family, Leisure and Recreation presented the details and background for the Mandatory Referral Report 2016-017 for the purchase of 163 Spruce Street for \$67,500. He said the purchase of this property meets several community aspirations as outlined in Manchester’s Plan of Conservation and Development:

- There is a desire for Manchester to be a vibrant, thriving and energetic community. The characteristics of such a community include a diverse population, a welcoming atmosphere and destinations or activities that can be reached by transit/auto and on foot.
- Creating community requires a physical arrangement and design of spaces that provide for both programmed and spontaneous interaction. Businesses, shops, arts, entertainment, food, parks, and plazas located in attractive and accessible settings are important.
- Equally important to creating community is the soft infrastructure of neighborhood groups, clubs, and activities organized by government agencies, non-profits or social networks.

The location of the lot in question is in the center of the East Side Neighborhood right next door to the East Side Neighborhood Resource Center (formerly Spruce Street Firehouse). The refurbishment of the building only allowed for two parking spaces, both of them handicapped. There is additional parking available across the street at the former Nathan Hale School building. There is a community garden on the north side of the building.

Currently, the Office of Neighborhoods and Families has a user agreement with the owners of 163 Spruce Street, which is 100’ x 500’ in size. The agreement allows the Office to use the green space at 163 Spruce Street for community events, such as the Manchester Community Youth Art Initiative, Outdoor Family Movie Nights, flea and farmers’ markets, etc.

The Office of Neighborhoods and Families hopes to continue the use of this lot for community events, as well as an expansion of the community garden, which they expect will reach full capacity in the near future. The space is large enough to accommodate these activities, as well as provide more parking for the East Side Neighborhood Center.

Mr. Kidd asked Mr. Silver to discuss the current number and condition of any buildings on the property and any plans for using them. Mr. Silver replied that there is a house and a garage on the property. The house will be torn down, but the garage may be suitable for storage. Mr. O’Neil added that this property is on the list of blighted properties. He indicated that the

purchase of this property by the Town would give a clear signal to the East Side Neighborhood that although the Nathan Hale School was closed, the Town is very much committed to the East Side neighborhood.

Mr. Kidd asked where the parking would be and how that would work. Mr. Silver responded that the parking would probably be located on the portion of the lot nearest to Spruce Street, but he added that was just a guess.

Mr. Kennedy asked if the property was currently owned by a church. Mr. Silver replied that this was correct. Mr. Kennedy asked if it was being used for worship or services and Mr. Silver responded that it is not currently being used for worship.

Mr. Stoppelman asked if the driveway on the map was only used to service the house. Mr. Silver said that was correct.

Mr. Bergin agreed that additional parking would be useful and the space would be good for the garden. He asked what other activities might be planned for the space. Mr. Silver noted that the main objective was to preserve as much open space as possible, to be used as a neighborhood park and for neighborhood activities.

Mr. Bergin went on to ask what funds would be used for the purchase of the property. Mr. Silver indicated that the funds would be found within the operating budget of the Town.

Mr. Kidd called for staff comments. Ms. Bertotti replied that the staff recommended that the Commission issue a favorable report. She went on to state that the purchase of this area for a neighborhood park falls in line with the community aspirations as outlined in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Mr. Stoppelman asked Ms. Bertotti what the zoning for this parcel was. Ms. Bertotti replied that it is Residence B zone.

Mr. Kidd stated that he feels the property is in the perfect location for the proposed use.

Mandatory Referral (2016-017)

MOTION: Mr. Kennedy moved to issue a favorable report for the purchase of 163 Spruce Street. Mr. Stoppelman seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Ms. Bertotti reminded the Commission of the email her office received from Ms. Fish regarding the newly implemented sign regulations. She asked if the Commission was planning to discuss the points Ms. Fish brought up in her email. Ms. Bertotti asked the Commission if they wanted to have a discussion about this topic at the next meeting. Mr. Kidd replied that he felt the topic was worthy of discussion, but he would like to delay until more Commission members were present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 20, 2016 – Business Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Kennedy moved to approve the January 20, 2016 Business Meeting minutes as written. Ms. Ike seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATIONS

EVERGREEN CROSSING, LLC –Inland Wetlands Permit – Determination of Significant Impact (2016-014); Inland Wetlands Permit (2016-014); PRD Detailed Site Development Plan (2016-015); Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (2016-016) – Development of 135 multifamily units at 317 New State Road.

The Chairman closed the business meeting at 7:45 p.m.

I certify these minutes were adopted on the following date:

March 7, 2016 _____
Date

Eric Prause, Chairman

NOTICE: A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THIS BUSINESS MEETING CAN BE HEARD IN THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.