

MINUTES

STATE-CAPITAL-REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

December 16, 2011

Attendees: James Bouley (Mayor); Michael Connor (Director, NH Dept. of Administrative Services); Doug Woodward (City Planner, City of Concord); Sylvia Larsen, (State Senate); Mike Tardiff, (Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission) and Jennifer Czysz (NH Office of Energy & Planning).

Also in Attendance: Don Lyford, Project Manager, NH DOT
Stephen Henninger, Asst. City Planner, City of Concord
Matt Walsh, Project Manager, Community Development, City of Concord
Ed Roberge, City Engineer, City of Concord

Meeting came to order at 8:30 A.M.

1. Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes from the last Commission meeting on December 17, 2008 were not available. The minutes will be reviewed at the next Commission meeting.

2. Potential Sale of Surplus Land: State

The State is interested in selling surplus state property and the Legislature has established an Asset Monetization Committee to review and make recommendations of state property that could be sold to provide additional revenue to the State. As part of this process, the State requested a meeting with City representatives to identify parcels of state property that the City may be interested in purchasing or selling to private developers for business development. In addition, the City also identified some state owned parcels that may be of interest to the Conservation Committee.

3. Use of Anna Philbrook Center as Homeless Shelter

The Anna Philbrook Center was utilized by the State for youth housing/detention. The program was relocated to another facility and the building has been vacant since July of 2010. The City is looking to utilize the facility as a homeless shelter during the winter for families. The City has funding for a volunteer coordinator and they are working with Health and Human Services to come to some agreement on the use of the building. They are looking to have space for 5 to 6 families.

4. Potential redevelopment of Tobey Building

The Department of Employment Security is interested in the possibility of renovating the Tobey Building and consolidating their operations to the Tobey Building. They hired an architect to review their space plans to see if they could consolidate operations from their two buildings in Concord and two buildings in Manchester into this facility. The State is requesting the City's assistance to encourage the Capital Area Transit to include a stop on South Fruit Street to reduce vehicle traffic and accommodate access to the facility by Employment Security clients.

5. Status of Stickney Avenue

The State is continuing to lease space with most of the space occupied at this time. The City met with State Department of Transportation Commissioner, George Campbell to express their desire to acquire the facility at Stickney Avenue. It is unlikely that this will occur due to the uncertainty of the highway expansion.

6. Status of State Fuel Farm

The State needs to replace the tanks at Stickney Avenue. The State is looking at the State Police Garage on Hazen Drive as a potential site for a new fuel farm. The City and State have been working cooperatively on this project. They originally identified over 20 sites. The refueling site needs to be near the interstate and easily accessible for plows in the winter. The City is requesting a formal review by the Planning Board of any plans for the state fuel farm as required under RSA 674:54.

The natural gas refueling station will remain at Stickney Avenue. The State Department of Environmental Services is looking to renovate the equipment and facility and lease it to a private firm that would run the natural gas refueling station. There are some zoning issues if the state leases to a third party. The City also requested that the State provide copies of any leases to the State for taxation purposes.

7. Graphic Services Building License and Construction Schedule Update

The state building located at 12 Hills Avenue sustained extensive water damage during a storm event last spring. The State has gone out to bid to complete the required renovations through a design build process. The State has entered into a contract with a contractor and their architect to develop plans and renovate the building. Due to code issues the project will also include the addition of a new external stairwell that will encroach on City Property. The State has requested and obtained a license from the City for use of the land for the stairwell. In accordance with RSA 674:54 the State has reviewed the preliminary plans for renovations with city staff and the Planning Board. Due to the fact that the project is design build, the City has requested that the State return to the Planning Board when the building plans are complete. The City requested that the State include a parking plan for the facility in its submission. The State is hoping to have the renovations completed by April 15, 2011.

8. Liquor Warehouse location

The City heard a rumor that the Liquor Commission was looking to relocate from their current location on Storrs Street to a new warehouse. The State is not aware of any specific plans but noted that anything is possible given the need for revenue.

9. Potential City Interest in NH Employment Security Property as Future Library Site

The City has a task force that is looking into potential sites for a new City Library. One of the potential sites is the land and building on South Main Street that is currently occupied by Employment Security. There is approximately 3/4 of an acre within the City with parking.

10. 3.43 Acre State Owned Property Located at Loudon/Old Loudon Road (opposite Steplegate Mall)

The City had reached agreement in principle with a large big box developer for the site. Due to the economy, the project has been put on hold. The property has an appraised value of \$900,000

11. Merrimack County Courthouse Update

The State would like to build a new courthouse to house Merrimack County Superior and Probate Court as well as provide office space for administrative staff. The Merrimack County Court project is 2nd on the Supreme Court capital budget plan. The first priority is Keene District Court. The State has entered into an agreement with a developer for a fifteen year lease for a new court facility that will combine the Cheshire County Superior, Probate, District and Family Court into one facility. This project was put together with new market tax credits and the cooperation of the City of Keene and Cheshire County.

The State looked into a similar approach for the Merrimack County facility but was not able to come to terms due to the large increase in lease payments that would have been required. The State has submitted their capital budget request in the Governor's phase of the budget. The Governor will announce his recommendations for the capital budget on February 15, 2011.

12. Concord Steam Relocation Update

The City entered into a three year lease extension with Concord Steam to utilize the current boiler plant at the Governor Hugh Gallen Office Park. The extension is required to allow Concord Steam time to put their financing together to construct a new facility in South Concord. Concord Steam is looking for the State to enter into a long term contract to purchase steam and electricity. Concord Steam is looking for the State for commit to purchase 37,000 MWh per year in order to make the deal happen.

13. Sewalls Falls Bridge Status Report

NH DOT is working with the City on this project. Construction is scheduled for 2013 with an ad date of late 2012. They are working on the design of this project this summer with the new bridge being constructed adjacent to the old bridge. They need legislation to be approved. Funding for the project is 80% federal and 20% City.

14. I-93 Bow-Concord Status Report

The Corridor plans were going well until funds were reallocated within in the highway plan. The State is trying to use turnpike funds to start design in 2011. Phase A of the planning effort concluded with only one reasonable alternative. The State would like to take this alternative and complete further design and environmental studies. Meanwhile construction on red listed bridges is going forward with turnpike funds. DOT is looking to replace two bridges on I 93 near I 89 in Bow. They are also looking to make repairs to the exit 12 Bridge on I 93.

A question was asked regarding the bridges near the Community College and DOT replied that the preferred method is to close the bridge and create a well signed detour. The repairs are scheduled from May to August of 2011. The project includes improvements to the sidewalks and bike paths. DOT is coordinating with the Bike Committee and the shuttle.

15. Other Business

Steve Henninger requested that the State consider planting some landscape screening at the National Guard facility on Airport Road.

Doug Woodward stated that the City is meeting with the State to define the right of way for Old Loudon Road. There is a need to define the State and City right of way and discuss whether the road should be considered class 4 or 5.

Ed Roberge commented that the City is working with the State Department of Corrections on a large stone culvert that serves the State Prison and other facilities. The culvert is buried 18 to 20 feet and below a building across the street from the prison. The culvert is leaking causing a large sink hole. The City is looking to seal the culvert from the interior of the pipe and they would like the State to participate with the project.

16. Future Meeting Date

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for March 16, 2011, at 8:30 AM, City Council Chambers

