



City of Caribou, Maine

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Caribou Planning Board Meeting Minutes Thursday, April 14, 2022 @ 5:30 pm City Council Chambers

Members Present: Dan Bagley, Christine Solman, Amanda Jandreau, Dave Corriveau, Frank McElwain, Eric Hitchcock and Steve Wentworth

Other in Attendance: Ken Murchison – CEO; John Morrill – Councilor Liaison

Chairman Dan Bagley called the meeting to order at 5:46 pm.

- I. Call Meeting to Order, Determine Quorum** – Chairman Dan Bagley called the meeting to order at 5:46 pm. A quorum was present.
- II. Public Hearings** – None.
- III. Approval of Minutes -**
 - a. Approval of Minutes of the March 10, 2022, Planning Board meeting.

Amanda Jandreau moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by David Corriveau.

Discussion followed and Dan Bagley noted that under IV New Business, a. Review of Section 13-700.13 Home Occupations the Signage Language in the third paragraph should be amended to read “not to exceed two feet in any dimension.”

The Motion was amended and seconded (Amanda Jandreau and David Corriveau)

Roll Call Vote:

Steve Wentworth – Yes; Frank McElwain – Yes; Amanda Jandreau – Yes; Christine Solman – Yes; Dave Corriveau – Yes; Eric Hitchcock – Yes.

Motion carried with all in favor.

IV. Council Liaison Update

- a. Council Liaison to the Planning Board John Morrill presented an update of City Council activities to the Board
 - i. Pending Energy Credit Agreement with Nordic Sun Energy with the City which would result in cost saving of 15 to 20% of the City’s energy cost. RSU39 is also involved with this proposal. In a related question, Amanda Jandreau asked about the Solar Array development and whether the City is leasing land for the project. Councilor Morrill indicated it would be on the developer’s land, doesn’t know if he has been to the Planning Board yet or the stage of that project. Basically, they need to sell the power before they build the project. Location near a transformer that has capacity and the ability of the power grid to accept generated power is limited. Sen. Jackson has proposed a bill to connect transmission line to the grid downstate, which would help development.
 - ii. Façade Improvement Grant, the Council approved Façade Grants to four businesses this round, a great mix of new and existing businesses, Thrive Body Spa, Signage Level Grant \$1500.00, Rossignol Performance and Fitness Signage Level Grant \$1500.00, Creative

- Level Grant \$1500.00 (reuse of Buzzell's Building).
- iii. Revolving Loan Committee is working with two new businesses relating to metalwork and ceramics/stained glass.
 - iv. Blight 2022, with the melting of the snow the city will resume our focus on limiting blight in our community through series of articles and outreach to educate the public of blight issues in our community, Staff will be working on blight remediation projects throughout the City and hope to employ the State's new Land Bank legislation and techniques to alleviate blighted conditions in our community.
 - v. The City Council welcomed Governor Mills and delegation representatives as they announced legislation to save our Veterans Home from closure.
 - vi. City Councilors toured the former Merlin One Power Plant and were informed of current conditions and concerns on the site, City ownership, the need to remediate asbestos and petroleum products in order to sell the property and effect the demolition and redevelopment of that site. There is an abundance of friable asbestos and other fixtures containing asbestos, including equipment that is a large undertaking to abate. The City still technically owns the property and is still burdened with these environmental issues going forward. Regarding the steam plant, Dan Bagley inquired whether the City is required to do the remediation before a sale can go through. Councilor Morrill indicated that as a municipality, we have better avenues for funding to remediate the property and that through the grapevine, the estimate for the abatement project would be \$2-3M. Activity on this site could have an effect on the Riverfront Renaissance planning that is ongoing.
 - vii. Chairman Bagley thanked Councilor Morrill for the update and stated this will be a permanent entry in the agenda. Councilor Morrill invited two-way communication between the Planning Board and City Council in the future.

V. New Business

- a. **Novel Energy Solutions, Maine, Caribou Connector CSG, LLC Solar Array Project for Tax Map 013 Lot 002B in the R-3 District Site Design Review Application Concept Plan Review**
 - i. **Discussion on Site Design Review Procedure and Requirements**

Regarding the Site Design Review Application Process, Dan Bagley brought up that usually the Concept Plan Review has been done in a Public Hearing and asked CEO Murchison to explain why we are not doing a Public Hearing tonight.

CEO Murchison reviewed the procedure for Site Design Review and found we don't have to have a Public Hearing that runs for two months, we can actually contact all the landowners and have the Concept Plan Review as more of a workshop setting. So, the first meeting will be a workshop and the Final Review will be a Public Hearing. Chairman Bagley asked if there were any objections to handling the Site Design process in this way. Frank McElwain asked if the abutting landowners would be able to participate in the meeting and Chairman Bagley replied not in the workshop setting that is not a Public Hearing, but it would be up to the Chair's discretion if someone did appear at the Concept meeting to allow.

CEO Murchison said he would forward the information to the Board regarding this. What we have been doing is opening a Public Hearing at one meeting and not closing it until we get to the second Final Review, which is a bit clunky. Chairman Bagley said there is a cost savings by only advertising a Public Meeting once. CEO Murchison indicated yes; it is about a \$200.00 savings. Amanda Jandreau asked if we keep it open, do we have to advertise twice, at which CEO Murchison said yes, and that is what we have been doing.

There were no objections to handling Site Design reviews in this way.

ii. Discussion on Site Design Review Procedure and Requirements

Brittney Krebsbach, Permit Specialist Novel Energy Solutions, LLC introduced herself and her company.

Novel Energy Solutions, a Minnesota-based company that moved into the Maine market this year and was founded in 2014 by fifth-generation farmers from Minnesota. Novel has developed and constructed over 250 megawatts of solar projects in Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan, also having 13 projects in Maine that were acquired in the early stages of development. This is the first Novel-originated projects, as they have mostly dealt with acquisitions so far.

The Caribou Connector CSG, LLC Solar Array Project will be a 133-kilowatt 6 unit, tracker style 35' foot high solar array mounted on 20'x 20' x 3' to 4' thick concrete slab foundations with dual-axis tracking technology. DEP environmental applications have been filed (permit by rule), no wetlands or areas of special interest will be impacted. The solar panels are largely recyclable, and the surety bond usually covers transportation costs. They have had no other issues in their other project applications, which usually take 2 weeks to a month for approval. As far as Wetlands and Stormwater, this site will likely only require a MDEP Permit-by-Rule. Erosion Control and Stormwater Plans are all up to Federal and State codes.

Decommissioning plan will be required, and bond is provided with Guerrette Farms Lese as well. Water and stormwater control is done to federal standards.

Project will install 7' chain-link fence with barbed wire security top course and there is a 5" gap in the bottom for wildlife passage. There is an existing fence on this site to the south, so they would likely utilize an existing fence. CEO Murchison indicated the existing fence is most likely the MDOT's fence and would likely have to work with them to utilize their fence. Brittney Krebsbach stated they will have to work with them for their access on the highway.

Array designed to meet generation capacity at local substations. This site has room for future development depending again on capacity.

Chairman Bagley asked if the electrical runs would be above or below ground. Brittney Krebsbach explained the RFP plan shows Power lines installed below ground.

Christine Solman asked if there is a line of sight for these panels from the Connector and is that something MDOT might need to look at. There will be no line-of-site issues along the Connector Road or along Route 1 Van Buren Road. Chairman Bagley commented reflection and glare could be an issue and asked Brittney Krebsbach if they have dealt with this before and how they deal with it. One of their recent projects was near an airport so there had to be a glare study conducted. The solar panels use low reflective technology are designed to absorb light, not reflect it, and the panels are not directly facing the line of traffic, and in general they are designed to minimize this. The studies that have been conducted in the past have not brought up any issues. They have never had to mitigate in their existing projects.

Aggressive June to July 2022 construction scheduling.

Chairman Bagley felt the plan was ready for Public Hearing and Final Review with no objections from the Board at the next regular meeting and to go ahead and schedule that.

b. Introduction Home Occupation Application for Paradise Aesthetics at 47 Meadowbrook Drive Tax Map 010-A Lot 003 in the R-1 District

- i. Home Occupation applicant Lindsey Paradise was not present, so Chair Bagley introduced the Home Occupation Application as a Personal Services Business for the Injection of Botox for multiple health related treatments.

CEO Murchison explained this is a personal service type of business in a residential area, her specialty is Botox injections. There is licensing involved, she will be a licensed practitioner. The property has lots of room for off-street parking and she doesn't feel there would be that much traffic anyway because a lot of the service will be done in person off-site, but she wanted people to be able to visit her at her home office as well.

Chairman Bagley clarified with CEO Murchison that the necessary licensing must be obtained by the time the full application is approved.

It was noted that the square footage of the building used for home occupation was not noted but there was ample room for off-street parking and no apparent covenants banning home occupations within the subdivision. CEO Murchison said clients being at the home would not generate much traffic. Chairman Bagley stated that we do have a use in the Land Use Table for medical facilities and we can look and make sure this would not be considered a medical facility that would stand in the way of this. Amanda Jandreau discussed that this is not medical, and Aesthetician is not considered medical. Christine Solman said it is like a Cosmetologist operating from home. CEO Murchison said we do have other similar services in the community such as Chiropractor and Sports Massage therapy operating in our community.

Recommendation to for Public Hearing to be scheduled for May 12th, 2022, at 5:30 pm.

VI. Old Business

- a. **City Council Designate Riverfront Development District,**
Present the Riverfront Development District to the City Council for their approval. Overlay District format will not work due to the more restrictive land use in the existing Zoning.
Possibly include the Water Street area as part of the District, Gateway to the Riverfront. Bring to the Riverfront Renaissance Committee for their input and guidance at the April 19th meeting.
- b. **Section 13-700.13 - Home Occupations Final Review,**
Amendments made in response to Council Public Hearing comments.

Revisions to sign language Section D, 5, "does not exceed 2' in any dimension"

Soften language on traffic "Section F, 2, "and shall not produce excessive noise or parking nuisances. Category I Home Occupations may be serviced by occasional delivery vehicles, limited to the shipment or receipt of merchandise, goods, or supplies, so long as the frequency of those deliveries do not create a nuisance to surrounding residents."

Soften language on Category II Home Occupations Section G, 1-C, "Vehicular traffic from business-related visitors and customers shall not exceed that which normally and reasonably occurs in the neighborhood, except as provided for in Item 2. "Child Day Care and Other Group Child Activities" below. Traffic from Category II Home Occupations shall not produce excessive noise or parking nuisances and may be serviced by occasional

long as the frequency of those deliveries do not become a nuisance to surrounding residents.”

Motion to accept final amendments to Section 13-700.13 - Home Occupations and forward to City Council for Approval by Amanda Jandreau, Seconded by Frank McElwee

Roll Call Vote:

Steve Wentworth – Yes; Frank McElwain – Yes; Amanda Jandreau – Yes; Christine Solman – Yes; Dave Corriveau – Yes; Eric Hitchcock – Yes.

Motion carried with all in favor.

c. Land Use Table Workshop

Next Land Use Table Workshop scheduled for April 28, 2022, at 5:30 pm in the Caribou City Council Chambers.

VII. Staff Report; CEO Ken Murchison

- a. Dangerous Buildings – when snow starts to go, this is the time of year they see violations. Will be dealing with many dangerous buildings. Tax Acquired properties in need of demolition, collapsed barns in the rural area.
- b. West Gate Villa – totally abandoned, many trailers were not tax acquired, City chose not to acquire those. Working to designate as dangerous buildings. There is a nuisance and dangerous buildings law where the City can deal with buildings and attach the costs to the owners on their tax bill. Caribou Trailer Park Closure – three families left. Working with Housing Agency for placement.
- c. Landbank Legislation just passed, and City staff looks forward to learning how to apply these new techniques to fight blight. Business Investment Group Land bank activities to date, 40 North Street demolition but hope to establish funds for redevelopment.
- d. Maine Northern Railroad Reuse Petition to MDOT to establish Reuse Council for the abandoned and unused portion of the Rail Corridor Central Aroostook. Council has given permission to send Letter of Petition. Staff will prepare Petition Letter and collect letter of support from our Coalition. Potential projects are pending at Otter Brook, we have the Dow Siding Solar Array to be constructed in May and Climate Control Storage and Kacie's Place RV Park being constructed this Spring. Staff also had the opportunity to offer letters of support for the Atlantic Salmon for Northern Maine.

VIII. Recognition and Farwell to Denise Lausier for her outstanding contribution to the Caribou Planning Board over the course of her career with the City of Caribou

- a. **Chair Dan Bagley extended a sincere thank you to Denise for her contribution to the Planning Board and wished her well in her new position to the Caribou Finance Department.**





IX. Adjournment – Dave Corriveau moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 pm; seconded by Amanda Jandreau.

Roll Call Vote:

Steve Wentworth – Yes; Frank McElwain – Yes; Amanda Jandreau – Yes; Christine Solman – Yes; Dave Corriveau – Yes; Eric Hitchcock – Yes.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Jandreau
Planning Board Secretary

AJ/dl