

Erving Board of Selectmen

Monday, March 22, 2017

**Senior & Community Center
1 Care Drive, Erving, MA**

Selectmen Present: Jacob Smith, Scott Bastarache, William Bembury

Finance Committee: Daniel Hammock

Planning Board: Jacquelyn Boyden, Deb Smith

Also Present: Bryan Smith, Christopher Blair, Glenn McCrory, Philip Wonkka, Peggy Sloan, Jessica Atwood, Rebecca Sherer, Julie Cowan, Frank Canning, Pat Sluder, Rich Griffin Jr., Richard Widmer,

Press: Miranda Davis, The Recorder; Katie Nolan, Montague Reporter

Location: International Paper Mill- 8 Papermill Road, Erving, MA 01344

At 9:30 AM the Board met to conduct a site visit of the International Paper Mill.

Location: Senior & Community Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, MA 01344

At 10:29 AM **Chairman Smith** called the meeting to order.

Rebecca Sherer, Tighe & Bond, provided a presentation of the feasibility studies that have been conducted on potential reuses of the site. The initial feasibility study reviewed five (5) options that included demolition and selective rehabilitation. As part of the feasibility study, a market study was conducted and addressed housing and mixed use commercial needs in the region. The mill is within the Central Village zone while the remaining parcel is the rural residential zone. The second phase of the feasibility study explored two (2) options: rehabilitation of buildings 2 and 8 or the demolition of all existing structures and the development of new light industrial buildings.

In scenario 1, building 2 would include mixed residential and commercial. It would establish a new foot print for a new industrial building and maintains the existing tunnel through building 2 and allows parking for all facilities. The concept includes a new access road along the river front. This plan is in alignment with the Town's subdivision and zoning bylaws. Scenario 2 calls for full demolition of all existing structures and proposes three (3) new structures. The concept includes a proposed new access road with a cul-de-sac. The resource areas have been identified and there are natural heritage impacts on the rest of the parcel, but not within the mill site directly. The proposed layouts maximize the available building area.

Rebecca explained that Tighe & Bond reviewed the eastern portion of the parcel. Drainage systems from Route 2 and existing wetlands have been identified. The property is within the riverfront zone. The site constraints does not allow for commercial or residential development, but could be used for recreational access along the Millers River.

Rebecca reviewed probable redevelopment costs for cleanup of hazardous materials and each concept. It was explained that the redevelopment of building 2 will cost more because the facility has a higher square footage than the footprint of a proposed new building would have. Building 2 will also require repairs for separating the connected buildings.

Jacquelyn Boyden, Planning Board Chair, explained to those in attendance that the Town owns the adjacent parcel across Papermill Road and asked if consideration had been given to a reuse of that parcel. Rebecca suggested that the parcel may provide parking for the future development.

Mass Development Services

Julie Cowan, MassDevelopment, provided those in attendance with an overview of MassDevelopment as an agency and the types of projects the agency has been involved with. Julie explained that MassDevelopment wants to hear from the community about the priorities for the project.

MassDevelopment has a team of seven (7) people assigned to work in the four (4) western Massachusetts Counties.

Frank Canning, MassDevelopment, explained that the agency can work to offer tax-exempt bonds for affordable housing projects and industrial projects. He noted a focus on supporting private and public partnership projects. Frank also explained that the agency can work with the Department of Housing and Community Development to help with low income housing tax credits.

Pat Sluder, MassDevelopment, provided an overview of New Market Tax Credits and how they might apply to a project like the IP Mill. The community must be designated as low income and Pat explained that she has confirmed that the IP Mill site is in an eligible area. New Market Tax Credits are a scarce resource issued by the U.S. Government that can help fill the financing gap. Pat confirmed that New Market Tax Credits could be applicable to a mixed residential and commercial development and a light industry use. She noted that a project of \$10 or \$20 million is within the range of possible for a project with the complexities of the IP Mill site. Pat clarified that New Market Tax Credits can be used with historic tax credits, but not low income housing tax credits. Rebecca suggested that the Town talk to the Massachusetts Historical Commission to see if credits would be available for buildings 2 and 8 if demolition for the rest of the complex is completed.

Peggy Sloan, FRCOG, asked what funding might be available to help the Town complete demolition. Rebecca suggested looking into abandoned mill funding.

Rich Griffin Jr., MassDevelopment, explained that he works in the community development side of the agency, including work with brownfields. MassDevelopment can issue loans to a developer with a five (5) year repayment plan or a municipality with a thirty (30) year return. Would be 15% of increased property value. Rich explained that MassDevelopment can offer a predevelopment loans for assessment work up to \$100,000 for developers with 0% interest. The agency can also offer remediation loans with some interest. Collaborative work space funding, is another opportunity that is matched 1 for 1. \$25,000 seed funding with up to \$100,000 for implementation.

Julie Cowan provided a brief discussion regarding the Economic Development Improvement Program and explained that it can align with a tax relief increment financing.

Next Steps

Peggy Sloan asked those in attendance what next steps the Town should take to work on the redevelopment of the site. The Town has already applied for a FY17 Brownfields Cleanup Grant. It was clarified that only a developer, not a municipality, would be able to apply for predevelopment funding that would include the plan for demolition, sub divide, and site preparation.

Julie Cowan explained that once the project is defined and the process begins; that costs that are incurred can be included in the overall financing. Peggy noted that the Franklin County real-estate market may not support a developer cleaning the site and asked what options exists assuming the Town does the demolition and site preparation. **Chairman Smith** agreed and explained that he anticipates that the Town will have to take the lead to prepare the site. He clarified that the Board needs to be able to present the options to the public with an understanding of the resources available the Town. Rich Griffin explained that Brownfields assessment and remediation funding is available to municipalities, but the other funding is for developers. Julie and Pat noted that MassDevelopment may be able to assist with site readiness and that funding through Mass works may be able to assist with the infrastructure and road work.

Jacquelyn Boyden asked what resources might be available for marketing the IP Mill site to potential developers; noting that Erving has an attractive tax rate. Rich Griffin suggested that the FRCOG often Erving Board of Selectmen

markets these opportunities. Jessica Atwood, FRCOG, explained that the developers' conferences occur every two (2) years and that the property has been listed. Julie Cowan explained that Site Selection Services can be offered through the Massachusetts Office of Business Development. It is possible that the site could be listed through that service. Jessica suggested that it is important have the community be clear about the goals for the project so that developers can identify whether or not the project is the right fit. **Chairman Smith** noted that the Town has a history of supporting projects like this; referencing the redevelopment work occurring with the former Usher Mill site. Julie suggested that it would be advantageous to partner with the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board, Franklin County Technical School, and Greenfield Community College to ensure employers will have labor force.

Mass Development will review the feasibility study from Tighe & Bond and assess what services may be available. Rebecca Sherer suggested that all parties consider a phased approach to developing the site.

At 11:50 AM **Chairman Smith** left the meeting.

Richard Widmer provide thoughts on the project from his perspective as a Millers Falls resident. Richard encouraged the Town to take an approach of a community centered development. He stated that such an approach should consider flexible spaces and a phased build out.

Daniel Hammock thanked those in attendance for considering the project and considering what could be possible with vision. The Board agreed that this is a large and important development project for Erving. The Board stated their plan to begin a process of meeting with the public to review the plans and involve them in the decision making process.

Adjournment

At 12:34 PM **Selectman Bastarache** made a motion to adjourn. **Selectman Bembury** seconded. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bryan Smith
Administrative Coordinator