

**City of Lewiston  
PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
November 10, 1997**

**I. ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Members Present: H. Milliken, H. Skelton, D. Theriault, D. Jacques, M. Paradis, T. Peters, and L. Zidle (arrived at 6:40 PM)

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: J. Lysen, E. Friedman, G. Arsenault, D. Ouellette

**II. READING OF THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 28, 1997.**

**MOTION:** by H. Skelton, seconded by D. Jacques to accept the minutes of October 28, 1997 as written.

**VOTE:** Passed 5-0-1 (H. Milliken abstained).

**III. CORRESPONDENCE**

Memo from G. Dycio to Gil Arsenault regarding Board of Appeal initiated code amendment.

**MOTION:** by D. Theriault, seconded by H. Skelton to accept the above correspondence and be read at the appropriate time.

**VOTE:** Passed 6-0.

**IV. WORKSHOPS**

**A. Presentation of the Bates Mill Redevelopment Plan.**

Elliot Friedman explained that the Bates Mill Master Plan is an overall conceptual look of the buildings and that it was a tremendous economic opportunity for Lewiston. **Tom Platz** of Platz Associates gave an overall summary of the Bates Mill Complex. He said that the mill contained 1.1 million square feet, comprised of 11 buildings with ten still standing. He noted that Mill 2 would best be used for ground floor traffic/ pedestrian traffic. He wants to see an atrium at the center, with the upper floors of Mill 1 & 2 used as office space. Mill 3A is scheduled to be demolished and this will open the view to Mill 2. Mill 3 is ideal for offices, while the rear could be for telephone communication companies. Mill 4 can go with Mill 1 or Mill 3 and ideally used as a back room operation. Mill 8, which is the old cotton mill storehouse, has been demolished after obtaining permission from the Historic Society to do so. This area will be used for parking and a deck can eventually be added to the top of it with entrances off the grade. LMRC has purchased the lot across the street for parking. T. Platz noted that parking is definitely a concern. Mill 7, People's Heritage Savings Bank will employ 300 people and will be in operations by March, 1998. Mill 6 is in good shape and is being used by Bates Mfg. This building can

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be developed alone or could be used in conjunction with Mill 5. Mill 9 is the existing boiler plant and he would like to see it cleaned out. The Ash House, Mill No. 10, will be demolished; it has no historic significance. The executive office building will be moved over the canal, parallel to the foot bridge and be used as a visitors' center or mill museum. Mill 5 has 380,000 square feet, and he would like to see 100 to 120,000 square feet as an exhibit hall and 80,000 square feet for services that would support a convention center. He stated that nothing like this exists north of Boston. He would like to see this convention center targeted as a regional convention center. Again, he noted that if the convention center goes in, then parking would be an issue. Hotel rooms would also be an issue, there would be a need of approximately 800 more rooms if this is to be successful. T. Platz said this Master Plan was clearly a concept at this time and the financial figures in the packet are his best guess.

H. Milliken asked how he planned to phase in a hotel. T. Platz said they needed to start booking shows well in advance. He also said that a hotel had already committed to build if LMRC went ahead with the convention center. He further stated that if he develops 120,000 sq ft hall and breaks it up into smaller units, several conventions can be booked at one time.

H. Milliken asked about the floor in that mill, if it could accommodate a convention center. T. Platz said it could accommodate 400 pounds per square foot. He said that trucks could actually be driven right onto the floor and that since a regular parking deck was designed for 100 lbs per square ft, this flooring was quite adequate. E. Friedman said it was a huge asset in having these old buildings and that they are geared for bringing in materials by having their own loading docks.

T. Peters asked who presently owns the buildings and parking area. T. Platz said the City has options on some of the properties on Lincoln Street. D. Theriault asked if all of the mill buildings were owned by the City. T. Platz said they were. D. Theriault about the option to purchase the mill. T. Platz said yes, he had an option to purchase it after seven years, which is now down to six. He further said that the City would get back every dime they put into the Mills including all operating losses, plus a percentage profit and end up with a fully taxable mill.

H. Skelton asked what was missing in the drawing on Main Street. T. Platz said that the buildings all the way from the corner of Lincoln up to the Canal were not pictured there. D. Theriault asked T. Platz what would make him walk away from this deal. T. Platz said he could exercise his option at any time, but the project has to become financiable. He said that his firm had substantial amount of money in this project. E. Friedman also mentioned the 10-20% historic tax credit. M. Paradis asked how much money was invested to date. T. Platz said approximately six million. D. Theriault asked when T. Platz thought the Mill would not need CDBG money. T. Platz said that People's would be running shortly and Bates of Maine would be leaving the mill - he noted the City is paying substantial for heating. He thought that the amount of funds needed from CDBG would be less each year.

T. Peters asked who negotiated the lease for the People's lease. T. Platz said his firm along with the City and the City Attorney. T. Peters asked about the businesses presently occupying the Mill at this time if they were in financial trouble. T. Platz said that some were struggling, but said that by March, when People's brings in 300 employees in that area, there should be some improvements to those businesses. He said he also expected to see a spin-off into the downtown. T. Peters asked if his firm had done a downtown study. T. Platz said his firm had not, that it concentrated on the Mill.

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H. Milliken asked if the City moved forward with this plan, if they would be willing to get other business people involved in the development. T. Platz said he would. H. Milliken spoke about the three sub-committees that the LMRC had set up and suggested that some Planning Board Members along with business people be appointed to these committees. E. Friedman said it was a good idea. He further stated that this Mill would have a huge impact on Lisbon Street, Main Street, Lincoln Street, etc.-they were all integral; that they couldn't isolate a single street. T. Peters asked about the traffic on Lincoln Street to the turnpike. E. Friedman said the convention center's hours would have different hours of peak. H. Milliken asked how the Bates Mill redevelopment is going to be phased in with the Planning Board and that the People's project never went before the Planning Board. E. Friedman said they intend to involve the Planning Board. D. Theriault said that according to the Planning Board's review criteria, this project should be reviewed before the Planning Board.

D. Theriault asked if there was any means of finding out what the public thinks about the redevelopment of the mill, he suggested a polling or referendum questions. J. Lysen said that a public poll was done earlier and that three-quarters of the people surveyed were in favor of redevelopment of the mill. T. Platz said the comments he was receiving were favorable and added that it was premature for a referendum question. M. Paradis asked where they were receiving their financing. T. Platz said he was trying to get private financing as well as loans and grants.

*7:45 PM At this time H. Milliken opened the discussion to the public.*

**Kaileigh Tara**, 25 Wellman Street commented regarding the polling issue. She said there was a lot of misinformation with the public and suggested that everyone make sure to bring information out to the public. She said she believed when people were more informed, that they would get an accurate poll.

**Dan (Nick) Knowlton**, 21 Brooks Avenue said he was excited about the convention center and thought it was a great idea for Lewiston/Auburn.

**Neal Roy** asked about Radio City, if it would be moved out and torn down. T. Platz said they had to agree to sell. He said some property owners simply want to relocate and others want to sell. H. Milliken asked where eminent domain played into this. T. Platz said it was possible, but they would still have to purchase the property at a fair market value.

**John Criscieus** (sp?), 282 Lincoln Street said he wanted to get on one of the committees and would eventually like to manage the convention center. E. Friedman said that committees were not the only way to get involved with this project. **S. Myers** of Platz Associates said that groups or organizations can invite them to speak to them about the redevelopment. **Estelle Rubenstein** suggested that Platz speak to the senior citizens at the Multi Purpose Center. **Fredda Wolfe** said that eminent domain tends to alarm the public and reminded everyone that there were strict guidelines for the City to obtain property by eminent domain. She also voiced her support for the mill redevelopment.

**Doug Boyd**, 32 Manning Place said he would sell Platz Associates a booth at the next Balloon Festival as a means for them to educate the public. He asked what the going rate was on a building like People's Heritage versus the competition in Bangor. He also asked how they planned to finance a convention center without raising taxes. He did, however, say that he thought the convention center would work well. T. Platz said that People's ended up being \$65 per square foot finished, ready to move in. The City did the work on the outside, while People's did the work inside. He said that it would be about \$100 per square foot if this was built new. Regarding financing, he said there were

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many private ways of financing, however, because of its competitive nature for interest rates, he could not comment on it at this time.

**Richard Hollis** of Main Street asked what would happen if the rest of the complex could not get tenants. T. Platz said studies were well under way. He suggested that this project would be built up when he was certain the tenants would come. If Mill No. 5 had to be put on hold for a while, then it could without affecting the remainder of the project. **E. Rubenstein** asked how long the People's lease was. T. Platz said they had a fifteen year lease and they had already asked for another five.

*8:05 PM At this time H. Milliken closed the meeting to the public.*

M. Paradis asked what the City was paying Platz Associates. T. Platz answered that it varied month to month. He also pointed out that half of what they do ends up as cash into the project. D. Theriault said he thought \$400,000 was spent by the City on this project for management fees. T. Platz, said no, it went into operational, especially into heating. D. Theriault voiced his concerns regarding City acquisitions and dispositions of property and thought the Board should be made aware when a building at the Mill was going to be torn down. He said that this project was too large for the Planning Board not to be involved. T. Platz again suggested that Planning Board members join a committee. H. Milliken asked if anyone had any idea when the City Council would be taking action on this and asked Jim Lysen to check on this. T. Peters suggested forming an *ad-hock* committee to study the downtown. J. Lysen said Staff was investigating the UE district downtown and would discuss this on the 25th. H. Milliken said he felt that until City Council went along with this idea that it was premature to set up an *ad-hock* committee.

*Recess at 8:15 PM - Back in session 8:25 PM*

H. Milliken asked that CDBG be scheduled for the November 25th agenda.

**V. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Lisbon Street/ Main Street Gateway Presentation**

J. Lysen said that there was a landscape plan for Lisbon Street from Main Street to the turnpike, and on Main Street from the Longley Bridge to Sabattus Street. He said this plan would be presented to the City Council on November 18th. E. Friedman said that the entrance to the City of Lewiston is negative and this is attempting to mitigate that. The landscaping plan is for a period of over five years. G. Arsenault said the plan included that the private sector participate in order to keep the cost down. D. Theriault suggested to have Mike Cormier, the City arborist, involved in looking at the plan. T. Peters suggested they hold a public meeting instead of going door-to-door to tell citizens about this plan. H. Milliken suggested a public hearing at the Multi Purpose Center after the City Council has had a chance to view this. G. Arsenault said he had planned to go door-to-door a section at a time, the cost of implementing this landscape plan was \$262,000 over a five year period. D. Theriault asked about funding. G. Arsenault said they were going to ask for funding through LCIP. H. Milliken suggested that the Board let the Council know that they were in favor of this concept. T. Peters asked if the City would maintain these

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plantings. G. Arsenault said it would on the public land, but not private. T. Peters said he thought people would jump at the chance to get trees if the city would maintain them.

**MOTION:** by T. Peters, seconded by L. Zidle to send a favorable recommendation to the City Council to begin implementation on the proposed Lisbon Street Corridor and Gateways Landscape Improvement Plan.

**VOTE** 7-0.

**STREAMLING PROCESS WORKSHOP**

J. Lysen said that the streamling proposal would reduce the amount of time for development review. It would remove some of the burden from Planning Board and shift it to the Development Review Committee. Staff's recommendation was to reduce the amount of meetings necessary for approval. He said he would like to be able to speed up the process so that a project took 1 to 2 steps instead of three as it does now. He pointed out that the standards were not reduced, simply reducing the number of review steps. D. Theriault said he would support a "one shot deal" and said he believed staff did a good job. He said he would like to be made aware of when a project is starting; a memo would be sufficient. He said that as of now, meetings 1 and 2 are usually handled in one meeting. H. Skelton raised concerns about the threshold. H. Milliken also expressed concerns about leaving room and time for public input. It was decided that more time was needed for this workshop and that it be scheduled for 6 PM on November 25, 1997.

M. Paradis asked about the engineer's report for the Bates Mill Complex. E. Friedman said there was report from the engineer and would have it available at the Planning Office. D. Theriault suggested that things did not necessarily have to be copied, but that if they would be made available at the Planning Office, it would be helpful.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** by L. Zidle, seconded by D. Theriault to adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE:** Passed 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Denis Theriault  
Planning Board Secretary

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