

GREATER DOWNTOWN TIF ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES

June 6, 2023

Present: Bill Kennedy, Gary Fischer, Andrew Dunbar, Cy Gregg and Heather Vaillancourt

Also Present: Danica Melone and Laura Norton, Office of Building and Planning

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Ms. Melone.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded to approve the Minutes of December 8, 2022 as written with all in favor.

Review of Added Public Amenities:

Ms. Melone extended a welcome to new member Heather Vaillancourt. She pointed out two large graphics for the members to review as they discussed the addition of new public amenities (picnic tables, trashcans and bike racks) for the Riverwalk Parking Lot. The members reviewed what currently existed in that location as well as Lower Main Street and the Centertown region “but the priority is the Riverwalk area” she said.

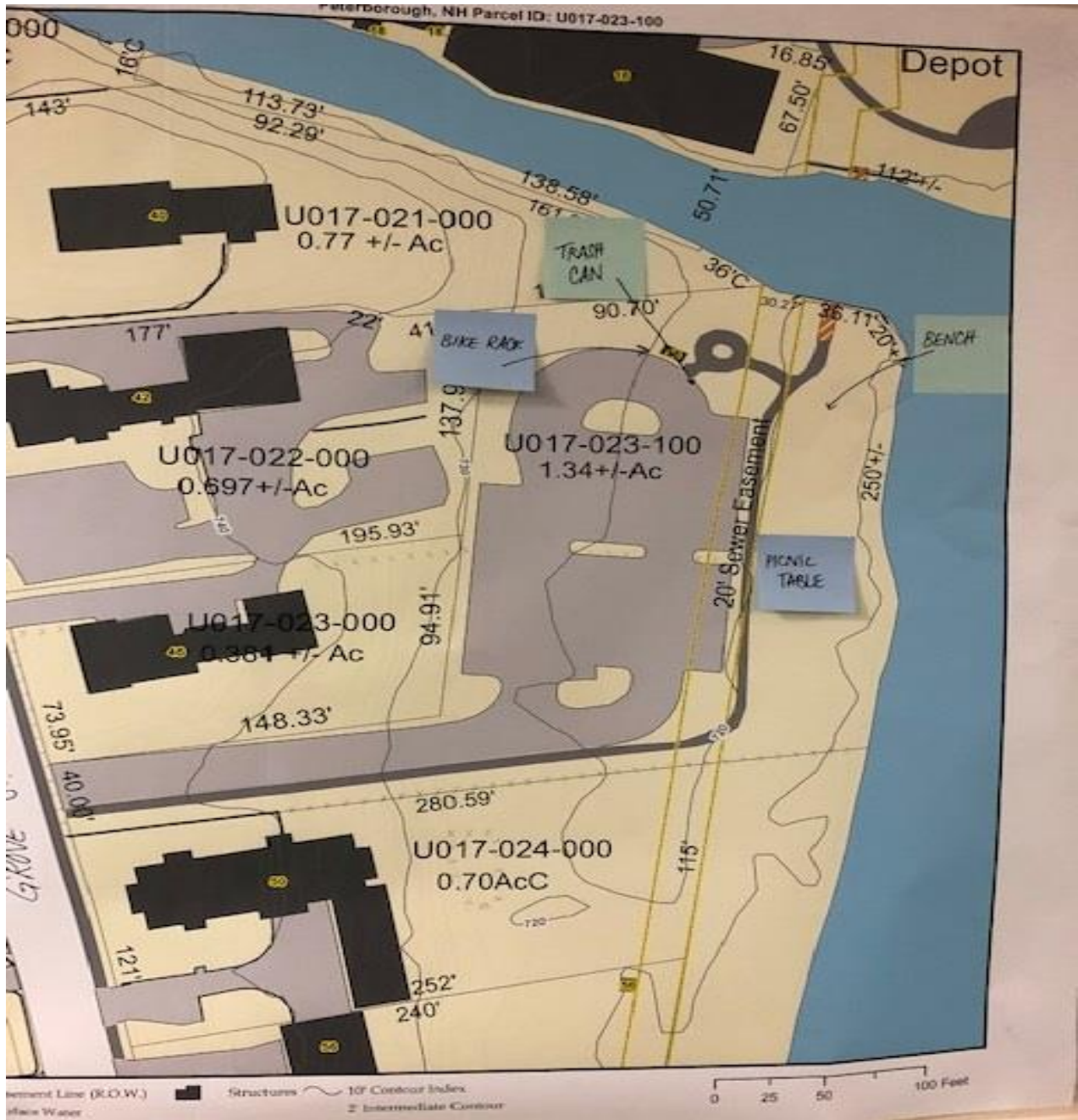
As the members began discussing the amenities Ms. Melone noted the potential for a pollinator garden; a children’s naturescape and additional landscaping would also be added as an element of the plan.

Mr. Gregg noted that (perhaps) due to their locations the current bike racks in Depot Park are seldomly used. “Maybe they should be more strategically placed, to be accessible they have to be visible” he said. Mr. Dunbar agreed adding “it seems there are more bike racks than people using them.” Ms. Melone noted the parking lot did not have a rack at all and one was scheduled to be installed there.

Mr. Fischer asked about the bike pathway (Common Pathway) and a brief discussion about its route and how it has lost its delineation followed. Mr. Fischer suggested a Downtown Map showing the amenities and the bike path route. Mr. Dunbar asked about the “carry in – carry out” trash policy. The members agreed the policy was in effect but not well followed. They went on to discuss the problem of overloaded, ugly trash overloaded trash receptacles all over the Downtown with

Ms. Melone noting the Buildings & Grounds crews were to empty the trash on Mondays.

As the discussion went on the members gathered around the graphics to determine the best locations for the amenities as seen below before moving on to Grove Street and Putnam Park and the Lower Main Street areas.





Ms. Melone noted Nick White of Bar Harbor Bank was very supportive of a green-space parklet on his property by the Main Street Bridge. It was noted that some amenities needs change or are dependent on the different event in town. Mr. Gregg suggested monitoring the use of said amenities and moving them if they are not being used. Mr. Fischer noted the picnic tables and benches should be secured (“bolt them down”) so they don’t end up in the river. Ms. Melone also reviewed

some of the ideas generated from the proposed visioning plan set created by Hoyle Tanner that included more green spaces, traffic bump-outs and potential for realignment of the Main/Depot/Summer Street intersection.

Wayfinding Kiosk:

Ms. Melone reviewed the location of the kiosk noting “we are keeping it basic” but added a plan to produce a business map for distribution at that site was in the making.

There was a brief discussion about potential improvements to the Ocean State Job Lot Plaza as well including additional bike racks, reseeding, revegetation and picnic tables along the walkway and under the bridge once it is finished.

Ms. Melone noted she was working on a grant to supplement TIF funds for some of the beautification projects. She also mentioned the approval of a site plan review for 14 Grove Street and their plans to add landscaping and soft lighting for a big facelift for that building. This led Mr. Fischer to ask about the building on the corner of School and Depot Streets which is currently vacant. Ms. Melone reported the owner of that building seem reluctant to do anything with it “and have not been responsive to anything proposed.”

Before adjourning the meeting, the members briefly discussed the history of bus service through town and the potential of re-initiating that service to the new Downtown Parking Lot.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Office of Building & Planning