

CITY OF DOVER

COCHECHO WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE – MINUTES

Meeting Type: **Regular Meeting**
Meeting Location: **McConnell Center, Room 305, 61 Locust Street, Dover, NH**
Meeting Date: **Tuesday, August 31, 2021**
Meeting Time: **5:30 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dana Lynch (Chair), Dane Drasher, Jack Mettee, Matt Cox, Liz Goldman, Otis Perry, Norm Fracassa (Vice Chair), Sean Fitzgerald, Kim Schuman, Dennis Ciotti

EX-OFFICIO: Ryan Crosby (DHA Executive Director), Bob Carrier (Mayor), Michael Joyal (City Manager)

STAFF: Steve Bird – City Planner, Gary Bannon- Recreation Director

OTHERS: Rob Simmons, Jeff Johnston, Jon Ouellette, Robert Del Savio, Beth Fischer, Dennis Shanahan, Jennie Marshall, Fred Loucks, Bill Baber, Lauren Katz, others

1. Call to Order at 5:30 pm

Members in attendance stated their name for the record.

2. Approval of Minutes from July 20, 2021

Motion: Perry moved to approve the minutes of July 20, 2021. Drasher seconded. Vote: U/A

3. Citizen's Forum:

Elizabeth Fischer, 24 Rutland St has no issues with the development side of the project. She outlined her concerns about the project as it goes forward: public park and water access to the river; she is disappointed the placeholder was removed from the plan. She sent an email to the board and is willing to answer any questions the board has.

Jenny Marshall, 140 Silver St and President of Great Bay Rowing thanked the City for including them in the plans. Their programming and outreach has increased substantially over the past 8 years since they've been operating on the Dover Waterfront. They helped support the grant for the dock. They donated almost \$20,000 to help pay for the dock. They are invested in Dover and the future of the waterfront. They are concerned about the current plans which call for a 3-year gap between the Butler building coming down and when Building F goes up. They hope to be partners to devise creative solutions to that problem.

Iris is a D1 athlete at Northeastern University and has been rowing on the river for 7 years. This gave her access to going to university at an affordable rate. An interruption in the programming will interrupt the education and athletic careers of many.

Lauren Katz, 309 Washington Street kayaks off the launch. She's more comfortable now and it looks like it will be developed. Dover residents don't seem to access the waterfront as much as they could and it's important to promote. She is interested to make sure good access is retained. Continue the partnership with the Great Bay Rowing group.

4. Changes to the Agenda: None

5. Correspondence: Bird noted two emails received from Elizabeth Fischer that are part of the record.

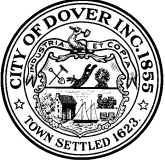
6. Old Business: None

7. New Business

A. Response from Cathartes on Comments and Questions Received from CWDAC Members on Site Plan, Landscape Plans and Architectural Renderings

Rob Simmons, Cathartes explained the committee members needed some time after the last meeting's presentation to review the plans and submit comments. He and others from the team addressed the comments received:

- Charging stations, rooftop solar, sustainability/ building design
 - Making progress on how to implement solar into the project
 - EV charging will be implemented into the project to meet or exceed the regulations
 - Calculations will be run on weatherization, lighting, widows etc for sustainability



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- Landscaping
 - Retaining wall/ screening was described
 - Species of plantings were described
- Building acoustics – acoustical engineer studies and submits plans to exceed code regulations
- Architectural design
 - Rear elevations C, D were described, and materials explained
 - Townhouses were described

Committee members asked clarifying questions about green roof options, heat islands, sidewalks, could solar power cover parking lighting and EV stations, carport or parking solar options and landscape heights. Rob Simmons addressed these questions.

B. Discussion and possible vote on Overall Site Plan

Committee members discussed in detail what motions to make and how to word them.

Motion: Mettee moved that the developer, the city's planning and recreation staff and the CWDAC's Park Planning Subcommittee work diligently and closely with the paddle sports community (including the Great Bay Rowing Club and the UNH Rowing Program) to ensure cooperation in any future plans for the design, permitting and construction for a paddle sports facility. Cox seconded. Vote: U/A

Motion: Mettee moved to approve the waterfront development plans as presented by Cathartes (CPI Management, LLC), including the site plans prepared by Tighe & Bond and the architectural renderings prepared by Embarc Studios, both dated July 26, 2021, as amended, for purposes of forwarding such plans to the Dover Planning Board for review and consideration with a recommendation to grant a Conditional Use Permit for building height. Perry seconded. Vote: U/A

Motion: Mettee moved to encourage cooperation among the developer, city staff, CWDAC and the paddle sports community to work toward a reasonable transition plan as soon as possible for maintaining access to the Cochecho River paddle sports dock, to the greatest extent possible, during the period of project construction. Perry seconded. Vote: U/A

Lynch noted that four members of CWDAC have agreed to serve on the Park Planning subcommittee: Drasher, Fracassa, Schuman, and Brown.

C. Report on Status of Environmental Permitting

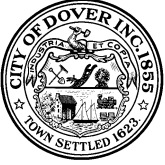
Bird: Horsley Witten organized an interagency meeting to discuss all outstanding issues among all three permits. In attendance were: NH fish and game, EPA, Army Corps of Engineers, Natural Heritage Bureau as well as Wetlands, Alteration of Terrain and Solid Waste from DES. It was a productive meeting, and all questions were addressed or noted to follow up with.

8. Committee Member Comments:

- Lynch went to the Granite State Landscape architects meeting which was at the dock before they went out on the river. He gave explanations of the project.

9. Adjournment

Motion: Fitzgerald moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:55pm. Goldman seconded. Vote: U/A



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Two e-mails from Elizabeth Fischer that were made part of the record are included below.

August 29, 2021

Good morning Cocheco Waterfront Development Advisory Committee members,

I understand the city is attempting to pull members of the waterfront committee together with paddle sport stakeholders, but that has not happened yet.

Last week, there was a request for a rushed meeting next week so something could come to the full waterfront committee later this month. The promise of this meeting should not be in place of the committee acting Tuesday to ensure that the plan has a paddle sports building placeholder but back on the plan.

It is not enough time to adequately digest all the park engineering that is now available, never mind develop a sound proposal and since the paddle sports coalition has been waiting since 2014 to have this discussion, not fair to squish this into a couple of weeks.

Left off your approval when you move the project to the Dover Planning Board, I am concerned we will have access problems for the public desiring to use the paddle sports dock while the construction project is underway never mind what it will do to the viability of UNH and GBR Crew programs.

I would again ask you to consider the following actions on Tuesday night before approving the developers and the most recent iteration of the park plan permit drawings to include.

- Place a condition on the approval that a placeholder for a future paddle sports structure is noted on the park plan.
- Direct the city staff to work in earnest with the parties that would utilize this paddle sports structure. Including design, permitting, and construction of the facility, exploring all ownership, leasing, and management scenarios to settle on a proposal that makes sense for all parties.
- Direct the city staff to prepare a viable plan that ensures individuals seeking to use the paddle sports dock have access during the entire construction period of the project.
- Direct the city staff to prepare a viable plan working with Great Bay Rowing and UNH that allows the current Butler Building to remain until another temporary or permanent structure is available.

Thank you for your time. I am available to discuss this further with any or all committee members either before or at the meeting on Tuesday.
Beth

August 13, 2021

Cocheco Waterfront Committee Members
288 Central Avenue
Dover New Hampshire 03820

transmitted by e-mail to all committee members

Dear Waterfront Committee members,

I am writing today to reinforce my concerns about the waterfront park plan and the omission of a place holder for a paddle sports boathouse. As I have expressed in my recent appearances before your committee, I have a strong interest that all citizens and visitors to Dover have actual access to the river, including a freestanding *paddle* sport structure to support such activities.

I understand that until recently, the boathouse placeholder depicted on the 2017 RFP to developers appeared on the drawings submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services- see image below, lower right corner.

As of the most recent submission, I understand that this is not the case, and this is distressing as it has long been represented by the waterfront committee documents that space would be made available for the construction of a structure to house paddle sports equipment and activities. Earlier this spring, I listened to a Cocheco Waterfront Committee meeting. I heard a presentation from Ironwood, the city's park designer, that "the parking lot and place holder for the future paddle sports facility on the south end of the park had been removed, and it would now be a meadow.

What disturbs me most is that the city and this committee removed the placeholder without outreach to those most impacted.

To gain an insight into why the change, I reached out to the city manager, planning staff, the committee chair.

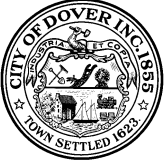
I was told that there that the developer had viewshed concern, s possibly soil contamination in that area, DES wanted less impervious surface near the river, a vernal pool was discovered, existed - a whole host of reasons.

I was also told that the "paddle sports group had not let anyone know what they needed for space and probably couldn't pull it off financially," and the permitting process needed to move forward.

I replied that several years ago, 2014 to be exact, having recently checked my records, Great Bay Rowing gave the city concept sketches of what a boathouse might look like on the waterfront, including scope & size. The paddle sports enthusiasts' group was poised to present a formal proposal, but the city told them to wait; it wasn't time to make a presentation given that the site engineering was not complete, but an opportunity to work with the city and the committee would be forthcoming.

This opportunity never occurred, unfortunately, although numerous times representatives from Great Bay Rowing, UNH representatives, and the public were present at waterfront committee meetings willing and able to answer questions and eager to get the project underway.

Not to be deterred, GBR and UNH moved their operations to Dover, and in the seven years that they have been rowing on the Cocheco, they initiated and helped pay for a grant writer to apply in conjunction with the City of Dover for a grant to construct an ADA compliant paddle



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sports dock. GBR and friends of paddle sports contributed countless hours of in-kind labor to satisfy the grant requirements and donated almost \$20,000 to bridge the gap in funding to install the dock.

This ADA-compliant community dock is used by hundreds of paddle sport enthusiasts each season, and their presence has deterred the damaging vandalism that had plagued the site for years following the construction of the public works facility on Mast Road.

Recently twice, I came to your meetings and raised my concerns. After some cajoling on my part with the powers to be, Gary Bannon was asked by city planning to assemble the paddle sports representatives.

Stakeholders met in June & July of this year with Gary Bannon and representatives from [Great Bay Rowing](#), [Berwick Academy Crew](#), [UNH Crew](#), and [Northeast Passage](#).

I attended as a Dover native, current kayaker & canoeist, taxpayer, past member of Great Bay Rowing, past member of the waterfront committee, and current member of the Dover Recreation Committee.

Gary Bannon confirmed during the meeting that the city had removed the placeholder for a watersport building in the park and the city planning office suggested they look at Building F on the developer's side of the property as an alternative.

Early July, a meeting occurred with the developer to flush out the details of Building F proposal, and a third meeting was held in late July in which Steve Bird attended.

At the developer meeting, the group was told the space was smaller than initially reported, the ceiling height was nine feet but might be able to be raised to ten feet where twelve or fifteen feet is optimal to be able to rack crew boats, the ownership structure would be a condo that they would have to purchase for an unknown sum, and the building most likely wouldn't be built for several years as it was scheduled to be the last to be constructed.

At the most recent meeting of the group Steve Bird stated the current iteration of the park plan was a done deal, no free-standing building, the Butler Building would be demolished to regrade the site with no date specified. Lastly, if the rowers wanted space on the waterfront, they should work it out with the developer.

This was distressing news to all parties, but they made an investigation of the Building F option.

Unfortunately, Building F is the space as it is too small to accommodate all four coalition members equipment and will, in the end, at least in my opinion, cause conflicts between the residential condo owners and the crew teams as they head out in the early dawn for their practice sessions.

To Gary Bannon's credit, he has suggested a plan where the Pavilion building in the park might be expanded with lower-level space for additional paddle sports activity, i.e., public kayak and paddleboard storage. I encourage the waterfront committee to give it due consideration, but please note, this option does not provide adequate crew boat storage.

On Wednesday of this week, I went to city hall to review the current version of the development plans under consideration by your committee just in case I was missing something. My visit raised some questions, so I asked to meet with Steve Bird. I also wanted to hear from Steve directly how the placeholder came to be removed from the park plan. He reiterated several of the reasons I listed above.

I asked how this could be rectified, and Steve instructed me that it is up to the waterfront committee to make any changes, so I am coming to you folks to resolve this issue.

I would ask you to consider the following actions on Tuesday night before approving the developers and the most recent iteration of the park plan permit drawings to include.

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