

Community and Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, July 3, 2024

Topics:

- 1) Berwick Hotel Site
- 2) Recommendation to edit the SEP application language to require posting about road closures
- 3) Blush Salon BIAP – decision on whether to forgive the BIAP Loan
(Note, applicant was unavailable for this date, so there will be a different meeting for this topic)

Committee Members present were: Chair Tadio, Alderwoman McClure, Alderman Whitcomb, Alderwoman Davis

Others present were: Mayor Doenges, President Talbott, Alderman Barbagallo, Alderman Adams, Ed Bove from the RRA, Gordon Dritschilo from the Rutland Herald

Meeting was called to order at 5:30PM.

First, Chair Tadio set the order of the meeting. The Blush Salon BIAP will be discussed at a different committee meeting because the applicant was unavailable. The second order of business was an update on the new hotel at the Berwick site followed by the Special Event Permit conversation.

Mayor Doenges gave an update on the current plans for the hotel that will be located where the old Berwick hotel stood. Belden Construction company is currently planning a seven-story structure, with four stories of hotel containing 100 hotel rooms. There will also be two stories set aside for 26 apartments. There will be underground parking and hopefully a rooftop business. This hotel will be built at the site of the “pit” where the Berwick hotel and an old dry cleaner burned down in the 1970s. To build the hotel, the developers need to clean-up hazardous materials including PFAS. The original estimates in 2013 to clean up this site were \$500,000 and current estimates are \$5 million. The developer is working to procure funding to hopefully begin the cleanup this fall. There are likely EPA funds available to clean up Brownfields sites. Rutland City’s involvement in the plan includes ensuring there are water and wastewater connections and working with Green Mountain Power and the Department of Public Works to get power to the site. The city is hoping to coordinate the opening of the hotel with the opening of the Paramount and Center Street so that neither project interrupts business for each other. No motion or action was needed and the Berwick hotel site will remain in committee.

Next the committee discussed the Special Event Permit application. After recent events, neighbors and businesses have complained that they did not receive advance warning and adequate notice that streets would be closing. The committee discussed a few options of methods to notify the public. One easy option is to have a city calendar for events that require street

closings or that require a Special Event Permit so that the public can check for events. The Mayor said he would begin work on this right away.

The committee had a conversation about how to not impede events and encourage businesses but also strike a balance of giving fair warning to locals when roads would be closed. Alderman Barbagallo suggested that we set a certain timeframe by which people holding special events must notify surrounding neighbors and business, but ultimately the committee felt this would be too great a burden for people holding events. It was determined that it would be appropriate to add language to the SEP application to ask the applicant what actions will be taken to notify neighbors. At future Board meetings when considering SEP applications, if the Board of Aldermen feel that the applicant's response to this question is insufficient they can deny the permit at the meeting until the applicant provides a more robust notification plan.

Alderwoman McClure made a motion to add a question to the Special Event Permit that reads:

“How will you notify neighbors and businesses that roads will be closed for your event? What is your action plan?

(A sufficient action plan could include contacting businesses and neighbors in one or more of the following ways: emails, phone calls, physical notice in the form of a mailer and/or speaking with people door to door)”

Motion passed 4-0.

Alderwoman McClure made a motion to update **Section 8** on the Special Event Permit application to include a section on social media.

“Social media? (Front Porch Forum, Facebook, Instagram, X, and any other social media platforms)”

Motion passed 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:21PM.