

City of Biddeford
Downtown Development Commission
September 10, 2018 5:30 PM City Hall
Conference Room 2nd Floor

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Welcome Guests**
 - 2.1. Greg Tansley, City Planner
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - 3.1. August 13, 2018 Downtown Development Commission Meeting Minutes
[8-13-2018 DDC Meeting Minutes.doc](#)
- 4. Budget Report**
 - 4.1. FY17 - Budget Encumbered Balance: \$3172.00
FY19 - \$2500.00 - Effectively July 1, 2018
Total funds available: \$5672.00
[9-10-2018 DDC Budget Aug 2018 current.pdf](#)
- 5. Chairman Follow-ups/Updates**
 - 5.1. Open position on DDC - Mayor Casavant to appoint
FY17 Funds (original vote funded RiverWalk Overlook benches/tables)
New Meeting Time
- 6. Old Business**
 - 6.1. Clean Team Funding (before RiverJam)
Downtown Construction Updates/Roadwork/Sidewalks/Crosswalk Planters
City Website - downtown sections/pages/RiverWalk page out dated/DDC past minutes not uploaded
Business Retention/Improvement Plan
Parking Management Plan/Parking Structure Update
Façade Improvement
Neighborhood Mapping Update
Light Pole Promotion Banner
Sub-Committees
[9-10-2018 Downtown Goals Jan 2018.doc](#)
[9-10-2018 Downtown Task Force Action Plan DURKIN COMMENTS.docx](#)
[Parking Management Plan Review 2018.doc](#)
- 7. New Business**
 - 7.1. DDC - Discussion of Role, Vision, possible Ordinance Update
315 Main Street Park - Gateway & Clean Up
[9-10-2018 DDC Ordinance as of Aug 2018.doc](#)
- 8. Next Meeting**
 - 8.1. October 1, 2018

9. Adjourn



Commissioners Present: Clearwater, Dubois, Edwards, Foley, Swanton
[QUORUM]

Commissioners Absent: Droggitis, Durkin, Schlaver

City Representative: Favreau

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I • Opening Remarks: Favreau, Introductions and Welcome guest Sgt Steve Gorton and citizen Lucas Blom

II • Report from Sgt Gorton

Community Policing and Street Crimes Unit

Open for law enforcement questions and general issues – best mode of communication is email and request either information or meeting presence

Hate Crimes Report – well-handled by law enforcement side, discussion of public-facing side of this issue

Biddeford Rising, citizenship ceremonies – potential paths of publicization and encouragement of positive progress of new Biddefordians

My Neighborhood Project – Police involved in helping form connections to each neighborhood and natural hub for each; try to improve contact points with people within neighborhoods

III • Vote to approve July 2018 Minutes

[Moved: Clearwater, Second: Dubois, Vote: Unanimous]

IV • Reports

• Budget FY17

FY17 Encumbered balance: \$3270.12

• Budget FY19

Line at \$2500

• Clean Team Funding

Director of Public Works (DPW) states that it is not high priority, but will try to get it covered.

Potential DDC role: Fund one-time cleaning before River Jam

Ask DPW to come to September meeting to report on PW projects and goals

Favreau will resarch funding; will call special meeting to vote on funding

Potential feedback can be offered to Council re: downtown cleaning

V • Old Business and City Business

- **Role of DDC**
Needs to be a discussion with City Manager and Mayor
Revisit charter and potentially amend for appropriate role
- **Empty Slot**
Favreau will contact Mayor via Clerk to address
- **City Website**
Downtown sections/pages: Mission; Commissioner names; links to projects
Vote for Favreau to establish this page
[Moved: Dubois, Second: Clearwater, Vote: Unanimous]
- **Business Improvement Plan**
Tabled until September
- **Parking Management Plan**
Update will be given at August 14, 2018
- **Façade Improvement and Business Retention/Assistance Plan**
Façade: HUD money is much more than city capacity, but will be a bit more restricted as to uses (slum and blight; ADA and safety; etc.).
Business Retention: Loans for other forms of improvement/retention, managed through Southern Maine Finance Authority
Maximum: \$15,000 with match; commercial space only

VI • **New Business**

- **Subcommittees**
Discussion of formalization and need for clarity of Open Meeting guidelines and city rules of order for DDC and subcommittees
Edwards – volunteers to form Policy Manual as needed
- **Citizen remarks**
Riverwalk signage – Coming from Saco Train station, lacks directional signs and is not clean or tidy

September 10 – recommendation for next meeting

VII • **Meeting Adjourned (7:55p)**

[Moved: Edwards, Second: Swanton, Vote: Unanimous]

08/30/2018 15:24
gmatherne

City of Biddeford
YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET REPORT

P
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FOR 2019 13

ACCOUNTS FOR: 001 General Fund	ORIGINAL APPROP	TRANFRS/ ADJSTMTS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBRANCES	AVAILABLE BUDGET	PCT USED
21128 Municipal Services							
21128 60859 Downtown Development C	2,500	0	2,500	.00	.00	2,500.00	.0%
TOTAL Municipal Services	2,500	0	2,500	.00	.00	2,500.00	.0%
TOTAL General Fund	2,500	0	2,500	.00	.00	2,500.00	.0%
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,500	0	2,500	.00	.00	2,500.00	

08/30/2018 15:24
gmatherne

City of Biddeford
YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET REPORT

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FOR 2019 13

ACCOUNTS FOR: 002 Designated Fund Bal Sub-Fund	ORIGINAL APPROP	TRANFRS/ ADJSTMTS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBRANCES	AVAILABLE BUDGET	PCT USED
22001 Des. F/B General Government							
22001 60859 Downtown Development C	3,172	0	3,172	.00	.00	3,172.00	.0%
TOTAL Des. F/B General Government	3,172	0	3,172	.00	.00	3,172.00	.0%
TOTAL Designated Fund Bal Sub-Fund	3,172	0	3,172	.00	.00	3,172.00	.0%
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,172	0	3,172	.00	.00	3,172.00	

08/30/2018 15:24
gmatherne

City of Biddeford
YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET REPORT

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FOR 2019 13

	ORIGINAL APPROP	TRANFRS/ ADJSTMTS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBRANCES	AVAILABLE BUDGET	PCT USED
GRAND TOTAL	5,672	0	5,672	.00	.00	5,672.00	.0%

** END OF REPORT - Generated by Gerry Matherne **

Downtown Goals Jan 2018 (excerpt from City Council 2018-19 Goals Workshop)

Like many urban/service centers, economic development efforts have been and continue to be focused on the downtown. Past efforts, especially the bold decision to buy and tear down the former trash to energy plant in the downtown is paying significant dividends. Commercial properties are being redeveloped. Residential units are being developed. The latest large scale residential conversions in the downtown are being completely sold/rented out prior to opening. Every commercial property sold privately in the downtown is selling at a price significantly higher than the City's assessed value. These sales translate into a greater percentage of the property tax burden being paid for by the commercial properties in the downtown in comparison to single family homes.

There is a 'buzz' in the area, as people from outside the community have determined that the improvements in the downtown are creating a desirable location to live. The attractiveness of the community is driven in part by the ideal location of the community - nearly equally located between Portsmouth and Portland. Recent large scale conversions of mill space into residential housing have primarily attracted tenants from outside of the community.

Parking remains the greatest challenge to further redevelopment in the downtown area. At the height of the mills as a source of employment, a great percentage of the employees walked to work. While the trend is moving slowly in the opposite direction, it is rare that employees arrive to work in anything but a privately owned automobile. The private sector is very aware of the plans that the City has to construct a parking structure.

Exposing the falls and vistas that exist along the Saco River has been an important aspect of the 'buzz' that is being felt in the development sector. The views, hidden for generations by the then operating mill complexes, are unmatched in their beauty and wonder. The continuation of the RiverWalk, including integration with other planned downtown improvements, is an important step that the private sector anxiously awaits.

To continue the momentum and positive transition in the downtown, the City will:

2018-36 Construct a parking structure: The construction of a parking structure that is intended to service expected downtown business growth, improve the marketability of the city owned property at 3 Lincoln Street, and provide access to the RiverWalk system is critical to the next big steps for the downtown. To achieve construction without any general fund and/or property taxes being used to pay for the parking structure, a parking program must be implemented prior to the project receiving final authorization to construct. *Critical, 4th quarter

- a. *Select location:* Critical, 1st quarter
- b. *Determine design features of structure:* Critical, 1st quarter
- c. *Implement a comprehensive parking program to generate user revenue in order to guarantee residents don't pay for the parking structure:* Critical, 2nd quarter
- d. *Award contract to construct:* Critical, 3rd quarter

2018-37 *Integrate 3 Lincoln St master planning with other plans to redevelop site:* The City has one opportunity to correctly complete the redevelopment of 3 Lincoln St. To achieve successful redevelopment, the City needs to integrate a solution for parking, provide access to the RiverWalk through pedestrian connections, formulate improvements to traffic flow that encourage pedestrian activities, and define a phased approach to achieve completion of the other City improvements in the downtown. To achieve the eventual redevelopment of the site, the City will:

*Critical, 1st quarter 2019

- a. *Authorize the construction of the parking structure:* Critical, 3rd quarter
- b. *Determine the final plans for the next phase of the Riverwalk (from Rt 1 to Laconia Plaza) and pedestrian connections (to include funding, phasing and schedule) and authorize the first section(s) to be constructed:* Critical, 4th quarter
- c. *Determine the project schedule for other important improvements planned in the downtown:* High, 3rd quarter
- d. *Critically review traffic impacts on the pedestrian vision for downtown and develop a master plan to make changes:* High, 4th quarter

2018-38 *Riverwalk and pedestrian connections:* The City will cause the design of the next critical park of the RiverWalk (from Laconia Plaza to Route 1) along with the pedestrian connections necessary to connect the facility to downtown and community. To achieve this, the City will:

Critical, 4th quarter

- a. *Determine the design elements:* High, 1st quarter
- b. *Secure the necessary legal authority (easements and/or ownership) of the land:* Critical, 2nd quarter
- c. *Determine funding requirements, sources of funding and proper phasing:* Critical, 3rd quarter
- d. *Authorize bidding for the next phase to be constructed:* Critical, 3rd quarter

2018-39 *Encourage private sector redevelopment of all Main St properties and those along critical corridors:* The City will examine the reasons that some properties are being redeveloped while others remain unchanged. There is clear evidence that the City's façade grants have been successful and popular. Additional government design and performance standards have had some limited success. The City will present the results of the analysis and provide a plan to act as a catalyst to encourage more private sector investment and at a faster pace. High, 2nd quarter

2018-40 *Identify critical gateways and develop a gateway plan to improve them:* As identified in the Downtown Task Force's report, gateways are an important component of achieving the desired results of the Task Force's recommendations. High, 3rd quarter

2018-41 *Implement Downtown Task Force Recommendations:* The Task Force's recommendations were widely accepted and well done. A critical review of the recommendations is needed followed by creation of an implementation strategy. High, 4th quarter

2018-42 *Critical review of the services provided by Heart of Biddeford (HOB) and determine if changes are needed to improve them:* HOB provides some services that are normally provided in other communities by the formal government. It is widely accepted that HOB is the most effective way to deliver those services. However, a review has not been done to confirm that belief. Medium, 4th quarter

2018-43 *Continue to be involved with MDOT to redesign the Main, Water and Hill intersection:* *High, 3rd quarter

* indicate goals carried from 2017 2018

2018-44 *Continue to monitor MDOT plans for South and Elm St:* This intersection is on MDOT's long-term planning horizon for redesign. Continue to advocate and monitor MDOT plans. *Medium. 2nd quarter 2019

2018-45 *Creative economy strategy:* Continue to evaluate the potential role of the creative economy strategy to assist with the redevelopment of the downtown. Low, 3rd quarter

Downtown Action Plan

Introduction

Downtown is for people. It is a dynamic, interesting place with features and amenities that create the desire to linger. Downtown is for walking. It is an unmatched pedestrian experience where delight unfolds with every step. Downtown is an adventure, with a never-ending flow of things to see and do. Downtown is a place people want to *be*.

The vision of the Downtown Task Force for Biddeford encompasses these traits, but in a way that can only happen here. Biddeford's unique qualities, for example, the Mill District, Main Street architecture and our location at the falls of the Saco River, already provide the necessary ingredients to fulfill this vision. Emphasizing our strengths and seizing opportunities will draw us closer to this vision.

Communities grow and evolve naturally, as market conditions and demographic shifts bring about change. City Council has asked this subcommittee /AD-HOC COMMITTEE to suggest ways in which this natural evolution can be most productive and lead to the most beneficial outcomes for Biddeford.

Why is downtown important?

Downtown is the heart of a city. The downtown defines the greater community by providing a visual identity of the area, often through iconic buildings and other place-making elements. City Hall here in Biddeford is perhaps the most iconic image of our downtown.

The 'flavor' of the overall city is the direct result of what takes place in the downtown. Is there a strong arts community downtown? Is downtown a tourist destination? How do residents and visitors use the downtown?

Downtown embodies the history of the community. History often begins downtown. Downtown provides a rich and varied account of the community's foundation. The falls here on the Saco River and the Mill District define what Biddeford has been in the past and where it may go in the future.

Walkable, pedestrian friendly communities are becoming more important in the 21st century as age cohorts on both sides of the adult spectrum (i.e. young adults and seniors) are beginning to prefer living in a densely populated downtown that offers a unique urban experience. This kind of experience, lively, and convenient is becoming more valuable and is likely to be the driver of ongoing economic development.

Characteristics of a Great Downtown

First, a successful downtown is an easy and enjoyable place for pedestrians and has many features people want to explore on foot. Historic buildings give downtown a unique presence. Public art, interesting water features and other distinctive characteristics add aesthetic value to a downtown area. Effort to maintain both public and private spaces is evidence of the pride that all members of the community take

in the downtown area. Aside from being pleasing to the eye, a great downtown also includes strong infrastructure that supports flow of both pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Public transportation aids moving people in and out of downtown and the supply of parking is sufficient to meet development requirements. Both are easy and convenient to use. Lastly, a strong arts community, in conjunction with successful civic organizations keeps downtown vibrant and interesting.

Impressive City Hall Investment in Biddeford's Comeback

Listen to long-time Biddeford residents and you will hear stories about downtown from years ago. National chain stores like Woolworth's and JC Penney anchored Main Street. Local shops filled all the spaces in between and flourished. Going shopping in Biddeford meant going down to Main Street. However, America was a different place then. Now, shopping is an entertainment activity and most likely takes place in a regional mall or big-box retailer, or more likely than ever before, online. Main Street may no longer be the commercial center of Biddeford, but the flavor of what once was can be recaptured using a 21st century vernacular.

That flavor is people, especially those that were a part of Biddeford's industrial past. People like to go where other people already are. Enhancing Biddeford's existing downtown attributes, and creating new destination venues, will spark greater pull downtown. Much has been accomplished in recent years to add visual interest and vitality downtown. The Mill District is a distinct part of downtown and THEN there IS the RiverWalk, the city's signature public project, uses Biddeford's greatest asset to create a destination-oriented amenity. The Saco River and its dramatic falls have drawn people to Biddeford for centuries, and can still play that role, albeit for different reasons and effect. Conceived in 2009, three phases of the RiverWalk are completed. To date, the RiverWalk proceeds from Mechanic's Park through Pepperell Mill Buildings 15, 17 and 18 to Laconia Plaza, where striking views of our famous falls are at their best.NEED TO MENTIONED THE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE OVER THE SACO RIVER AND JOINT PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF SACO ... City Council has approved the master plan for future phases, which will take the RiverWalk from the new Laconia Plaza along the river past River Dam Mill and the former MERC site, THROUGH A NEW WATERFRONT PUBLIC PARK, crossing Elm Street ,AND UP THE RIVER TO THE NEW DIAMOND MATCH PARK ...to what will become Diamond Match Park. An additional pedestrian bridge joining Biddeford to Saco Island is also a part of the master plan.

For many years, manufacturing shielded much of the river and falls from Biddeford residents. The RiverWalk now opens up this dynamic feature for residents and visitors alike to enjoy and, one day, Biddeford will be known for this very special amenity.

The RiverWalk provides an excellent vantage point to explore, not only the Saco River, but also Biddeford's Mill District. The Mill buildings here fascinate people. The Mill District is an asset like no other, a dense and compact collection of rugged and historic buildings that provide an inimitable urban-like experience in a small town setting. They continue to intrigue, as the backdrop for stories of the men and women who once toiled long hours there to fuel Biddeford's economy.

Today, instead of large manufacturing operations in these imposing buildings, the Mill District now attracts dozens of small business people to work each day. Pepperell Mill Campus has invested more than \$25 million in recent years to renovate its buildings. Housing in the Mill district is especially in demand. The atmosphere of an apartment in these buildings, particularly those with river views, is virtually unmatched anywhere. There are now 100 housing units in Pepperell Mill and 146 units between the Mill at Saco Falls and the Lofts at Saco Falls, with many more housing units planned. Whether for home or for work, the Mill District brings people downtown and, importantly, adds “feet on the street.”

The Mill District is not the only place downtown where business is thriving. Biddeford is home to many local businesses that have anchored the downtown for decades. Alex’s Pizza, Roger’s Barbershop, Oakpoint Associates, and Wonderbar Restaurant are just a few of the establishments that have served Biddeford residents for generations. Others, like Reilly’s Bakery and Biddeford Savings Bank have operated on Main Street for more than a century. The durability of these businesses is indication of the resilience of our downtown.

Businesses both old and new thrive in downtown Biddeford. Over the past five years, many new businesses have opened on Main Street, and while some have lasted only a short time, those that have endured have established a strong presence in Biddeford. Some examples are:

- Elements COFEESHOP AND BAR- a true anchor on the west side of downtown Main Street
- Biscuits & Company – the crew’s enthusiasm for their work can be tasted in every bite
- Trillium - a gift shop up front, Walter’s watch repair in back
- Cow Bell Burger Bar – a simple burger made special
- Uncorked - a wine bar that adds cachet to Main Street

Each of these businesses is, in part, experiential and provides distinctive products. These are true destination-oriented enterprises that entice people downtown repeatedly. Along with Main Street and the adjacent streets, retail is also taking hold in the Mill District.

The benefit of plentiful space in the mill buildings has expanded retail presence beyond traditional Main Street storefronts. In particular, new enterprise is burgeoning in Pepperell Mill Campus, where Portland Pie, Sweetcream Dairy, Tulu Salon and Spa and Banded Horn are flourishing. Over the past decade, not only has this space been absorbed by retail and office users, but manufacturing has taken root in the very soil that was cultivated a century and a half ago when the first mills began operation. Hyperlite and Anglrox are two manufacturers now carrying on Biddeford’s historic legacy.

Regardless of its success, no business and no new housing units would be possible without vigilant upkeep of the infrastructure that supports both. The city has provided and/or has leveraged millions of dollars to not only upgrade and repair vital infrastructure, but also invest in downtown in other meaningful ways. Some of these projects include:

Purchase of the Maine E energy Recovery Company – This transformative event at the end of 2012 sparked millions of dollars of new investment downtown.

Main Street sidewalk reconstruction (2012) – Hill Street to Alfred Street. Project included new sidewalks, streetlights and upgraded electrical service.

Main Street sidewalk reconstruction (2017) – Alfred Street to Lincoln and Adams Street. The project included new sidewalks, streetlights, street trees and crosswalks of laid pavers and cobblestones. Decorative cobblestone accents also now adorn Main Street.

MAIN Street reconstruction (2016) – Main Street from Elm to railroad tracks. Project included sewer separation and new road surface.

Elm Street repaving (2015) – “Mill-and-fill” resurfacing.

Adams/Jefferson Street repaving (2015) - “Mill-and-fill” resurfacing.

Main Street repaving (2017) – Elm Street to Alfred Street – “Mill-and-fill” resurfacing.

Mill District “elevated platform” (20__) – the city repaired sewer lines and the “platform” they are suspended from adjacent to Building 15. City took ownership of the area.

Downtown wifi – A new downtown wifi hot spot was installed here at City Hall on August 4, 2017. This is a public/private partnership initiated by the City’s Downtown Development Commission with the generous help of Bangor Savings Bank, GWI, and Axiom Technologies of Machias. The DDC is currently seeking new sponsors for three additional hotspots to cover Main Street completely from Mechanic’s Park to Elm Street.

Pilot downtown beautification project - Infrastructure is of course important, but great downtowns also are visually interesting. Biddeford is fortunate to have many fine and architecturally significant buildings, but a little seasonal color adds “atmosphere.” This spring the city embarked on a pilot beautification program along Main Street. Now over 100 planters and hanging baskets add the color of many varieties of flowers. The response to this program has been overwhelmingly positive.

As a result of these ongoing public improvements and maintenance projects, the cost of which is more than \$11 million, the commercial properties downtown are selling at 58.59% above assessed value, and valuation overall has increased by more than \$38 million, yielding an additional \$716,000 of property tax revenue.

Additional Investment on the Way

The success that The City of Biddeford, private investors, and community organizations have accomplished much in just a few short years. Still there is much to do to achieve Biddeford’s full potential. Further infrastructure projects, business enhancement and a continued focus on downtown will strengthen Biddeford’s position as a destination that will be the envy of neighboring communities.

Public investment will be needed to complete these projects:

RiverWalk – As mentioned above, Biddeford’s RiverWalk will help define Biddeford as a destination community. As stated, upcoming phases will follow the river from Laconia Plaza and terminate at Diamond Match Park. This project is the epitome of a pleasurable pedestrian experience. The master plan prepared by Wright Pierce in late December 2016 will guide future phases as funding is acquired.

THE RE-EMERGENCE OF THE RIVERWALK STEERING COLLATION, A JOINT PUBLIC-PRIVATE COMMITTEE, WILL ONLY STRENGTHEN THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF BIDDEFORD'S RIVERWALK. THE GROUP CAN ASSIST WITH FUNDING SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC ENTITY.

Parking Garage – Parking has been a problem here for decades. Main Street commerce, plus new uses in the Mill District now demand new structured parking. An important element of this project must be convenient and clear pedestrian connections to link the new garage to Main Street and the Mill District, thereby enhancing the pedestrian experience downtown. This group made recommendations regarding proposed parking garage earlier this year. Council has engaged Desman Associates to recommend a site and design the facility. However, a parking garage must also be one part of a comprehensive parking management strategy that together balances parking supply and demand to make car-storage as efficient as possible.

Main Street sidewalks – The new sidewalks, lighting and street trees from Lincoln Street down to Hill Street have brightened the character of Main Street. Still to be replaced, however, are the sidewalks from Lincoln and Adams Streets to Elm Street.

Re-design of the Main, Hill and Water Streets intersection – This very busy intersection at the foot of Main Street is in need of reconstruction due to increased levels of traffic here. This project is currently in design phase and should be completed during the 2018 construction season.

Lincoln Street re-construction – As part of this project, Lincoln Street will be re-paved, overhead electrical lines will be moved underground, and the retaining wall along Lincoln Mill will be re-built.

Ongoing downtown beautification project for 2017 and been an unqualified success. Main Street is brighter and livelier because of the colorful flowering plants that line the streets this season. Continuing this project, whether funded by the proposed Downtown Improvement District or by the City, sends an important message about the pride we all take in Biddeford. IN ADDITION TO THE WATERING AND PLANT MAINTENANCE, THERE IS A SERIOUS NEED IN FUNDING FOR A DEDICATED "CLEAN TEAM" ALONG ALL DOWNTOWN STREETS, PARTICULARLY THE CENTER CORE.

Lincoln Street Park/ACTUALLY IT IS : CITY SQUARE PARK – This small park next to the bank building at 208 Main Street is a leafy oasis with mature trees and nicely trimmed hedges. However, an iron fence surrounds it on all sides with an inconspicuous opening near the rear of the bank building. Opening the fence park along Main Street will allow greater enjoyment of the park, particularly if benches are added. This park might also be an excellent venue for street performers.

City Hall Clock Tower – Wind your way up the stairs of the City Hall tower to the clock works and you will find the names and dates of countless workers penciled or painted on the broad wooden beams. These are, no doubt, the men who over more than a century cared for the tower, keeping the clock good working order for the benefit of all city residents and visitors. Today, the clock no longer operates. The hands of its four faces are frozen in place. The repair and continued maintenance of the clock is an excellent way

for the city to demonstrate to residents and to the private sector its commitment to the maintenance of municipal property.

Upcoming private investment will supplement public funds described above to create a complement of places and spaces that reinforce the pedestrian experience here.

3 Lincoln Street redevelopment – The purchase of the MERC facility by the City in late 2012, and its subsequent demolition, was a transformative event for downtown Biddeford. This six-acre site is now ready for redevelopment. The feasibility study conducted by Camoin Associates of Sarasota Springs, New York suggested mixed-use, campus-like development. City staff is actively marketing the site to both Maine and out-of-state developers.

Lincoln Mill – This two-phase project will change the complexion of downtown for years to come. As planned, this is a 180-unit residential project will be joined later by a stand-alone boutique hotel. Both phases are luxury accommodations that will include other commercial space as well.

208 Main Street – this purpose-built bank building dating from 1921 has been occupied by several financial institutions over the years. Bank of America operated a branch here until 2015, when it was sold to a local developer. Bangor Savings Bank now owns the building and will move its downtown branch here by early fall. THE BANK HAS A 99 YEAR ON THE CITY SQUARE PARK, NEXT DOOR, AND WILL ENHANCE THE PARK'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTAIN THE FACILITY.....

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE/TRAFFIC FLOW PATTERNS/PACTS INVOLVEMENT/MASS TRANSIT / AMTRAK / ZOOM BUS / NEW MAINE TURNPIKE EXIT / PEOPLE GETTING IN & OUT OF CITY

Action Plans

Defining Downtown through Gateways

Successful downtowns have clearly visible indications that one is entering the central business district. We call these indications “gateways.” Gateways can serve several functions in support of Biddeford's downtown:

- Provide recognizable entry points to downtown
- Create an identifiable brand for downtown by using consistent design language and place-making elements (signage, plantings, and materials as part of a gateway scheme)
- Linked together by “connecting the dots,” create a boundary of the downtown area
- Emphasize neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown area that in turn become “gateway districts,” and create stronger identity for these neighborhoods
- Assist with wayfinding in the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods

Seven locations around the perimeter of downtown Biddeford have been proposed as formal gateways (shown as squares on the “Proposed Downtown Boundary and Proposed Downtown Gateway” map). These are geographic points (mainly street intersections) that already hint at transition from outlying

areas into the downtown and need only the addition of place-making elements to become true gateways. These gateways are:

- Elm Street at the Saco City line (Spring Island)
- Elm Street at the railway overpass
- Main Street at Elm Street
- South Street at Elm Street
- Alfred Street at Birch Street
- Pool Street at Hill Street
- Water Street at Main Street

Using gateways to establish a new brand for downtown will enhance the downtown experience and help to reset the existing image of downtown Biddeford. The proposed gateways encompass an area bounded roughly by Elm Street, the Saco River, Hill Street and Birch Street. These boundaries define downtown experientially, and differentiate the downtown area from other parts of Biddeford.

Pedestrian Access FUTURE LINKS FROM RIVERWALK TO CLIFFORD PARK AND ON TO THE COASTLINE (?) MORE RIVERVIEWS, CLIFFORD PARK, THE GRAND CENTRAL PARK OF BIDDEFORD.

Pedestrian Amenities PUBLIC RESTROOMS ? DOWNTOWN AND ON THE RIVERWALK .BOAT LAUNCH FACILITIES . SIGNAGE

Business Attraction: Restaurant Sector

Continually Reassess Action Items THE DDC CAN BE THE "ACTION" COMMITTEE

Whom do we want to attract?

In the broadest sense, the vision for Biddeford is for downtown to be well *populated*. Improving downtown may be as simple (but not easy!) as drawing in more people. More residents, more shoppers, more workers, and more tourists will benefit all the businesses, organizations, and institutions located in the downtown and cultivate new enterprise here.

For a healthy and vibrant downtown, it is important to have residents and visitors from all levels of the socio-economic spectrum. However, Biddeford will benefit greatly by attracting ongoing investment, in terms of both monetary capital and social capital. The vision here is to draw into downtown:

- Tourists – Out-of-staters who can help drive new types of business

- UNE students, who remain a largely under-served population/ALUMNI WHO RETURNED
- New residents who wish to contribute to the economic and social well-being of Biddeford

It is important to keep the “gritty” quality of Biddeford. This is, in part, what attracts some newcomers here: the unpretentious and hard-working air that many people find charming. However, it is equally important to make whatever changes are necessary to attract a demographic that can foster upmarket new businesses like Trillium, Suger, Elements, and Biscuits & Company, each already successful in our downtown. These businesses have proven that downtown Biddeford is a viable market for more upscale enterprise and can act as a model for new start-ups.

What do we want to attract?

The overall vision for downtown Biddeford is of a multi-layered and integrated array of residential neighborhoods, commercial blocks, Mill District uses, and civic amenities that, in tandem, create an environment that is pleasing and desirable. As a unique urban experience becomes more desirable and valuable, people will naturally gravitate toward certain features and conditions in the downtown area that can reliably supply that experience. Comfortable walkability is a key element of a successful urban experience. Biddeford already has the advantage of a downtown built environment that lends itself easily to pedestrians: dense assortment of buildings, streets that are not too wide and focal points (City Hall, the “Great Wall”) that help orient downtown users. Variety is another important element, which can be achieved by fostering a mix of daytime and nighttime uses that are functional, lively, attractive, and full of visual interest that never becomes stale:

- A complementary assortment of retail businesses
- A strong link between manufacturing in the Mill buildings and local retail shops, drawing on Biddeford’s manufacturing heritage
- Informal entertainment (street musicians) as well as live performances at regular venues
- New place-making elements that reinforce Biddeford’s identity and brand
- On-going improvement and beautification (A CITY COUNCIL COMMITMENT)

Communities that invest in themselves are more likely to attract businesses and new development than those that do not. To be successful in the long term, downtown must be the beneficiary of continual future-oriented investment. Always ask, “How can we make downtown better?”

Downtown Biddeford, with its significant architecture, good proportions, and burgeoning amenities, already comprises the elements of a vibrant downtown. Many new businesses, both on AND OFF Main Street and in the Mill buildings, have found this to be true. DOWNTOWN BIDDEFORD IS LOCATED IN A UNIQUE SETTING WITH THE SACO RIVER FLOWING THROUGH THE URBAN SETTING, THE ATLANTIC OCEAN A 10 MINUTE DRIVE, A 165 ACRE CITY PARK WITH 5 MINUTE WALK, A NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ALONG

THE COAST AND GENTLE ROLLING HILLS AND FARMLANDS WITHIN A SHORT REACHStronger direction and additional investment in public place making will make downtown Biddeford a place that more people truly want to be.

Come enjoy a tour of downtown Biddeford with me. The year is 2023

What a familiar place: the aroma of donuts and bread coming from Reilly's B bakery, the beautiful bones of the historic architecture. Over here, the roaring of the waterfalls. Down there, the quiet of Mechanics Park. With just the right light, you will swear you can see the shadows of millworkers and their families who, for decades, filled these streets on a Friday night. You know you belong here because this city was built by immigrants, fought for with hours of hard work, maintained through innovation, and preserved by its own people who cared so much about their downtown, the very heart of the city.

While familiar and comforting, the downtown is not locked in the past, that is why we see a group of medical students walk out of their second story apartments to check out Banded Horn and a few other breweries that now join dozens of successful businesses in the mills.

The retail shops in Main Street, many of them flagship stores that are stocked with goods created in the mills, stay open late to accommodate the restaurant crowd, made up of young local families as well as retirees and tourists here from the Kennebunks and Biddeford Pool. ArtWalk and another sold out show at City Theater showcase Biddeford's creative spirit. Buskers play on the street corners while a free concert welcomes all to the quaint bandstand in Shevenell Park. The trees and plantings, charming cobblestone crosswalks, ample benches, and interactive play spaces along the full length of Main Street demonstrate that this town is still proud to welcome locals and visitors to its city center.

Following clear signage, we see another gateway to the river. It is an easy stroll from Main Street, down through the thriving mill district, to Laconia plaza on the River Walk. On this early evening walk along the Saco, we see kayakers and casual fishermen enjoy this clean and mighty river.

It is easy to be impressed with the diversity of the crowd enjoying the downtown. New hotels in the downtowns of both Biddeford and Saco, not only draw curious visitors, but they also add to the employment opportunities offered in the mills' manufacturing businesses. With more economic opportunity, young families have found their place within the fabric of downtown Biddeford.

In 2023, it is striking the unpretentious beauty of this place, where the City, local developers, business owners, and thriving community organizations collaborate to preserve this city's authentic natural beauty and history while cultivating entrepreneurship and economic opportunity that makes Biddeford better for all its members.

GREAT REPORT/ACTION PLAN. THE KEY COMPONENT IS TO SELL IT TO THE PUBLIC AND HAVE THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE CITY COUNCIL. THE COUNCILORS NEED TO WALK IT.

Parking Management Plan Review - Process & Schedule

The Biddeford City Council is interested in obtaining public input/comment prior to establishing a downtown parking management plan. Earlier in the process staff made several assumption about a parking management plan in order to create what has been generally referred to as the parking garage pro forma worksheet. The city council has not had any significant discussions about the assumptions. The next step in the process is to provide the public with an opportunity to provide comment on parking and the components of a parking management plan for consideration before a formal plan is developed. The process for obtaining public input is detailed below. Due to citizen and business owner work schedules there will be three separate public opportunities for comment plus an online comment option. Two opportunities will be in the evening in front of the Biddeford City Council and one will be held by staff during the day. The public opportunities will be established as listening sessions rather than public hearings. Listening sessions are voluntary, less formal, and allow for more flexibility. The sessions will not involve comment from members of the city council or staff in order to obtain as many comments as possible during each listening session. Each opportunity is listed below.

Thursday, April 5th at 6:00 p.m. - Council Chambers This will be the first council listening session.

Tuesday, April 10th at 6:00 p.m. - Council Chambers This will be the second council listening session.

Thursday, April 12th at 1:30 p.m. - Council Chambers This will be the staff listening session.

Additionally there will be an online option for members of the public unable to attend any of the listening sessions. The online option will allow comment to be submitted through the website. Click [here](#) to access the online form. Please note that use of the online form does not require that the person submitting the comment provide an email address. If an email address is provided, each individual will receive a confirmation email along with a copy of their submittal. Additionally, each councilor and key staff members will receive a copy of every submittal via email.

Once the listening sessions have been completed, staff will compile all comments obtained at the listening sessions and from the online form and will prepare a draft parking management plan for consideration by the city council on or before Monday, June 18, 2018. The city council will then review the draft parking management plan following the traditional public process established for meetings of the city council. During this review the public will have opportunity to comment on the draft parking management plan and any revisions considered subsequent to final adoption.

Chapter 2. Administration

ARTICLE IV. BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS

DIVISION 6. DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Sec. 2-251. Established.

[Code 1975, § 2-212]

The Biddeford Downtown Development Commission is hereby established.

Sec. 2-252. "Commission" defined.

[Code 1975, § 2-210]

Unless otherwise indicated, the term "Commission," as used in this division, shall mean the Biddeford Downtown Development Commission.

Sec. 2-253. Composition; appointment of Commissioners; terms of office; removal of members.

[Code 1975, § 2-213; Ord. No. 99.69, 8-17-1999; amended 3-21-2013 by Ord. No. 2013.13]

(a)

The Commission shall consist of 9 members, referred to in this division as "Commissioners." Such Commissioners shall be nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

[Amended 3-21-2017 by Ord. No. 2017.21]

(b)

Commissioners shall serve for three-year terms. The terms of each Commissioner shall be staggered so that no more than four Commissioners' terms shall expire in the same year. Any Commissioner appointed to fill a vacancy for which more than half of the unexpired term remains shall be deemed to have served one full term.

(c)

A Commissioner shall automatically be removed from office in the event that he or she no longer is a resident of the City of Biddeford or is absent for three consecutive regular meetings without being excused by the Chair.

Sec. 2-254. Functions and purposes.

[Code 1975, § 2-211; amended 3-21-2013 by Ord. No. 2013.13]

It shall be the function of the Downtown Development Commission to:

(1)

Encourage and promote the expansion and development of existing commercial firms downtown and to promote and encourage the location of new commercial firms downtown.

(2)

Through the Economic Development Office, establish and maintain files of data and information of interest and assistance for downtown publicity and marketing.

(3)

Review downtown ordinances and recommend revisions to the Policy Committee.

(4)

Serve as coordinator for such boards, merchant groups, commissions and City departments as shall be established from time to time to study matters relating to downtown parking, traffic circulation, historic districts, land use, public utilities, landscape, streetscape and a downtown comprehensive plan; hold downtown promotions and events; and promote and implement downtown beautification and cleanup projects.

(5)

Work with the Economic Development Office to gather, correlate and preserve records, statistics, surveys and other data relating to downtown land classifications and uses, buildings, commercial firms, labor, and such matters that will enable it to carry out its functions and purposes.

(6)

Perform such other functions as may be required or delegated by the Mayor and City Council.

Sec. 2-255. Filling of vacancies.

[Code 1975, § 2-214]

Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled for the remainder of the term in the same manner as original appointments are made.

Sec. 2-256. Quorum.

[Code 1975, § 2-215; amended 3-21-2013 by Ord. No. 2013.13]

Seven Commissioners shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 2-257. Required vote.

[Code 1975, § 2-216; amended 3-21-2013 by Ord. No. 2013.13]

The Commission shall act by majority vote of those present and voting. The Commission by majority vote may permit a Commissioner to participate and vote in a meeting by conference call, video streaming or similar means of remote access.

Sec. 2-258. Annual election of Chairman.

[Code 1975, § 2-217; amended 3-21-2013 by Ord. No. 2013.13]

The Commission shall hold a meeting at the beginning of each calendar year for the purpose of electing a Chair. The Chair shall not vote except to break a tie.

Sec. 2-259. Management of Commission.

[Code 1975, § 2-218; amended 3-21-2013 by Ord. No. 2013.13]

The management of the Commission shall be vested in the Commissioners appointed and confirmed in accordance with Section **2-253**. The Commission shall be staffed by the Economic Development Director or designee.

Sec. 2-260. through Sec. 2-261. (Reserved)

[1]

Editor's Note: Former Section 2-260, Nomination of Director, as amended, and former Section 2-261, Director to perform assigned duties, were repealed 3-21-2013 by Ord. No. 2013.13.

Sec. 2-262. Director to supervise Commission activities.

[Code 1975, § 2-221]

The day-to-day operation and administration of the Commission shall be under the supervision of a Director.

Sec. 2-263. Chair to submit budget, reports.

[Code 1975, § 2-222; amended 3-21-2013 by Ord. No. 2013.13]

Annually, the Commission Chair shall, on or before January 1 of each year, submit a budget for the ensuing year and submit reports as requested to the Commission and Council.

Sec. 2-264. Director, Chairman to execute contracts and agreements.

[Code 1975, § 2-223]

All contracts, agreements and other matters entered into under the authority contained in this division shall be executed by the Director and Chairman of the Commission with Mayor and Council approval.

Sec. 2-265. Authority to establish subcommittees.

[Code 1975, § 2-224]

The Commission may from time to time establish subcommittees composed of such persons as the Commission shall desire to provide advice and counsel on downtown matters.

Sec. 2-266. Authority of Council to assign powers, duties.

[Code 1975, § 2-225]

The Council may assign additional powers and duties to the Commission as it deems necessary.

Sec. 2-267. Designation as agent for City.

[Code 1975, § 2-226]

The Council may from time to time designate the Commission to serve as agent for the City in matters relating to the federal government, the state, other cities and towns, persons or corporations.

Sec. 2-268. Expenditures.

[Code 1975, § 2-227; amended 3-21-2013 by Ord. No. 2013.13]

All Commission expenditures shall comply with the City procurement policies established in the City Code of Ordinances, Procurement, Sec. 2-331 et seq.

Sec. 2-269. through Sec. 2-280. (Reserved)