

City of Biddeford
Downtown Development Commission
February 05, 2018 6:30 PM City Hall
Conference Room 2nd Floor

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Welcome Guests**
 - 2.1. Welcome new Commissioner, Amy Clearwater
- 3. Nominations**
 - 3.1. Chair / Vice-Chair / Secretary
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
 - 4.1. December 4, 2017 DDC Meeting Minutes
No January 2018 Minutes - did not meet
[12-04-2017 DDC Meeting Minutes.doc](#)
- 5. Budget Report**
 - 5.1. FY17 Budget Encumbered Balance: \$4015.38 - discussion on usage
FY18 Budget Request - no approval
FY19 Budget - Finalize draft letter to City Council supporting a Downtown budget
- 6. Chairman Follow-ups/Updates**
 - 6.1. Commissioner members status update
Main Street Improvement : Adams to Elm Streets - RFP due out soon
Main/Adams/Lincoln Streets Intersection Design - Public Meeting Feb. 8th
[Downtown Development Commission.docx](#)
[2-08-2018 Notice of Public Hearing-PACTS.doc](#)
- 7. Old Business**
 - 7.1. WinterFest - Victoria Foley
City Staff Update - Brad Favreau
WiFi - Brad Favreau
- 8. New Business**
 - 8.1. Business Retention and Expansion Program - Mathew Eddy, Economic Development Director
Downtown Goals - City Council Plan
Public Advocacy Role
Creation of Sub-committees (re: Downtown Goals)
[1-16-2018 2018-2019 Goals Workplan-Final Version.docx](#)
[2-05-2018 DID Article.doc](#)
- 9. Next Meeting**
 - 9.1. March 5, 2018

10. Adjourn



Commissioners Present: Droggitis, Durkin, Edwards, Eon, Foley, Nielson
[QUORUM]

Commissioners Absent: Dubois, Schlaver

City Representative: Eddy

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I • **Welcome Guests:** Matthew Eddy (City Economic Development Director), Verun
(UNE Student, observing)

II • Quick Introduction and Background (Eddy)

III • **Vote to approve November Minutes**
[Moved: Foley, Second: Edwards, Vote: Unanimous]

IV • **Reports and Other Business**

- **Budget**

- \$4015.38 remaining

- Table update; potential for Hanging Planters (upgrade from last year); Droggitis will report back from Beautification meeting and see about feasibility

- **WiFi**

- New England Cancer Specialists – 2nd WiFi hotspot; securing 265 Main (David Flood) and other buildings. Mark Ouellette (Axiom) and Foley following up. Once building decided, installation scheduling will occur, and then ribbon cutting will be scheduled.

- 3rd hotspot sponsor ideas: Portland Pie, Oak Point

- **Beautification**

- Droggitis will attend Public Works meeting Thursday 12/7, 1pm

- **WinterFest**

- Foley – Idea for Friday night of WinterFest: “Sip and Slide” targeted at adults, could run in the evening 9-11pm, charge \$15, all proceeds to fundraising

- **UNE Relationship**

- Foley – Attending meet the President 5:30 Friday 12/8 (new hire)

- Eddy – meeting with new president this week

Transportation: Care Share/ZipCar – will look at potential relationship; Bike Racks/Share; Electric car charging stations

V • 2018 Goal Setting/Visioning

• DDC Identity

Policy recommendations re: specific budget lines (e.g. Clean Team, Marketing);
Policy recommendations re: large improvements (Riverwalk, Parking, see page 3 of DTF report); Conduits for Focus Groups/Feedback on specific projects (e.g. beautification via Survey Monkey, send reports to Council)

• Budget

Advocacy notes: Budget line for DID, due in January

- Beautification and Clean Team; moving Perennials from tree beds
- Edwards will start Google Doc of draft memo

• Gateways

Advocacy notes: perhaps lead design team/consultation

• Public Art

Advocacy notes: New murals on Pepperell Mill; Kat from Round Turn (Edwards will follow up)

• Beautification

Advocacy notes: Continue planters, improve as years go on, good coverage; improve hanger baskets

Main Street banners discussion: Run by Public Works and by volunteers via HoB: Late summer/early fall, River Jam; (Fall?); Winter, Wreaths (la Kermesse); (Spring?); (Early summer?)

River Walk – potential to have the consultant doing the river walk in to get a presentation and for us to provide feedback

January 8, meeting will focus on budget advocacy memo for the city council, and new projects within our “identity”

Last meeting Eon and Schlaver – notify Mayor Cassavant of nominations

IV • Meeting Adjourned (7:55p)

[Moved: Foley, Second: Droggitis, Vote: Unanimous]

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The commission shall consist of nine (9) members, all serving a 3-year term. The commission shall hold a meeting at the beginning of each fiscal year for the purpose of electing a chairperson.

<u>NAME / ADDRESS</u>	<u>PHONE #</u>	<u>EXP. DATE</u>
DURKIN, BILL, <u>Chair</u> P.O. BOX 117, BIDD POOL 682 POOL STREET	283-0925	12/2018
DROGGITIS, SPIROS 2 MAIN ST, SUITE 35-201	(240) 479-1964	12/2018
SCHLAVER, JULIAN 34 UNION STREET	(917) 301-2160	12/2020
DUBOIS, MATTHEW 2 MAIN ST, APT. 18-404	423-0758	12/2018
FOLEY, VICTORIA 26 MASON STREET	409-5115	12/2019
NIELSON, LUKE 13-B BEACON AVENUE	710-4880	12/2019
EDWARDS, STEPHANIE 5 LAURIER STREET	(503) 830-0505	12/2019
CLEARWATER, AMY 136 ALFRED STREET	632-9173	12/2020



CITY OF BIDDEFORD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

**Main/Lincoln/Adams Streets Intersection Improvement Project
PACTS/MDOT MPI Project Win 022182.00
and
Lincoln Street Improvement Project
MDOT BPI Project Win 21934.01**

**Thursday, February 8th, 2018
5:00 PM
Council Chambers
Biddeford City Hall
205 Main Street**

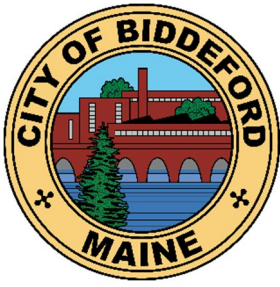
Please be advised that a Public Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, February 8th, 2018, at 5:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, in City Hall at 205 Main Street, Biddeford, for the purpose of informing citizens about the proposed Lincoln Street Improvement Project and the Main/Lincoln/Adams Street Intersection Improvement Project and for obtaining input from citizens, public and community groups regarding these projects.

This Public Meeting is being held pursuant to the City of Biddeford's participation in the MDOT/PACTS MPI and the MDOT BPI Programs. Any questions regarding the program and/or the Public Meeting may be addressed to Tom Milligan, City Engineer or John Malloy, Staff Engineer at 207-284-9118 or by email to tmilligan@biddefordmaine.org or to jmalloy@biddefordmaine.org

City of Biddeford, Maine 2018-2019 Goals



Adopted by City Council on xxx



INTRODUCTION

The City of Biddeford has conducted an annual goal setting process with the City Council for the past two years. Following the workshop, the Council has formally adopted a work plan during one of their regular Council meetings. The work plan has contained specific actions/goals with targeted completion dates.

Goal setting in municipalities is often limited. Historically, when communities do embark on a formal process, the goals are almost always very limited in number and scope. The adopted goals are reasonably obtainable.

Biddeford's approach has been quite the opposite. A review of the adopted goals for the past two years shows an appetite to achieve more than other communities would. The goals are both bold and many. The thought process is that the City will achieve more by taking this route than the other. There is no expectation that the goals will be completed in their entirety. In fact, completing 85% of the goals would be an amazing achievement, especially if the higher priority items have the greatest success. The results for the past two years have supported the approach. Much has been accomplished.

While the results have been impressive, in the spirit of continuous improvement, the goal setting process was critically reviewed this past year. From the review, changes were made to seek even greater results.

Those changes are briefly described below:

1. The goals were classified in two main categories and then further broken down into four primary categories for each. Taken together, it establishes the eight major areas for the 2018-2019 goals. These are described below:
 - a. Internally controlled goals are those where city government has significant influence on the outcome: these are represented by the blue squares in the graphic representation of the goals. City government can achieve these goals by simply making the decision(s) to proceed. In other words, outside influences have little to no impact on the outcome of the goals.
 - i. City services: items in this category are the day to day services that the City provides to the citizens and visitors in the community;
 - ii. Staffing: items in this category involve employment issues within City government
 - iii. Financial: items in this category involve the financial health of the City and the impact those decisions have on the taxpayers
 - iv. Community Connections: items in this category include how citizens communicate with the City as well as how they relate to their community.
 - b. Externally influenced goals are those where the City has a role but cannot with certainty control the outcome: these goals are represented by the yellow ovals. Goals

that fall under this category have external forces that will have a significant impact on the degree of success that the City has in achieving the results.

- i. Changing Demographics: items in this category capture the changing faces of the community.
 - ii. Downtown: this category includes changes that are desired in the downtown and strategies to achieve those changes
 - iii. General Economic Development: this category outlines desired outcomes for economic development in areas outside of the downtown
 - iv. Sense of Belonging: this category captures desired outcomes for establishing meaningful connections with residents of the community.
2. The timeframes for the goals are established in quarters instead of specific months.
3. The goals are not assigned to a specific person or department. Instead, they are assigned generally to city staff as a whole.

The goals remain aggressive. Staff will work with the elected officials to achieve as many as possible in the coming year. As in previous years, progress will be reported out in a dashboard format that will be available on the City's web site.

For more information, please feel free to contact Mayor Casavant, any member of the City Council or the City Manager Bennett.

Staffing

The City is fortunate to have many long term employees that have been committed to delivering quality services for the Citizens of Biddeford. Working within an organization that has been geared towards finding solutions for residents, departments easily cooperate to achieve specific tasks. To achieve innovation in local government, decision-makers, from the elected officials to the employees need to think systematically instead of departmentally. In a rapidly changing world, status quo behavior (normal within governmental entities that are criticism adverse) will guarantee less productivity and greater costs in the future.

To achieve a more innovative team, the City will need to take deliberative actions, especially taking advantage of the expected turn over in staffing at all levels. At the end of 2017, 25.99% of all employees are 55 or older. Recruiting and hiring qualified personnel will become increasingly important given the expected turnover in an employment market facing shortages. Direct investment in employees at all levels will be necessary.

To achieve an organization that is more innovative, is more productive, promotes continuous learning and is results oriented while protecting democratic processes, the City's priorities will include:

2018-1 *Right Sizing Revisited:* the staffing levels in the City have been going in one direction (reductions) while at the same time the City is growing and providing an increase in services. In 2011, the City had 240 FTE; currently we have 224 authorized positions. There are some operations/functions that have legitimate needs for additional assistance. At the same time, there may be some services (both internal and external) that are being provided that might need to be adjusted to accommodate other priorities. High; 1st quarter

2018-2 *Succession planning:* the City is expecting (or has recently seen) a significant turn over in many of the management and mid-management level positions. Development of a formal process to identify and train qualified internal replacements (both short and long term) is needed.

*Medium; 3rd quarter

- a. *Identify possible replacements for all key positions* High, 1st quarter
- b. *Identify training requirements for possible replacements* Medium, 2nd quarter

2018-3 *Development & Training:* an inventory of succession, development and training needs will be created and used as the basis for creating a system wide training budget. This will be a multi-year approach. *High; 3rd quarter

- a. *Identify mandatory training requirements and costs:* Medium, 1st
- b. *Identify skills and goals desired in the organization:* High, 2nd quarter
- c. *Develop leadership training within the organization:* High, 2nd quarter
- d. *Identify sources/costs to meet training needs:* High, 2nd quarter

2018-4 *Achieving Greater Diversity:* a more diverse workforce brings diverse perspectives and contributes to more innovation opportunities. To achieve greater diversity in the workplace, the City needs to not only critically examine barriers and inherit biases that exist within the organization but it also must work with existing employees to understand the benefits of diversity: Medium; 4th quarter

- a. *Analyze EE reporting to determine shortfalls by department:* Low, 1st quarter

- b. *Develop annual report on employee diversity: Medium, 3rd quarter*
 - c. *Develop annual report on board and committee diversity for appointing authority review: Low, 3rd quarter*
- 2018-5 *Labor relations:* with all labor contracts expiring on June 30, 2018, the City will prepare to enter into the processes to achieve several goals, including: High, 1st quarter
- a. *Aligning compensation with the stated compensation goals of the City*
 - b. *Treating employees with respect and dignity in the process*
 - c. *Listening to non-monetary workplace concerns of the employees to achieve workplace of choice preference for those seeking employment*
 - d. *Understanding the changing municipal job environment*

Financial

Financial stability is critical to Biddeford taxpayers. Stability is viewed both from the perspective of the financial condition of the City and from the amount of the check paid to the City by each taxpayer. The first view is often considered a long term perspective. The second view can become very short term.

For the past two years, the Council has established a goal of providing tax rate stability as one of its highest priorities. While the tax rate has gone up slightly the last two years, the vast majority of residential tax bills have gone down because of the increase in the homestead exemption (which also reduced the total value of taxable property in the community causing part of the increase in the tax rate).

To achieve short term tax rate stability, many communities will sacrifice the long term financial condition of the City; choosing to underfund things like capital investment. This was not the case in Biddeford. The Council not only significantly increased the annual spending for capital items; 604% in two years (\$200,416 in FY16 vs. \$1,210,747 in FY18), but it also reversed the trend of drawing down fund balance to keep the tax rate lower. In 2010, the unassigned municipal fund balance was \$4,711,260. By 2015, it was reduced to \$1,723,143. The last two years, we have increased it to \$2,310,409 and \$2,983,230 respectively.

To continue to improve the financial stability of the City of Biddeford, it will:

- 2018-6 *Revise Current Fund Balance Policy:* the existing fund balance policy is inconsistent with current rating agency recommendations. Adopting reasonable multiyear targets to come into compliance with the new policy will be part of the adoption process. *High, 1st quarter
- 2018-7 *Establish a Formal Policy to Continue the Stable Tax Rate Objectives:* Adopt a policy that formalizes the goal of providing a stable tax rate from one year to the next as has been achieved the last couple of years. *High, 1st quarter
- 2018-8 *Set Target Date to Secure Bond Upgrade:* The City's bond rating is strong. On May 16, 2017, Moody's gave the City of Biddeford a rating of Aa3 with a negative outlook. Standard and Poor's gave the City of Biddeford a rating of Aa- with a stable outlook. After a better understanding of the factors that contribute to the bond ratings, the City will adopt a rating target and create a plan to achieve the target bond rating upgrade. *High, 2nd quarter
 - a. *WWTP Fund and General Fund Payables/Receivables:* The City's financials have both payables and receivables to and from each fund. These funds appear to be the primary concern influencing Moody's negative outlook. Taking action to address Moody's concern will be a significant step in removing the negative outlook and making progress on the goal of achieving bond rating upgrade. Medium, 1st quarter
 - b. *Multiyear forecast of financial impact on tax rate of airport:* *Low, 2nd quarter-2019
- 2018-9 *Long-Term Planning for Tax Incremental Funds (TIFs):* There are several different TIF accounts that are separate stand-alone accounts. Most are credit enhancements (direct payments back to the developers). There is one large TIF account that is used for downtown improvements and other economic development activities. Prior to two years ago, the fund was

managed independent of the budget and with limited Council expenditure oversight except as required by the purchasing policy. Today, the entire account activity is included as part of the annual budget process. The next step is to include a multi-year review and projections of the fund on an annual basis. High, 2nd quarter

2018-10 *Improve the purchasing process:* The City's purchasing process is essentially the same as it was when the City operated under a strong Mayor form of government. Lacking administrative oversight, City Councils often created purchasing policies designed to hold the elected Mayors accountable; processes that today are overly administratively burdensome compared to other forms of local government where the Council does have administrative oversight. Medium, 3rd quarter

2018-11 *Long term planning for capital assets (buildings, infrastructure):* With the reintroduction of a formal Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) process two years ago, the City is better positioned to understand the long term costs associated with maintaining over \$200 million in capital assets (including schools). The next step is to creating a more "near term" process to focus on and achieve needed building repairs. *Low, 4th quarter

a. *Repair City Hall Tower:* Medium, 2nd quarter

b. *Improve review of non-building assets:* *Low, 1st quarter-2019

City Services

The core of any municipal government is the services that it provides for the benefit of the community. Pressures to solve problems that voters have often increases services. The current trend is for federal and state governments to cease services and/or funding for services citizens see at the local level. The defunded services and/or costs are now putting pressure on local communities to replace the financial burden. At the same time, for a variety of reasons, including overall state policy, property taxes (the only major revenue source of Maine communities) are becoming a greater burden for individual citizens.

The annual budget process is the ultimate policy expression of the City Council. It determines the funding for specific city departments and operations. It determines service levels, albeit sometimes less explicitly than transparent government advocates would suggest.

The following activities will occur in evaluating the various levels of city services:

- 2018-12 *Determination of services for downtown:* In the FY18 budget, the City established a 'pilot' program to fund additional and/or expanded services in the downtown. These services (beautification, promotions, events and cleaning) are not traditional services paid for by general taxation. Other communities create special districts to allow those that benefit from the services to contribute to the costs. There seems to be wide acceptance that the program (notwithstanding the funding) was well received. However, there has been no strong support from the downtown to embrace paying for the services by creating a special district. High, 1st quarter
- 2018-13 *Opium Program:* The City, jointly with the City of Saco, received a grant in 2017 to provide a dedicated employee to assist victims and their families impacted by the Opium crises. The program is run out of the Police Departments and primarily managed by BPD. The funding for the grant runs out in June 2018. The state has indicated that there is no funding for continuation of the program. The City will have to decide if it wants to continue the program and if so, how to fund it. *High, 1st quarter
- 2018-14 *Community Center:* The failure of the heating system this year has triggered a larger discussion of what to do with this 130 year old building (main building was built in 1888 and the addition was built in 1927). The former school was a convenient and inexpensive way to provide recreation services. Facing upwards of \$500,000 in needed investment for a complete heating system in a building that will require significant additional investment, a committee is being formed to examine the choices. High, 3rd quarter
- 2018-15 *CALEA (The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies):* Obtaining and maintaining CALEA accreditation is a tremendous honor. Normally it takes at least three years to obtain the initial approval. With just two years into the process, the department is on track to receive their approval the first half of 2018. *Medium, 2nd quarter
- 2018-16 *Relocating departments within City Hall:* to correspond with the reorganization in the spring of 2016, the offices will be relocated to reduce the amount of space used by the City to free up prime rental space on Main Street. *Medium, 1st quarter

- 2018-17 *Conversion of street lights to LED:* Wrapping up the project that started in the previous year, the City will evaluate the complete replacement of the street lights with LED technology in order to reduce cost and save energy. *Low, 4th quarter
- 2018-18 *Complete Comprehensive Plan:* As required by state law, the rewrite of the comprehensive plan will be completed and submitted to the Council for consideration. *Low, 1st quarter
- 2018-19 *Evaluation of fire/ems services:* the calls for services, primarily driven by emergency medical services (EMS), have increased 57.7% in 12 years (3,278 calls for service in 2017 vs. 2,078 calls for service in 2005). Staffing has remained the same. The impact of the increase volumes has not been fully discussed by the Council. *Medium, 2nd quarter
- a. *Review of response times:* High, 1st quarter
 - b. *EMS training and leadership:* Low, 3rd quarter
- 2018-20 *Threat analysis and preparation:* It is unfortunate but the reality is that the City is not immune from various forms of violence and potential terrorist activities. The City is not as prepared as it should be for a number of reasons, including financial challenges. After completing a self-analysis of the likely exposures, staff will present the estimated financial obligations needed to eliminate or reduce these exposures. Low, 4th quarter
- 2018-21 *High profile criminal enforcement:* The interagency, interdepartmental task force created in 2016 called 'Operation Safe Streets' has been successful in not only impacting crime within the community but also sending a message that this activity is unwelcomed. The City will continue the approach, along with reporting on the outcomes. *Medium, 3rd quarter
- 2018-22 *Winter operations and parking:* Parking in an urban core is difficult for any community, especially during winter operations. Snow removal, parking bans and providing alternative parking can be a daily discussion in the community. With the growing shortage of parking (because of successful redevelopment) and the changing nature of the downtown, long standing practices need to be reviewed and evaluated. Until there is a significant increase in parking inventory, any action is likely to be temporary in nature. *Medium, 3rd quarter
- 2018-23 *Consolidate Harbor Master Operations:* The Harbor Masters' responsibilities in Biddeford and Saco are shared between two part-time employees. The joint Biddeford-Saco Committee has recommended combining operations and sharing resources. *High, 2nd quarter

Community Connection

Local government's ability to effectively communicate with its citizens and those that are interested in the activities of local government are more difficult today than any time in recent history. With so many communication platforms available, especially social media, the challenge to effectively use all of the available resources is daunting. Citizens pick their favorite among multiple choices and ignore others. Often the preferences are elastic; today's preference is replaced seemingly overnight with another emerging alternative.

The challenges facing local governments are far more complex than ever before. Issues that were typically resolved in our federal and state branches of government have become victims of political breakdown at those levels. Driven by frustration and concern about the lack of action, citizens have turned to their local leaders. Often these issues are unresolvable at the local level. Financial support from both the state and federal government continues to decline.

Deliberative communication is critical to connecting with citizens. The ever-changing social media landscape and personal preferences creates voids. The voids are almost immediately filled by new platforms and technology. Within the community, citizens also come and go for various reasons. This is having a noticeable effect on Biddeford's demographics. The values, motives, and purpose of citizens and businesses change over time and may be quite different two years from now than they are today. To maintain and improve community connections in this changing social climate, the City will:

- 2018-24 *Evaluate social media opportunities and develop new strategy:* The City does not have a social media strategy. In fact, its social media presence is limited to a few Facebook accounts and Twitter. High, 2nd quarter
- 2018-25 *Communication strategy:* At the core of any private sector marketing strategy is communicating with their customers about the value of the product to the user. Local governments face the same challenge; connecting with constituents so that they may see the value of what the government is doing and why. With the dramatic changes occurring within the community, effective communication has an even higher value and potential return. High, 3rd quarter
- 2018-26 *Strategic Plan:* Initiated in 2016, the Strategic Plan Committee's work on the plan stalled about six months ago. Completion of the plan is still a high priority to effectively communicate the priorities (and rationale for those priorities) of the City, to form strategies to achieve the priorities, and to recommended time frames to achieve the priorities. *High, 4th quarter
 - a. *Complete the draft Strategic Plan.* High, 2nd quarter
 - b. *Complete outreach.* High, 3rd quarter
 - c. *Submit plan to City Council.* High, 4th quarter
- 2018-27 *Improve relationship with UNE:* A new President took office at UNE in September. With the recent change in leadership, there may be a change to the institution's priorities. Unbound by past perceptions of the community, a new opportunity exists. *High, 2nd quarter
- 2018-28 *Evaluate the success of 'Biddeford Beat':* The weekly electronic newsletter began in 2016 as a vehicle to provide timely and factual information. Developing content and publishing is labor intensive. The work of producing the 'Beat' was added to the already growing workload of the

administration. A complete review is appropriate to determine if it meets expected goals; and if not, how it should be adjusted or is there another more effective way to achieve the goals. Low, 4th quarter

2018-29 *Strengthen the relationship with Southern Maine Health Care (SMHC):* SMHC remains a major employer and institution in the City and continues to grow. The City does not currently have a formal relationship with SMHC, except for the departments that interact due to routine business activity. Medium, 1st quarter 2019

Changing Demographics

The face of our community is changing; and rapidly. According to the 2014 census update, one out of every five residents has moved in the previous year. Biddeford is younger than its neighboring communities; our median age is 35.4 compared to 42.7 for the greater Portland area and 43.5 for the entire state. It has been argued that we are the fastest growing community in Maine for the under 35 age bracket. At a time when communities are seeking deliberate ways to encourage younger people to stay in their communities, Biddeford is seeing the trend occurring without deliberate government action.

There is a 'buzz' in the area, as people from outside the community see downtown improvements creating an enhanced quality of living. The attractiveness of the community is driven in part by its ideal geographic location between Portsmouth and Portland. Recent large scale conversion of mill space created affordable residential space attracting new tenants from outside of the community. The City's downtown investment combined with private sector investment has created positive energy dubbed the 'Biddosance'. Communities strive to obtain the positive growth Biddeford is experiencing but growth does come with some other impacts. Diversity in the community is also accelerating; in four years the student ESL population within the school system has doubled (199 compared to 94). That trend is expected to continue.

For the first time in 2017, city staff began to see a shortage in affordable housing preventing residents who desire to live in the community from finding affordable housing. Rents have also been climbing creating economic challenges for existing residents. While there is no formal documentation to support the belief, there are indications that homelessness within Biddeford is increasing. We are also hearing that demand at all the three private food pantries has increased.

To meet the opportunities and challenges of the changing demographics of the City, it will:

- 2018-30 *Examine the homelessness issue in order to better understand the changes:* The City participates in a national survey of homelessness in January. The goal to determine if the formal survey is capturing all that are homeless, especially the teens at risk in the community: Low, 4th quarter
- 2018-31 *ESL (English as second language) growing population:* The City, primarily through the school department, is actively addressing the students' needs. The City will continue to monitor ESL population changes and make adjustments to service levels to accommodate the needs. Low, 3rd quarter
- 2018-32 *Culture awareness:* Understanding that different cultures view similar events in much different ways is critical. Through this knowledge, misunderstandings are minimized and the benefits of a diverse population can be realized. The City will monitor the changing face of the community and report on recommendations around the City's ability to foster better community cultural awareness. Low, 4th quarter
- 2018-33 *Under 35 age population growth:* The City will seek to understand the reasons for the increase in the younger population and how to best incorporate demographic changes and potential impacts into the development of the community. Medium, 2nd quarter

- 2018-34 *Continue to support Senior Citizens:* The City has a long history of supporting seniors within the community. To continue this support, it will:
- a. *Continue with the aging in place initiative:* Medium, 2nd quarter
 - b. *Continue to invest in the 50+ Club via the recreation department:* High, 2nd quarter
 - c. *Evaluate opportunities for life long seniors to continue to live in the community:* Low, 4th quarter
- 2018-35 *Review the challenges facing today's teens and determine if current services meet those challenges:* The challenges facing all citizens are greater today than in the past. The challenges are even more difficult for today's teenagers. Biddeford, much like most communities, continues to provide successful programs based on past design principles. An internal review of the specific programs that are offered to teens will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of reaching and assisting today's teens: Low, 1st quarter 2019

Downtown

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

- 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

General Economic Development

Economic development as a general goal seeks to improve the financial condition of the municipality while improving the social well-being of the community members. Good economic development primarily focuses on diversifying the tax base of the community to decrease the tax burden on the residential properties. It also includes being a partner with existing and future businesses to assist in retaining quality jobs and attracting new ones.

While there is an intense focus on the downtown for all of the obvious reasons, there remains a strong commitment to balance the interests of our non-residential tax base. To assist in this process, the City will:

Continue to review the advantages of a new turnpike exit between exits 32 and 36: Studies have indicated that a significant reduction (upwards of 20%) of the traffic going through the downtown of Biddeford (and Saco) is simply traveling through town to get to the respective turnpike exits. There is strong belief that a new turnpike exit would be beneficial for the community (as well as Saco). More in depth understanding of all the impacts is needed in order to guide the policy of the City as well as its lobbying efforts. *High, 4th quarter

2018-46 *Analyze the current zoning on Route 1 from five points to Arundel town line:* The selection of the former Pate property to be the new courthouse for York County is and will create further economic development activity in the corridor. Exploring the impact of current zoning and suggesting changes to take advantage of the new activity will be required. Medium, 3rd quarter

2018-47 *Maintain the current industrial parks:* The parks are essentially full. There is some aging in the parks; including some of the buildings. Generally considered a cash producer for the general fund budgets, there is a need for some industrial park capital investment to keep them from becoming less attractive. Staff will determine the capital needs and formulate a plan to make the investments. Low, 1st quarter 2019

2018-48 *Attract more job training for private sector employers:* The availability of qualified employees remains a high concern and priority for all employers. Communities (regions) that have an available labor force or easy access to job training resources will be more successful than those that don't. Staff will determine the needs and formulate possible solutions. Low, 4th quarter

2018-49 *Complete street approach to design requirements:* A complete street approach implies that redesign of roadways includes all forms of transportation, especially given the expected changes in the use of personal autos. PACTS has recently changed their funding formulas to place more emphasis on complete street designs. Hence, the ability to secure additional federal and state funding may necessitate such an approach. Staff will determine the impact of such change and evaluate the options in connection with the change. Medium, 3rd quarter

2018-50 *Evaluate traffic patterns:* Traditional traffic counts are readily available. However, most transportation planning for the community has been based on the old views of the community and thoughts regarding the "purpose" of traffic management. Using new expectations, it is appropriate to revisit the plans to understand if they contribute, distract or have no impacts on the goals. Medium, 2nd quarter

2018-51 *Waste water treatment plant (WWTP) capacity study:* The last capacity analysis was based on the original plant design and community characteristics. A fresh review should be performed that addresses the new reality and current activities in the community. Low, 1st quarter 2019

Sense of
Belonging:
Loving Biddeford

When you love something, you take pride in it. You invest in it. You protect it. You believe in it. You treat it better than other things. The basic premise is that residents are either in love with their community or they are not.

A person's home town is something that they are generally proud of. Whether it is their real home town or the one they have decided to adopt, they have a special bond with it. Longtime residents are proud of their community. We also have new residents that are discovering Biddeford and its charm for the first time.

The actions of city governments either contribute to that source of pride or can become examples of embarrassment. The City will take definitive actions to encourage citizen pride and reinforce their strong positive relationship with Biddeford by:

2018-52 *Find ways to bring the government to the Citizens:* Meaningful connections between local government and citizens is seldom achievable via the old systems i.e. public hearings. Finding ways to bring local government in a less formal more conversational way to the citizens could greatly improve connections. Staff will identify for consideration different ways that government can connect with citizens. High, 2nd quarter

2018-53 *Community celebrations are important:* Celebrating is one of the ways that people feel great about the event(s) that they are a part of and themselves. Assisting the community and/or neighborhoods in holding regular celebrations is part of the bigger goal of creating a love relationship with our citizens and them with us. Staff will evaluate the current celebrations, offer suggestions for enhancement and propose other opportunities. Low, 3rd quarter

2018-54 *Formalize a process to include youth in local government:* Many communities have created a formal system that encourages students to actively participate in the process of governing. Staff will explore those opportunities and evaluate the potential for use in Biddeford. Low, 4th quarter

2018-55 *Encourage more neighborhoods to adopt the neighborhood planning process:* Efforts to assist the Bacon St area Have been successful in a large part because of the neighborhood association and planning process. Using and improving that process for other neighborhoods will be explored. *Low, 4th quarter

Plan for extra tax on downtown no longer a priority

25JAN18 Biddeford Saco Courier

BIDDEFORD – Few downtown property owners attended informational meetings at the Heart of Biddeford office to discuss forming a Downtown Improvement District, even though the city council is unlikely to take up the measure in the next year.

The meetings were held in the morning and afternoon on Friday, Jan. 19 at the quasi-municipal nonprofit's Main Street headquarters. Delilah Poupore, the organization's executive director, facilitated both meetings. David Flood, Alex Fabish, both downtown property owners and Ward 7 Councilor Michael Ready attended the morning meeting. Engine Executive Director Tammy Ackerman and downtown property owner Jim Brady attended the afternoon meeting. Poupore posted the meeting notice on the Heart of Biddeford's Facebook page, emailed it to 66 downtown property owners and included it in the Heart of Biddeford newsletter which is sent to about 2,000 recipients.

Poupore organized the meetings to gauge interest in a Downtown Improvement District, which would collect additional taxes from downtown property owners to fund services in the downtown above and beyond what the city already provides. City Manager Jim Bennett said there has not been a discussion of the district in the city council since the decision to spend \$27,500 from the Industrial Park Tax Increment Financing District last year for hanging and boxed flowers along Main Street as an example of what a Downtown Improvement District could fund. The district could also fund downtown events, more extensive snow removal, marketing campaigns and a trash clean up team among other things. The expected tax during the first transitional year would have been 49 cents per \$1,000 of value on top of every downtown property owner's tax bill. The tax was to appear on the July 2018 bill.

Ready said he was not officially representing the city council at Friday morning's meeting, but that the council decided implementation of a Downtown Improvement District would not be a priority for 2018. If a district is formed, the momentum will have to come from property owners, he said. Poupore said she did not have any more meetings planned to discuss a downtown improvement district.

"For at least a year, it's not going to be on the agenda," Ready said. "This is not going to be pursued unless with a huge buy-in from the group living under that. It's not something we are intending to impose."

Poupore said she had worked with a group last fall to specify what a Downtown Improvement District would look like, but the conversation ended once property tax bills, issued in October, were between 20 to 50 percent higher than the previous year.

"People said, 'Who right now is in a position to say please tax me more,'" she said.

Poupore said that in Portland and Bangor, which both have versions of downtown improvement districts, property owners were the driving factor behind the district.

Fabish, 34, said he feels he's one of the younger property owners in Biddeford. He owns 32 Alfred St. and 13 Bacon St. He said he is interested in a downtown improvement district as long as property owners have a say in how the district operates.

"The perception of Biddeford has changed quite a bit," he said. "It's still cheaper than Portland or Portsmouth. There's definitely more of a draw and I like what's going on here. I mean, it's a noticeable difference in the past five years. I wouldn't be 100 percent opposed to having it if there is control by property owners, if whoever is paying taxes here is able to pinpoint a few things, shortcomings to be dealt with or enhancements in general."

Ready said if a district were formed, he would want the money to stay in the downtown and not be put in the general fund. He gave the example of taxing a certain neighborhood more because police spend more time there as something he would be against.

"If we have an area of the city that has a problem, we're not going to tax that area differently," he said. "Those are the kinds of things I don't want to see paid for out of this thing. We will address those as needs come up."

He also said businesses should take care of their own marketing and that he didn't want the city to be responsible for marketing the downtown.

"I don't want the city telling me how to run my business," he said. "Portland does a lot of marketing I think. I don't want the city involved in that."

Portland based developer Jim Brady purchased the former courthouse building at 27 Washington St. last year. He said he's almost completed the first phase of interior remediation and will look for a tenant to fill the space soon. The purchase was his first in the Biddeford market and he said he's hopeful it will be a good investment. Capitalizing on Biddeford's college town status is one way to attract businesses and visitors, Brady said.

"I've got a high school age daughter and we've been on a lot of college tours," he said. "What the local community is like is a major part of that. Successful towns trying to grow are often out promoting themselves in other communities to attract businesses and people there."

When Pouppore said some people in Biddeford feel that the downtown only benefits those who own property there and so they should be the ones to pay for improvements, Fabish said that a thriving downtown benefits the whole community.

"Ask any property owner in Portland, those property values have gone up since Portland exploded in the past 10 years," he said. "Maybe it benefits disproportionately, but if a city has a nice downtown, like Kennebunkport, tell me it doesn't make just about everything out there more valuable. Countrywide, go anywhere, Buffalo, New York or Haverhill, Massachusetts, old mill towns are coming up. It's not specific to Biddeford. Throughout the whole country, a demographic shift is occurring. How well are we going to ride that wave?" "Or be ahead of the wave?" Pouppore added.

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