

PUBLIC MEETING
PROPOSED U.S. EPA BROWNFIELDS-FUNDED CLEANUP ACTIVITIES AND
PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT PLANS
OLD WALDO COUNTY JAIL
45 CONGRESS STREET, BELFAST, MAINE
JUNE 1, 2016
Waldo County Emergency Management Agency
4 Public Safety Way
6:00 PM

PRESENT:

Waldo County Commissioner William D. Shorey
Waldo County Commissioner Amy R. Fowler
Waldo County Commissioner Betty I. Johnson
Waldo County Emergency Management Agency Director Dale Rowley
Ransom Environmental Consultants, Inc. Senior Project Manager Peter Sherr
Ransom Environmental Consultants, Inc. Project Manager/Environmental Scientist Aaron Martin
Bureau of Remediation & Waste Management, Maine DEP - Tracy Kelly
USEPA Region 1 Brownfields Project Officer AmyJean McKeown
Belfast Economic Director Thomas Kittredge
Belfast City Planner Wayne Marshall
Deputy Waldo County Clerk Marilyn Saucier

Public in attendance: Steve Chapman, Keith Nealley, Walter Harris, Lianne Harris, Judy Bond, Mollie Noyes, David Bond, Rachel Siviski, Cynthia Anthony, Barbara Redclay, Wayne Marshall, Paula Johnson, Didier Ganter, James Holland, Richard Green, Brenda Bonneville, Thierry Bonneville

Call to Order: Commissioner Shorey called the public hearing to order at 6:00 p.m.

Senior Project Manager Peter Sherr began the public meeting by explaining that this was an informal meeting, a public forum for Waldo County citizens to offer feedback regarding the reuse options for Old Waldo County Jail and Sheriff's Building and also an update on the Brownfield funded cleanup project. He explained the grant funds will be used to clean up hazardous building material. Whatever decisions are made for reuse options they will still need to go through the normal city planning board process. No final reuse options have been made, we are only identifying options. We are soliciting feedback from the public at this time.

Commissioner Bill Shorey thanked everyone for coming. He also reminded everyone to please speak their minds and give their opinions. He went on to say that "It has been a complicated process from the beginning and that plans don't always work out as intended. The building has extensive water damage as a result of frozen and broken pipes. The cost to refurbish after the water damage would be upwards of \$100,000.000. We would like to use the Old Jail for record storage as the County has limited space. There was also a rumor that it would be used for inmate housing. That is false. We gave our word to the community that no prisoners would be housed there. We are here tonight to get your thoughts and ideas. No decision has been made yet."

Paula Johnson, of 46 Congress Street, said, "There has been a lot of distrust that started 6 years ago" and accused the County of hiding money to build the new Sheriff's Office. She said, "While everyone was struggling the County managed to pull the wool over everyone's eyes. " She went on to say, "Demolition is not

an option that should even be considered. Also there should be no open space, like a park, that they would all have to look at. There needs to be a way to surplus money to save this building.”

B. Shorey: “Thank you or your ideas. What do you think we should do with the building?”

P. Johnson: Not demolished. We also have issues with the Re-entry Center residents walking by our houses. If there is a way to keep the building, do it.

B. Shorey: “I would like to clarify a few things. Waldo County was under the LD1 Cap for 6 years in a row. We are very thrifty with the County’s money. We are not hoarding money. There was a combination of reserve accounts used to fund the Sheriff’s Building built 6 years ago. I do not want to rehash what happened 6 years ago. We are here tonight to get the publics ideas and thoughts on what we can possibly do with the site.”

P. Johnson: “Be clear on what you are asking us as far as a community. Why are you giving up?”

P. Sherr: “The building will cost millions to refurbish and this does not include the abatement.’

Mike Hurley, a member of the Belfast City Council: Says he was “surprised not to read about this as no local paper has covered this story. What are you, the County, trying to achieve? And why? Whatever it is it turned out to be very expensive. Sell it, divide it up but ultimately I don’t support demolition.”

P. Sherr: “All options are open and all are viable. We have hit hurdle after hurdle trying to bring it to code. It will be expensive, that is for sure. We are looking for viable options. The County is not pulling the wool over anyone’s eyes. What can the County do? Has anyone offered to purchase it? Should they keep the Jail portion for document storage and sell the rest? We have hit historical requirement roadblocks as well.”

Mollie Noyes who lives at 19 Congress Street: “I love Belfast and would hate to see it razed.” It would be a travesty to have an empty space in the middle of all the historic houses.

Dianne Mekelburg of 20 Congress Street: “I grew up here and would hate to see it torn down. It would ruin the appearance of the community. This areas historic nature is what brings people to Belfast. You should renovate it and sell it. Why would it cost a \$100,000.00 to renovate?”

B. Shorey: “Maybe a walk-through with all interested parties would be a good idea. There re so many renovations needed. Maybe if a reasonable offer was made we would sell it.”

P. Sherr: “A certain amount of abatement must be done before it can be sold.”

Brenda Bonneville of 31 Congress Street: Read several articles regarding the site. One stated that the Maine Historical Preservation Committee says “demolition of the two historic buildings would have an adverse effect on the community.” B. Bonneville read more articles regarding grants. She says “everyone should be working together for solutions. This neighborhood is historic and should remain intact. There would be quite a whole left in the neighborhood if it were turned into a park. Just because the project will be expensive it shouldn’t be discarded.”

B. Shorey thanked B. Bonneville for her thoughts.

Thomas Kittredge, Belfast Economic Director; Says the County applied for a \$200,000 abatement and was unsuccessful, applied a second time and received the grant.

Thierry Bonneville of 31 Congress Street: T. Bonneville read a statement from Eric Sanders, Belfast City Council member....”The Commissioners felt the neighbor’s views were not important. T. Bonneville said “We were very disappointed to read that razed was mentioned in the Public Notice we received. We got a guarantee from you that the building would be repurposed. I do not believe it would cost \$1000, 000.00 to renovate. I told Abigail Curtis from the Bangor Daily News that it was awkward to have the Sheriff and Communications Center building in our area. Couldn’t they have been built somewhere else? Don Berry, former Commissioner, made it difficult to figure out a way to redevelop. What is tragic is that the County Commissioners didn’t have a plan for what was left behind. Now we are facing the possibility of an historic building being destroyed. We don’t know why you didn’t keep this building updated, we all did. We hope to all work together on this.”

B. Shorey: “We want your opinions. There are several proposed options, razing is only one option. All viable options will be considered.”

Cynthia Anthony of 42 Congress Street: “Condo units are not compatible in our neighborhood.”

P. Sherr: Says some cleanup can be done regardless of what happens to the buildings.

Wayne Marshall, Belfast City Planner: “There are certain things that can and cannot be done with this building, within certain parameters. These involve multiple steps. To use one building as document storage; is it a great reuse? Does this cause concern? It’s a tough old building.”

T. Bonville: It’s not so much what’s going to happen, it’s what is going to happen from a historical point of view.

Barbara Redcay of 49 Congress Street: “I share a drive with the Old Jail. Three years ago the jail didn’t look bad. It does now. My property will be an island with the building gone.”

Lilly of 25 Congress Street: “I love this building. There must be lots of options. I want to know how to help. Can a committee be formed for those who want to help?”

B. Shorey: A committee should be formed.

P. Johnson: The Commissioners should form a committee and invite the taxpayers.

P. Sherr: “We can offer the County, as consultants, to take the lead on this and sift through all of the information and look at all ideas. We can take it one step further and form a committee and possibly find a way to pay for work done. The \$200.000 grant is for clean up only.”

T. Bonneville: “I just spoke with a neighbor who moved to Belfast because of the historic preservation. It would be so much more helpful to work on a committee together. Just know this....we do not want the buildings to be razed.”

B. Shorey: “I think we need to have an official meeting to form a committee. I think this is a good decision and we will use this meeting a beginning. Please leave us your email addresses or a contact number

The public portion of the meeting closed at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by *Marilyn Saucier*
Deputy Waldo County Clerk