

Parole Board Day--It Make Or It Breaks

MS 3/11/73

By BILL CALDWELL

THOMASTON — It is 'Parole Board Day' inside the Maine State Prison.

Nineteen inmates are to meet the Board.

For them, this day is crucial.

Each will face the Board alone, without attorney, asking for parole.

The interview may last 10 minutes or perhaps 20 minutes.

And the Board alone, will decide whether that prisoner stays in prison or whether they will allow him to serve the rest of his prison sentence outside in the community on parole. The community has no voice in the decision.

But for the first time a newspaper reporter will witness the proceedings.

"We are uptight, naturally" one prisoner tells me. He is a "druggie", convicted of using and selling drugs. "I was deep into heroin" he says.

His hair is long, down to his shoulders, wavy and well groomed. He wears a luxurious beard, carefully trimmed. He

Bill Caldwell

On The Road

is 22 years old. "Before this sentence, I was at Windham — the Correctional Center — on an earlier drugs charge." He speaks easily and well. "I've been taking college courses here, three semesters. If I get parole, I want to study for a degree in Sociology. If I can get funded, that is."

This prisoner tells me that he and most of the 19 meeting the Parole Board have rehearsed thoroughly. "We have a pre-parole program in prison. Eight in a class. We meet twice a week for six weeks to act it all out. One guy takes the hot seat, asking for parole. Others act as the Parole Board, and fire questions at him.

Then we swap places. At the end, we criticize each other's performance. . . The group is supervised by a counselor called David McCullum. He used to be a school teacher in

New Jersey. . . Sure, we've all got a lot riding on what happens in that room today. . . So we are uptight."

The three members of the Parole Board arrive at the prison by nine in the morning. They wield more power over more prisoners than any judge or any warden. But few outside the prison system know who they are or what they do.

From Camden comes Leroy L. Morong, chairman. He is 55 years old, blue-eyed, spectacled, his hair reddish, short and thinning. He has served on the Parole Board for six years now, four of those years as a member, two as chairman.

"I'm Maine born and bred" he says "One of 10 children Born in Lubec. My father was a machinist for the Lighthouse Service, and traveled the coast. We moved to Vinalhaven. My mother was a Libby — one of the first families to settle on the island. My grand'father owned a fish factory there."

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Prob. + Recs

Chairman Morong ran a jewelry store in Camden for 19 years, worked in the Bath Iron Works, and most recently was an insurance agent. His seven living brothers and sister also live and work in Maine. "My brother Ben had the Morong Volkswagen agency in Portland. Another brother, Charles, has been a guard at Maine State prison. . . My son-in-law Bruce Wentworth is a schoolteacher at the prison now."

Morong says he has had a "longtime interest in helping lawbreakers get back into useful, happy living. But I got appointed to the Parole Board through my political activities." Over lunch in the prison later he says "I worked for Ken Curtis' campaigns as governor and for Kyros' campaigns for Congress. And when Curtis was elected governor for his first term, he appointed me to the Parole Board for four years. When that term expired, I was named chairman. Now, to learn more of what life on the street is like for a paroled prisoner, I have taken leave from insurance business to work on salary for Project Exit — the Maine organization which assists former inmates to adjust to life on the outside. It has federal funds of about \$300,000 a year."

From Auburn comes parole board member Edward J. Hansen. He is the 'government' or Prison and Corrections administration representative. The Maine law today says that one of the three man Parole Board shall be the Commissioner of Mental Health and Corrections. Commissioner William F. Kearns Jr. deputized this job to Miss Ward E. Murphy, director of corrections. She in turn deputized it to her assistant Edward J. Hansen, a stocky dark-haired man with black horn rim glasses. But today, Hansen is also sitting as a member of a promotion panel for prison employees. So he ducks back and forth from one Board to another, missing part of the Parole Board hearings.

FROM NEWCASTLE comes the third and newest member of the Parole Board. He is the Rev. Samuel G. Henderson Jr., pastor of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. Father Henderson, tall, handsome, grey-haired and spectacled, wears his clerical collar and around his neck is a big silver cross. "Often I do not wear clerical clothes, but a regular shirt and tie," he explains.

Father Henderson is an unusual Episcopal minister. Up until his mid forties, and his sons were through college, he was a successful radio and television executive of Guy Gannett Broadcasting Services. Then he went to theological college and became an ordained minister. In this capacity, he worked closely with inmates at various reform institutions, especially the Stevens School for Girls and the Womens' Correctional Institution at Skowhegan, where Miss Ward Murphy was in charge there. Father Henderson has also played an active role in establishing and counseling several Maine youth and drug centers. He has taken intensive courses in sociology and psychology.

The room inside the prison where the Board meets is cold and austere. The Board sits on a raised dais, like judges in a courtroom. Below, at left, sits the prison warden, who may add information or opinion about each prisoner only in the discussion period after the prisoner has left the room. Below to the right is a prison counsellor and the secretary to the board, William A. Kimball, whose regular job is as an assistant director of the department of Probation and Parole.

Alone in the center of the room is one wooden arm chair and one small wooden table. The prisoner sits here.

"Call John D.!" . . . The word goes out over the squawk box to the anteroom where prisoners wait their chance to be heard. To preserve the prisoners' rights of privacy, no real names are used in this report. And references to crimes, appearance and testimony, etc., are composites from the many prisoners who appeared before the Parole Board. So they do not mirror any specific individual prisoner.

BY 9:30 A.M. the procession begins. It lasts all day and continues on for three hours the next morning.

They are young, very young, for the most part, many in their early 20s. They dress in blue dungarees, shirts and light windbreakers. Some wear their hair long. This prison does not go in for 'prison haircuts'. They are clean, fresh-pressed. Mostly they act subdued, with careful restraint in their speech and their gestures. They sit. They answer questions from the Board members, who take turns leading the hearing for each new prisoner asking for parole.

A big dossier on each inmate is in front of every man in the room—except the prisoner. He is not allowed to see the dossier on him.

The dossiers are required advance reading for board members. They are highly confidential. Each is two, three, even four inches thick. "I read them all carefully until midnight and later before each hearing," says Father Henderson.

In the dossier are compressed, disturbing facts of the prisoner's life and record. Birth. Family. Schooling. Jobs held. Opinions of friends. Childhood and family medical history perhaps. Evaluation of work records. The story of troubles with the law. Records from previous institutions and previous sentences. Often these stretch back to early juvenile delinquency. The dossier also contains current medical records; and reports from prison psychiatrist and psychologist; records of his conduct in prison, the good along with the bad; records of his infractions of prison rules, and his punishments; his record of taking any educational courses or of attending A.A. or drug meetings in prison; efforts at rehabilitation; efforts to learn a trade; perhaps some commendations or perhaps demerits from guards.

If more detailed information should be needed, the Warden, and the state officials have other stacks of papers on most prisoners.

"Hello, John. . . sit down. . . be comfortable. . . relax. . . we are here to help you help yourself. . . to decide if you are ready to go out yet. . . ." Board members make an effort to put each prisoner at ease.

The 'con-men' types respond garrulously. The tongue-tied stay tense.

"I WAS DRINKING HEAVY. . . I don't remember much.



. . . No, I don't really mean it, when I threaten to kill. . . It's the drink. . . I almost got killed by my own father when I was 14. . . He was trying to kill my brother. I stepped in. He threw me on the table and took the knife to me. . . Yeah, I got hooked on drugs after booze . . . a doctor started me on pills . . . and I got to popping 'em. . . Yes, I think I could go back and live with my father now, even though he tried to kill me and my brother. . . My father is a policeman now. When I explode, I don't know what I am doing.

When I get filled up on liquor or pills or both, I lose control. . . But after 18 months here, I got a lot of help. . . Yes, I'm ready to go out now. . ."

After seven minutes, it's over. The Board says "Thank you, John." And the prisoner goes out. He will wait six hours or so to hear the Board's decision.

Now there is a brief discussion in private among the Board. . . "Record shows lots of arrests, but only intoxication before this Aggravated Assault. . ." "Yep. . . but the kid is plainly severely retarded. . . one of twelve backwoods kids. . . schooling went to 5th grade and stopped. . . he worked a bit in the woods and in a potato house. . . What can we do for him? I don't think he's safe to put outside yet. "Well, the psychiatrist says he should be in 'a highly controlled atmosphere.'" I agree he'd be a danger outside. . . Do his folks want him?"

The warden digs up papers which say that his parents refused to have the boy back home when he was asking for a furlough from the prison. . . They have never visited him, in prison. But they are a long way off.

"You heard the boy say that when he and his grandfather were drinking together, he just jumped this girl. . . and got a knife to her. . . but that he doesn't remember any of it. . . My hunch is that he is not ready. He'd be a danger outside. . ."

The Board denies parole for three months. They tell the Warden to arrange more counseling and treatment. . . And to try the boy on some outside work. "Then we'll take another look in three months to see if we can risk sending him on parole after that."

Discussion time. . . six minutes.

"Send in Harold Y. . .!"

He is older, sophisticated. He gives a big smile, a half comic, half ingratiating bow to all Board members. "What's your real name, Harold? What do you want us to call you? There are so many aliases here in your record. . ."

He laughs. . . "Call me anything you want. . ." The Board discusses his record of crime with him. . . Intoxication, grand larceny, assault, obscene letters. . . "It was silly. . . I was drinking. . . didn't think of the consequences. . ."

THE BOARD FIXES on the fact that in one fight he strangled a police dog to death after beating up a few people. "Well" he says "I used to be an alcoholic. . . Now I can take three beers and quit. . . I got the power to do anything I want. I used to feel alienated and inadequate. Maybe because I am a half-breed. . . But I am over that now."

He makes a play toward the clerical collar. "I was brought up as a Protestant till I was 12. Then turned Roman Catholic. . . Now, it's just me and God. I don't need any middleman between us. . . That is all I need to understand. Myself and God. The only purpose I've got is to get on the same level as God. . ."

At the end of 15 minutes, the board tells Harry he can go. He leaves with a wave at them all. He seems to have enjoyed the session. "One last thing" he says, "It's cold in here." An air conditioning vent has been blowing right onto the prisoners. And it is indeed cold in the room.

Discussion on this man is rapid.

"He is dynamite. . . He'd fly easily."

"Yep. . . but he is bright. And appealing. That obscene letter, for instance. . . that wasn't written to any girl. That letter was to the Internal Revenue Service. They were on his back for \$32! And he called them dirty names!"

"Maybe" says another board member "But he's got a record that would choke a horse. . . He is a con-man, a manipulator. . . His sentence is up next January. We don't want him discharged, walking out with no strings. Better he go out earlier on parole, so we can keep a string on him, watch him. . . What about keeping him three months more, then take another look?"

"No," says another "I think he'll blow up. . . If he has a place to go to and a job lined up, we ought to parole him now. . . Then we'd have him on parole for six months or more to

see how he does on the outside. . ."

After 11 minutes of talk, the board decides on Parole Placement. This means that when the job is firm Harold goes out — on parole.

"Send in Charles T. . ."

This kid ambles in, looking very young and lost-lam like. The records show this is a sad one. Busted home early. . . Banging around the nation very young and alone. From . . . on he worked in circuses, carnivals, at washing dishes, at setting up bowling pins. . . He seems the patsy type, a dumb kid who has been rejected so much that he'll do anything including stealing to please anybody. . . The record is for Drugs, Car theft, Breaking and entering. . . Escapes from Correctional Center at Windham. . . Transferred to state prison. . . lots of minor infractions here. But in the last few weeks some improvement. . . doing work in the carpentry shop sweeping. . . Educated up to 6th grade. . . under medication for epilepsy. . ."

Charles is excused in seven minutes.

The discussion lasts only one minute.

"Plainly a lost kid. . . but beginning to find himself. . . He has got that epilepsy problem too. But can't discipline himself to take the medicine needed. . . A guard's report says he may be sniffing glue hard. . ."

Parole denied. Charles will be heard again in 90 days to see if he has made what they call "institutional adjustment

"CALL NORMAN P!"

For the first time today, in comes a mature prisoner about 45, clearly a family-man. He is reserved, aloof, upright.

He is serving a 2 to 4 year sentence for assault and battery. This time in jail (he has served jail sentences before, but had had no convictions for seven years) he had unexpectedly 'fouled up' on his work-release program.

Under work-release, Norman had been performing daily job in a contracting business, for pay, and had been returning each night to jail to turn himself into the local county jail until morning, when he went off to work again.

He had been performing well. Then, under stress from an accident, he says, he had stopped at his wife's home, told her his troubles and 'drunk some beers'. He confessed his forbidden drinking to the local Sheriff. The Sheriff sent him packing back to state prison in Thomaston. He blotched the record.

In a grudging, reserved way this mature man answers questions from the board. From his story, it appeared likely that he was a tough heller when he had too much to drink.

His story was told in a taut, close-mouthed manner. . . reticent it seemed to embarrass him, as if he felt it degraded to recount past criminal episodes in public. He had a skill, wife and children on ADC while he served out his term.

After 17 minutes, Norman was dismissed.

Discussion lasted only one minute. The Board put him on two years probation, with the extra restriction against drinking any alcohol.

"Call Lincoln M!"

Aged 25, Lincoln enters. . . a tall man, wispy blond moustache and clouded eyes. He has a cool, detached, faintly hostile manner as he mumbles long answers.

"I had a terrible drug problem. . . I was into LSD, then heroin. . . Yes, I did the whole route. . . speed, morphine, uppers and downers. . . and alcohol."

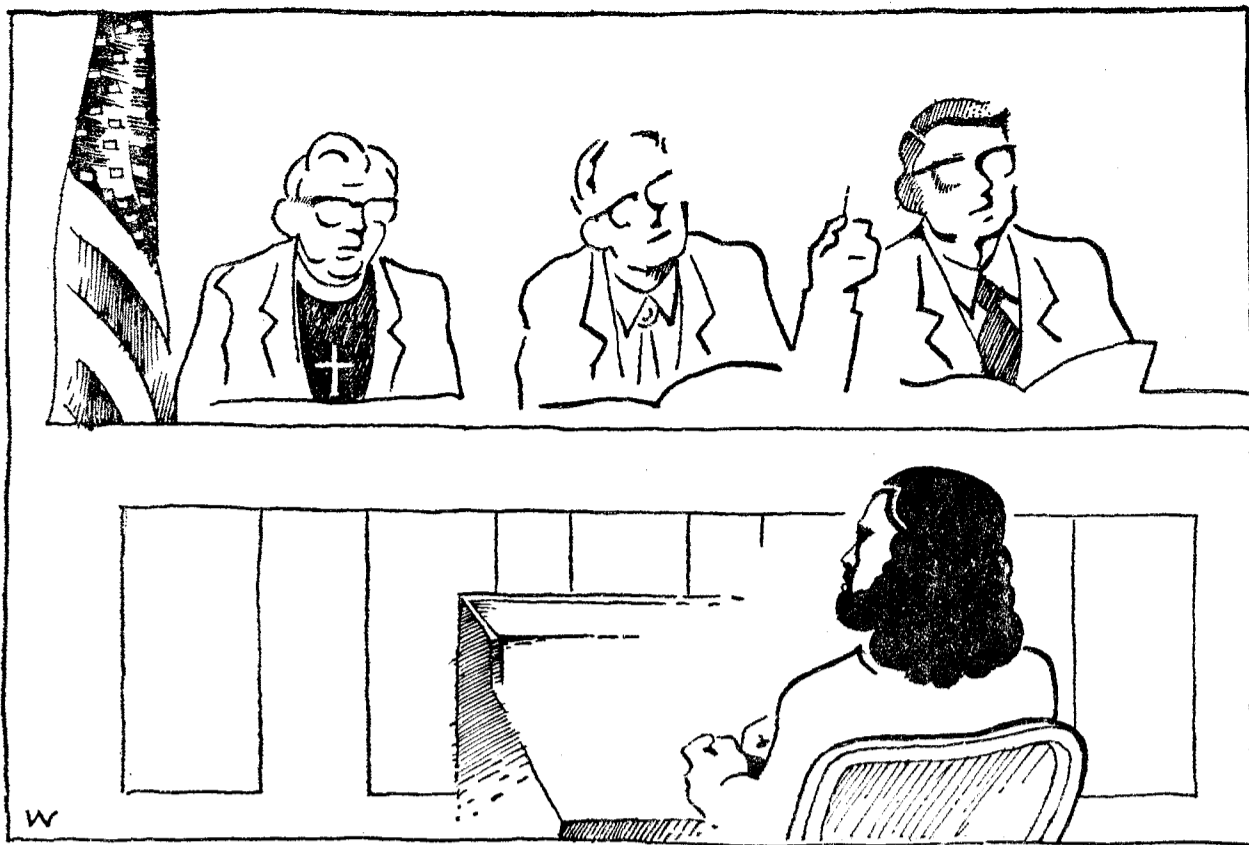
He had done time in other states, he said, naming two prisons. He had been sent from here to other prisons, on interstate compact arrangement. He had been sent back to Maine. Why?

"I fought with the blacks. . . and I tried to escape from them," he said.

The record shows that Lincoln had also escaped from Maine State Prison. He had crossed the borders — fled out of state. He had done this while on furlough, granted by the prison. When recaptured and returned, he had caused trouble — all admitted in the records. Why?

"I was strung out on heroin, when they brought me back" he said. "The inmates hated my guts. . . They felt had killed the furlough program for them. . . You don't know how it feels to be strung out and hated. . . and be in solitary. But I came back here to help myself. . . My furlough violation was a stupid, childish thing. . . I don't want to be a junkie the rest of my life. It's a terrible thing to be. . . I know."

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LINCOLN IS SERVING two sentences. The first for

armed robbery; the second for his escapes. He wants to be paroled from the first sentence, so he can start serving time on his second.

This same request is made by a number of prisoners, most of whom have received second sentences for escape. The requests are all denied. And these denials highlight a fact of parole procedure, about which Maine judges appear to be ignorant, and about which the Parole Board has so far failed to inform the judges.

Maine judges often pass sentence of "1 to 2 years" on a prisoner who has made an escape. Maybe judges feel that if a man is already serving, say, two to five years, it is enough to give him one-to-two more for escape.

The Parole Board sees it differently. They will not parole a man from a sentence with a five year maximum to start serving a sentence with only a two year maximum. By so doing, they would in effect be shortening the maximum sentence, and thereby rewarding the prisoner for his escape. Furthermore when and if he should be paroled from the short sentence, the prisoner would have a shorter time under parole supervision, once he is out.

For these reasons, Lincoln was told by the Board to go back to his Judge and ask that he be given a longer maximum term on his second sentence. If the Judge would put the maximum up from two years to five years, say, then the Board would reconsider the case. Meanwhile Lincoln's case was 'continued' or in effect denied for the time.

Board members sometimes relax a moment between prisoners. One may go to the small toilet and splash cold water over wrists and face to freshen up his mind. One phones his office. One leaves the dais and walks to a small anteroom to fill two paper cups with coffee from the electric coffee urn. He hands me a coffee.

"After a while, you see the pattern" he says. "And you ask — what makes a man a criminal? After seeing hundreds, my guess is that only about ten per cent have the criminal mind. . . are professionals who want to live by crime. . . who'd rather steal than work. The other 90 per cent are in prison because they are ignorant or because they are on drugs or because they are alcoholics. . ."

"You've seen the parade today, coming up for parole. . . And I don't think you have yet seen one "smart" criminal. . . a guy who by cunning and by deliberate preference lives by busting the law."

"MOST ARE IGNORANT. Men who never got schooling past the 5th or maybe 8th grade. Kids unwanted in home or in school who hit the streets. Then they got to boozing it up, or got into dope and drugs and they got caught doing crazy things. . . stealing cars or breaking and entering or pulling a gun or beating somebody up. . . So they get busted and get on the treadmill early. . . Reform school first. . . then Windham or its equivalent. . . then county jails. . . now the state prison. Some are retarded plain and simple. . . some seem bright, full of native intelligence. But mostly they never learned enough to make it in competition for jobs with the next fellow. . . They get the label of "loser". Then if they strung out on heroin or get full of whiskey or both, there is no telling what they'll do. . . Half of 'em tell you they don't really know the details of the crime they committed. They don't—they were out of their mind, really, when they did it. . . Now they come up to us for parole, after maybe 18 months in here. . . The record may show they are shaping up, going to A.A. or living in the Drug Dorm, doing encounter sessions each night to kick the habit. . . They are off booze and drugs inside. . . maybe they are going to school, getting a bit of the education they missed. . . or learning some skill, like fixing furniture or something to make a living on the outside.

"But the big question is:—are they ready to go back out into society? Or will we parole a man who may stab a girl or beat up a lonely storekeeper? Who will really hurt his fellowman?"

"I tell you I lay awake at nights worrying about that question. And the day does come when I pick up the paper and read that someone I paroled a few months back has gone bad and beaten up — even killed — an innocent person. . . Maybe 99 others we voted to parole are doing fine; but the fact is you made a terrible mistake on one, and somebody else is paying for that mistake. . . Trying to predict how any human being will act under unknown future pressures is a risky business, even if you are hiring a schoolteacher, let alone paroling a prisoner. . ."

Nineteen men come before the Board, seeking parole at this session. The box score at the end of 1½ days is nine paroled, four continued for rehearing at the next meeting next month, and six cases denied parole for three months at least.

In a recent year, the Parole Board heard a total of 432 cases, including parole violators, at the Maine State Prison. Out of this total, the Board granted parole to 239 prisoners.

About 460 men are out on parole from the state prison now, serving their sentences in their communities.

This compares to about 320 men inside the state prison, serving their sentences under lock and key.

On any day, there are about 1,000 persons in Maine prisons, correction centers and county jails "doing time."

On the same day there are three times as many convicted persons—3,000—in Maine outside the institutions, on parole and probation.

The state spends \$4,230 a year to keep a man in prison (That is about \$2,300 a year more than the state spends to help send a student to the U of M; and \$3,400 more than it costs to keep a youngster in high school.)

By comparison the state spends about 70 cents a day on the person on parole or probation. One reason is that just 33 parole and probation officers are looking after 3,000 "clients" compared to several hundred prison guards and jailers looking after about one third the number of inside prisoners.

If all the people on parole and probation were kept in confinement, it would cost Maine taxpayers an extra \$12 million a year.

NEXT SUNDAY: What is it like to be on parole? Does parole work?

Pre-release center in Hallowell gets reprieve, escapes budget ax

By MIKE LABERGE
Staff Writer

KENNEBEC JOURNAL

AUGUSTA — The Central Maine Pre-Release Center will stay open — barring last minute changes by the Legislature.

The Hallowell center, housing 60 inmates, was slated to close Monday for one year because of cuts in the state budget.

But a revised plan submitted by Gov. John McKernan includes an additional \$19 million for corrections, enough to keep all of the state's prisons open, said A.L. Carlisle, associate corrections commissioner.

Along with the Hallowell center, the state had proposed closing a pre-release center in

Bangor for two years beginning July 1, and prisons in Charleston and Bucksport for one year beginning in July of 1992.

The Appropriations Committee, which handles money matters, has approved the additional money for prison funding, giving the governor's request a strong endorsement, Carlisle said.

"As of right now and to the best of our knowledge, all of our institutions will remain open for the next two fiscal years," she said. "There is very strong support to keep those institutions open."

The closings had been proposed to help shave \$7.8 million from the corrections budget in 1991-92. Closing the Hallowell center would have saved \$765,000.

But the proposal drew strong opposition

not only from inmates, but also from lawmakers, who argued closing them would damage the state prison system.

Willis Lyford, McKernan's spokesman, said the governor made prisons a priority in submitting his revised budget to the Legislature May 20.

The governor would fund those programs and others, in part, by raising taxes, Lyford said. He had proposed raising the state sales tax from 5 to 6 percent and by raising taxes on other items such as food and lodging.

"In good conscience he could not take the type of action of closing down the facilities," Lyford said.

In the governor's view, he said, "They

should be kept open to ensure stability in the state's correctional system."

Officials, including the director of the Hallowell center, had argued the closings would harm the morale of the inmates there and in the rest of the system.

The Hallowell center houses prisoners considered harmless and within 14 months of their release. The center operates like a dormitory for inmates, with minimal security.

Inmates with seven months or less left in their sentences hold jobs at local businesses such as restaurants and construction companies. They pay their room, board and medical expenses.

Those more than seven months from

release do odd jobs for Augusta Mental Health Institute and the Bureau of Public Improvements. Those inmates last year did work that would have cost the state more than \$100,000, center officials have said.

If the center were closed, those inmates would have had to finish out their sentences at other facilities in Maine, including the Maine State Prison in Thomaston.

Richard McKeen, the center's director, could not be reached for comment Friday afternoon.

In the past, he had argued closing the center would be a "terrible waste," undoing much of the progress made in programs to help inmates re-adjust to the outside world.

Inmates, others speak of losing 'hope' if pre-release center shuts

KENNEBEC JOURNAL
MAY 6 1991

By MIKE LABERGE
Staff Writer

HALLOWELL — James Stewart tried to rob a Brunswick store five years ago, was caught, convicted and sent to prison.

Through good behavior, he earned a transfer last September to the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell and now has a work-release job at a local restaurant.

If the center were closed for a year by budget cuts, he and 59 other men now finishing their sentences there would lose their jobs and be sent to other institutions, including the Maine State Prison in Thomaston.

It's not something they look forward to.

"This is our light at the end of the tunnel," said Stewart, who is due to be released in September.

"I just want the public to know that we are worth more here — working in the community — than sitting behind those walls."

The McKernan administration has

proposed closing the Hallowell center and one like it in Bangor July 1 to help balance the budget over the next two years.

The Department of Corrections must cut \$7.8 million in 1991-92. Officials say closing the Hallowell center would save \$765,000.

"We tried to keep as many of our institutions open as we could," said A.L. Carlisle, associate corrections commissioner. "The first year, we could keep the major ones open only by closing the pre-release centers."

Opponents — including Sen. Beverly Bustin (D-Augusta) — warn closing the Hallowell center would cost far more than it would save.

For starters, they said, it costs the state \$10,000 to \$12,000 to house an inmate there, about half the cost of a stay at a regular prison.

Then they point to the benefits to the community.

The Hallowell center houses low-risk inmates who are within 14

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Inmates speak of losing hope if center shuts

FROM PAGE ONE

months of their release from custody, said Richard McKeen, the center's director.

During the day, inmates with seven months or less from release work at restaurants, construction companies and other businesses. Those inmates pay their room, board and medical expenses, McKeen said.

Those with more than seven months to go work for agencies such as the Augusta Mental Health Institute or the Bureau of Public Improvements. They mow lawns, do repairs, paint, and wash laundry. Last year, McKeen said, the inmates did work that would have cost the state more than \$100,000.

If the center were closed, he would be guaranteed another job, as would the corrections officers there.

What McKeen worries about is the effect it would have on the inmates' morale.

"I think it's a terrible waste," he said.

"Because of the budget crisis, we are going to have to say, 'Sorry, with all of your hard work we can't help you.' I'm concerned about what will happen when we take the hope away."

Inmate Steven Meyers worries too.

He has been at the center since mid-February, serving out the final months of his sentence for burglary and theft.

He works days on a grounds-keeping crew and is due to start work-release in mid-June. He says the system has helped him turn his life around.

"I've had to work to get where I am, and that's all going to be taken away," he said. "By taking it away, you're not giving an inmate a chance to shoot for something."

Carlisle, the associate commissioner, said the pre-release centers could remain open if the Legislature were to fund the department's revised budget, submitted last week.

But that could depend more on the economy than anything else, she said.

"Absent the money shortage, we would not be closing the centers," Carlisle said, adding that they are "essential" to the corrections system.

Bustin, Senate chairman of the Legislature's corrections committee, said she and others would work to keep the Hallowell center open.

"There is very much interest in keeping it open," she said. "If we don't have the continuum of programs that allow inmates to go out into the world, then we won't have the kind of citizens you want to produce from those prisoners."

Prison

Way station for inmates

Hallowell center eases move to freedom

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the final segment of a three-part series examining the changing nature of the state penal system.

By **BRUCE ELLISON**

APR 17 1991

Sentinel Staff

MORNING SENTINEL

HALLOWELL — Richard McKen will tell you that he has the best job in Maine's Department of Corrections, and in some ways the easiest.

As director of the Central Maine Pre-Release Center here, McKen runs a kind of dormitory for felons who are within six months of their final release from custody.

At the center, which has neither bars nor locked doors, 60 prisoners at a time are brought to learn how to rejoin the community.

They eat and sleep at the center, and are restricted to its grounds when not working.

And they spend five days a week at regular jobs, either in state agencies such as the Augusta Mental Health Institute, or at res-

taurants or construction firms, earning money, sharpening their skills and in general learning how to adjust again to life outside the prison system.

Only a few violate the trust they have earned to come here, McKen says. One or two a year simply walk away. Most are picked up immediately, and go back to the State Prison in Thomaston or another correctional center.

Some others, who McKen judges aren't able to move into society easily, or who are unwilling to adjust to the fairly rigid structure in the center, are returned to prison on his authority.

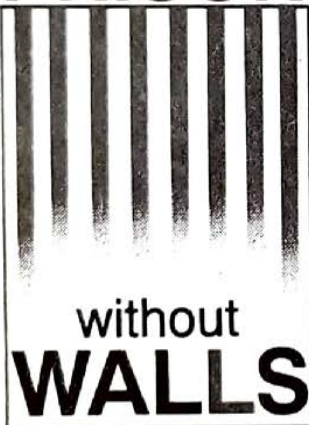
"I say I have an easy job because the people who are here have been filtered out of the corrections system," says McKen, a 22-year veteran of penal work.

"The ones sent to the pre-release center have been checked and tested and found likely to succeed. That's why they're here."

Although most of the prisoners work for minimum wage or a little above, they do pay the state some of the cost of keeping them, McKen says.

And the state agencies where they work profit, too, getting work done — such as by a regular Pre-Release Center painting crew —

PRISON



without
WALLS

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at much less than what it would cost to hire private contractors.

□ □ □

McKeen says it costs about \$10,000 to \$12,000 a year to feed and house a prisoner in Hallowell, less than half the cost of a stay at a medium security institution.

The budget for the center is \$667,000 a year, about 1 percent of the total spent by the Department of Corrections.

Despite that, and despite the higher cost of incarceration in regular prisons, the McKernan administration plans to close the center in the fiscal year beginning in July, as an economy move.

The prisoners will stay in Thomaston, Windham or Charleston, McKeen said.

Last year, Hallowell Pre-Release Center prisoners gave over 30,000 man hours of community service. That's work done inside the center.

On release programs, they earned \$285,000, paying state and federal taxes with their wages and also contributing to the cost of their upkeep.

The center also operates a garden in season, where inmates work, and which provided a sufficiently bountiful harvest last summer that some produce was shared with AMHI, the Kennebec County Jail and the Augusta Soup Kitchen.

Prisoners released from the center during the day must have jobs. They don't simply wander off on their own, McKeen says. Nor do the prisoners find the jobs; that's done for them by center officials.

"We tell the employer what's up," the center director says. "Some prisoners don't like that," he adds. "They'd rather just have the job without the possible stigma. But that wouldn't be fair.

"And," says McKeen, "we want the employers to keep us informed about what the prisoners are doing. They have some responsibility, too."

"Those employers who don't want to cooperate with us just don't get the workers," he says.

Prisoners don't go too far from Hallowell — about 10 miles is the maximum — and they are delivered and picked up by a center bus.

Despite what the public might think, McKeen says, no prisoner so far has been disruptive or tried any criminal behavior while on the job.

Nor has any member of the community been attacked or robbed.

But McKeen can't tell what happens to offenders after their release.

"We have no clerical help here, and no way to track people once they are released," he says, although, he observes, some of the offenders end up working as regular employees at the places where they worked as pre-release prisoners.

With the economy slumping, getting jobs has become harder than it was five years ago, when most employers were screaming for help, McKeen says.

And not all potential employers are willing to participate in the program.

Some, like major grocery chains which have lots of cash on the premises, stay open at night and have young female workers as well as members of the public around, just won't take a chance, he said.

In fact, he says, "most of our employers don't want their names mentioned publicly."

McKeen says his pre-release center, despite its lack of bars and locks, doesn't turn out to be for everyone.

"Because we can't lock anyone up, we have to keep them on a very tight rein," he says. "There are a lot of rules, some would say very petty rules, but you have a certain percentage of people here who like to push you to the edge.

"If there isn't something saying they can't do it, they'll try to get away with it. So we have to write the rules for those who need the strictest control," he explains.

Among the rules: No one goes out the door without permission.

Of the 115 people housed at the center last year, 87 were released to the general community, 18 were transferred for security reasons, and four were sent back to prison at their own request, according to McKeen.

Hallowell group keeps eyes on pre-release expansion

By MIKE LABERGE
Staff Writer

APR 17 1990

KENNEBEC JOURNAL

HALLOWELL — City residents are keeping a close watch on a proposal to move 30 women from a Windham prison to a minimum-security center here.

The proposal — part of a \$20 million bond the state Department of Corrections plans to put before voters in November — involves moving minimum-security women inmates from the Maine Correctional Center to the Central Maine Pre-Release Center at the old Stevens School campus on Winthrop Street. The state is eyeing as a possible site a building housing the state division of community

services.

The pre-release center, which shares the campus with a number of state agencies, is home to 60 community-security male prisoners. They generally are at the ends of their sentences and perform work for the community under a minimal supervision.

Despite the 11-year-old program's success, members of a city committee formed to monitor the use of the pre-release center wonder if it could handle the additional inmates.

"The facility now is supposed to house 30, but it houses 60 . . . It's quite a volatile situation," said Viola Bucknam, a member of the group. "If they move in the women, I just think it might be too

many. I wonder if a community of this size is ready for that."

Bucknam, who lives next to the center, said that although it has been a good neighbor, she has questions about the proposed addition.

"They have been very aboveboard, and I hope it will stay that way," she said. "It's been going so good, why rock the boat by adding more?"

Richard McKeen, superintendent of the pre-release center, said the addition of the women — at a cost of about \$50,000 — should not pose a problem because they will be housed in a separate building from the men and be supervised by a separate staff.

"We're not going to be asking the

people at the existing facility to take on an additional burden," he said. "There will probably be 15 or 20 women to start with, and they would have to be eligible for minimum or community security."

The state is eyeing the move to Hallowell because the Windham facility has grown until it no longer is suitable for many of the women there, McKeen said.

That center houses most of the state's female prisoners as well as some men who need to be under maximum supervision.

"That multi-purpose unit probably has

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APR 17 1990

KENNEBEC JOURNAL

Hallowell keeping eye on expansion plans

FROM PAGE ONE

the best maximum-security facility in the state," he said. "These women have worked hard to earn minimum-security status, but here they are in a maximum-security facility. It wasn't planned that way, but it happened."

Members of the citizens group do not question the need for the women's center, but they wonder whether Hallowell is the best place for it.

Some have mentioned the campus of the Pineland Center, a Pownal facility for the mentally retarded, as a possible site.

"You don't have the density of population at Pineland that you do in Hallowell," said Pat Truman, a member of the pre-release committee. "If they are looking for service-

type work for these women to do, Pineland might be worth looking into . . . They could help out around the facility."

Like Bucknam, Truman also questioned whether Hallowell could absorb the additional prisoners.

"We have 60 men there now, and if they bring in an additional 30 women, you would have to have more security and that makes me nervous," she said. "I think we've done our part already. We want to be fair. But we want to be fair to the people of Hallowell as well."

Truman, who praised the pre-release center as a "tightly run ship," suggested that if the women were moved to another site, some of the men could be placed in other buildings,

giving them more "breathing space."

But McKeen said there just isn't the money to do that.

"That's a great suggestion," he said. "I wish I could do it that way, but we just don't have the luxury right now."

He said the Hallowell site is the only option available.

"We really don't have any alternatives as far as I know," he said. "But that doesn't mean something couldn't come along between now and November."

Although the decision about where to move the women is up to the Department of Corrections, city officials and committee members hope department officials will work with them.

"Most people are concerned and cautious, but we don't want to judge (the prisoners). We just want as much information as we can get," said Harmon Harvey, Hallowell's mayor. "It is my understanding (the state) can do whatever it wants. It is our hope they will work with us and keep us informed of their plans."

McKeen said state officials plan to do just that.

"They are a very honest, forthright group of people," he said of the committee. "They don't have a hidden agenda. If they have a concern, they tell me about it and I address it. I want to keep in touch with them so they will be there to give me advice and work with me."

Pre-release women file complaints

Allege that MCC discriminates in housing, recreation for females

By MICHELE CHARON
Staff Writer

When Laurie Knudsen goes home, there's no doubt she's in prison.

She enters a low-lying building surrounded by a towering fence and passes through five electronically locked doors before she reaches her living unit.

Knudsen resents her placement in a new, multipurpose building of the Maine Correctional Center in South Windham, she said, because she is a pre-release inmate — the lowest-security status for prisoners. If she were a man with that same status, she'd live in a building that looks and feels far less like a prison, she said.

"We just want to be treated fairly," said Knudsen, seated in a straight-backed chair in one of the prison's plain meeting rooms. "We want them to realize that we deserve the same rights and privileges that the men do."

Knudsen is one of a group of female MCC inmates who've filed complaints with the Maine Civil Liberties Union over what they believe is discrimination at the prison. One of their primary concerns is that pre-release women must live within a building that houses maximum-security prisoners while men with the same status live in more relaxed dormitories outside the prison's fences.

"The main building (that houses the men) is not as forbidding as the one that houses the women," said John Rogers, an advocate for MCC inmates. "They (the women) are being treated differently from the men — that's the bottom line, there's no question."

Until last June, the prison's pre-release inmates lived in a wooden house called Oak Haven, located outside the high fence that surrounds the main prison buildings. The house could not continue to be used for security and financial reasons, said MCC superintendent James R. Clemons.

INMATE POPULATION

As of this week, there are 1,559 prisoners living in the state's system of correctional centers and prisons. Of those, 45 are females, according to Ralph Nichols, director of inspections for the Department of Corrections.

Prisoners' placement in the state's correctional facilities depends on many factors, including length of sentence, past criminal history and security status, said Nichols. Each facility has an overall security rating, however.

✓ The Maine State Prison in Thomaston is a maximum-security facility that houses 501 male inmates.

✓ The Maine Correctional Cen-

ter in South Windham is a medium-security facility that houses 438 males and 45 females.

✓ There are three pre-release centers for male prisoners in the state: the Southern Maine Pre-Release Center in South Windham, the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell and the Bangor Pre-Release Center. A total of 152 inmates live at these facilities.

✓ The state also operates two other correctional facilities and a minimum-security unit. The DOC also contracts with county jails, corrections departments of other states and agencies of the federal government to house Maine inmates.

Clemons contends the MCC's multipurpose building was designed to house prisoners of all security levels. The living quarters for each security level are separate from one another and all inmates are given the privileges associated with their status, he said.

"The bricks and mortar are a higher level of security but we've built all the different levels of housing and security into the same building," Clemons said. "We try to make it as normal as we can within the confines of the building."

Deborah Noonan, a Portland attorney who is handling the complaints for MCLU, said she has investigated the women inmates' concerns and determined that they are legitimate. She hopes the problems can be remedied without a lawsuit, however.

"The MCLU is still actively monitoring the situation and will continue to do so until the problems are remedied," Noonan said. Assistant Attorney General Terrance Brennan notified Noonan that the Department of Corrections had established a task force to work on long-range planning for female

offenders. He said the task force is investigating the women's concerns, said Noonan.

Male inmates at MCC live in about eight dorms, whose security levels range from minimum to maximum. Pre-release male prisoners live in a simple, one-story building that's located outside the high fence surrounding the prison complex.

Men at that pre-release center serve out the last six to eight months of their sentences in a more open, relaxed setting than any of the higher security areas, said MCC corrections officer Carl Carpenter.

"You can see the openness down there when you walk into the building," said Carpenter about the men's pre-release facility where there are no bars, no electronic doors and no fence surrounding the building.

The MCC's multipurpose building was funded by a \$10.3 million bond passed by Maine voters in 1984, said Corrections Commissioner Donald Allen. Besides women, it houses the male federal prisoners and men who are in segregation due to disciplinary problems.

It replaced women's living quar-

ters that did not meet the needs of the female population, said Clemons.

"The one building was inadequate from a classification standpoint," said Clemons about "Dormitory Four" where most of the women used to live. "There was no way to classify out inmates by their special needs."

He added that the Oak Haven center for pre-release women was not a cost-effective housing arrangement.

"At maximum, it could house five women because of fire codes — the problem being that it was extremely cost inefficient to man it around the clock seven days a week," said Clemons. "It also did not adequately meet the number of potential prisoners who should be involved in work release."

The multipurpose building is an improvement over the women's former quarters, said Clemons, because each classification level has separate living units, with progressively greater privileges like use of a kitchen, common living area and right to keep more personal items. The new facility also has space for 10 pre-release women inmates, double the number that could live in Oak Haven, he said.

But the pre-release women who live there don't agree that the building is an improvement. The way they see it, they are living in a high-security building, being watched all day by the same guards who monitor the high-security prisoners.

Prison guards man a central observation station in the women's unit. The station is circular, glassed-in and dominated by a blinking, high-tech control panel from which the guards operate the building's electronic doors.

Around the circular guards' station are the women's living quarters, separated by security level. In the largest, the pre-release area, there is a common living area, kitchen and small cells with wooden doors. When the guards are seated at their



Kennebec Journal/DAVID MACDONALD

Karen Mann, a former Gardiner resident, is one of the inmates at Maine Correctional Center concerned about lack of privacy for pre-release women. Mann also is involved in Project HIP.

control panel, they directly face the pre-release area.

The pre-release unit is separated by walls from the minimum, medium and segregated areas, that have progressively less space and fewer amenities. In the segregated area, women are confined to their cells most of the time.

"We're the lowest security here and they have a better view of us than anyone here," said pre-release inmate Karen Mann as she glanced up at the security guard's station. "A person in medium security slit her wrists and we could hear her screaming — it upsets you. You can't see what's going on but you can hear what's going on."

The women have also pointed out that they have less access to outdoor recreation than men at MCC. Women are allowed to go to the gym and recreation room only during two hours of daily recreation time whereas men in the minimum

security dorms and pre-release centers are allowed outside during most daylight hours.

"We never get outside unless we're going somewhere," said Knudsen, referring to times when the women leave the building for special programs, work or classes.

Clemons said that outdoor recreation privileges for men depend on their security status but admitted that women can go outside less than the men. The reason for the disparity is that the fence surrounding the new building has not been completed, he said.

Clemons said he expects the fence to be completed by next spring.

Attorney Noonan said she will continue to monitor the task force's progress in addressing the women's concerns.

"If the DOC (Department of Corrections) is not addressing the problem in a sufficient way we will certainly zealously defend our clients' rights," she said.

HALLOWELL Pre-release center helps prisoners get back on track

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

May 15, 2011 Sunday

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Body

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- You may not have ever even heard of them, but they have likely saved you thousands of dollars in taxes, all while getting their lives back on track, one brush stroke at a time.

"With this type of program, their behaviors can positively impact people in the community, and they see that," said Richard Charest, director of the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell. "It's a win-win for everybody."

The pre-release center, which opened in 1979 on the grounds of the former Stevens School, is often the last stop in the prison system for inmates rejoining society.

Prisoners at the 64-bed facility are within the last 14 months of their sentences and could be eligible for work release within seven months of their release date. They receive about 50 hours of education each week and many take part in a crime prevention program that allows them to speak about making the right choices, and the consequences of bad choices, at public schools and other forums.

In addition to the work-release prisoners -- who work in the private sector outside the facility during the day and return to center at night -- the facility also has prisoners who work on community projects.

These community restitution work crews have provided an average of 26,000 man-hours to public and nonprofit organizations over the past two years, Charest said.

"This is free labor provided by our work crews to our neighbors in the central Maine area," he said.

Approximately a dozen workers were busy painting Tuesday inside Bread of Life Ministries new shelter for homeless families and veterans on Hospital Street.

The pre-release center also has provided countless hours of free labor for Bread of Life Executive Director Dean Lachance. The prisoners will install the floor of the new shelter once the painting is complete.

"That's saving us thousands," Lachance said. "Rich (Charest) has this unbelievable staff that's been coming here and doing amazing things."

The work crews have done everything from help set up for the Maine International Film Festival in Waterville to refurbish the Augusta Police Department. City officials estimated the latter project alone saved Augusta taxpayers \$180,000 over three years, Charest said.

HALLOWELL Pre-release center helps prisoners get back on track

Soon, crews will be in Clinton helping carry boxes of books for the library and then sweeping up streets for the town.

"It's a busy time of year for us," Charest said.

But the work is not just about saving money.

The inmates learn skills that will help them get and keep jobs when they are released.

For some, those lessons can be as basic as learning to get up early enough to get to the job.

"We've had some guys, when they come in, they don't know how to hold a paint brush," Charest said. "We started teaching them responsibility. It's all part of the process of preparing these guys to re-enter the community."

Getting positive feedback from people in the community, even from the police officers working in departments being renovated, can have a tremendous impact, Charest said.

"I don't think we can play up enough how much we've empowered these guys," he said. "It gives them a chance to give back to the community. I think everyone intrinsically wants to do that."

Mark Reynolds, an inmate who has worked in a contracting business in the Bangor area, said the opportunity to work together helps the inmates bond and learn how to get along with others.

"Most of them have a really good attitude and want to help," Reynolds said. "We try to the best job we can."

Crews recently helped get baseball and softball fields in Augusta ready for the season. League directors showed their appreciation by opening the snack shack and letting the inmates eat to their hearts' content.

"That was really nice," Reynolds said.

Charest has called the center and its work "one of the best kept secrets in the Department of Corrections," and Lachance agrees.

"This is really what people want -- and it's exactly what Rich's crews are doing," Lachance said. "This has got to be told. This is great."

Craig Crosby -- 621-5642

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HALLOWELL Concerns on closing of center expressed

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

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Body

BY SUSAN M. COVER

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- Local residents said Wednesday they have benefited from the work provided by the inmates from the Central Maine Pre-Release Center, and they urged their local representative to find a way to keep the program in central Maine.

About 50 people attended a meeting at Hallowell City Hall organized by Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell, who wanted to see what community members had to say about a plan to move the center to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren. Today there are about 58 prisoners and 21 employees at the Hallowell facility.

The Department of Corrections told workers at the pre-release center last month that the state will move the program out of Hallowell. Commissioner Joseph Ponte told lawmakers Monday he hoped to have the move complete by July 1.

On Wednesday, however, residents who represent local communities and nonprofits said they don't want to lose a valuable resource.

"They have given us a countless number of hours," said Dean Lachance, executive director of Bread of Life in Augusta.

Lachance said the inmates painted his 30-bed shelter last year, put new flooring in his veterans homeless shelter and performed work in other housing units around the city. He said the program helps the inmates, too, by giving them skills and introducing them to the community services they might need once they are released.

Jack Walsh, of the Hallowell Food Bank and the Hubbard Free Library, said his agencies often need the manpower to haul food and books.

"We would hate to lose what these guys have done for us," he said.

Those who live in Manchester, Windsor and Litchfield also said they have saved large amounts of tax money through the years because of the program.

The Stevens School complex was first put up for sale in 2008. Initially, the city of Hallowell expressed interest in buying the 63-acre, 13-building complex. It later rescinded a \$600,000 offer, and the property has been listed for sale in recent years for \$1.1 million.

HALLOWELL Concerns on closing of center expressed

The complex was one of the state properties that was supposed to be sold to balance the state budget, Treat said. It hasn't sold, however, and it isn't being marketed for sale.

"We have heard nothing for two entire years," she said.

Jennifer Smith, director of legislative affairs and communications at the state Department of Administrative and Financial Services, said discussions about moving all state offices off the campus have been going on for the past year. The Department of Marine Resources and other offices also are on the campus.

"There has been an ongoing dialogue between the Bureau of General Services and Corrections for at least a year," she said.

The bureau is putting together a five-to-10-year plan for all state properties in the capital area, as well as in Bangor and Portland. While some state offices may stay on the Stevens campus as anchor tenants, it was never envisioned that the pre-release center would be an appropriate anchor for a private developer, she said.

In an interview Wednesday afternoon, Chris Paszyc, a property broker with CBRE/The Boulos Co., which had the listing at one time, said the presence of the pre-release center on the property made it a tough sell.

"I would say that was the major stumbling block," he said.

At the meeting Wednesday night, some suggested that other state office space in Augusta might be an option. Others said it would be better to stay in Hallowell, where local residents have reported few problems with the inmates.

Jim Durkin, a labor union representative for the employees at the pre-release center, said he was encouraged to see so much support for the program.

"I hope in the coming weeks and months we can build a coalition to put a stop to this and find a better solution," he said.

Treat said she would talk to fellow lawmakers, some of whom expressed concern Monday about the proposed move, to see whether anything can be done.

"It's pretty sudden for us," she said. "It's still pretty new. I don't know whether we can affect the outcome."

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Time, and public, served ; Inmates at a prison pre-release center learn work skills while providing free labor to nonprofit groups.

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Final Edition

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Byline: CRAIG CROSBY, By CRAIG CROSBY Kennebec Journal

Dateline: AUGUSTA

Body

You may not even be aware of them, but they have probably saved you from paying thousands of dollars in taxes, all while putting their lives back on track, one brush stroke at a time.

"With this type of program, their behaviors can positively impact people in the community, and they see that," said Richard Charest, director of the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell. "It's a win-win for everybody."

The pre-release center, which opened in 1979 on the grounds of the former Stevens School, is often the last stop in the prison system for inmates rejoining society.

Prisoners at the 64-bed facility are within the last 14 months of their sentences and could be eligible for work release within seven months of their release date. They receive about 50 hours of education each week, and many take part in a crime prevention program that allows them to speak about making the right choices, and the consequences of bad choices, at public schools and other forums.

In addition to the work-release prisoners - who work in the private sector outside the facility during the day and return to the center at night - the facility also has prisoners who work on community projects.

These community restitution work crews have provided an average of 26,000 man-hours to public and nonprofit organizations over the past two years, Charest said.

"This is free labor provided by our work crews to our neighbors in the central Maine area," he said.

About a dozen workers were busy painting Tuesday inside Bread of Life Ministries' new shelter for homeless families and veterans on Hospital Street.

The pre-release center also has provided countless hours of free labor for Bread of Life Executive Director Dean Lachance. The prisoners will install the floor of the new shelter once the painting is complete.

"That's saving us thousands," Lachance said. "Rich (Charest) has this unbelievable staff that's been coming here and doing amazing things."

Time, and public, served ; Inmates at a prison pre-release center learn work skills while providing free labor to nonprofit groups.

The work crews have done everything from help set up for the Maine International Film Festival in Waterville to refurbish the Augusta Police Department. City officials estimated the latter project alone saved Augusta taxpayers \$180,000 over three years, Charest said.

Soon, crews will be in Clinton helping carry boxes of books for the library and then sweeping up streets for the town.

"It's a busy time of year for us," Charest said.

But the work is not just about saving money.

The inmates learn skills that will help them get and keep jobs when they are released. For some, those lessons can be as basic as learning to get up early enough to get to the job.

"We've had some guys, when they come in, they don't know how to hold a paint brush," Charest said. "We started teaching them responsibility. It's all part of the process of preparing these guys to re-enter the community."

Getting positive feedback from people in the community, even from the police officers working in departments being renovated, can have a tremendous impact, Charest said.

"I don't think we can play up enough how much we've empowered these guys," he said. "It gives them a chance to give back to the community. I think everyone intrinsically wants to do that."

Mark Reynolds, an inmate who has worked in a contracting business in the Bangor area, said the opportunity to work together helps the inmates bond and learn how to get along with others.

"Most of them have a really good attitude and want to help," Reynolds said. "We try to do the best job we can."

Graphic

Caption: Andy Molloy/Kennebec Journal Inmates from the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell paint a stairwell last week at the Bread of Life Shelter in Augusta. From left are Joe Oliveira, Danny Logan, Dallas Sizemore and Adam MaGuire. Work crews from the center also have helped set up for the Maine International Film Festival in Waterville and refurbished the Augusta Police Department.

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[Hallowell residents address big bond](#)

Kennebec Journal

March 7, 2017 Tuesday

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Body

FULL TEXT

Hallowell City Council will hold a public hearing Monday on a proposed \$2.36 million bond issue. LATE

City Council to vote on item at next meeting

HALLOWELL -- More than a dozen people spoke in favor of and against the proposed \$2.36 million bond package during a special City Council meeting Monday.

Mayor Mark Walker said the council will vote whether to approve the bond proposal at its regular March 13 meeting. If approved, the bond would then be put to the voters during a special election April 20. The final public hearing for this proposal was originally scheduled for the council's Feb. 13 meeting, which was postponed to the following day because of a blizzard.

"We've had a lot of information provided to use over the last few months," Mayor Mark Walker said. The meeting was held in the City Hall Auditorium and a new audio/video system including microphones and a projector screen were used for the first time.

The bond includes \$600,000 for developer Matt Morrill's Stevens Commons project, \$585,000 for a Water Street reconstruction project, \$535,000 for work on rural Hallowell roads, \$300,000 for downtown parking improvements and \$220,000 to restore the fire station's water tower. If approved by council, it will go to the voters sometime in the spring.

Finance committee chairman George LaPointe said the city decided on one bond package because "the various components of the bond fit together to support the economic vitality and development of Hallowell." But not everyone agreed.

Steve Rubin said he is in favor of every part of the bond except the Stevens Commons portion, and because of that, he would vote against the entire package. Patricia Connors, who sent out a mailer in opposition to Morrill's plan earlier this year, took things a step further and said if the council doesn't put the Stevens Commons part into its own question, there will be a serious campaign to defeat the entire bond package.

"I'm opposed to the Stevens School bond because Matt Morrill is engaged in a profit-making enterprise," she said. She then said Morrill's financial information and disclosures are in the same place as President Donald Trump's tax returns.

Hallowell residents address big bond

Morrill joked that he wouldn't be releasing his tax returns, but he added he's spent more on the property so far than he's asking for the city to invest. He also said the city will own the land that it is investing in before any of the bond money is spent.

He also said he has a couple of multi-million dollar projects on the horizon that hinge on the bond being passed by the voters.

Ken Young disagrees with the single bond proposal and said using a single bond question frustrates voters' ability to exercise their judgment on the merits of each item.

"A single question also puts the whole package at risk of a negative vote," Young said. "Most who speak to me say they do not like the one question approach because they want to make their own choices and set their own priorities.

Young has also spoken publicly on many occasions about his concern with the Stevens Commons portion of the bond proposal.

He said Morrill's project is "fraught with risk" because "the developer has little, if any, redevelopment experience, little, if any, major bank or experienced investor backing and little, if any, objective market analysis."

Young said by spending \$600,000 up front, the city is assuming all those risks. "Once the city's money is in, it has no other option other than to wait passively, potentially for a very long time, and hope for the best," he said.

Harold Booth, on the other hand, supports the single bond package because it's part of the city's investment in itself, especially the Stevens Commons project.

"Finally, someone had the fortitude to make an investment in it, and what (Morrill) paid for the property is nothing, but what he's putting into it is huge," Booth said. "It's all part of fixing the city for ourselves and the future."

Nathan Pierce moved to a new house in Hallowell a few years ago and said he may not have the history in Hallowell as some long-time residents, but he has just as much of a stake in the future.

"We want all of the components of this bond to pass, and this isn't a knee-jerk reaction," Pierce said. "We've educated ourselves to the best of our ability."

Since buying the former girls school, Morrill has called the project a public-private partnership that will bring added tax revenue to the city. He said in January that he's put more than two years into the project and is asking the city "for a little bit of money to get the road network in place."

At-large councilor Lynn Irish last week said the city has the potential for a huge payoff when the property is developed.

"Hallowell has a big interest in getting that property developed," she said. "What Matt is asking is what whoever owned the property would ask for."

Young, however, said the prior council decided how to proceed well before hearing from the citizens of Hallowell regarding the best way to work with the developer.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, acquired the 54-acre Stevens Commons campus from the state in April for \$215,000 and hopes to turn it into a mixed-use development including affordable senior housing, commercial and retail space and small, clustered subdivisions.

He asked the city for help fixing the roads and sidewalks on the campus, which he said would make the property more attractive to other developers and tenants. His proposal includes turning over ownership of the roads to the

Hallowell residents address big bond

city, which then would oversee all maintenance. The council approved the project's master plan application last month.

Councilors hope the funding for downtown parking improvements would help alleviate potential parking problems during next year's Water Street reconstruction project.

LaPointe said the money would be used to acquire four lots near Central Street and the historic Dummer House. He said the money also would help cover the cost of moving the Dummer House to Second Street and creating a new parking area on the acquired land.

"It's a short-term action to get the properties and make some temporary parking during construction while still allowing for long-term planning," LaPointe said last month. "It's a lot of money, but it's been an ongoing problem for business owners and residents for a long time.

The bond proposal originally called for an additional \$300,000 toward construction of a new parking lot, but councilors thought spending \$30,000 to \$60,000 per new parking space was not a sound financial decision, LaPointe said. He said the council might need to consider budgeting additional money for the construction of a more permanent parking area, and he thinks there are more cost-effective ways to do it.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Center closing plan questioned

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

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Body

BY SUSAN M. COVER

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- Rep. Corey Wilson said he's concerned that the inmates who will be moved from the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell to one in Warren won't have the same kind of job opportunities they have now.

Wilson, R-Augusta, asked Department of Corrections Commissioner Joseph Ponte several questions Monday during a meeting with the Legislature's Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

Last month, Ponte told employees at the center that the 58 inmates -- many of whom hold full-time jobs in the Hallowell area while they are finishing the last 12 months of their sentences -- will be moved to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren.

"How are we going to find these people work if we move them to Bolduc?" Wilson asked. "We may be moving them away from what is important to curb the recidivism rates."

Ponte said the goal is to close the Hallowell center no later than July 1. He said the department ordered the move because the state Bureau of General Services is trying to sell the 63-acre campus.

He said the Winthrop Street center, in the former Stevens School, which opened in 1975, is in tough shape, with asbestos, lead paint and heating problems.

The department will continue to take inmates to jobs in central Maine until they are released from the program, while new enrollees will be placed in jobs in the Warren area, he said.

"I believe we can do just as good of a job in Bolduc that we did in Hallowell," he said.

Hallowell officials and Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell, said they were surprised by Ponte's decision to close the center. Treat is hosting a community meeting at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Hallowell City Hall to hear from residents about the state's decision.

Sen. Gary Plummer, R-Windham, said there's been talk of closing the Hallowell center for years. He asked Jim Mackie, the union representative for center employees, why it came as a surprise.

"How many times do you cry wolf?" Mackie said. "We were surprised to get the call that quickly that now it was going to happen. Why has it now been so immediate that we have to get out of there?"

Center closing plan questioned

Dave Gott, a correctional officer who works at the Hallowell center, said while he agrees the program needs to be moved out of the aging buildings in Hallowell, he thinks the job prospects for inmates will be limited in Warren.

"I don't see enough industry down there to give them jobs," he said. "There are opportunities up here in Augusta to keep more people working than there is on the coast of Maine."

Gott said the move has the staff at the center worried about picking up a commute to the new facility in Warren or the possibility of being transferred to other jobs in Windham.

"I'm sure my blood pressure is up 10 points," he said. "For some people, it's affecting their personal lives."

About three-quarters of the inmates in the program work off site, while the others participate in supervised community service projects. A large group of the Hallowell inmates work at the Alford Center for Health, the regional hospital under construction in north Augusta, Ponte said.

Rep. Tim Marks, D-Pittston, said his town has benefited from the community service provided by the inmates, including work at the town office, fire department and fairgrounds.

"I'm concerned when the prisoners go, so does some of our help," he said.

Sen. Stan Gerzofsky, D-Brunswick, asked Ponte if the department looked at other sites in central Maine, including the former Augusta Mental Health Institute campus or other places in Hallowell.

"How much effort did we really put in trying to keep this here?" he asked.

Ponte said the department did look at some of the state-owned buildings on Augusta's east side, but that they would have required millions of dollars in renovations. He also said the department got the impression that a pre-release facility might not be welcomed in Augusta.

While Ponte said he wasn't sure who his staff spoke with, Augusta City Manager William Bridgeo said he remembers having a conversation with the department in late summer or early fall.

Bridgeo said he told the state officials they would need to pitch the idea to the City Council, and told them that he thought there would be some concern about bringing a facility to the city. For instance, he said the city would want to know if it would mean taking another building off the property tax rolls, if inmates released from the program were likely to end up on General Assistance, and whether it would mean convicted felons would be concentrated in Augusta.

"Augusta is already home to a huge number of social service agencies and forensic group homes and other institutions that require local resources to support," he said.

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City eyes transfer of roads in Commons

Kennebec Journal

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Body

FULL TEXT

The Hallowell City Council will hold a special meeting Wednesday to transfer ownership of the road network at Stevens Commons from Matt Morrill to the city. This transfer will proceed the infrastructure work at the 54-acre campus, which will be funded using \$600,000 from the \$2.36 million bond Hallowell voters approved in April.

HALLOWELL -- The City Council on Wednesday will discuss the transfer of roads within Stevens Commons that would pave the way for the start of infrastructure repairs on the campus.

Under terms of an agreement with owner and developer Matt Morrill, the work cannot begin on the 54-acre property off Winthrop Street until he transfers the deeds to the road to the city of Hallowell.

The road work will be funded using \$600,000 approved by voters in April as part of a \$2.36 million bond package. Mayor Mark Walker said the city hopes to issue the bond Thursday or as soon as possible thereafter so that the road improvement work at Stevens Commons -- and other work around the city -- can begin.

Earlier this month, Hallowell officials determined the upcoming infrastructure and road work at Stevens Commons is not subject to Planning Board review. The determination was made after discussions among the City Council, City Manager Nate Rudy, Planning Board members, Stevens Commons owner and developer Matt Morrill and legal counsel for the city and the developer.

As part of the agreement with the city, Morrill will remain involved in the bidding process and will help oversee the work done on the site. He bought the former Stevens School property from the state in April 2016. Three bids were submitted, and Rudy said the winning bid will be chosen at Wednesday's meeting.

Rudy said the plan doesn't call for widening any of the existing roads, partly because that's what the Maine Historic Preservation Commission has required for maintaining the Stevens Commons "quad" and because it serves the campus better to not have wide roads there.

The Highway Committee and other city officials met last Thursday and reviewed plans for the work with Morrill and came away from the meeting thinking that the plan is "workable and meets the ordinance standards," Rudy said.

Once the bond is issued, the city can begin working on other projects funded by the controversial package, including repairs to rural Hallowell roads; renovation and improvement of city-owned buildings, including the historic

City eyes transfer of roads in Commons

Second Street fire station; and the conversion of a parcel of land where the Dummer House currently stands into a parking area for visitors to downtown Hallowell.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, has said that improving the road network within Stevens Commons will make the property more attractive to outside developers, and he needs other developers to help him realize his vision of turning the campus into mixed-use development and centerpiece of Hallowell.

In the year since he bought the campus from the state, Morrill has done a number of below-the-surface infrastructure improvements, found six tenants to lease office space in the Baker Building, secured a commitment from Community Housing of Maine to convert the Central Building into senior housing units and reached a deal with the city to locate a new fire station on the site of the Farwell Building. He has said several times that he's invested more already than he's received from the city, and he said the infrastructure improvements are needed for the redevelopment to take the next step.

"(Those) improvements are the foundation of this whole project," Morrill said in April. "It paints a nice starting point for other people to participate, and it's already a real project with real tenants."

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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[Stevens project renews long-held hopes for fire station](#)

Kennebec Journal

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JASON PAFUNDI

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Body

ABSTRACT

[...]as long as the 54-acre campus was owned by the state, that vision could not be realized. Since Matt Morrill purchased the property from the state in April and submitted his master plan last month to the city that includes a mix of uses, Grant's vision of a new station on the campus has come into focus.

FULL TEXT

An indepth look at the possibility of renovating an existing building at Stevens Commons to become the city fire station.

HALLOWELL -- Fire Chief Mike Grant has long envisioned a new fire station at the Stevens School campus at the top of Winthrop Street. But as long as the 54-acre campus was owned by the state, that vision could not be realized.

Since Matt Morrill purchased the property from the state in April and submitted his master plan last month to the city that includes a mix of uses, Grant's vision of a new station on the campus has come into focus.

"We always looked at this empty lot (next to the Erskine Building) as the perfect place for a fire station," Grant said while walking with Morrill on the campus Friday morning. "You'll get more value out of any improvements if you have a public safety building included."

Grant and Morrill envision a free-standing garage in a lot adjacent to the Erskine Building, one of the northernmost buildings on the campus. Plans call for a new road called Cedar Street, between Beech Street and Coos Lane, that would have a loop so firetrucks would be able to exit two ways, depending on where the trucks were headed.

"That way, you're not always coming out in the middle of the hill (on Winthrop Street), which has always been a concern," Grant said. "It alleviates that concern, and with modern firetrucks, going downhill is not a concern."

Morrill thinks it would be a multi-phase project, with the first phase being the construction of the fire station. After that, renovation of the Erskine Building could include living quarters for firefighters, a space for the Hallowell Police

Stevens project renews long-held hopes for fire station

Department and maybe even a community center for use by residents of the Stevens Commons campus or the public.

"It could be an option for the city or another investor to renovate (Erskine), but it's a perfect use for that building," said Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop. "There's a lot of work that has to happen, and it could be expensive, but the spaces inside are usable and would fit well."

While an expanded space for the city's Fire Department would come in a later phase, Grant said the department would be fine in just a garage, because that's basically what they have now at the Second Street station, which is more than 180 years old.

"We're working within the confines of the trucks, we meet around the trucks and our offices are virtual," Grant said. "This would at least get us out of that building and into a decent garage, and then we can work on what's going to happen with (Erskine)."

Grant said the process started with the need to get Hallowell's trucks and equipment out of the unsuitable garage where it's been stationed since the mid-1800s. It's evolved into a full-blown discussion about the future of the city's fire protection services.

"I know there are a lot of naysayers who don't want to invest in this place, but if you open your eyes and look at the possibilities, this is it," Grant said.

Stevens Commons, as it is now called, has to be developed within the city's historic district guidelines, and Morrill and Grant have assured everybody that a new fire station would be "designed in harmony with the rest of the campus and historic district," meaning the garage doors wouldn't face Winthrop Street; the back of the station would be seen from most vantage points on campus, and it would match the exterior of the other buildings on campus.

Morrill wants to include the community in the process, saying if "it's going to have some community-based use, let's involve the community."

Over the last several months, City Manager Nate Rudy provided the fire services committee with nine options, including contracting with Augusta and disbanding the Hallowell department, sharing space with Farmingdale in that town's station while operating autonomously, reconstructing the existing Second Street station and building a facility at Stevens School that would include the fire and police departments and the city's emergency management department.

According to Rudy's estimates, moving into a new public safety building at the Stevens Campus would add \$141.14 in annual tax per \$182,000 of valuation. Grant and Morrill are expected to provide the committee specific figures in the next several weeks, before the committee's next meeting.

During a meeting Monday, the committee all but ruled out any proposal that included a 24/7 per diem department because it would be too costly for the city, and thus would add too much to Hallowell residents' property taxes each year. Rudy's estimates showed the cost over a 10-year period, but Grant thinks 10 years isn't far enough. Grant said a 24/7 per diem department means firefighters would be like part-time workers without benefits. They would work varying shifts based on availability, like reserve police officers, and would be paid per shift. Currently, Hallowell firefighters are paid hourly per call.

"If you max it out to 20 years, the cost goes down," Grant said. "Augusta's plan keeps going up every year, but our proposal's initial cost goes up, and may even be higher than Augusta; but eventually it goes back down, while their line continues up."

Grant said that fire services going forward never will be cheaper than they once were, especially if they build a station, because of maintenance and upkeep.

Stevens project renews long-held hopes for fire station

The longtime Hallowell fire chief said many people in Hallowell have a lot of pride in the community and might be willing to donate to the cause, which would lower the cost of construction and subsequently would lessen the tax burden on individual property owners.

The plan to lease several bays in Farmingdale's station while operating a separate department is not right for Hallowell, Grant said.

"I'm not comfortable with having made investments in the building that is in another town," he said. Grant thinks a new fire station and public safety facility would help recruit new firefighters and police officers, who would be proud to work out of a new station.

The chief said he's put in grants recently for new air packs, but he can see why foundations or people wouldn't want to put money into a Fire Department whose own city doesn't invest in it.

"They go through peer review and will Google the fire station and Fire Department, so it's detrimental," he said. "Eventually, I need to find someone to lead this department, and how am I going to interest someone with the skills necessary when they don't have support behind them?"

Grant and Morrill first spoke about the possibility of a fire station on the property shortly after the developer acquired the former girls' school campus for \$215,000. The two plan to continue to talk in the next several weeks about specific design plans for the fire station.

The fire services committee will meet at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 29, and expects to have firm numbers from Grant. The committee also has talked about holding a public meeting to get the public's opinion on the proposals before making a recommendation to the City Council.

It is unclear whether the committee will have its recommendation in time for the Nov. 7 council meeting, though that is the hope. The official review for completeness of Morrill's master plan for Stevens Commons should be on the Planning Board agenda for that board's Oct. 16 meeting.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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[UMA aims to provide student housing in Hallowell The commuter campus in Augusta is pursuing a plan to create 20 apartments at Stevens Commons.](#)

Portland Press Herald

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Body

FULL TEXT

AUGUSTA -- The University of Maine at Augusta, historically a commuter school, could be entering the student housing market.

UMA spokeswoman Domna Giatas said Mastway Development was awarded a contract to negotiate a short-term lease for student apartments at Stevens Commons in Hallowell - pending approval from the University of Maine System board of trustees, which meets Sunday and Monday in Presque Isle.

The project also is scheduled for discussion at the Hallowell Planning Board meeting Wednesday. The first item on the agenda is a site plan review for a "minor project" by Landmark Corp., an agent for Matt Morrill, owner of Mastway Development and Stevens Commons, to convert the existing Stevens Building into "21 apartments for student housing."

Morrill purchased the 53-acre Stevens Commons from the state for \$215,000 in 2016. The name Stevens Commons is a tribute to the Stevens School, which was built there in the 1870s as a girls' school, and more recently was occupied by state offices and other agencies.

The Stevens Building, on Coos Lane, has access to an estimated 55 parking spots, according to Morrill's master plan. The three-story brick building has a 4,700-square-foot footprint and 17,936 square feet of floor space.

Morrill said his company will carry out the conversion of the Stevens Building into apartments and then lease them to the university. He said the building is set up well to become apartments.

"Some work was done when we first bought the property to stabilize and protect the building until it was time to redevelop the Stevens Building," he said Friday. "Although this will be a significant renovation project, the main structure is in really good shape.

"The building will receive a complete renovation, with new systems, utilities, finishes, elevator, roof repair and exterior finishes, as well as new parking, underground utilities, site lights and landscaping."

The other item on the agenda is a "minor" amendment to a subdivision approval for Landmark Corp.

Giatas said university officials have discussed housing for a number of years.

UMA aims to provide student housing in Hallowell The commuter campus in Augusta is pursuing a plan to create 20 apartments at Stevens Commons.

"UMA does not have any other housing. We are a commuter school at this point," she said Friday. "This would be an opportunity to take an initial step to evaluate the viability (of student housing)."

Giatas said the process is in the beginning stages and she did not know which students would occupy the potential apartments. Meeting materials said the property is "intended to support enrollment growth in key academic programs including aviation, architecture, music and nursing."

UMA has about 6,200 students, according to the school website, making it the third largest school in the University of Maine System.

Materials released ahead of the university trustees meeting say the lease would begin Aug. 1, 2019. While the planning board's agenda states 21 apartments, the trustees' news release says the lease would make 20 furnished apartments available, with a total of 38 beds. Only 32 of those beds would be move-in ready by August 2019. The remaining six would be added in January 2020.

The proposed lease would have an initial term of five years and would have a maximum cost of about of \$1.5 million over the term. If two five-year extensions were renewed, the maximum cost could reach \$5.3 million.

The university plans to cover the lease cost "from student housing fees from residents of the facility and from tuition revenue associated with increases in credit hours resulting from the availability of the facility." The meeting packet says "assuming a 92 percent occupancy rate with 20 percent out-of-state students, this initiative is projected to yield an incremental 918 credit hours and approximately \$300,000 in tuition and revenue annually."

Rent is expected to cost \$675 a month, the trustees' release said.

Mastway's Stevens Commons proposal was selected on Aug. 10 after receiving the highest score of all proposals. Proposals were limited geographically to areas within a 25-minute drive of the UMA campus, Giatas said. Stevens Commons is about 15 minutes from the university, according to Google Maps.

She said Mastway Development was selected from "a competitive bid process" with other potential developers.

Morrill said he was "thrilled to have this chance to work with UMA and welcome them to Stevens Commons."

An affordable-housing development is also in the works at Stevens Commons. Portland-based developer Community Housing of Maine was given a site plan extension last month after funding took longer than expected through the Maine State Housing Authority. Construction could start early next year.

The city has given Morrill a forgivable \$238,000 loan and \$600,000 from a voter-approved bond package for infrastructure improvements to Stevens Commons. Morrill also donated the parcel of land in Stevens Commons on which the donor-funded \$1.9 million Hallowell Fire Station was built.

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[Stevens Commons given extension for site plan](#)

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Body

FULL TEXT

A senior housing project that has been in the works for a few years is asking for a site plan extension from the planning board tonight.

Developer granted two 6-month reprieves while it seeks tax credit for affordable senior housing

HALLOWELL -- The senior housing development in Stevens Commons will take a little longer than expected after some delays in funding.

Portland-based affordable housing developer Community Housing of Maine was granted two six-month site plan extension by planning officials unanimously on Wednesday while it seeks a federal tax credit for affordable housing through the Maine Housing Authority.

If the new projected timeline is met, construction of the project will start early next year. Work previously was scheduled to begin this September.

An Aug. 2 letter from CHOM development officer Bree LaCasse asked for the extensions because the site plan for the project is due to expire Sept. 20.

LaCasse said one of the primary sources of financing for the proposed project -- dubbed Central Commons -- is the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, a federal program that runs through the Maine Housing Authority.

Maine Housing Authority spokesperson Deborah Turcotte said there are two Low Income Housing Tax Credits: 4 percent and 9 percent. CHOM initially applied for the 9 percent credit, which is highly competitive, and was not granted funding.

While applications for that credit usually are accepted in the fall, they were delayed until March because of an uncertain equity market. The credit is given to developers to sell to investors, and the resulting money is used as equity in the project.

About a month later, CHOM applied for the less competitive 4 percent credit. Turcotte said CHOM has been approved to continue work on its financial plan and scope of work before the credit is formally released. She said the funding should be wrapped up, allowing construction to begin, in the "late winter or early spring."

Stevens Commons given extension for site plan

The developers signed a purchase option in April 2017 to restore 25,000-square-foot building, which CHOM Development Director Erin Cooperider said in April 2017 would cost about \$3.5 million to undertake. The project was approved by the planning officials on Sept. 20, 2017.

There will be 29 total units of permanent affordable housing for seniors 55 and older.

The master plan for the Stevens Commons project said that the Central Building "remains in the best conditions of all the building on campus." One of the options listed in the plan was affordable housing for the "55-plus age group."

Developers that apply for the housing credit must reserve a portion of the units in the development for lower-income renters, according to the Maine Housing Authority website. Each application is scored according to set of guidelines and credits are given out to the highest scoring project, according to Turcotte.

LaCasse said in February the development would include 13 studio and one-bedroom units available to residents with incomes 50 percent or less of the area median income -- about \$22,000 for an individual and about \$25,000 for a family of two. The remaining 16 one-bedroom units would be available to people with incomes 60 percent or less of the area median income -- about \$26,000 for an individual and about \$30,000 for a family of two.

She also said homeless veterans will be given preference in 20 percent of the units.

CHOM already has been given a tax deal in Hallowell. In February, city councilors approved a fixed tax rate of \$17,400 for 20 years. The tax credit would free up money to help maintain the property.

Councilor George Lapointe said Wednesday he supported the tax deal, despite the city losing property tax income, because it could push more development at Stevens Commons. Further, he said the development fits with the city's comprehensive plan that stipulates that 10 percent of all new housing be affordable.

Matt Morrill, of Mastway Development, purchased the 53-acre Stevens Commons from the state for \$215,000 in 2016. The name "Stevens Commons" is a tribute to the Stevens School, which was built there in the 1870s as a girls' school, and more recently occupied by state offices and other agencies.

The city has given Morrill a \$238,000 forgivable loan and \$600,000 from a voter-approved bond package for infrastructure improvements to Stevens Commons. Morrill also donated the parcel of land in Stevens Commons on which the donor-funded \$1.9-million Hallowell Fire Station was built.

LaCasse said the city would reap the benefits from elderly residents contributing to the community and spending money in Hallowell.

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Credit: By SAM SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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End of Document

[UMA eyes student housing in Hallowell](#)

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

September 15, 2018 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 2.B

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Byline: SAM SHEPHERD

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

Two items for Stevens Commons regarding student apartments are on the Wednesday, Sept. 19 planning board agenda. This would be UMA's first student housing development.

Board set to discuss plan for 21 new units at Stevens Commons

AUGUSTA — University of Maine at Augusta could be entering the student housing market.

UMA spokesperson Domna Giatas said Mastway Development was awarded a contract to negotiate a short-term lease for student apartments in Stevens Commons — pending approval from the University of Maine System Board of Trustees, who are meeting Sept. 16-17 in Presque Isle.

The project also is scheduled for discussion at the Planning Board's meeting Wednesday. The first item on the agenda is a site plan review for a minor project by Landmark Corp., an agent of Stevens Commons owner Matt Morrill's Mastway Development, to convert the existing Stevens Building into 21 apartments for student housing.

The Stevens Building, on Coos Lane in Hallowell, is on 1.13 acres and has access to an estimated 55 parking spots, according to Morrill's master plan. The three-story brick building has a 4,700-square-foot footprint and 17,936 square feet of floor area.

Morrill said his company will carry out the conversion of the Stevens Building into apartments and then lease them to the university. He said the building is set up well to become apartments.

Some work was done when we first bought the property to stabilize and protect the building until it was time to redevelop the Stevens Building, he said Friday. Although this will be a significant renovation project, the main structure is in really good shape.

The building will receive a complete renovation, with new systems, utilities, finishes, elevator, roof repair and exterior finishes, as well as new parking, underground utilities, site lights and landscaping, Morrill added.

The other item on the agenda is a minor amendment to a subdivision approval for Landmark Corp.

Giatas said university officials have discussed housing for a number of years.

UMA eyes student housing in Hallowell

UMA does not have any other housing. We are a commuter school at this point," she said Friday. "This would be an opportunity to take an initial step to evaluate the viability (of student housing)."

Giatas said the process is in the beginning stages and did not know what students would occupy the potential apartments. Meeting materials said the property is "intended to support enrollment growth in key academic programs including aviation, architecture, music and nursing."

Materials released ahead of the university trustees meeting say the lease would begin Aug. 1, 2019. While the Planning Board's agenda states 21 apartments, meeting materials say the lease would make 20 furnished apartments available, with a total of 38 beds. Only 32 of those beds would be move-in ready by August 2019. The remaining six would be added in January 2020.

The proposed lease would have an initial term of five years and would have a maximum cost of about of \$1.5 million over the term. If two five-year extensions were renewed, the maximum cost could reach \$5.3 million.

The university plans to cover the lease cost "from student housing fees from residents of the facility and from tuition revenue associated with increases in credit hours resulting from the availability of the facility." The meeting packet says "assuming a 92 percent occupancy rate with 20 percent out of state students, this initiative is projected to yield an incremental 918 credit hours and approximately \$300,000 in tuition and revenue annually."

Rent is assumed to be \$675 a month, according to the materials.

Mastway's Stevens Commons proposal was selected on Aug. 10 after receiving the highest score of all proposals. Proposals were limited geographically to areas within a 25-minute drive from the UMA campus, Giatas said. Stevens Commons is about 15 minutes away from the university, according to Google Maps.

She said Mastway Development was selected from "a competitive bid process" with other potential developers.

Morrill said he was "thrilled to have this chance to work with UMA and welcome them to Stevens Commons."

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An affordable-housing development is also in the works at Stevens Commons. Portland-based developers Community Housing of Maine were given a site plan extension last month after funding took longer than usual through the Maine Housing Authority. Construction may start early next year.

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Credit: By SAM SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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End of Document

[UMA eyes new student housing site](#)

Kennebec Journal

September 15, 2018 Saturday

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Body

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Credit: By SAM SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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AUGUSTA -- Just a short walk into the woods from... [Derived headline]

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

April 20, 2014 Sunday

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Byline: KEITH EDWARDS

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

The park included gardens, ponds, carriage paths and trails he opened to the public so they could enjoy the natural setting as his family did in their log cabin lodge on the site, Camp Comfort, so named because Gannett was publisher of Comfort Magazine, the first American periodical to reach a circulation of more than 1 million.

FULL TEXT

AUGUSTA -- Just a short walk into the woods from a number of informal access points scattered around Augusta and the edge of Hallowell, Howard Hill is a wooded world away from the bustle and noise of Maine's capital city.

But off an old logging road extending from Ganneston Drive to the top of the 164-acre undeveloped parcel, from the edge of a cliff where a pair of turkey vultures circled overhead on a recent day, the Capitol itself rises into view, the Maine State House's dome presiding over a blanket of forest.

The views afforded from the hill didn't go unnoticed by publishing magnate William Howard Gannett, who in the 1890s bought some 450 acres including Howard Hill -- where he created Ganneston Park. The park included gardens, ponds, carriage paths and trails he opened to the public so they could enjoy the natural setting as his family did in their log cabin lodge on the site, Camp Comfort, so named because Gannett was publisher of Comfort Magazine, the first American periodical to reach a circulation of more than 1 million.

It's a view that works in reverse, too, as the nearly unspoiled stretch of land provides a dramatic wooded backdrop behind the State House when viewed from the opposite side.

Members of the Kennebec Land Trust, a local nonprofit land preservation organization, noticed both those views, too. It targeted the property for years before announcing last month it has a deal with the landowner to buy the property and turn it over to the city of Augusta. If all goes as planned, the property will be given to the city, along with a \$100,000 fund to help care for it, and the land trust will retain a conservation easement that prevents the land from development.

It will be open for recreation, wildlife-watching, and other nondevelopment uses. It is open to hunting now, and it will be up to city officials to decide whether to continue to allow that once the city takes ownership.

City councilors voted unanimously Thursday to endorse the acquisition of the property, contingent on an agreement being struck with the land trust, and authorized City Manager William Bridgeo to act as a co-applicant with the land

trust to seek Land for Maine's Future grant funds to help make the purchase. The order approved by councilors stipulates that no local property tax dollars may be used to acquire Howard Hill.

"Wow, this is beautiful," Dale McCormick, at-large city councilor, said Friday during an informal tour of Howard Hill, which is named for Capt. James Howard, the first commander of Fort Western and Gannett's great-great-grandfather.

Brian Kent, president of the land trust, said the trust had eyed the property for years before reaching a deal with Augusta attorney Sumner Lipman, owner of the corporation that owns the land, to buy it from him by December 2015.

He said the land trust saw it as particularly valuable to acquire and preserve in its natural state for several reasons: its scenic value; its location in the heart of the city, which makes it easily accessible; the green space it provides, which fits with Augusta Comprehensive Plan goals of increasing such areas; and the recreational, educational, and wildlife-viewing opportunities it offers.

"To have the potential to conserve this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Sue Bell, of Augusta, a former state legislator and member of Kennebec Land Trust board of directors.

Theresa Kerchner, executive director of the land trust, said the project has long been a priority for the trust and could be "an inspiring public-private partnership that will forever benefit the city's residents."

She said the trust expects to close on the property in October 2015.

City councilors and residents spoke in favor of the acquisition Thursday.

"I'm here to support this plan, to allow the creation of more public recreational opportunities, and preserve natural habitats in the city for everyone to enjoy," said resident Raegan LaRochelle, who said she lives in a neighborhood next to the property. "The city has had the foresight to create some wonderful public areas. I think Howard Hill will be another one that future generations will thank us for supporting."

The property is spread between a point just south of Capitol Street to the Hallowell line at the former Stevens School complex off Winthrop Street. Informal hiking trails extend from the Stevens School site into and through Howard Hill. There are other unofficial access points off Sewall Street and Ganneston Drive.

Councilor Michael Byron said he's been contacted by a constituent who lives on Sewall Street who is concerned that access there could affect her privacy and solitude.

Mike Seitzinger, a board member of the land trust and president of Augusta Trails, a group that oversees other public trails in the city, said the city will own the land and will be able to decide how and where access to the property should be allowed.

The Gannetts had a large, apparently cliff-side, treehouse on the property, though no signs of the treehouse remain.

Kent said Gannett, whose son started Guy Gannett Communications, which owned the Kennebec Journal, Morning Sentinel, Portland Press Herald and several television stations until its 1998 sale, wanted to protect the natural features of the hilly, boulder-strewn land and allow the public to use it.

While officials have not disclosed the proposed purchase price other than to say it is below market rate, Howard Lake, a Winthrop attorney and land trust board member, said the total cost of the project is about \$1.5 million.

The city's property assessment database indicates three parcels that make it up, owned by Lipman, are valued at \$171,000 for tax purposes. At the current property tax rate, the city would lose about \$3,100 a year in annual taxes by taking the property.

AUGUSTA -- Just a short walk into the woods from... [Derived headline]

The land trust plans to seek grant funding and raise money privately, as part of its 25th-anniversary fundraising campaign, to purchase Howard Hill and provide the city with a \$100,000 endowment to help the city manage the property once it takes it over.

Donations may be made online to the Kennebec Land Trust , by calling the land trust at 377-2848 or mailing checks to Kennebec Land Trust at 331 Main St., P.O. Box 261, Winthrop, ME 04364.

Newspaper clips indicate the state sought to acquire the land in 1969 but didn't go through with the proposed purchase of 190 acres for about \$500,000.

Wildlife seen on the property has included a moose and many deer, and the birch and beech trees, Kent said, provide good habitat for songbirds. Its many gullies provide plenty of quiet spots to get away from the nearby noise of the city.

"It's like a secret valley within a stone's throw of the State House," Kent said while on a lower section of the property near Sewall Street, where the babbling Kennedy Brook provides the only noise, save for the occasional buzz of an airplane coming in for a landing at the Augusta State Airport. "It's a superb piece of property in the heart of the capital city."

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Credit: By KEITH EDWARDS Staff Writer

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Corrections' prerelease center moving from Hallowell to Warren

Sun Journal (Lewiston, Maine)

January 10, 2013 Thursday

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Body

AUGUSTA -- The Maine Department of Corrections plans to relocate its prerelease center from Hallowell to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren by this spring.

Commissioner Joseph Ponte met Tuesday with staff at the Central Maine Pre-Release Center to inform them of the plan. As of Monday, 58 prisoners were assigned to the center, according to Jody Breton, an associate commissioner at the Department of Corrections.

The prerelease center, which has operated from the former Stevens School property in Hallowell since 1979, is classified as "minimum security/community," Breton said. Prisoners at the center participate in work release, substance abuse recovery and community restitution programs. There is no fence around the compound.

The move isn't a direct effort to save money or cut staff positions, according to Breton. "We'll have the same number of inmates," she said.

The relocation derives more from uncertainty about the future of the Hallowell site -- which the state has been trying to sell for more than a year -- and availability of more appropriate space at Bolduc, Breton said.

"This is not a budget initiative," she said. "Our intent is to transfer the positions and related correctional expenses, based on operational needs."

The relocation does not require Board of Corrections approval, according to Breton.

The Maine Department of Corrections contracts with Correct Care Solutions to run the substance abuse recovery program in Hallowell. Approximately 18 inmates currently take part in that program, Breton said. Corrections officials started negotiations Wednesday with Correct Care Solutions to move substance abuse recovery services to the Bolduc facility, a similar minimum-security program also known as "The Farm."

Educational services similar to those offered in Hallowell, such as GED tutoring, are in place at Bolduc, Breton said.

Jim Mackie, a spokesman for the union that represents the 21 Department of Corrections staff who work at the Hallowell site, said the union is scurrying to help workers find new positions within the department. Some of the staff assigned to the prerelease center have worked there for decades, so moving to another state correctional facility -- most likely in Windham or Warren -- will create hardships, he said.

Breton said the administration wants to minimize those hardships. "We are committed to work with the union to find solutions," she said. "It's our intent to help employees and prisoners in this transition."

Corrections' prerelease center moving from Hallowell to Warren

Mackie expects "an outcry" from Hallowell and surrounding communities over the loss of the inmates' community service. "There will be a big impact on the community," he said.

The Department of Corrections estimates that prisoners at the center provide about 22,000 hours of free labor annually to food banks and other community groups in the Hallowell area.

Corrections officials spent a year and a half looking without success for an alternate site in central Kennebec County, Breton said. She was uncertain Wednesday whether corrections staff had conversed with municipal officials about the impact of the relocation.

Administrators plan to ask staff to help develop a timeline for the move, with an aim to complete the transition in the spring. Some of the inmates are committed to work for local employers, who pay them, and the department doesn't want to leave those employers in the lurch, Breton said.

"We want it to go as smoothly as possible for everyone involved," she said.

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Council accepts donation of land

Kennebec Journal

January 20, 2017 Friday

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Byline: KEITH EDWARDS

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

Augusta City Council on Thursday will officially accept Howard Hill, the scenic backdrop to the State House that will forever be preserved thanks to the Kennebec Land Trust and the Land for Maine's Future program.

Kennebec Land Trust giving away Augusta Howard Hill property

AUGUSTA -- City councilors voted Thursday night to accept the donation of the 164-acre Howard Hill property, which provides a scenic wooded backdrop to the State House and which prompted a good deal of heated debate within the State House's walls.

Councilors voted unanimously Thursday to receive the largely undeveloped property from the Kennebec Land Trust, and the city and the locally based land trust could close a deal to transfer the property as soon as Friday.

The terms of the agreement conveying the land specify the property never shall be developed or subdivided, shall have its natural resources protected, and shall remain open to the public.

"This is just a tremendous example of public-private partnership," said Augusta resident Michael Seitzinger, a former land trust board member. "The result here for the people of the city of Augusta, the entire capital community, and the entire state of Maine, is outstanding."

Gov. Paul LePage and members of his administration, over the last year, have criticized the Land for Maine's Future program for overpaying for properties, and specifically cited Howard Hill as an example.

The Kennebec Land Trust bought the land for about \$925,000 from local attorney Sumner Lipman in 2015, with plans to give the property to the city.

The land trust initially was expected to use \$337,500 in Land for Maine's Future money to help pay for the purchase. However, Land for Maine's Future funding for the \$1.2 million project was slashed from the previously promised \$337,500 to \$163,500 last October,

Five of six members of the Land for Maine's Future Board, all of whom were either appointed by LePage last year or work for him, voted to reduce the state's contribution to the project, expressing concerns about the accuracy of the roughly \$1 million appraisal of the property. The property is assessed by the city, for tax purposes, at \$171,000.

Council accepts donation of land

Land trust officials have defended what they pay for such properties, stating they have the properties professionally appraised, based upon their "highest and best use," or what their value would be if they were to be developed.

The trust took out a loan to close the funding gap so the project could proceed.

The originally proposed terms of the agreement with the city stated the privately funded land trust would give the city, in addition to the land, a \$100,000 endowment to help the city form a plan for the property and to maintain it.

However, since the state reduced its funding of the purchase, the land trust proposed to modify its agreement with the city.

Instead, the land trust, according to City Manager William Bridgeo, will give the city \$25,000, will be credited \$7,500 it spent to have a forest management plan done for the property, and will pay the city the remaining \$67,500 in the next two years. City officials said they accept the arrangement and have no doubt the land trust will pay the remaining money as promised.

"Some roadblocks were placed along the way, and you folks overcame them," Mayor David Rollins told land trust officials. "This will be a treasure for the city of Augusta, one of our collection of gems."

Theresa Kerchner, executive director of the Winthrop-based land trust, said people in the area have suggested for decades that the land needed to be preserved.

Kerchner said numerous individuals, businesses and foundations donated money so the trust could buy the land.

The property is named for the family of Capt. James Howard, one of the founders of Augusta. It was later owned by local publishing magnate William Howard Gannett, who in the 1890s bought some 450 acres, including Howard Hill, where he created Ganneston Park. The park included gardens, ponds, carriage paths and trails he opened to the public. The property, tucked between developed parcels in Augusta and extending to the Augusta-Hallowell city boundary, provides sweeping views of the area, including the Maine State House dome.

City officials said a plan will need to be developed to provide public access points to the property. Among the limited existing access points is an old carriage road where Ganneston Drive comes to a dead end.

Kerchner said the land trust already has had discussions with the developer of the formerly state-owned Stevens School campus in Hallowell, Matt Morrill, about also providing public access to Howard Hill from the proposed development there.

Terms of the proposed agreement require the city to complete a conservation plan within a year of receiving the property.

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Credit: By KEITH EDWARDS Staff Writer

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[Donation clears way for Stevens Commons](#)

Kennebec Journal

July 21, 2017 Friday

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Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

The Hallowell council meets tonight to receive a transfer of ownership to roads within the Stevens Commons campus.

Council accepts roads, paves way for repairs

HALLOWELL — The City Council voted Wednesday to accept a donation of roads within Stevens Commons from the property's owner, paving the way for the start of infrastructure repairs on the campus.

Matt Morrill gave several acres of roadway at Beech Street and Coos Lane and an 8-acre conservation area to the city as part of the deal to fund the road work using \$600,000 approved by voters in April as part of a \$2.36 million bond package. Under the deal's terms, the work could not begin on the 54-acre property off Winthrop Street until Morrill transferred the deeds to the road network to the city.

The conservation area on the north side of the campus will provide open space for the city forever, conservation commission member Deb Sewall said. The land also gives people access to the Howard Hill Conservation Area, a 164-acre wooded tract in Augusta that is a backdrop to the Maine State House.

(The commission) thanks Matt Morrill for stepping up to the plate and providing the city with the opportunity to preserve these 8 acres, she said.

Earlier this month, Hallowell officials determined the upcoming infrastructure and road work at Stevens Commons is not subject to Planning Board review. The determination was made after discussions among the City Council, City Manager Nate Rudy, Planning Board members, Stevens Commons owner and developer Matt Morrill and legal counsel for the city and the developer.

As part of the agreement with the city, Morrill will remain involved in the bidding process and will help oversee the work done on the site. He bought the former Stevens School property from the state in April 2016. Three bids were submitted, and Rudy said the winning bid will be chosen at Wednesday's meeting.

Rudy said the plan doesn't call for widening any of the existing roads, partly because that's what the Maine Historic Preservation Commission has required for maintaining the Stevens Commons and because it serves the campus better to not have wide roads there.

Donation clears way for Stevens Commons

After the official transfer of the roads, the council authorized City Manager Nate Rudy to enter into an agreement with McGee Construction to complete the project. According to the proposal, the work will cost \$675,000, which is \$75,000 more than was allocated in the bond package.

The council voted 6-1 to use \$100,000 from tax increment financing revenue to cover the additional costs. Ward 5 Councilor Lisa Harvey-McPherson opposed using that money because it isn't what voters approved in April.

"I don't think we should be spending more than \$600,000, which is what we asked the voters to approve," she said.

Some of the work in the proposal includes reclamation of existing pavement, tree clearing, installation of a water main, service connections and hydrants, installation of new sewer mains, service connections, manholes, and asphalt paving for roadway, sidewalks and curbing.

The proposal indicated the work will be substantially complete on or before Dec. 15, and Rudy said the project can begin at any time now that the bond has closed.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, has said that improving the road network within Stevens Commons will make the property more attractive to outside developers, and he needs other developers to help him realize his vision of turning the campus into mixed-use development and a centerpiece of Hallowell.

In the year since he bought the campus from the state, Morrill has done a number of below-the-surface infrastructure improvements, found six tenants to lease office space in the Baker Building, secured a commitment from Community Housing of Maine to convert the Central Building into housing for the elderly and reached a deal with the city to locate a new fire station on the site of the Farwell Building.

In other business, the council approved the contract with State Paving Inc. for work on Outlet, Town Farm and Vaughan roads and Sunrise Drive in the rural part of Hallowell. The contract price is not to exceed \$371,357.90, well under the \$575,000 allocated in the bond package approved by voters in April.

The agreement with the contractor states that the project must be substantially completed by Oct. 31, and the city will receive \$250 per day for every day the contractor fails to complete the work by that date.

The rural Hallowell road project also is expected to begin in the next few weeks.

Mayor Mark Walker also told the council of his plans to appoint a Noise Ordinance Committee at the council's August meeting. The committee, recommended by former councilor and current chairwoman of the Ordinance Rewrite Committee Kate Dufour, will be tasked with reviewing the city's noise ordinance to see how it could be amended to better suit the needs of the city, its businesses and residents and how violations can be better enforced by the Hallowell Police Department.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

Load-Date: August 3, 2017

[Kennebec County jail could house pre-release inmates](#)

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

March 17, 2013 Sunday

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Section: LOCAL NEWS; Pg. A.1

Length: 1270 words

Byline: EDWARDS, KEITH

Body

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- Some inmates at the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell could move to Kennebec County jail in Augusta after the center closes next month, under a proposal state and county corrections officials are discussing.

State officials also have inquired about whether Augusta would be interested in being home to a new pre-release center, and potentially take all the state inmates now housed in Hallowell, and possibly others from elsewhere in the state as well.

City officials said they think the pre-release center provides a good program but worry that residents may be wary of adding it to Augusta, already home to the county jail, Riverview Psychiatric Center, and group homes housing mental health patients who have committed violent criminal acts. The pre-release program is for felons nearing the end of their prison terms and re-entering society.

City councilors say they can't answer the question of whether the city might be interested in having a new pre-release center in Augusta without more information about the possible location and the inmates it would house. They want input from residents too.

"We need to make sure our constituents are heard on this," said Mayor William Stokes, who is also head of the criminal division of the Maine Attorney General's Office. "Trust me, I think pre-release programs, if properly operated, are a great correctional tool that allows inmates to transition into the community, gives them skills and provides a valuable service to the community. And I don't think any of us question the outstanding work they've done for the city of Augusta. But my real concern is do the citizens of Augusta have a sort of fatigue of being the default site for facilities, state facilities, where no other community steps up."

Stokes, speaking Thursday night as councilors discussed the issue with Rep. Corey Wilson, R-Augusta, also referred to the closure last year of two group homes that housed forensic patients on the state-owned former Augusta Mental Health Institute grounds. After the homes on the state's east side campus closed, the patients -- some of whom had been found not criminally responsible for violent criminal acts -- were moved into two group homes on Glenridge Drive and Green Street.

Stokes said some city residents are "still reeling from being what they consider blindsided by the state" because the patients were moved without prior notice or public input.

Kennebec County jail could house pre-release inmates

A proposal Kennebec County Sheriff Randall Liberty is discussing with state corrections officials could keep some inmates now at the pre-release center in Hallowell in central Maine, at the Kennebec County jail in Augusta.

The proposal, which Liberty plans to discuss with Department of Corrections Commissioner Joseph Ponte on Monday, would move inmates who were from the central Maine area to the county jail, which also has a pre-release program. Those inmates then would transition back into society from there.

Liberty said there are now 39 inmates at the Hallowell pre-release center, five of whom are from central Maine.

The pre-release center can hold about 60 inmates.

Liberty said he was told the rest of the inmates now at the Hallowell center would move to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren.

The preliminary proposal stems from a philosophy that it would be better for inmates to transition from imprisonment through pre-release and back into society in their own communities, Liberty said. He said the program could expand later to include more county jails taking pre-release prisoners from their areas.

Liberty said the proposal also could result in some state employees from the pre-release center in Hallowell also coming to the Kennebec County jail, to oversee the state prisoners.

"They'd remain state employees," Liberty said, "running their own operation out of our facility."

Some city councilors expressed concern that the jail might not have the space for inmates from the pre-release center.

Liberty said Friday said the jail has the capacity to take additional prisoners and there would be no additional cost to the county or its taxpayers, because the state would pick up the cost. He said county jails in Maine are now in a unified system, so when one has space for prisoners and another is overcrowded, they can move the prisoners to the less-crowded jail.

Liberty said the jail has had a pre-release work program for about 20 years. In that program, inmate work crews perform supervised work such as cleaning public cemeteries or painting buildings, as do inmates at the pre-release center in Hallowell.

He said for every two days of work, county inmates get one day off their sentences.

The work performed by inmates at the pre-release center, which Wilson said amounted to thousands of hours a year, is one reason many area residents have advocated keeping it in Hallowell.

Legislators also have expressed concern about the planned April 15 closure of the facility.

However, the state wants to sell the Stevens School complex where the pre-release center is located, and Wilson said state officials fear having a facility of inmates, even those transitioning back to society, as the anchor tenants of the complex would make it harder to sell.

Wilson said the Legislature's Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee is interested in hearing whether any central Maine community would be interested in being the location of a pre-release center.

Dean Lachance, executive director of Bread of Life in Augusta, which runs a soup kitchen, a shelter and housing programs, said inmates from the pre-release center have worked countless hours on the nonprofit organization's buildings and grounds and "do amazing things for our organization."

At a recent public meeting in Hallowell, more than 50 people spoke about the pre-release center's benefits and seemed unanimous in their support of it remaining at its current location. Lachance said he was struck by the fact that none of them suggested that if it has to move, it move elsewhere in Hallowell.

Kennebec County jail could house pre-release inmates

"Someone stood up and spoke about all the benefits of the program, then said, 'Why can't it move to Augusta?'" Lachance said. "I was shocked. If they truly want them to stay, the thing to do is rally as a community and look to find a place that would be feasible for them to stay."

Scott Fish, a Department of Corrections spokesman, said Friday that date is "fluid" because the department is open to considering other locations for it in the Augusta area.

"I understand the city of Augusta already does a lot," said Wilson said, the state representative. He noted that Augusta is already home to the county jail and the location of numerous nonprofit organizations, which aren't required to pay property taxes because it is the state capital.

"I need to know if my community supports the idea" of having a pre-release center in Augusta, Wilson said. "My feeling is the community may not like having that facility here, but I feel that may change if there were more education about the type of facility we're dealing with. We're not talking about another jail here. These are minimum-security inmates. They don't pose a threat, generally, to society in any way. These individuals are working on a daily basis, are at the end of their sentences and looking to be released."

City Manager William Bridgeo told councilors and Wilson he was "hearing a lot of open-mindedness about the whole conversation," and said he would begin seeking data about the pre-release center before considering scheduling a public forum to discuss the concept and what community members think of it.

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End of Document

Stevens School complex facing neglect

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

June 24, 2013 Monday

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Body

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- The grass is growing, the inmates are gone and state workers will follow, leaving the state-owned Stevens School complex vacant.

Hallowell officials are worried the property could become another Kennebec Arsenal, deteriorating and vulnerable to vandalism, and they're seeking assurance that there will be some maintenance as the state continues to try to sell it.

"Even though we've had conversations, we're still kind of in the dark as far as what the state intends to do with the property before it goes on the market or before it gets sold," City Manager Michael Starn said.

The state began trying to sell the property in 2008, first through a request for proposals and then by listing it for \$1.1 million.

The 14-building, 63.5-acre property is mostly vacant already. Inmates housed at the Central Maine Pre-Release Center were moved to another facility this spring. The Department of Marine Resources and the Natural Resources Service Center are still there, and Regional School Unit 2 has a lease on space there for its central offices until 2015.

The Bureau of General Services, a division of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, would not provide information about the state's plans for the property. Department spokeswoman Jennifer Smith said they would provide no comment because Gov. Paul LePage has ordered state agencies not to cooperate with the Kennebec Journal or other MaineToday Media newspapers or websites.

Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell, said she shares city officials' concerns. She has met with the Bureau of General Services several times, most recently last month, and she said they plan to move all state offices off the Stevens School property.

"One issue that came up with BGS is that their plan is to simply board up the buildings and to basically put them in cold storage and turn off the utilities," Treat said. "In those meetings, I know I have certainly raised concerns about not only what it would look like, but whether in fact those buildings would be secure. We've seen what's happened with the (Kennebec) Arsenal, for example."

Stevens School complex facing neglect

The state Office of the Attorney General filed a court complaint in April against the would-be developer of the Kennebec Arsenal in Augusta, saying he has failed to make promised improvements since buying the property in 2007. A state historian estimated that the developer's neglect has resulted in \$1 million worth of damage.

The Stevens School complex is on Winthrop Street, one of Hallowell's busiest roads.

Treat said it wouldn't be good for the city to have people driving past boarded-up buildings on an overgrown property every day.

In addition, if the buildings are unsightly or suffer from neglect or vandalism, the property will be more difficult to sell, she said.

Starn said he's working with Treat and Sen. Pat Flood, R-Winthrop, to make sure the Stevens School property gets the attention it needs. He plans to write a letter to the Bureau of General Services about his concerns, which city councilors share.

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End of Document

Stevens School Complex should be in private hands

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

February 17, 2010 Wednesday

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Body

Well, I thought we dodged a bullet, but it looks like the city of Hallowell is again looking to buy the Stevens School Complex.

Picture a slick used-car salesman selling a gullible hick a broken-down automobile, lurking with dangerous environmental hazards and loaded with hidden repair and maintenance costs.

Everything I know about the Stevens School Complex screams, "Run away as fast as you can." But no, it is back, just like the monster in a Grade B horror movie.

You really have to ask yourself: What is the purpose of Hallowell city government? I know one of the purposes is not to be a real estate developer. If it is such a great deal, then let the private sector take it on.

The last property the city of Hallowell was in charge of was the old Hallowell High School. It took such great care of that building that it had to be torn down.

No, no, no, don't open the door, the monster is behind the door waiting for you, and it's called the Stevens School Complex! I exit screaming.

Larry Davis

Hallowell

Load-Date: February 18, 2010

Latest attempt nets no bidders for Stevens School property

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

December 29, 2010 Wednesday

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Body

STAFF REPORT

AUGUSTA -- The state received no responses when it put the Stevens School campus out to bid this fall, the state's chief of facilities said Tuesday.

"This is not the end of this project," Chip Gavin, head of state's Bureau of General Services, told members of the Stevens School Campus Stakeholder Group. "It just means we need to pursue it in an updated way."

The group had agreed on several guiding principles that include historic preservation; reserving part of the campus for Regional School Unit 2 and part for the city of Hallowell; and preserving open green space for public access.

Gavin said those goals won't change, but he recommends marketing the property differently. Rather than ask developers to buy the whole property, they want to try to sell individual buildings, he said.

"We want to go to the private marketplace and see if we can encourage interest in the market," he said.

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End of Document

HALLOWELL Stevens School bill in works

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

May 20, 2009 Wednesday

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Body

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

An amended bill concerning the Stevens School complex in Hallowell now requires state and city officials to form a stakeholders' group if the state decides to sell the 63-acre parcel.

The bill, L.D. 905, also requires the stakeholders group to draft a "request for quotation," or RFQ, which asks bidders for proposals. This group will then select a bidder, and will agree upon a parcel of the land to be set aside for Hallowell and the school district.

The bill also extends a lease the school district has on the Reed Center from the state.

L.D. 905, was drafted by Rep. Sharon Anglin Treat, D-Hallowell.

A separate bill, L.D. 1098, was submitted by Sen. Seth Goodall, D-Richmond, requiring the state to sell the Reed Center to Regional School Unit 2 for \$1.

School Administrative District 16 -- one of the districts being consolidated into RSU 2 -- currently uses the Reed Center at the Stevens School site as the administrative office.

The bills were combined into L.D. 905 and amended, and the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government voted "ought to pass" unanimously last Wednesday to send the bill to the floor.

"I certainly hope it does pass," said Chip Gavin, director of the state's Bureau of General Services. "We are excited to work with the community."

L.D. 905 had originally required the Bureau of General Services to consult with Hallowell, and hold a public hearing in the city, if the state chooses to sell the site to a party other than the city. The amendment, Gavin said, further specified that consultation and establishes the stakeholders' group.

The group would include representatives of the Bureau of General Services, the city of Hallowell, the school district, the state historic commission and other interested individuals.

Dawn Gallagher, a member of the Stevens School Committee and chairman of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee in Hallowell, said the bill fosters a working relationship between the city and the Bureau of General Services.

HALLOWELL Stevens School bill in works

"In all likelihood, we hope to see this pass under the hammer, so to speak, and start to put the stakeholders group together," Gallagher said. "We'd like to draft the RFQ by the end of the year or the beginning of 2010."

Treat filed the bill Jan. 16 as an emergency placeholder days after Hallowell's City Council voted 4-3 to stop purchase negotiations with the state.

Gallagher said the bill or stakeholders group does not exclude Hallowell from being a bidder.

Treat was pleased with the amendment.

"I'd say everyone's happy," she said Tuesday. "We were able to get the community, the school and the state on the same page with this, and that's huge."

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End of Document

Land again an issue at Stevens School

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

February 9, 2015 Monday

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Body

ABSTRACT

Page and Pleasant street residents are concerned by a city committee's decision to ask councilors to reconsider a vote that signaled support for putting 14 acres of undeveloped land next to the neighborhood in the local school district's control.

FULL TEXT

Residents of a northern Hallowell neighborhood are concerned after a city council subcommittee recommended that a state-owned, 14-acre plot of land above Pleasant Street be left open to development, going against a January vote of the full council.

Possibility of new development project renews debate over Hallowell property

HALLOWELL -- Page and Pleasant street residents are concerned by a city committee's decision to ask councilors to reconsider a vote that signaled support for putting 14 acres of undeveloped land next to the neighborhood in the local school district's control.

It's an early bone of contention in the Stevens School Advisory Committee's work of narrowing down Hallowell's vision for the state-owned, 64-acre complex off of Winthrop Street that features some of the last undeveloped land in the heart of the city.

The last state offices housed there are expected to move by spring, and Gov. Paul LePage's administration has said it will market much of the property to developers with Hallowell's input.

The state began trying to sell the property in 2008, first through a request for proposals and then by listing it for \$1.1 million. The 14-building property is mostly vacant. Inmates housed at the Central Maine Pre-Release Center were moved out in 2013.

Regional School Unit 2, which has been headquartered at the Reed Center on the campus for two decades, has long been negotiating a transfer with the state for its building that would also include 22 acres of land, made up of a developed eight-acre portion and 14 acres of undeveloped land bordering Pleasant Street yards.

However, at a meeting of the Stevens School committee in January, the RSU 2 board's chairwoman, Dawn Gallagher, told committee members that the district had been negotiating for that land because it was included by

Land again an issue at Stevens School

the state, but that it didn't need all the land and is willing to limit negotiations to a small portion of the 14-acre plot, freeing much of that land to potentially come onto Hallowell's property tax rolls.

After that, the committee voted unanimously to ask the city council to reconsider a January vote in which it expressed support for the district getting the entire piece of land.

But that makes some in the abutting neighborhood nervous.

Last March, Jeremy Sheaffer of Page Street sent a letter signed by 20 neighbors to the state and school district in support of the school district taking ownership.

In an interview, Sheaffer said he "would rather sit across the table with the RSU board, two members of which were elected by Hallowell voters, than a nameless, faceless developer to be named later," adding that commercial development could force a discussion of extending Page Street, which bends atop a hill into Pleasant Street.

"In political terms, it's a third-rail issue for the neighborhood," Sheaffer said. "Page and Pleasant streets are a quiet, peaceful neighborhood and we don't want to see it turned into an off-ramp for a subdivision or a shortcut to shopping in Augusta."

Councilor Phillip Lindley, a committee member who is married to Gallagher, said any plan to extend Page Street would have to be "carefully scrutinized" to gain his support. He also said the sloped and rocky topography of the land could make it difficult to develop and that residents' concerns may be premature.

"Certainly, I understand their nervousness, but there will be plenty of opportunities for input and scrutiny down the road," he said.

Chris Vallee, a real estate agent on the committee, who prompted the discussion with Gallagher at the meeting, said he's not sure the land could be developed and isn't calling for that.

However, he said he'd rather see the land attached to parcels marketed to developers so the city can tax it.

"The best interest of the city is to get it on the tax rolls. That's the whole purpose of this committee," he said. "If you don't want that, there's something funny. I don't know why anybody wouldn't want that."

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Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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End of Document

HALLOWELL Treat wants city's say on complex

Kennebec Journal

March 24, 2009 Tuesday

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Body

FULL TEXT

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- Hallowell residents and officials will have a say in the sale of Stevens School complex, if a proposal considered Monday by the Legislature is passed.

The bill would require the State Bureau of General Services to consult with and hold a public hearing in Hallowell if the state chooses to sell the 63-acre land parcel to a party other than the city.

"My legislation will make sure there is a public hearing and could be amended to provide for a specific process that more formally involves the city," Rep. Sharon Anglin Treat, D-Hallowell, said Monday.

She filed the legislation, LD 905, Jan. 16.

The "specific process" would include language allowing Hallowell residents to evaluate outside developers' proposals in a "request for quotation," or RFQ, system.

"There are a lot of worries about (Stevens School complex) being sold off in short order and the city not having an input," Treat said after the hearing.

The proposal received public support from Hallowell Mayor Anthony Masciadri and Bureau of General Services Director Chip Gavin.

"As you know, the city informed us in January they chose to stop negotiations, and that door has been left ajar should the interest (in buying the complex) be renewed," Gavin said.

The state was authorized in 2003 to sell the complex. That authority, according to legislation, expires next year.

In 2008, the bureau started sale proceedings, with Hallowell among the interested parties.

On Jan. 12, Hallowell's City Council voted 4-to-3 to stop negotiations for the property.

HALLOWELL Treat wants city's say on complex

Under pressure from residents who said the Council's decision to pull out of the deal was premature, city officials put the possibility of re-examining the purchase back on the table.

In the meantime, the state said it would proceed to sell Stevens School to a private party. As of Monday, no negotiations had been entered and no sale was imminent.

No one spoke in opposition to the bill.

A separate bill, LD 1098, has been submitted by Sen. Seth Goodall, D-Richmond, with the intention to sell the Reed Center, which houses School Administrative District 16's officials, for \$1. The Reed Center sits on the Stevens School property.

The Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government said both bills would likely be considered together.

A work session on Treat's legislation will not be held until after Goodall's bill is referred to the committee.

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End of Document

Task force to consider using school for veterans' housing

Portland Press Herald (Maine)

March 17, 2006 Friday

FINAL Edition

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Length: 62 words

Byline: Blethen Maine News Service

Dateline: AUGUSTA

Body

The House passed a resolve Thursday that establishes a task force to consider whether the Stevens School in Hallowell can be used for veterans' housing.

The working group will study the possibility that at least some of the buildings on the 64-acre parcel off Winthrop Street in Hallowell could be converted to veterans housing.

The bill now needs final approval in the Senate.

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End of Document

City seeks private offers for school

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

September 14, 2010 Tuesday

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Byline: EDWARDS, KEITH

Body

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- The state will seek private firms to purchase and redevelop the Stevens School complex, even though the debate still rages about whether some or all of the property should be purchased for city or educational purposes.

A request for proposals could go out as soon as this weekend, according to Chip Gavin, director of the state Bureau of General Services.

The request will make it plain that at least some of the 63-acre parcel above the heart of Hallowell could be reserved for public use, Gavin and other observers said.

"We want to sell it... but we are definitely reserving -- for the city and school district and state -- the right to portions of the property," Gavin said. "We've gone on the record as saying we may not want to sell all 63 acres."

The Legislature has authorized the Bureau of General Services to sell the campus by 2011. It is part of a package of state properties the Legislature authorized be sold in an effort to generate \$1.5 million in revenue.

City and school officials -- as well as residents -- have in recent years debated whether the city should purchase the property, which sits along a Winthrop Street hillside.

In December 2008, the city made a bid of \$600,000 for the property but rescinded the offer after councilors voted to break off negotiations.

Officials and residents are currently debating what should be done with the property as a major piece of the city's proposed new Comprehensive Plan.

City Councilor Ed Cervone, a member of a Stevens School stakeholders' group, said councilors will discuss making changes to the Comprehensive Plan, based on comments at a recent public hearing, Sept. 21 in an effort to finalize the plan.

Mayor Charlotte Warren said council action on the plan would likely come in October.

The request for redevelopment proposals specifies: "As part of the sale and redevelopment, the project will specifically consider reserving portions of the parcel for use or transfer to the city of Hallowell for municipal uses; to any school administrative unit that includes the city of Hallowell for educational uses; and for public open space or public recreation."

City seeks private offers for school

Potential developers would also likely be required to preserve five buildings and surrounding grounds on the part of the site designated as the Industrial School for Girls Historic District, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

There are 13 buildings on the site.

Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell, said potential developers should be made aware of the site's significance to the community, and restrictions on how it may be redeveloped.

"How this is marketed is important, Treat said. "We don't want people getting involved if they don't understand, right from the get-go, this is incredibly important to the community of Hallowell."

Gavin said the state, in a competitive bid process, selected CBRE/The Boulos Company to help market the property along with numerous other properties statewide authorized to be sold.

Resident and stakeholder Stephen Thompson suggested giving Maine developers the first chance to submit proposals for the project "to keep the money in Maine."

But Warren, Cervone and others said it is in the state and city's best interest to get as many proposals as possible, to increase the odds of finding a proposal that best matches state and local goals for the property.

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HALLOWELL City pulls bid for Stevens

Kennebec Journal

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- The city is stopping its negotiations with the state for the purchase of the Stevens School complex.

The City Council voted 4-3 Monday to rescind negotiations.

The city has long debated purchasing the 10-building complex from the state.

In December 2008, it made a bid of \$600,000 for the property. The proposal said the city would buy the campus back, then lease it to the state, which currently uses it for offices.

In a letter to Bill Leet, director of the Division of Leased Space within the Bureau of General Services, the City Council said it withdrew their decision for economic reasons.

"It was felt that given the dramatic change in the nationwide economy in the last 12 to 18 months that the city would be wise not to pursue this project," the letter said.

Two public hearings, scheduled for Thursday and Jan. 31 to discuss the potential bid have been canceled.

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Buildings labeled most endangered

Kennebec Journal

August 30, 2013 Friday

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Body

FULL TEXT

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- The Kennebec Arsenal in Augusta and Stevens School in Hallowell are among the state's most endangered historic properties according to preservation advocates.

The properties are among 12 added to Maine Preservation's Maine's Most Endangered Historic Properties List, which was announced Thursday.

"These are very well built, solid buildings, there is no reason they could not be repurposed and used," said Greg Paxton, executive director of Maine Preservation, a statewide nonprofit organization that advocates for preservation of historic buildings and places. "Oftentimes these buildings are a deterrent to development where they are located, because in many cases they are in need of repair. If they are rehabilitated, they'll serve the exact opposite role -- they will be catalysts for economic development. And they are really important beacons of our history."

The Arsenal was built between 1828 and 1838. In 2000, it was designated a National Historic Landmark, one of 43 in Maine. North Carolina developer Tom Niemann, who planned to redevelop it into new uses including office, retail, and dining space, bought it from the state in 2007.

However, the state has filed a still-unresolved lawsuit alleging Niemann has failed to prevent vandalism, theft and deterioration at the riverside collection of buildings. The lawsuit, which has not yet been taken up by the courts, seeks to either have the property returned to the state, or a \$1 million bond and assurances from Niemann he will protect, preserve and develop the property.

The Arsenal is considered by some preservationists to be one of the best and earliest surviving examples of 19th century munitions depots in the country.

"It's not just a mound of bricks, it's a great set of buildings on a campus, so I think there is some real potential," for redevelopment, Paxton said.

Maine Preservation noted the theft of historically significant features, including copper piping, cast iron balusters, and bronze handrails, has occurred at the Arsenal since the sale to Niemann.

Buildings labeled most endangered

Niemann said he's hopeful being named to the list could open up additional potential resources to help preserve and restore the complex of eight Greek and Gothic revival granite buildings.

Work on the Arsenal over the last year has included a new roof on the small gatehouse building and electricity has been restored to part of the complex, enabling security cameras to function.

Niemann said he and state officials will get together in October to see if they can work out their differences.

"We're staying the course, preserving the property, and talking to some interested parties, but we're into litigation with the state, which has slowed us down a little bit," Niemann said Thursday. "I'm still optimistic about the potential the site has."

The state-owned Stevens School complex is for sale, with the state seeking a buyer to redevelop and preserve the multiple-building, 63.5-acre property, which still houses some office space and previously housed the Central Maine Pre-Release Center until it moved earlier this year.

Stevens School was originally founded in the 1870s as a school for wayward girls. It has several Colonial revival-style buildings, which over the years have been used as state office space. However, now many of them are empty.

City officials and others have expressed concern the historic property will fall into disrepair because of its under-utilization, according to Maine Preservation.

"Any building not being used becomes more endangered, simply because no one is there, monitoring it," Paxton said. "There does not appear to be a long-term plan for the complex. And it's a large complex to simply put on the market."

Officials at the state Bureau of General Services, which oversees state property, could not be reached for comment Thursday.

Maine's Most Endangered Historic Properties List started in 1996 as a way to identify and raise public awareness of endangered historic properties and materials, according to a news release from Maine Preservation.

Earle Shettleworth, state historian, said he believes being publicly identified as "most endangered" on the list has likely helped save some historic buildings in Maine.

"In some cases buildings have been lost, in some cases there's no change, but in a number of cases buildings' situations do improve," Shettleworth said. "I think (the list) is an effective tool, and valuable."

A Maine Preservation database of properties on the list from 1996 to 2012 says 41 properties have been saved, 19 were "in motion," meaning positive efforts are being made to rescue the property, 18 remain threatened. Some 15 have been demolished, including the Kennebec County YMCA on Winthrop Street, which went on the list in 2006 and was torn down in 2011.

The Bond Street neighborhood in Augusta, which went on the list in 2001, is listed as saved and the Colonial Theater on Water Street, which went on the list in 2011, is listed as threatened.

Keith Edwards -- 621-5647

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Load-Date: March 23, 2016

Hallowell councilors to vote on bond

Kennebec Journal

March 3, 2017 Friday

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Section: Pg. 2.B; ISSN: 07452039

Length: 722 words

Byline: Jason Pafundi

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

started package to have place to put aerials of Stevens School

Council's action may advance Stevens School redevelopment project

Hallowell councilors plan to take a final vote Monday on a \$2.36 million bond package during a special council meeting.

The final reading of the proposal originally had been scheduled for the council's Feb. 13 meeting, which was postponed to the following day because of a blizzard. The public hearing for the bond had to be re-publicized and advertised for 14 days.

The bond includes \$600,000 for developer Matt Morrill's Stevens Commons project, \$585,000 for a Water Street reconstruction project, \$535,000 for work on rural Hallowell roads, \$300,000 for downtown parking improvements and \$220,000 to restore the fire station's water tower. If approved by council, it will go to the voters sometime in the spring.

For months, the council debated how to structure the bond package. Councilors discussed whether there should be one bond including all the different funding elements or multiple proposals. Ultimately, finance committee chairman George LaPointe said one package was the right choice because "the various components of the bond fit together to support the economic vitality and development of Hallowell."

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, acquired the 54-acre Stevens Commons campus from the state in April for \$215,000 and hopes to turn it into a mixed-use development including affordable senior housing, commercial and retail space and small, clustered subdivisions. The council approved, with conditions, the project's master plan application last month.

He asked the city for help fixing the roads and sidewalks on the campus, which he said would make the property more attractive to other developers and tenants. His proposal includes turning over ownership of the roads to the city, which then would oversee all maintenance.

There has been some public opposition to the Stevens Commons part of the bond proposal. Patricia Connors in January sent out a mailer to everyone in Hallowell because she thinks giving Morrill "a gift" is not a good investment, and she re-stated her position at the council's January meeting.

Hallowell councilors to vote on bond

Her postcards, which she said cost nearly \$600 to mail, said the City Council was rushing to judgment on the development and is trying to "hide a \$600,000 bond to benefit Morrill within the Water Street reconstruction bond." She said she supported redevelopment of the project, but she said public money shouldn't be used to help fund a private development.

Since buying the former girls' school, Morrill has called the project a public-private partnership that will bring added tax revenue to the city. He said in January that he has put more than two years into the project and is asking the city "for a little bit of money to get the road network in place."

At-large councilor Lynn Irish said the city has the potential for a huge payoff when the property is developed.

"Hallowell has a big interest in getting that property developed," she said. "What Matt is asking is what whoever owned the property would ask for."

Councilors hope the funding for downtown parking improvements would help alleviate potential parking problems during next year's Water Street reconstruction project.

LaPointe said the money would be used to acquire four lots near Central Street and the historic Dummer House. He said the money also would help cover the cost of moving the Dummer House to Second Street and creating a new parking area on the acquired land.

"It's a short-term action to get the properties and make some temporary parking during construction while still allowing for long-term planning," LaPointe said last month. "It's a lot of money, but it's been an ongoing problem for business owners and residents for a long time."

The bond proposal originally called for an additional \$300,000 toward construction of a new parking lot, but councilors thought spending \$30,000 to \$60,000 per new parking space was not a sound financial decision, LaPointe said. He said the council might need to consider budgeting additional money for the construction of a more permanent parking area, and he thinks there are more cost-effective ways to do it.

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Credit: By Jason Pafundi Staff Writer

Load-Date: March 8, 2017

End of Document

[State eyes site for housing](#)

Kennebec Journal

February 16, 2006 Thursday

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Section: LOCAL & STATE; Pg. 1B; ISSN: 07452039

Length: 266 words

Byline: SUSAN M. COVER

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

By SUSAN M. COVER Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- The state wants a working group to examine whether the former Stevens School site in Hallowell could be used as housing for veterans.

The State and Local Government Committee voted Wednesday in support of a bill to allow veterans housing at the Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center in Bangor.

An amendment to the bill, also approved by the committee, calls for a working group to study the possibility that at least some of the buildings on the 64-acre parcel off Winthrop Street in Hallowell could be converted to veterans' housing.

Elaine Clark, director of the Bureau of General Services, said there are state offices and vacant buildings on the property now.

"There's such a need for veterans housing that is not hospital or nursing care," she said. "That's a big piece of property that could support a lot of veterans."

The school was founded in 1872 as the Maine Industrial School for Girls, a name that was changed to the Stevens School for Girls in 1915. Several buildings were added to the campus in subsequent years, for a total of 14 buildings, according to information provided by Clark.

Hallowell Mayor Barry Timson said he's going to get a briefing on the proposal later in the week. He said the city is interested in using one building on the property and in getting the property back on the tax rolls.

"I'm open to suggestions," he said.

If the legislation is approved by the full Legislature, the working group would be required to report back to lawmakers with recommendations next year.

Susan Cover -- 623-1056

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State eyes site for housing

Load-Date: June 24, 2021

End of Document

[Preservation advocates list 'endangered' buildings](#)

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

August 30, 2013 Friday

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Section: LOCAL NEWS; Pg. B.1

Length: 856 words

Byline: EDWARDS, KEITH

Body

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- The Kennebec Arsenal in Augusta and Stevens School in Hallowell are among the state's most endangered historic properties according to preservation advocates.

The properties are among 12 added to Maine Preservation's Maine's Most Endangered Historic Properties List, which was announced Thursday.

"These are very well built, solid buildings. There is no reason they could not be repurposed and used," said Greg Paxton, executive director of Maine Preservation, a statewide nonprofit organization that advocates for preservation of historic buildings and places. "Oftentimes these buildings are a deterrent to development where they are located, because in many cases they are in need of repair. If they are rehabilitated, they'll serve the exact opposite role -- they will be catalysts for economic development. And they are really important beacons of our history."

The Arsenal was built between 1828 and 1838. In 2000, it was designated a National Historic Landmark, one of 43 in Maine. North Carolina developer Tom Niemann, who planned to redevelop it into new uses including office, retail and dining space, bought it from the state in 2007.

However, the state has filed a still-unresolved lawsuit alleging Niemann has failed to prevent vandalism, theft and deterioration at the riverside collection of buildings. The lawsuit, which has not yet been taken up by the courts, seeks to either have the property returned to the state, or have a \$1 million bond and assurances from Niemann he will protect, preserve and develop the property.

The Arsenal is considered by some preservationists to be one of the best and earliest surviving examples of 19th century munitions depots in the country.

"It's not just a mound of bricks. It's a great set of buildings on a campus, so I think there is some real potential" for redevelopment, Paxton said.

Maine Preservation noted the theft of historically significant features, including copper piping, cast iron balusters and bronze handrails, has occurred at the Arsenal since the sale to Niemann.

Niemann said he's hopeful being named to the list could open up additional potential resources to help preserve and restore the complex of eight Greek and Gothic revival granite buildings.

Work on the Arsenal over the last year has included a new roof on the small gatehouse building and electricity has been restored to part of the complex, enabling security cameras to function.

Preservation advocates list 'endangered' buildings

Niemann said he and state officials will get together in October to see if they can work out their differences.

"We're staying the course, preserving the property, and talking to some interested parties, but we're into litigation with the state, which has slowed us down a little bit," Niemann said Thursday. "I'm still optimistic about the potential the site has."

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City officials and others have expressed concern the historic property will fall into disrepair because of its underutilization, according to Maine Preservation.

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A Maine Preservation database of properties on the list from 1996 to 2012 says 41 properties have been saved, 19 were "in motion," meaning positive efforts are being made to rescue the property, and 18 remain threatened. Some 15 have been demolished, including the Masonic Hall in China, which went on the list in 1999.

The Gerald Hotel, under renovation in Fairfield, went on the list in 2007 and is "in motion," but several Waterville-area buildings on the list are considered threatened, including the Hains building in Waterville, which went on the list last year, and the Abner Coburn House in Skowhegan and the New Sharon Iron Bridge, which have both been on the list since 1998.

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Load-Date: August 31, 2013

End of Document

[HALLOWELL -- City councilors on Monday stood by an endorsement...](#) [\[Derived headline\]](#)

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

February 11, 2015 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 2.B; ISSN: 0745-2039

Length: 558 words

Byline: SHEPHERD, MICHAEL

Body

ABSTRACT

Residents of Page and Pleasant streets packed the City Hall chambers on Monday after an advisory committee voted unanimously in January to ask the council to reconsider an earlier vote that signaled support for Regional School Unit 2 getting the state-owned land, which is attached to the property at the Reed Center.

FULL TEXT

HALLOWELL -- City councilors on Monday stood by an endorsement of putting 14 acres of undeveloped land at the Stevens School complex in the local school district's control.

Residents of Page and Pleasant streets packed the City Hall chambers on Monday after an advisory committee voted unanimously in January to ask the council to reconsider an earlier vote that signaled support for Regional School Unit 2 getting the state-owned land, which is attached to the property at the Reed Center. The school district uses the property as the district's headquarters.

It's an early kerfuffle in the city's work of narrowing down a vision for the 64-acre complex that's now owned by the state, which is expected to move its last few offices from the site by spring and is expected to market much of it to developers.

The council took no action on the matter Monday, sticking by its original stance after lobbying from neighborhood residents. However, some think the city could be hurting development of the property before a developer is identified.

Sharon Treat, a former legislator from Page Street, said development of the 14-acre parcel could "change the flavor of the neighborhood," while some feared an extension of Page Street could be built to create access to any new development there.

"Why we're here is we're asking you to remove any risk there might be to our neighborhood," Page Street resident Jeremy Sheaffer said.

The school district has long been negotiating with the state for a transfer of 8 acres around the building the district leases, as well as the 14 acres behind it. RSU 2 board chairwoman Dawn Gallagher, of Hallowell, told the advisory committee that it doesn't need all of that back portion, but she said on Monday that "we want to do what the citizens want to do" and the district would comply with any city master plan for the land.

HALLOWELL -- City councilors on Monday stood by an endorsement... [Derived headline]

Councilor Lisa Harvey-McPherson said Gallagher gave the city "an easy out" on the issue, but she said the council's position may have created a hurdle for potential developers of the parcel. However, Councilor Lynn Irish said "the other hurdle" is that the district's negotiations -- which must now be done by June, when its current lease expires -- could be hampered if its parcel is changed.

Chris Vallee, a member of the Stevens School Advisory Committee, said last week that he'd like to get the property on the city property tax rolls, calling it the "whole purpose of this committee."

But Joan Sturmthal, another member, said on Monday that the entire committee "is not hot" for development in the 14-acre parcel. Rather, she said members wanted it to be considered as part of the larger portion being marketed by the state to make a potential deal as flexible as possible.

"If the council doesn't agree," said Gerry Mahoney, a committee member, "then I think we ought to change the name from 'advisory committee' to 'observatory committee.'"

Michael Shepherd -- 370-7652 mshepherd@centralmaine.com Twitter: @mikeshepherdme

Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

Load-Date: February 12, 2015

End of Document

Hallowell project needs less risk

Kennebec Journal

January 9, 2017 Monday

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Section: Pg. 1.A; ISSN: 07452039

Length: 801 words

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

A bank would finance a redevelopment project only after it conducted a project analysis and underwriting (risk assessment) process. Use downtown Tax Increment Finance revenue to subsidize a bank loan to complete the street improvements.

FULL TEXT

MATT MORRILL, OF Winthrop, purchased and plans to redevelop the Stevens School in Hallowell. He asked the city to contribute as much as \$600,000 to finance street and related infrastructure improvements.

In return, Morrill would give 20 acres of the site to the city as open space and provide access to Howard Hill.

This City Council is poised to borrow the money to give to Morrill. This would be in addition to about \$235,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds the city has committed to date.

Borrowing would have to be approved by the voters in Hallowell at a special election in April -- \$600,000 for 20 years would cost taxpayers as much \$800,000.

Many in Hallowell are supportive on the proposed Stevens redevelopment. Some like the idea of possible future property tax revenue. Others like the idea of having more public open space.

At the same time, there appears to be a growing sentiment concerned with the city's plan to invest public tax money directly in Stevens. There are various significant financial risks in the project.

These risks include:

1. That the cost of construction might exceed the eventual value of the buildings;
2. That the individual redevelopment projects, particularly the affordable and low-income housing, would cost so much to build as to be unaffordable; and
3. That there will be insufficient market demand for the project's proposed uses (luxury condos, affordable housing, low-income housing, senior housing, etc.).

Additionally, it is not clear whether Morrill has the financial capacity to complete the redevelopment project. Morrill has not released any information about his personal or corporate financial situation. No bank has partnered with

Hallowell project needs less risk

Morrill to help finance the project. A bank would finance a redevelopment project only after it conducted a project analysis and underwriting (risk assessment) process. The city lacks the information necessary to do a professional banklike financial analysis and risk assessment.

It is possible that the Stevens School project might be wildly successful. Nonetheless, the risks are substantial and of a type and significance that are well beyond any sort of risk the city and its taxpayers have undertaken previously.

Are there alternative ways for the city to support the Stevens project? Can the financial risks to the city be reduced?
Yes.

There are less risky alternatives to Morrill's proposal that the city borrow to invest \$600,000. These include:

1. Be satisfied with the support the city has provided to date. It expedited its zoning review and approval process and made available approximately \$235,000 in CDBG money that Morrill already has invested in street improvements;
2. Make a loan. Lend the \$600,000 to Morrill with the expectation that it will be paid back over time. This is the role a bank would typically play in a project like this.
3. Promote the direct involvement of a bank. Use downtown Tax Increment Finance revenue to subsidize a bank loan to complete the street improvements. This is called a "Credit Enhancement Agreement," a well-tested mechanism municipalities use to support development projects.
4. Provide financial incentives for project completion in the form of a loan or grant. Specify the amount of the city's participation and tie the funding to the completion of specific elements of the redevelopment plan. For example, upon the sale or completion of a specific project, give Morrill \$100,000, and so on. These funds could come from city TIF funds. This reduces the city's risk while providing an added incentive to Morrill to complete the redevelopment project sooner. The faster this goes, the smaller the risk.
5. In any instance where the city puts up money for Stevens, take a security interest or even an equity interest in the portion of the land Morrill intends to use for an expansion of his Overlook project, a high-end housing development.
6. Some combination and or variation on these mechanisms.

Ask the City Council to consider and analyze the alternatives listed above before voting out a bond proposal for Stevens. Ask them to broaden their perspective to include options in addition to the developer's current proposal. One or more of these alternatives has the potential to reduce the city's financial risk while providing support and incentives to expedite redevelopment.

Ask the City Council to report the results to the citizens before committing to 20 years of principal and interest payments.

Ken Young lives in Hallowell and is a former city councilor and school board member.

Credit:

Load-Date: January 10, 2017

Stevens Commons

Kennebec Journal

January 17, 2017 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 1.A; ISSN: 07452039

Length: 351 words

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

With Stevens Commons, and the attached housing requirements, we can keep our beloved Hallowell residents where they belong -- in Hallowell.

FULL TEXT

This package will contain all letters to the editor that are awaiting editing and headlines.

will benefit Hallowell

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to express my support for Stevens Commons. This project will enhance our community in a meaningful way, not only in the short term, but with long-term benefits for generations to come. One example is the creation of housing opportunities we so badly need in Hallowell.

In purchasing the parcel, local developer Matt Morrill has stepped up to the plate in a big way. And he has invited every single Hallowell resident to partner with him in the project. He's hosted tours, attended multiple Planning Board and City Council meetings, and met with reporters to keep us all informed.

As many of you know, for the last 17 years, I have been involved in Hallowell's municipal government, including as a Planning Board alternate for two years, City Councilor for eight years, mayor for four years, and now representing our city, along with Manchester and West Gardiner, in the Maine House of Representatives.

Throughout the years, we've struggled with the need for both affordable housing and elderly housing. We've worked to sustain affordable apartments. We've brainstormed ways to create single level housing. But despite all the hard work and good intentions, we're losing our artists, musicians, and aging Hallowellians. We are struggling to meet their needs. With Stevens Commons, and the attached housing requirements, we can keep our beloved Hallowell residents where they belong -- in Hallowell.

Further, the Stevens School property has been sitting as a dangerous deserted eyesore for years. I'm thankful that we have the opportunity to partner with Matt and Tammy Morrill. They have a proven track record of executing quality thoughtful development in Hallowell. They earned my trust through the process of creating the Hallowell Overlook project.

Credit:

Rep. Charlotte Warren

D-Hallowell

Load-Date: January 19, 2017

End of Document

HALLOWELL -- The state of Maine will keep 10 acres... [Derived headline]

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

May 20, 2015 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 2.B; ISSN: 0745-2039

Length: 708 words

Byline: SHEPHERD, MICHAEL

Body

ABSTRACT

Walker, who has been working with state officials on a sale plan, said there will be "plenty of opportunities" for the city to oversee development on the land, and he said stormwater improvements should be included in any developer's plans for the property, which the city would have to review.

FULL TEXT

HALLOWELL -- The state of Maine will keep 10 acres at the Stevens School complex instead of giving it to the local school district, a move that could spur development but goes against the wishes of city councilors and neighbors.

It's the latest flashpoint in a debate about a parcel of open space abutting Pleasant Street that is wrapped up in the state's latest effort to sell the largely vacant 64-acre campus off Winthrop Street, where Regional School Unit 2 leases its headquarters.

The district has long been discussing a land transfer with the state for the 8 acres on which its office stands and 14 acres of open space behind it. But the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services and RSU 2 have agreed to keep 10 acres of the open portion in the state's hands, with department spokesman David Heidrich saying the move "may better fit with our plans" for marketing the rest of the campus, which he said "are undetermined at present."

In February, Hallowell city councilors stood by an earlier endorsement of transferring all of that land to the district. That vote came after residents of Page and Pleasant streets expressed concern that development on the parcel could change their neighborhood.

Sharon Treat, a former Democratic legislator from Pleasant Street, said water running downhill from the parcel already affects homes on the street, a problem that could worsen if land is paved.

"We're just kind of sitting ducks here in the neighborhood," she said. "It seems like we don't have a lot of say over it."

Under the deal's current calculus, the school district would get a total of 12 acres.

An appraisal of the agreed-upon parcel of land is set for this week, and both Heidrich and RSU 2 board chairwoman Dawn Gallagher, of Hallowell, said a final agreement might be reached by the end of summer. The district has been passive on whether it would take the full 14 acres. Gallagher said the school district -- which consists of Hallowell,

HALLOWELL -- The state of Maine will keep 10 acres... [Derived headline]

Farmingdale, Richmond, Dresden and Monmouth -- was willing to take the land if the community wanted to keep it public, but "it doesn't really matter to us" as long as RSU 2 gets its office and a suitable land buffer.

Councilor Alan Stearns, who lives on Pleasant Street, said the state's move to keep 10 acres calls into question its willingness to collaborate with Hallowell and Mayor Mark Walker's "ability to shape the state's approach to this parcel." But Heidrich said Hallowell "remains a valued stakeholder and will continue to be involved in the property's disposition to the greatest extent practical."

Walker, who has been working with state officials on a sale plan, said there will be "plenty of opportunities" for the city to oversee development on the land, and he said stormwater improvements should be included in any developer's plans for the property, which the city would have to review.

"I don't think they're working against our interests at all," the mayor said of the state.

The RSU deal is one part of the state's plan to shed the complex, which it tried to sell to no avail in 2008. The last state offices at the complex haven't left yet, and the property isn't yet on the market.

Still, the local concerns have been an early hurdle. Stearns said the city has "acted as if this is a municipal discussion, when in fact the state has a very big role in what happens to the Stevens School," adding that he's "not convinced that the state is working with the mayor and the process the mayor has described to the city."

However, Walker said some city and state interests are the same and that getting the property into the hands of a developer and on the city's tax rolls should be a main goal.

"That's not in the city of Hallowell's interest, to let that complex sit there undeveloped," he said. "We need to find somebody to take that over."

Michael Shepherd -- 370-7652 mshepherd@centralmaine.com Twitter: @mikeshepherdme

Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

Load-Date: May 21, 2015

End of Document

Hallowell businesses worry over new retail possibilities ; They say customers might not come back if Stevens Commons is redeveloped into a mixed-use facility.

Portland Press Herald (Maine)

October 2, 2016 Sunday

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Section: Pg. 2.B

Length: 917 words

Byline: JASON PAFUNDI, By JASON PAFUNDI Kennebec Journal

Body

HALLOWELL -- Ruth LaChance looks at the Stevens School redevelopment plan not just as a Hallowell resident, but as a downtown business owner and as the president of the Hallowell Board of Trade. And she is clear about her support for developer Matt Morrill's plan, with one large caveat.

"There's no bones about it, because downtown Hallowell is bustling and we want to keep it that way," LaChance said at Boynton's Market, which she co-owns and helps operate with her husband, Bob. "If he wants the support of the businesses, he has to say no retail."

Morrill, who purchased the 54-acre Stevens Commons complex from the state in April for \$215,000, submitted his master plan for the site last month and is awaiting its initial approval of completion by the city's Planning Board. The plan calls for a mixed-use development featuring affordable senior housing, commercial and residential space and small, clustered subdivisions.

"Our plan shows a variety of conceptual uses, and I understand there may be things that may not meet everybody's desires," Morrill said in an email Saturday, "but we want to engage the community and the Board of Trade in the process so that we can arrive at a set of mixed uses on the campus that best serves the needs of the community."

Hallowell's comprehensive plan does not allow for retail usage at the former Stevens School site, so the city would have to amend the related ordinance. LaChance is worried that the city will drift from the intentions of the comprehensive plan.

"Retail will kill us," she said emphatically. "We are pretty clear that we don't need or want another coffee shop, another flower shop or another restaurant up there."

LaChance said there is support among the Board of Trade members for the affordable-housing aspect of Morrill's plan. There is so much employment along Water Street, she said, and businesses constantly are searching for affordable places where employees can live.

"We all understand that with the aging population, we're always going to need senior housing, and the biggest relief will be affordable housing not just for the elderly, but for everybody," she said. "We're all for the housing plan."

But LaChance just can't get past the idea of retail usage at Stevens Commons and admits she's "extremely concerned."

Hallowell businesses worry over new retail possibilities ; They say customers might not come back if Stevens Commons is redeveloped into a mixed-use facility.

In the months after he acquired the property, Morrill and the city have discussed a \$1 million bond that would allow for infrastructure improvements to the campus' roads, of which the city then would take ownership. Bonding would have to be approved by voters, something LaChance vows to not support as long as retail space is part of Morrill's plan.

"If this developer wants a bond issue to pass, and if he wants the support of the Board of Trade, we have to hear that there will be no retail," she stated.

Aside from the competition, LaChance said it's hard to get people to "come back down" to Water Street if they get used to shopping at Stevens Commons, especially during the Water Street reconstruction set to begin in 2018.

"If they have another place to go park and get similar items, we're going to be on the shutdown here," LaChance said. "The road construction is going to be a big deterrent to people, and we'll need all the help we can get."

Kim Davis, of Scrummy Afters Candy Shoppe on Water Street, isn't worried about another candy store opening at Stevens Commons. But she is concerned, like LaChance, that people will forget about shopping in downtown Hallowell if they can get what they need at Stevens Commons.

"Competition is good, but if they go to Stevens (Commons) where it's easy to get in and out of, people would bypass us to go there," Davis said. "Then what? Pretty soon an art gallery would go there? It's endless, and the city as a whole has to decide what they want."

Contrarians say that any new business coming to Hallowell is good business, but Davis said that's not true in her mind and mentioned how officials from Augusta said something similar about their downtown.

The candy store owner also is concerned about the new development's tax implications of. When it was owned by the state, the city received no tax revenue from the campus. She wonders whether the senior housing or affordable housing residents or property owners would be adding to the tax coffers.

"You'd have more people using services and going to the schools, but we'd be no further ahead," Davis said. "Property taxes and other taxes would go up to sustain those services. I'd hate to see that happen here."

People are so anxious to get any money in, Davis said, that they don't look at the long-term effect on the city and its residents. Some might see the property and think that it'll help lower taxes, but Davis said "it never does. It never works out that way."

LaChance said Morrill attended the Board of Trade meeting in July, and there was a little discussion about his plans. Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, said they are just at the beginning of vetting the appropriate mixture of residential and nonresidential uses with the Planning Board and then the City Council.

Interim Code Enforcement Officer Dick Dolby, who spent more than 20 years leading the code enforcement office in Augusta, has been reviewing the Stevens Commons master plan since it was submitted in mid-September. The Planning Board is expected to take up the issue at its next meeting, which is scheduled for Oct. 19. Jason Pafundi can be contacted at 621-5663 or at: jpafundi@centralmaine.com Twitter: @jasonpafundiKJ

Load-Date: October 2, 2016

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Pre-Release Center inmates now at jail

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

April 18, 2013 Thursday

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Section: LOCAL NEWS; Pg. B.6

Length: 288 words

Body

BY SUSAN M. COVER

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- Seven prisoners who lived at the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell, which closed last Thursday, have been moved to the Kennebec County jail in Augusta.

The effort to keep those inmates with ties to the area in central Maine is designed to help with the transition back to the community, said Kennebec County Sheriff Randall Liberty.

A state worker assigned to monitor the inmates takes them to the construction site for the new hospital north of Augusta each day and brings them back to the jail at night, Liberty said. Inmates in the pre-release program are in the final months of incarceration, and they are required to perform community service work and often hold paying jobs.

The program first opened in Hallowell in 1979, according to the Department of Corrections.

State officials surprised Hallowell city leaders and community members earlier this year when they announced the closure of the facility at the former Stevens School complex on Winthrop Street. The pre-release center often provided inmates to help with painting projects at town buildings, heavy lifting needed for book sales, or help at the local homeless shelter.

Residents who spoke at a meeting in February at Hallowell City Hall said they depend on the free labor provided by the inmates.

Liberty said the county jail, which also provides inmates for community projects, will now coordinate local volunteer efforts.

In addition to the seven inmates who went to Augusta, 14 were transferred to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren and seven went to the Maine Correctional Center in Windham, said Scott Fish, spokesman for the state Department of Corrections.

Susan Cover -- 621-5643

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Load-Date: April 19, 2013

Pre-Release Center inmates now at jail

End of Document

Stevens plan set for open meeting

Kennebec Journal

November 28, 2016 Monday

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Section: Pg. 2.B; ISSN: 07452039

Length: 444 words

Byline: Jason Pafundi

Jason Pafundi

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, acquired the property from the state for \$215,000 in April. Since the purchase, Morrill has been working on finding other investors and developers to help turn the space into a showcase piece of Hallowell real estate.

FULL TEXT

Advance of public workshop on the Stevens School project in Hallowell.

Public gets look at plan along with Hallowell panels

The Hallowell City Council and Planning Board will host a joint public workshop about the Stevens Commons Master Plan Wednesday.

The meeting begins at 6 p.m. in City Hall auditorium.

The public workshop is the next step in the process that ends with the City Council approving, approving with conditions or denying the master plan.

Owner and developer Matt Morrill submitted his master plan for the 54-acre campus on Winthrop Street in September. The Planning Board approved its completeness last month, the first step in the process of turning the former girls school campus into affordable senior housing, commercial and residential space and small, clustered subdivisions.

After facing public scrutiny Wednesday, Morrill has the opportunity to make changes to the plan before the Planning Board and council both review the application. The Planning Board would make a recommendation to the council, and then the council would vote. City Manager Nate Rudy did not know when a final vote by the council would take place.

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During its initial review of the master plan, the Planning Board recommended several small changes to the plan, including a number of grammatical ones. Morrill said he would present those changes during the public workshop.

The master plan was reviewed by interim Code Enforcement Officer Dick Dolby before the Planning Board deemed it complete. Hallowell has been without a full-time code enforcement officer since Maureen Aucoin-Geroux left the position in June.

Douglas Ide, a Manchester selectman, was hired as a part-time code enforcement officer earlier this month, though he won't be alone in tackling the Stevens Commons project. Dolby, who spent more than 20 years heading the code enforcement office in Augusta, has agreed to remain on board to assist Ide and continue reviewing documents related to the Stevens Commons redevelopment.

Jason Pafundi -- 621-5663jpafundi@centralmaine.com *Twitter: @jasonpafundiKJ*

Credit: By Jason Pafundi Staff Writer

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Stevens plan to get scrutinized in Hallowell

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

November 28, 2016 Monday

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Section: Pg. 2.B

Length: 435 words

Byline: Jason Pafundi

Jason Pafundi

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

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Credit: By Jason Pafundi Staff Writer

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[Council hears about budget at meeting](#)

Kennebec Journal

June 14, 2016 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 2.B; ISSN: 07452039

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Byline: Jason Pafundi

Jason Pafundi

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

The City Council discussed proposed ordinance changes relating to the Stevens School campus, the municipal budget and unanimously approved Nate Rudy's appointment as city manager during Monday's meeting at City Hall.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell City Council meets Monday to discuss the budget and officially hire the city manager.

Ordinance proposal for Stevens School also discussed

HALLOWELL -- The City Council discussed proposed ordinance changes relating to the Stevens School campus, the municipal budget and unanimously approved Nate Rudy's appointment as city manager during Monday's meeting at City Hall.

Rudy, 40, who replaced interim city manager Maureen AuCoin, starts today. He came to Hallowell after serving as the executive director of Waterville Creates!, a nonprofit organization promoting and supporting the arts and culture scene in greater Waterville.

The Stevens School project has been on the minds of many area residents for the better part of a decade. Matt Morrill purchased the 54-acre Stevens School campus in late April and outlined his visions for the property at May's council meeting. In front of dozens Monday, Morrill shared more ideas and gave a progress report including the possibility of a tenant moving into the Baker Office Building on July 1.

Most, if not everything, Morrill wants to do with the Stevens School campus requires approval of either the Planning Board or City Council, and Morrill wants to move fast to get things started.

One of the proposed ordinance changes is to add a residential component to Section 9-388 on permitted uses. Morrill, who began developing the Hallowell Overlook neighborhood in 2013, has said he wants affordable housing and residential space on the property. Morrill said the cost of improving roads and infrastructure on the campus would be in the millions, and he asked the city to pay for it.

Council hears about budget at meeting

"We've spent a lot of time diving through the systems on site to see what intact and what's defunct, and some looks OK, but some of it looks not so great," Morrill said. "I'm charging forward and am excited to keep it going at this pace. The more time I spend on this, the more time I realize I need your help to keep things moving."

Stearns said the council has spent years being frustrated by how the state let buildings on the Stevens School campus exist in disrepair. He said his goal is that "we get as many existing buildings occupied by winter as we can."

The Planning Board was directed to hold a public hearing on Thursday, June 30, about the amended ordinance with the hopes that the Planning Board will report its findings to the council at the July 11 meeting.

The council also approved a request from the Planning Board to have a historical consultant on retainer to help the board deal with issues related to Stevens School ordinance changes and other complex applications the board expects to receive in the near future.

Councilor Alan Stearns wondered if applicants would have access to the historical consultant, but Planning Board Chair Danielle Obery said the board first tries to steer applicants to the Maine Historical Society. Stearns was appointed as the council's liaison to the Planning Board.

Obery spoke at the May 23 council meeting and said the board would send a letter to Walker and the council about their request. The letter said one of the priorities should be a workshop historical consultant Mark Eyerman, the Planning Board, a councilor, the code enforcement officer and Rudy to discuss the Stevens School project. The workshop is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 30.

The council also approved the first reading of the nearly \$5.6 million 2016-2017 expenditure and revenue budget, which has \$5,578,897 in expenses and \$5,170,324 in revenue. The difference of \$408,573 would result in an estimated mil rate increase from 17.6 to 19.

More than half of the city's expenses go to Regional School District 2, who's budget called for an increase of nearly \$200,000 from Hallowell, accounting for the biggest expense change in the city's budget.

Rudy, a former Gardiner city official, is Hallowell's first permanent city manager since Stefan Pakulski's unexpected death in March. Pakulski took over for Michael Starns last October after spending 12 years as Readfield's manager. AuCoin, Hallowell's former code enforcement officer, took over in March on an interim basis and was one of the finalists for the permanent position but did not receive a second interview.

Jason Pafundi -- 621-5663jpafundi@centralmaine.com *Twitter: @jasonpafundiKJ*

Credit: By Jason Pafundi Staff Writer

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End of Document

Council to hear charter proposals

Kennebec Journal

September 11, 2016 Sunday

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Byline: JASON PAFUNDI

JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

Hallowell's City Council meets Monday and the agenda is expected to include a final vote on the proposed new city charter, an update on the Stevens School redevelopment project and news about the future of the city's fire protection services.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell's City Council meets Monday and the agenda is expected to include a final vote on the proposed new city charter, an update on the Stevens School redevelopment project and news about the future of the city's fire protection services.

Panel also to get update on Stevens School from owner

Hallowell will have a new councilor for Monday's meeting at City Hall, where the council is expected to consider proposed amendments to the City Charter and hear updates about the Stevens School redevelopment and the city's fire protection services.

Michael Frett, an attorney originally from Brooklyn, New York, was appointed to the council Tuesday by Mayor Mark Walker, replacing Sophie Gabrion. Gabrion, elected to the council representing Ward 2 in November, resigned this week, citing health problems.

Frett will jump right into discussions about many key issues facing Hallowell, Walker said. The mayor expects Frett will "hit the ground running," in part because of his experience on the ordinance rewrite committee and the Board of Appeals.

The eight-person Charter Commission, which was created last year, has worked for more than 12 months on reviewing and recommending potential revisions to the charter, which hasn't had many changes since it was first written more than 60 years ago.

One of the biggest changes the commission will recommend to the council Monday is changing the lengths of mayor's and city councilors' terms of office. The offices are now two-year positions. Commission Chairman Steve

Council to hear charter proposals

Langsdorf said two-year terms cause a possible turnover each year of half the members, so the commission proposes staggered three-year terms.

Other proposals include stipulating that certain positions that fall under the supervision of the city manager would be subject only to an initial approval by the council. After that, the city manager would handle all matters of employment under normal practices.

City Manager Nate Rudy said the council will receive an update on the Stevens School master plan from Matt Morrill, who bought the 54-acre campus from the state in April, and his attorney, Tom Federle. Morrill indicated last month that he planned to present his master plan for the site in September.

The council also will discuss a forgivable loan to Mastway Development, Morrill's company, that could provide funding for immediate infrastructure improvements that would ultimately support an affordable-housing development in the next few years at the Stevens School site.

Rudy said he was hoping the fire services committee would make a recommendation to the council about the city's fire protection services, but that won't happen until October at the earliest.

The panel met Aug. 30 and discussed several possible options for fire protection services, including contracting with Augusta, sharing Farmingdale's station and building a new public safety facility at Stevens School. The committee had planned to meet again last Thursday, but because of the resignation of Gabrion -- a committee member -- and other scheduling conflicts, that meeting was postponed until Sept. 29. Other items on the agenda include an update from Rudy on the city's search for a new code enforcement officer and from Walker on the Central Street parking project.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Hallowell candidates focus on Water St.

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

October 21, 2015 Wednesday

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Byline: ADAMS, BETTY

Body

ABSTRACT

"There's no easy answers to Stevens School," said George Lapointe, who is seeking re-election to an at-large council seat and whose office was at the Stevens School property for more than a decade when he was commissioner of the state Department of Marine Resources.

FULL TEXT

Live coverage of Hallowell candidate forum, 6-8 p.m. at City Hall.

HALLOWELL -- A forum for municipal candidates Tuesday night in City Hall focused largely on the anticipated Water Street reconstruction as well as the future of the Stevens School campus, now owned by the state.

Those two issues facing Hallowell over the next couple of years formed the basis for the opening question presented to the five candidates for City Council by Rep. Charlotte Warren, D-Hallowell, a former mayor of the city.

Mayor Mark Walker, who is seeking another two-year term, said a Department of Transportation public meeting scheduled for 6 to 8 p.m. today at City Hall will provide a good deal of information, including new information about storm drainage. The state is proposing to reconstruct the street between the public boat landing and a point just north of Winthrop Street.

"We have not made any decisions that are final at this point other than to go forward with the project," he said, adding that businesses have a little less than two years to prepare.

When Anthony Masciadri, also a former mayor, asked how long it might take, Walker said it was still in the engineering phase, but it could be done in one construction season, April to November.

Walker also said the 64-acre Stevens School property still is being marketed by the state with an Oct. 30 bid deadline.

He said no one came for the scheduled view the same day the area endured heavy rainfall. Walker said he has concerns about city police having to patrol the site and trying to keep watch on the 13 vacant, aging buildings.

"There's no easy answers to Stevens School," said George Lapointe, who is seeking re-election to an at-large council seat and whose office was at the Stevens School property for more than a decade when he was commissioner of the state Department of Marine Resources. "We need to remain active partners with the state so when they make a decision, it's good for the city as well."

Hallowell candidates focus on Water St.

He also said council has worked to foster communication about the Water Street reconstruction project and facilitate a good relationship with the DOT.

While the mayor and the incumbent councilor provided status updates, first-time candidates offered their views as well, including the two Greenville Street residents hoping to be the choice in Ward 4.

Diano Circo, project manager at The Trust for Public Land in Portland, said he had an up-close view of the systems running under Water Street, including modern pipes, rusty pipes, clay pipes and wooden troughs.

"There's no way to sugar-coat it; it's going to be painful," Circo said, adding that he wanted to see the city work with businesses "to make sure it's as pain-free as possible." He also urged people to think of the improvements it would bring, citing redeveloped sidewalks and better access to downtown for seniors among others.

Andrea Mooney, a clinical director of a mental health organization in Wiscasset, said she would look at the competing needs of everyone involved. "My thoughts are mostly around what I could bring to that process," she said. "I do understand people and some business."

She suggested celebrating the reconstruction and "doing crazy stuff to keep everybody's morale up."

Circo said he sees a great opportunity for preserving the undeveloped portion at the rear of the Stevens School property and having a trail to link it to the 146-acre Howard Hill property recently acquired by the Kennebec Land Trust.

He said that would ensure city residents' access to the hill and draw some of the traffic from Vaughn Woods, a heavily used nature preserve on the opposite end of the city's developed area.

With regard to the core of the Stevens School property, he said, "I'd love to figure out a way to preserve some of those buildings if possible." he said.

Mooney said she already has blogged about her thoughts on redeveloping the Stevens School property. "I see it as an opportunity to do something unique, maybe housing, affordable housing," she said. Mooney said she had difficulty finding an affordable apartment when she worked at Slates Bakery.

She said the property could be a good site for mixed development: houses, rental units and commercial use.

Sophie Gabrion, director of public education at NAMI Maine, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is running unopposed for the Ward 2 seat. She said she is particularly interested in history and wants to maintain as much of the historic charm as possible at the Stevens School.

Other candidates present included Jill Randall, an attorney with Maine Legal Services for the Elderly, who is seeking a three-year seat representing Hallowell on the school board of Regional School Unit 2, and Scott Cowger, a former legislator who is owner and innkeeper of the Maple Hill Farm and Conference Center. Cowger is running as a Ward 5 write-in candidate for the Charter Commission. No one had filed nominating papers in that ward by the deadline.

He and Warren told the attendees that people voting for Cowger must write his name on the ballot and fill in the circle next to it.

Cowger was the only charter commission candidate at the forum, which attracted 18 people, including current and former municipal officials.

The other charter commission candidates are Maureen Aucoin in Ward 1, Christy Cross in Ward 2, Richard Dolby in Ward 3 and Robert McIntyre in Ward 4.

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Hallowell candidates focus on Water St.

Credit: By BETTY ADAMS Staff Writer

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End of Document

HALLOWELL Stevens school property still at issue

Kennebec Journal

December 17, 2006 Sunday

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Byline: MECHELE COOPER

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

By MECHELE COOPER Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- Hallowell officials hope state officials make their minds up soon about the old Stevens School property on Winthrop Hill.

The State Facilities Master Plan calls for state agencies to move off the school campus and the property to be sold. State offices on campus include the departments of Corrections and Marine Services.

The main campus has 26 1/2 acres that includes 10 buildings -- five of which are historic -- and Reed Auditorium, which the state leases to School Administrative District 16 for its superintendent's office.

The rest of the property is split into 20 1/2 acres of undeveloped land at the rear of the main campus, 14 acres along Pleasant Street, two half-acre lots and a 1 1/2-acre lot.

Chip Gavin, director of the state Bureau of General Services, said the buildings are vacant if not occupied by state employees.

Mayor-elect Barry Timson said he wants to get the buildings back on the tax rolls. He also said city officials have talked about moving fire and police departments into a building on the western edge of the campus.

"We certainly feel what goes on at that complex is critical to the city," Timson said Thursday.

Gavin said there are no imminent plans to turn the property over to the city of Hallowell or sell it to a developer. He said it is recognized that redevelopment of the site should be a joint effort and include state resources to facilitate any changeover.

He said it was premature to talk about deadlines because the state still actively uses the property.

"The situation remains unchanged," Gavin said. "The long-term vision for that site is to work in partnership with the community in redevelopment. We will continue to talk with municipal officials."

"At the (Kennebec) Arsenal and other places, we're trying to be creative with reutilizing properties the state has so they can be put to good use," he added.

HALLOWELL Stevens school property still at issue

Gavin said it would be more cost-efficient to have fewer buildings occupied, since they wouldn't have to be maintained.

"We're looking forward to continue working with the state in the disposition of those buildings and get them back on the tax roll, hopefully in the next two or three years," Timson said. "They realize they should move away and then we can develop those buildings into offices and housing."

City Councilor Phillip Lindley said putting the property back on the tax roll would help out taxpayers in Hallowell.

On the other hand, the city desperately needs a new place for its fire department, with the fire station on Second Street, built in 1828, in need of major repair.

"We need a place for our fire engines," Lindley said. "We have calls at Granite Hill Estates and having a fire engine up there rather than at the bottom of the hill really helps with response time. It would make sense to put fire and police all in one spot."

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Load-Date: June 24, 2021

End of Document

Council expects to hear from developer

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

May 22, 2016 Sunday

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Section: Pg. 2.B

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

Since Pakulski's death March 5, Code Enforcement Officer Maureen AuCoin has been the interim city manager, attending meetings and handling a number of issues in relation to Stevens School, the Quarry Tap Room expansion plans and the demolition of a Water Street building.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell's Council is holding a special meeting to discuss the city budget and the progress of finding a new city manager. Matt Morrill, who recently purchased the Stevens School campus, is expected to make a presentation outlining his early thoughts for the 54-acre property.

Stevens School buyer Matt Morrill to present thoughts on property Monday

For more than a decade, nearly 54 acres on Hallowell's Stevens School campus sat idle as the state put it up for sale, only to find no takers.

Last month, developer and builder Matt Morrill bought those acres and the buildings that stand on them and will present his initial thoughts about the property during a special City Council meeting at 6 p.m. Monday.

Mayor Mark Walker said the city has asked Morrill, who paid just \$215,000 for the property, what he would like from the city along with his current thinking about use of the property and the timeline for development. Walker said he wonders whether Morrill will start redeveloping the 54-acre campus this summer, and Walker said the city would have to change some ordinances in connection with any redevelopment.

In an email after the sale was made public last month, Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, said Hallowell is a "cool little city" and the "property deserves new life that will benefit the whole community." He said it's a complex site that presents significant challenges and will require time and cooperation from both local and state agencies.

Also Monday, the council will get an update on the search for a new city manager.

Council expects to hear from developer

The city has been looking for a permanent city manager since the unexpected death of Stefan Pakulski in March, and the search process is winding down, according to Councilor Kate DuFour, chairwoman of the personnel committee.

DuFour said the city received 16 applications by the April 15 deadline, and the five-member search committee whittled the list down to six candidates for initial interviews. DuFour said four of the candidates still are being considered, but only one will have a second interview.

"The results of that interview will decide the next steps," DuFour said in an email Thursday. "Either we enter into contract negotiations with the leading candidate or undertake another round of interviews."

DuFour said each candidate demonstrated an overall knowledge of, interest in and passion for municipal government service, especially with respect to Hallowell.

"As we expected, the areas of municipal expertise and mix of strengths and interests varied from candidate to candidate," DuFour said. "One candidate edged out the rest."

Since Pakulski's death March 5, Code Enforcement Officer Maureen AuCoin has been the interim city manager, attending meetings and handling a number of issues in relation to Stevens School, the Quarry Tap Room expansion plans and the demolition of a Water Street building.

The other big topic on the meeting agenda is the city budget, though Walker did not have much information; and the finance committee chairman, Councilor George LaPointe, did not return a request for comment.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Council approves \$5.7M budget

Kennebec Journal

August 9, 2016 Tuesday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

Hallowell City Council will have its final vote on the annual municipal budget, an update on bonding and the potential use of block grant funds to support Stevens School's development and an update to the fire department conversation.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell City Council will have its final vote on the annual municipal budget, an update on bonding and the potential use of block grant funds to support Stevens School's development and an update to the fire department conversation.

Block grant funds may be used for Stevens School

HALLOWELL -- The City Council unanimously approved a nearly \$5.7 million municipal budget for the next fiscal year during its meeting Monday.

The budget is up 5 percent over the previous year, in large part because of the increase in the city's responsibility to Regional School Unit 2. The increased budget would raise the tax rate from \$17.60 to \$18.90 per \$1,000 of valuation.

The approved budget includes about \$2.4 million in expenditures and more than \$2.8 million toward RSU 2's operating budget.

The Council also discussed the possibility of using Hallowell's reserve of block grant funding, about \$238,000, to help the construction of a low- to moderate-income housing development on the Stevens School campus on Winthrop Street.

The Council voted to authorize City Manager Nate Rudy to enter into negotiations with Stevens School owner Matt Morrill for potential use of the block grants. Morrill said he is committed to presenting a master plan sometime in September.

Council approves \$5.7M budget

Councilor George LaPointe, chairman of the finance committee, said the city is looking into commissioning a study to find whether or not there is a market for low- and moderate-income housing in Hallowell. It is unclear how much the study would cost, and Rudy will be soliciting bids for the study soon.

The Council spent a few minutes talking about a new whistleblower policy, which was first brought up in July when it was referred to the personnel committee for further review. The policy is intended to protect city officials, employees and supervisors at all levels who report illegal, unsafe, unethical or inappropriate behaviors or practices.

The personnel committee will meet again before presenting a final draft of the policy to the council in September.

Earlier in the evening, Elaina George, who spearheaded the effort to put an Oxford House, sober-living facility on Town Farm Road in Hallowell, gave a presentation at the request of the Council on the Oxford House organization and her goals for the new facility, which opened Aug. 1.

Councilor Alan Stearns welcomed George and the house to Hallowell and invited her to come back to the Council if she encountered any resistance from the community.

Resistance came after George had already made her presentation and left the building. Larry Davis, who lives near the new Oxford House, arrived at City Hall thinking the meeting started at 7 p.m. and expecting to hear George and then express his concerns to the Council.

Davis said his neighbors have asked him to speak on their behalf about the issues and concerns they have with the presence of the Oxford House in the neighborhood. The Council invited Davis back in September to speak during the public comment period at the beginning of the meeting.

Councilor Lisa Harvey-McPherson, who represents the ward where the sober house is located, offered to facilitate a meeting between Davis and others with concern and representatives from the Oxford House, but Davis said he wanted to speak to the council directly.

Oxford House is protected from discrimination by the Fair Housing Act, so despite concerns from Davis or any others, there is nothing the city can do.

Jason Pafundi -- 621-5663jpafundi@centralmaine.com *Twitter: @jasonpafundiKJ*

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

Load-Date: August 10, 2016

End of Document

[Hallowell Council to vote on city budget](#)

Kennebec Journal

August 7, 2016 Sunday

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Section: Pg. 2.B; ISSN: 07452039

Length: 689 words

Byline: JASON PAFUNDI

JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

According to the revised document, "the policy is intended to encourage City officials, supervisors and employees at all levels to report good faith suspicion or observed occurrence(s) of illegal, unethical, unsafe or inappropriate behaviors or practices without retribution."

FULL TEXT

Advance of Monday's City Council meeting in Hallowell. Agenda should be released late Thursday or early Friday morning.

Availability of block grant funds to develop Stevens School also on councilors' agenda

HALLOWELL -- The City Council meets Monday to approve the next municipal budget and to discuss the availability of block grant funds to be used in connection with the redevelopment of the Stevens School campus.

City Manager Nate Rudy said the city's finance committee will meet Monday morning to talk about the possibility of using Hallowell's reserve of block grant funding, about \$238,000, to help the construction of a low- to moderate-income housing development on the sprawling Winthrop Street campus.

Rudy said the city is considering an agreement with Mastway Development and its owner, Matt Morrill, that could provide funding for immediate infrastructure improvements that would ultimately support an affordable housing development in the next few years. Morrill bought the 54-acre Stevens School property for \$215,000 in April and has said his vision for the campus includes affordable housing.

The committee, and later the council, will also discuss other forms of financial support for Stevens School that may include bonding or tax increment financing credit enhancement agreements.

Last month, the Council approved several amendments to the Hallowell ordinances that govern the Stevens School property, changes Morrill and his attorney, Tom Federle, said were necessary in order for Morrill to begin marketing the property to other developers and potential tenants.

Hallowell Council to vote on city budget

Federle said in July that the state of the infrastructure and state of the buildings is daunting, and the process of financing the redevelopment of the property is a big hurdle. He said that's why most developers passed on the project over the last 10 years, when the campus was marketed for sale by the state.

The council will also vote to approve the nearly \$5.7 million municipal budget for the next fiscal year, up about 5 percent over the previous year. The budget includes about \$2.4 million in expenditures and more than \$2.8 million toward Regional School Unit 2's operating budget.

The increase of about \$211,000, or 8 percent, to the school district means the city's mill rate is expected to increase from \$17.60 to \$19.00 per \$1,000 of valuation.

Also on the agenda, Elaina George, who spearheaded the effort to put an Oxford House sober living facility on Town Farm Road in Hallowell, will give a presentation to the council on the organization and her goals for the city's facility, which opened Aug. 1.

During its July meeting, the council briefly talked about a new Whistleblower Protection policy, which was referred to the personnel committee for continued discussion. According to the revised document, "the policy is intended to encourage City officials, supervisors and employees at all levels to report good faith suspicion or observed occurrence(s) of illegal, unethical, unsafe or inappropriate behaviors or practices without retribution."

Rudy is also expected to update the council on recent talks with Hallowell Fire Chief Mike Grant. In a Kennebec Journal story July 27, Grant expressed displeasure with the city and several unnamed elected officials for what he called a lack of support of the fire department.

The city has held preliminary discussions with the City of Augusta and its fire department about contracting fire protection services, thus eliminating the Hallowell department. Grant said Hallowell's department, which has 10 firefighters on its roster, is frustrated because the public "is hearing rumors and innuendos and not getting all the facts."

The council meets at 6 p.m. at City Hall on Winthrop Street.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Council approves ordinance changes

Kennebec Journal

July 12, 2016 Tuesday

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Length: 867 words

Byline: JASON PAFUNDI

JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

The Council spent nearly 25 minutes on the Quarry's application and request, and new City Manager Nate Rudy, Walker and several councilors seemed generally unsure of the correct process needed to approve the Quarry's request.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell City Council's meeting, where they are expected to address the Stevens School ordinance amendments recommended by the Planning Board.

Green light allows Stevens School development to proceed in Hallowell

HALLOWELL -- The City Council approved ordinance changes related to the Stevens School campus during its meeting Monday.

The Council voted 5-1 to approve the changes. Sophie Gabrion opposed the amended ordinances, and Diano Circo was absent.

The ordinance changes include allowing additional uses of the existing buildings on the 54-acre campus, which was built in the late 1870s as a boarding school for girls. The state marketed the property for more than a decade before selling to Matt Morrill, a builder who developed the Hallowell Overlook property a few years ago.

"It took a lot of work, but what we ended up with is a better project than when we started (talking about ordinance changes)," Morrill said.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, paid \$215,000 in April for the Winthrop Street property, and he's said he envisions a mixed-use development including affordable housing, commercial uses and residential space. With the approved changes, Morrill said he can begin marketing the property to other developers and potential tenants.

Council approves ordinance changes

His attorney, Tom Federle, said the changes mean Morrill will have to make improvements to buildings in order to have tenants occupy space, including work to the water and heating systems. Morrill said there is a psychiatry practice that wants to move into a 900-square-foot space in the 11,000-square-foot Baker Building with a lease beginning Aug. 1.

"This enables the Stevens School property to get out from being stuck in the mud, where it's been for a long time," Federle said. "Matt also fully expects to submit a master plan for the campus in the near future," despite some members of the public being concerned about Morrill moving ahead with the project without a master plan.

The possibility of ordinance changes related to the Stevens School Planned Development District has existed for years, Mayor Mark Walker said. After Morrill acquired the campus in April, Walker said changes would have to be made in order for Morrill to begin working on transforming the property.

The Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend several ordinance changes to the council during a special meeting at the end of last month.

Throughout the special meeting, which lasted more than four hours, board members went back and forth with Morrill and Federle on their proposed changes, and several members of the public expressed concern about Morrill's vision for the campus.

"It was a really constructive dialogue, and we ended up collectively working through a better rewrite," Federle said. "We think it's a really good product, and it was clear to us that the city views what Matt is trying to do as very much in the city's interest."

The council also heard the second reading of the nearly \$5.7 million municipal budget, which represents about a 5 percent increase over the current year. The increase, Finance Committee chair George LaPointe said, is mostly due to the continued rise of the Regional School Unit 2 budget and the city catching up on infrastructure improvements that have been delayed for some time.

Hallowell will pay Regional School Unit 2 about 8 percent, or \$211,205.26 more than last year. The overall budget would result in an increase in the property tax rate from \$17.60 to \$19 per \$1,000 in valuation.

In other business, the Quarry Tap Room's permit to permanently expand their premises to include their new outdoor space was unanimously approved. Their request to have live music outside from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday in celebration of Old Hallowell Day was approved by a 4-2 vote after objections from John and Janet Merrill, owners of the building adjacent to the Quarry.

John Merrill said he didn't object to the outdoor music on Old Hallowell Day, but to subject his tenants to outdoor music on two consecutive nights would be "unconscionable." The Merrills have been outspoken opponents of the Quarry's expansion plans from the beginning because of the noise generated by an outdoor space adjacent to their building.

The Council spent nearly 25 minutes on the Quarry's application and request, and new City Manager Nate Rudy, Walker and several councilors seemed generally unsure of the correct process needed to approve the Quarry's request.

"We need to get a much cleaner process so this doesn't happen when we have these kinds of applications," Walker said.

The meeting was Nate Rudy's first as city manager. He took over for Maureen AuCoin, who held the interim city manager post since the unexpected death of Stefan Pakulski in March. Rudy named Diane Polky the new city clerk and elevated Dan Kelley to the deputy city clerk position.

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Council approves ordinance changes

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

Load-Date: July 13, 2016

End of Document

HALLOWELL -- The state of Maine is moving to sell... [Derived headline]

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

April 6, 2015 Monday

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Section: Pg. 1.A; ISSN: 0745-2039

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Byline: SHEPHERD, MICHAEL

Body

ABSTRACT

A prerelease center that housed former prison inmates closed in 2013 and last week, the Maine Department of Marine Resources announced that it would leave in mid-April for the Marquardt Building on the former state psychiatric hospital campus on Augusta's east side.

FULL TEXT

HALLOWELL -- The state of Maine is moving to sell the Stevens School property as the city eyes a pot of public money that could provide incentives to developers.

The 64-acre campus off Winthrop Street will likely be appraised by the end of May, said Alex Willette, a spokesman for the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services. Once the state pursues a sale, Hallowell officials say they could use money flowing into a fund established last year as part of a plan to woo developers.

"We could be doing stormwater work; we could be fixing up those roads and taking them over as municipal roads," said City Manager Michael Starn. "There's a lot of things that could be done to make that property attractive for a developer."

Over the last few years, state offices have been leaving the campus. A prerelease center that housed former prison inmates closed in 2013 and last week, the Maine Department of Marine Resources announced that it would leave in mid-April for the Marquardt Building on the former state psychiatric hospital campus on Augusta's east side.

Willette said the Natural Resources Service Center will leave by the end of April. After that, only the Maine Conservation Corps and a state parks and lands office will remain, and their departure date hasn't been determined.

There was little interest when Maine tried to sell the Stevens School campus in 2008, and officials blamed it on a bad economy and the prerelease center's presence. Since then, Hallowell has placed many of its future economic development hopes on the 14-building campus, which features a northern 20-acre field and an eastern 14-acre field representing much of the last undeveloped land in the city's core.

A state map of the property drafted in June envisions residential development in the undeveloped portions and commercial uses. Chris Paszyc, the broker from CBRE/The Boulos Company in Portland who tried to sell the campus in 2008, said the state should "see interest from a variety of developers," including those seeing potential for residential and commercial uses.

HALLOWELL -- The state of Maine is moving to sell... [Derived headline]

Two residential developments about the property -- Hallowell Overlook, managed by builder Matt Morrill of Winthrop, on the west and The Ridges, owned by Blais Property Management, on the east, -- and Mayor Mark Walker said continuations of those developments on the Stevens School property could be "logical."

Neither Walker nor Starn would name potentially interested developers. Morrill declined comment when asked about his interest and Steve Blais of The Ridges said his company hasn't expressed interest.

Money going into the fund established in 2014 with Hallowell's downtown tax increment financing district could be leveraged to aid developers.

It allowed the city to freeze its downtown-area property valuation for 30 years, with Hallowell agreeing to spend all of the money it saves on state and county taxes as development increases on improvements in that area.

By 2024, the city expects to have put \$1.2 million into that fund, and Starn said the city could borrow against that to fund upgrades at the Stevens School complex, which Walker called "a natural use" for some of that money. But Paszyc said that "will certainly help generate interest," but added that the money "also comes with strings attached" that could hinder a developer.

"So, it remains to be seen what the city wants those funds to be used for," he said.

Councilor Alan Stearns, who lives on nearby Pleasant Street, called the Stevens School "a generational opportunity for Hallowell."

But he said a specific borrowing proposal should be vetted by the public, council and committee before advancing, even though using public money there may be appropriate.

"But I think the taxpayers need a lot more information before we approach that," Stearns said. "On an unfocused investment, the risk is as large as the opportunity."

Michael Shepherd -- 370-7652 mshepherd@centralmaine.com Twitter: @mikeshepherdme

Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

Load-Date: April 7, 2015

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Hallowell planners get proposal for school parcel; The multi-year project would be the biggest redevelopment in Hallowell's history.

Portland Press Herald

September 26, 2016 Monday

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Section: Pg. B.2; ISSN: 26895900

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Byline: JASON PAFUNDI

JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

HALLOWELL -- The proposed re-use of the Stevens School complex - a multi-million-dollar, multi-year project - is now in the hands of city planners.

The master plan for the Stevens School property at the top of Winthrop Street in Hallowell lays out a proposal that, if completed, would be the biggest redevelopment project in city history.

Owner and developer Matt Morrill submitted his vision for the campus, which is now known as Stevens Commons, to the city on Sept. 16. The code enforcement officer, Planning Board and City Council will now review the plan, and it's a process that could extend well into next year.

"I think there's an energy, and there are a lot of people in the city that are excited," Mayor Mark Walker said. "We need to keep the momentum going and this is the next step."

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, acquired the property from the state in April for \$215,000. His plan for the property, which was originally a boarding school for girls in the late 1800s, is for a mixed-use development featuring affordable senior housing, commercial and residential space and small, clustered subdivisions.

"We're excited and relieved that (the plan) is submitted, because it was a long process," Morrill said. "We had 12 different engineers and architects involved, along with other consultants. Now we begin the review process."

If all goes according to schedule, the Planning Board will take up the master plan at its meeting on Oct. 19 before it goes to the City Council. Jason Pafundi can be contacted at 621-5663 or at: jpafundi@centralmaine.com
Twitter: @jasonpafundiKJ

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Kennebec Journal

Load-Date: November 25, 2020

Hallowell planners get proposal for school parcel The multi-year project would be the biggest redevelopment in Hallowell's history.

End of Document

Hallowell planners get proposal for school parcel ; The multi-year project would be the biggest redevelopment in Hallowell's history.

Portland Press Herald (Maine)

September 26, 2016 Monday

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Section: Pg. 2.B

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Byline: JASON PAFUNDI, By JASON PAFUNDI Kennebec Journal

Body

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Load-Date: September 26, 2016

HALLOWELL CITY BIDS FOR STEVENS

Kennebec Journal

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 236 words

Byline: Anonymous

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- City officials are waiting to find out if their preliminary bid to buy the state-owned Stevens School complex will be accepted.

"We want to make sure the public knows this is all non-binding at this point," interim city manager Todd Shea said. "This is very preliminary."

In the proposal, the city of Hallowell offers to purchase the complex, which currently houses state offices, and lease the space back to the state.

For at least two years, city officials have debated whether to purchase the 10-building complex. Barry Timson, who was Hallowell's mayor two years ago, had expressed a desire to purchase the complex.

In a December 2006 interview, Timson, who died four months later, said he felt the activities at the Stevens School complex were "critical to the city," and he indicated he wanted the buildings back on the city's tax rolls.

Stevens School is a historic landmark.

Founded in 1872, it was first called Maine Industrial School for Girls, where many of the pupils were wards of the state. In 1915, it was changed to the Stevens School for Girls.

Before a decision is made, Hallowell city officials intend to hold two public hearings, Shea said.

"Councilors are looking forward to hearing from people," he said.

The hearings will be at 7 p.m. Jan. 15 and 10 a.m. Jan. 31 at City Hall.

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HALLOWELL CITY BIDS FOR STEVENS

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Hallowell moving forward with vision for its future

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

October 7, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 404 words

Body

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- Maine's smallest city is a step closer to finalizing its comprehensive plan -- an outline that guides changes within the city over the next decade.

Twenty-five residents attended a Tuesday night public hearing at City Hall to provide feedback on a draft of the plan, comprised of suggestions and visions residents have given the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee over the span of two years.

Residents gave overall praise of the plan and the committee's efforts, while offering more suggestions to refine the draft.

One of the contentions was the fate of the state-owned Stevens School complex, which is being overseen by a separate committee. Dawn Gallagher, chair of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee and member of the Stevens School Committee, admitted the latter group has "not met as often as we should be," leaving a hole in the comprehensive plan when it comes to land use of the 63-acre parcel.

Resident Alan Stearns urged the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee to not pass over opportunities for the Stevens School property, or to leave it to another entity.

"I think we're getting close to the time for decision-making," Stearns said Tuesday. "I think if the comprehensive plan leaves too much to future generations, it could be a mistake. Just set clear parameters (on Stevens School). That needs more specifics here."

Opportunities for the property -- which have ranged from affordable housing to a new fire station -- hinge on the state's decision to sell Stevens School, which is on a "sunset" provision of September 2010.

Additionally, rural Hallowellians expressed concerns over use of private wells and municipal water system hook-ups, as the draft plan adds subdivision standards for development of seven or more lots, so as to be compatible with the low density residential development of one single family dwelling per one acre minimum.

Kathleen Leyden, a member of the city planning board, requested a study of the adequacy of water supply for private wells, should the comprehensive plan as drafted move forward.

Hallowell moving forward with vision for its future

Frank O'Hara, a consultant for Planning Decision, a company working with town committees on their comprehensive plan, said the next step is taking Tuesday's suggestions and working them into a final plan to be presented to the city planning board.

The next public hearing will be Oct. 27.

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Load-Date: October 8, 2009

End of Document

[Developer proposes Hallowell housing; Portland company plans senior homes at Stevens Commons](#)

Kennebec Journal

April 7, 2017 Friday

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Section: Pg. 1.A; ISSN: 07452039

Length: 951 words

Byline: BETTY ADAMS

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

A Portland housing group is planning to renovate one of the buildings on the Stevens School campus for use as low cost housing. The announcement comes just days ahead of a scheduled vote by Hallowell City Council to approve a bond question that will go out to voters that asks for \$600,000 in city money for infrastructure improvements on the property. Also, a city resident has pledged \$100,000 for Stevens Commons, a city official said this week.

A Portland-based affordable-housing developer has submitted a proposal to restore the Central Building on the Stevens Commons property as housing for the elderly.

If the plans by Community Housing of Maine are approved, it will be a large step toward redevelopment of the former Stevens School property just off Winthrop Street.

Community Housing of Maine has signed a purchase option and submitted an application to the Hallowell Planning Board 'for a multi-million dollar historic restoration of the 25,000-square-foot Central Building into affordable apartments for seniors,' according to a news release from Community Housing of Maine.

'The project will be similar to the renovation of the Cony High School Flatiron Building in Augusta,' according to the release. 'Residents will have access to new city streets, sidewalks and trails which surround a lush public green and gardens which will host a variety of events such as the Farmers Market, chamber music events and other outdoor activities.'

In the news release, Matt Morrill, of Mastway Development, which owns the property, says, 'This is another important step for Stevens Commons and will bring new residents, new jobs and new tax dollars to the City of Hallowell.' Mastway <http://www.centralmaine.com/2016/04/26/stevens-school-in-hallowell-sold-to-local-builder> bought the nearly 53-acre campus for \$215,000 a year ago. The state had sought to sell it for 10 years.

Stevens School was built in the late 1870s as a boarding school for girls, and in more recent years it was occupied by state offices and other agencies.

Affordable housing was one of the uses discussed for the property. A <http://www.centralmaine.com/2017/03/10/hallowell-council-set-to-vote-on-2-36m-bond-package> \$2.36 million bond package approved by the Hallowell City Council will go up for referendum April 28 and includes \$600,000 worth of

Developer proposes Hallowell housing Portland company plans senior homes at Stevens Commons

aid to help fix roads and sidewalks in Stevens Commons that would be owned and maintained by the city. Other projects in the same bond include \$585,000 for the Water Street reconstruction project, \$535,000 for rural Hallowell road maintenance, \$300,000 for downtown parking improvements and \$220,000 to restore the fire station's wooden tower.

Erin Cooperrider, development director for Community Housing of Maine, said, 'We are very pleased to be a small part of this important rehabilitation project in Hallowell, and we are looking forward to working with Mastway Development and the City of Hallowell to help repurpose the Central Building.'

She said she's forecasting a cost of \$3.5 million to convert the building into 30 housing units.

According to the Morrill's master plan for developing the property, the Central Building 'remains in the best condition of all of the buildings on campus. With soaring ceilings and large windows that peer down over the common and the Kennebec River, this building has a very appealing layout.' The http://www.hallowell.govoffice.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={24AD4F51-6B42-453C-987F-2169D80D28C8}> master plan is included on the Hallowell city website.

Community Housing of Maine, a statewide nonprofit organization, has developed properties in Kennebec County since 1995, in accordance with its mission to develop and provide housing for low-income and disadvantaged people as well as workforce and senior housing.

Cooperrider said the organization completed a similar project in 2011 in Bangor, converting a former dormitory of the Bangor Theological Seminary into 28 units for the elderly, now known as Maine Hall.

'We have done projects in 37 different communities in Maine,' Cooperrider said Thursday. 'When we get involved, it's because somebody in the community has reached out to us.'

In the case of the Hallowell project, it was a member of Morrill's team.

Cooperrider said Community Housing of Maine previously had considered the site when the state was marketing it, but decided it was too large.

However, the organization amassed some documentation on it, including an appraisal.

'We looked at several different buildings for several different projects, and we landed on this one,' she said.

She said an architect and a structural engineer have been working on the plans and that they met with the Hallowell code enforcement officer earlier this week on the subdivision site plans process and submitted the application Wednesday, hoping to be on the Planning Board's agenda for the board's April 19 meeting.

'We wanted to engage with the Planning Board early on,' Cooperrider said. 'It's a big master plan thing and we need to understand very quickly what we can do there.'

She added that similar projects by Community Housing of Maine take about two years to complete.

The Cony flatiron building opened as housing for the elderly in summer 2015. Because that <http://www.centralmaine.com/2014/06/20/cony-flatiron-building-deal-closes> \$11 million project by Housing Initiatives of New England was partially funded by \$6.8 million from the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, residents who make more than predetermined incomes each year can't live there.

Betty Adams ' 621-5631

[mailto:badams%40mainetoday.com?subject=">badams@centralmaine.com](mailto:badams%40mainetoday.com?subject=)

Twitter:

Developer proposes Hallowell housing Portland company plans senior homes at Stevens Commons

Credit: By BETTY ADAMS Staff Writer

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End of Document

[Hallowell Pre-Release Center closing](#)

Portland Press Herald

January 11, 2013 Friday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 496 words

Byline: Betty Adams, By Betty Adams , badams@centralmaine.com, Staff Writer

Body

Hallowell Pre-Release Center closing

By Betty Adams badams@centralmaine.com

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL - The Central Maine Pre-Release Center, which has operated at the Stevens School complex since 1979, will close.

[image removed] Caption:

This photo taken on on Thursday January 10, 2013 shows the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell. It has operated on the Stevens School Complex since 1979 and will be closing.

Staff photo by Joe Phelan

[sidebar]

Map: Stevens School campus, Hallowell

The program, which has 58 inmates and 21 budgeted staff positions, will be moved to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren, said Associate Corrections Commissioner Jody L. Breton.

The closing will have a direct impact on nonprofit organizations that benefit from the inmates' free labor and on businesses that employ those inmates.

The Windsor and Augusta food banks, for example, benefit from such labor. Inmates from the pre-release center form work crews and participate in work-release programs, according to description of the center on the corrections department's website. They have done an estimated 22,000 hours of free labor annually.

The center also houses prisoners in a substance abuse treatment program.

The loss of free labor will mean less fresh paint and maybe fewer improvements at the Windsor Fairgrounds, where inmates have worked for at least a dozen years.

Hallowell Pre-Release Center closing

Bob Brann, a trustee of the Windsor Fair and president of the Windsor Historical Society, said inmates "painted everything that's painted down there," and he's never had any trouble with them.

"They move stuff for me, dig trenches by hand," Brann said. "It's the greatest gift for us. I do a barbecue for them because they like it and it's a gift to us. It's a small price."

Brann said he has had five or six men work for as long as a month at a time, and intermittently throughout the summers.

Breton said corrections officials met Tuesday with the staff at the center to talk about the move, which is expected to be done over the next several months. She said the date of the closing hasn't been set.

"This was not part of a budget initiative," Breton said. "We will be transferring the positions and related correctional expenses to other facilities based on operational need."

The Bolduc operation in Warren is a minimum security/community prison that generally houses prisoners with less than five years remaining on their sentences.

The Legislature previously authorized the Bureau of General Services to sell the 63-acre, state-owned Stevens School campus, which once included multiple state offices, by 2011. That did not happen.

Donald McCormack, director of the Bureau of General Services, said Thursday that the state still owns the property, which continues to house other state offices, including the Department of Marine Resources and human resources and financial offices for natural resources agencies.

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[Vote no on Hallowell bond](#)

Kennebec Journal

April 21, 2017 Friday

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Section: Pg. 1.A; ISSN: 07452039

Length: 770 words

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

IS THE REDEVELOPMENT of the Stevens School a good idea? Yes. Should the city provide financial incentives? Some, yes, if done strategically. Is the council's "if we build the road, we sure hope they come" approach a good one? No. Why not? Because, the city unnecessarily assumes all the same market, affordability, and financial risks as the developer while forfeiting more efficient means to promote redevelopment over the longer term.

Is there a better approach? Yes. Beginning in 2016 numerous suggestions were made for a subsidy strategy that involved less risk and lower cost for the city and with more generous incentives.

Were any these ideas considered seriously? Apparently not. It appears the City Council committed to borrow to pay for the roads at Stevens in 2016 long before the formal process began. This commitment was made despite a city ordinance that requires a developer to build and pay for roads in their project -- something many Hallowell developers have done.

Is combining six distinct projects occurring in different parts of the city into a lump sum, take-it-or-leave-it borrowing question a good idea? No.

The City Council's one-loan vote is an example of a classic political calculation. Fearful that the justifiable discontent with the council's approach to subsidizing Stevens School would jeopardize passage, the council decided to pair it with the more popular Water Street reconstruction, hoping Water Street would carry the day.

That same concern prompted the addition of \$535,000 for road work in rural areas ostensibly to accommodate a temporary increase in commuter traffic and more closely connect the western part of the city with downtown. This move is clearly designed to garner votes from parts of the city farther from Stevens School and Water Street.

Added to that is a \$330,000 down payment for more downtown parking. If the Dummer House is moved to make room for more parking, the cost will rise. The need apparently is neither acute nor immediate. A city official quoted in the Kennebec Journal said, "We have our share of (parking) issues and woes, but most of the time it's not that hard to find a parking space in Hallowell."

Then there is another \$220,000 down payment for repairs to the existing fire station's hose tower and foundation in aid of some future uses involving additional costs.

Vote no on Hallowell bond

Add a few odds and ends and before you know it you have \$2.36 million in new debt with a 20-year cost to taxpayers of about \$3.4 million. Interestingly, the total cost of borrowing is not mentioned in the city's voter information brochure or in an earlier piece in the KJ in favor of this new spending.

Why is information about the total cost important? Because property taxes in Hallowell are rising fast and unsustainably. More future spending associated with these projects and others, a new fire station and trucks and even more for parking, for example, will push taxes up even higher.

Between 2016 and 2017, the mil rate went up 7.39 percent, three times faster than the core rate of inflation. Joan Sturmthal's generosity will mitigate somewhat the upward move over the next two years; nevertheless, the longer-term trend is strongly toward higher taxes.

Hallowell is renowned for its community cohesion, tolerance, and respect for diversity. The one-bond approach does nothing to bring the community together. Indeed, no matter how the vote goes on April 28, it divides residents, setting the stage for more polarization and discord.

How much better it would have been to split the bond into at least four questions grouped by like kind and to ask the voters to set their spending priorities. If not for the council's political calculus, driven by the concern that, given a choice, the voters might set different priorities, none of this disagreeable process would have been necessary. What to do?

Vote no and return decision making on borrowing for distinctly different infrastructure projects to the voters as required by the new city charter. Lumping these six projects into one bond defeats the purpose of having voters decide on any borrowing over \$250,000.

Will a "no" vote torpedo any potential project, Water Street, Stevens? No. In the event the one bond question is defeated, the City Council will separate the projects and schedule a new vote ASAP. It might even improve the Stevens subsidy. A second vote may cause some small delay, much of which could have been avoided had the council decided on this course in mid-April.

Ken Young is a former Hallowell city councilor and director of School Administrative District 16.

Credit:

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[Pre-release center for inmates in Hallowell to close](#)

Portland Press Herald

January 10, 2013 Thursday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 437 words

Byline: Betty Adams, By Betty Adams , badams@centralmaine.com, Staff Writer

Body

Pre-release center for inmates in Hallowell to close

By Betty Adams badams@centralmaine.com

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL - The Central Maine Pre-Release Center, which has operated in the Stevens School Complex since 1979, is closing.

Jody L. Breton, associate commissioner with the Department of Corrections, said in an email that the program, which currently has 58 inmates and 21 budgeted staff positions, is being relocated to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren.

"The facility in Hallowell was not designed to be a correctional facility," Breton said. "The physical plant has limitations and the Stevens School complex was authorized to be sold in a previous budget initiative."

Breton said department officials met Tuesday with staff at the center to talk about the relocation, which is expected to take place over the next several months. She said the timing had yet to be set.

"This was not part of a budget initiative," Breton said. "We will be transferring the positions and related correctional expenses to other facilities based on operational need."

Bolduc is a minimum security/community facility which generally houses prisoners with less than five years to go on their sentences.

The closing of the Hallowell facility will have a direct impact on organizations that benefit from the free inmate labor and on businesses which employ those inmates.

"Right now, it looks like we have six employers that could be impacted," Breton said. "We are committed to these employers and are considering doing transport from Bolduc where it is feasible."

Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell, said she wanted to see communication between the community and the state about what is happening. "Hopefully something that helps the budget is good land use and good community policy and good correctional policy," she said.

Hallowell City Manager Michael Starn said he was unaware that the state intended to close the facility.

Pre-release center for inmates in Hallowell to close

The Legislature had previously authorized the Bureau of General Services to sell the 63-acre, state-owned Stevens School campus, which at one time included multiple state offices, by 2011. That did not happen.

Donald McCormack, director of the Bureau of General Services, said Thursday the state still owns the property, which continues to house other state offices, including the Department of Marine Resources and human resources and financial offices for natural resources agencies.

Published records show that at least several inmates housed at the Hallowell pre-release center have been charged with escape.

The most recent report shows that Justin Ross of East Willton walked off a work site in Leeds in September 2012.

Load-Date: July 8, 2013

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[City Council firm on land transfer](#)

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

February 11, 2015 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 2.B

Length: 597 words

Byline: SHEPHERD, MICHAEL

Body

ABSTRACT

Residents of Page and Pleasant streets packed the City Hall chambers on Monday after an advisory committee voted unanimously in January to ask the council to reconsider an earlier vote that signaled support for Regional School Unit 2 getting the state-owned land, which is attached to the property at the Reed Center.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell Council on Monday continued discussions about whether open space behind Page and Pleasant streets should be preserved or sold off for possible development.

Hallowell neighbors wary of RSU 2 control of Stevens School property

HALLOWELL -- City councilors on Monday stood by an endorsement of putting 14 acres of undeveloped land at the Stevens School complex in the local school district's control.

Residents of Page and Pleasant streets packed the City Hall chambers on Monday after an advisory committee voted unanimously in January to ask the council to reconsider an earlier vote that signaled support for Regional School Unit 2 getting the state-owned land, which is attached to the property at the Reed Center. The school district uses the property as the district's headquarters.

It's an early kerfuffle in the city's work of narrowing down a vision for the 64-acre complex that's now owned by the state, which is expected to move its last few offices from the site by spring and is expected to market much of it to developers.

The council took no action on the matter Monday, sticking by its original stance after lobbying from neighborhood residents.

However, some think the city could be hurting development of the property before a developer is identified.

Sharon Treat, a former legislator from Page Street, said development of the 14-acre parcel could "change the flavor of the neighborhood," while some feared an extension of Page Street could be built to create access to any new development there.

"Why we're here is we're asking you to remove any risk there might be to our neighborhood," Page Street resident Jeremy Sheaffer said.

City Council firm on land transfer

The school district has long been negotiating with the state for a transfer of 8 acres around the building the district leases, as well as the 14 acres behind it. RSU 2 board chairwoman Dawn Gallagher, of Hallowell, told the advisory committee that it doesn't need all of that back portion, but she said on Monday that "we want to do what the citizens want to do" and the district would comply with any city master plan for the land.

Councilor Lisa Harvey-McPherson said Gallagher gave the city "an easy out" on the issue, but she said the council's position may have created a hurdle for potential developers of the parcel. However, Councilor Lynn Irish said "the other hurdle" is that the district's negotiations -- which must now be done by June, when its current lease expires -- could be hampered if its parcel is changed.

Chris Vallee, a member of the Stevens School Advisory Committee, said last week that he'd like to get the property on the city property tax rolls, calling it the "whole purpose of this committee." But Joan Sturmthal, another member, said on Monday that the entire committee "is not hot" for development in the 14-acre parcel. Rather, she said members wanted it to be considered as part of the larger portion being marketed by the state to make a potential deal as flexible as possible.

"If the council doesn't agree," said Gerry Mahoney, a committee member, "then I think we ought to change the name from 'advisory committee' to 'observatory committee.' "

Michael Shepherd -- 370-7652 mshepherd@centralmaine.com Twitter: @mikeshepherdme

Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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Council firm on 14-acre transfer; Neighbors wary

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

February 11, 2015 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 2.B; ISSN: 0745-2039

Length: 592 words

Byline: SHEPHERD, MICHAEL

Body

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of RSU 2 controlling Stevens School land

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Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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State agencies play musical chairs

Kennebec Journal

August 18, 2010 Wednesday

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Byline: BETTY ADAMS

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- The former headquarters of the state Department of Labor will be the new home of three state agencies by the end of September.

The juggling of state facilities -- part of a state facilities master plan -- will affect dozens of state employees, the state bureaucracy's footprint in Augusta and Hallowell, and the city of Hallowell's long-standing pursuit of the Stevens School complex.

Employees of the State Planning Office, the state Department of Audit, and the Maine Human Rights Commission -- more than 100 total -- will move into the refurbished former Department of Labor headquarters at 19 Union St., said Chip Gavin, director of the Bureau of General Services.

The building, which was erected in 1960 with an addition constructed in 1970, has undergone a \$2.5 million renovation since the Department of Labor moved out more than a year ago. Gavin said the improvements include included strengthening the roof, installing a new heating-and-ventilation system and interior and environmental improvements.

"Some of the work started in 2009 and the core of the work occurred this year," Gavin said.

Gavin said the project cost was a significant savings compared to the \$15 million-to-\$25 million estimate for removing and replacing the building.

"All of this is in the context of implementing the legislatively approved Master Plan for state facilities," Gavin said.

Other State Facilities Master Plan items include reuse of the current State Planning Office at 184 State St. -- the historic 1910 Guy Gannett house near the Blaine House.

"The intention is for it to be the focus of a stakeholder process this fall and the next calendar year," Gavin said. "We're seeking to expedite that house so it can be actively reused."

Two other State Planning Office sites across State Street from the Gannett building will be sold, he said.

State agencies play musical chairs

Those houses -- at 187 and 189 State St. -- are connected but are actually two properties, according to State Historian Earle Shettleworth said.

The state refers to them as the Smith-Merrill House.

The house at 189 State St., which is on the corner of State and Child streets, was built in 1830 by Jacob H. Arnold. The Queen Anne-style turret was added in the 1890s, Shettleworth said.

Next door, the home with the green shutters was built in 1830 by Edward Williams, a merchant who helped lay out nearby Capitol Park, he said.

The Department of Audit will be moving from the Flagg Dummer building to its new offices.

The Maine Human Rights Commission will vacate its current facilities at the state annex in the Stevens School complex on Winthrop Street, Hallowell. The State Facilities Master Plan calls for state agencies to move off the school campus and for the property to be sold.

"The disposal, sale and redevelopment of Stevens School (property) has long been called for in the master plan," Gavin said. "We will be working with the community to see that plan come to fruition. This effort is totally in keeping with that."

The city of Hallowell has made numerous overtures toward the state seeking to obtain the Stevens School property.

Department of Labor offices are now in the Central Maine Commerce Center, Civic Center Drive.

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Hallowell mayor outlines city vision

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

January 5, 2016 Tuesday

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Length: 747 words

Byline: PAFUNDI, JASON

Body

ABSTRACT

Taking a page out of David Letterman's book, Walker presented those in attendance with a "Top 10" list of goals and issues for the city, including the need to have downtown buildings inspected for fire risks in light of recent serious fires in towns like Gardiner.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell will inaugurate two new councilors tonight during its first meeting of 2016. Mayor Mark Walker will also give a "state of the city" address.

Top three priorities the fire department, Stevens School, Water Street

HALLOWELL -- Mayor Mark Walker laid out his vision for the city during his inaugural address Monday night at the City Hall Auditorium in Hallowell.

During the speech, Walker highlighted some of the achievements of his first term as mayor, along with goals and plans for the city in the new year.

"I'm very proud of this council that despite the challenge, Hallowell had no tax increase this past year and only a modest increase in the prior year," Walker said.

Taking a page out of David Letterman's book, Walker presented those in attendance with a "Top 10" list of goals and issues for the city, including the need to have downtown buildings inspected for fire risks in light of recent serious fires in towns like Gardiner.

Walker also said the city plans to seek a permanent solution to what he called a "decades-long parking problem," including increasing the number of permanent spots downtown.

But the top three items were the future of fire department, the Stevens School campus and the Water Street reconstruction project.

"I'm optimistic and have a very positive outlook," Walker said. "I quote Socrates from 2,000 years ago that 'the secret to change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting (for) the old, but on building the new.'"

Hallowell mayor outlines city vision

The inauguration also featured the official swearing-in of Sophie Gabrion and Diano Circo as new councilors, Walker, who ran unopposed for another term, and Councilor-at-Large George LaPointe. LaPointe was unanimously elected council president later in the evening and said he agrees with Walker's top three priorities for the city.

"But I would've put the budget up there too," LaPointe joked.

In November's election, Gabrion, representing Ward 2, ran unopposed and replaces Lynn Irish. Circo defeated Andrea Mooney to fill the seat vacated by Mark Sullivan in Ward 4.

Stefan Pakulski said before the inauguration, which was his first as Hallowell's city manager, that Gabrion and Circo appear poised for success on the council.

"(Diano) served for many years on the Conservation Commission, so he presumably has a fair background with city government process at least in his subject area," Pakulski said. "(Sophie) appears to have some understanding, as well, through connections with former and current council members."

"Both new members seem very interested in municipal issues and seem willing to take on the responsibilities," Pakulski said.

Councilor responsibilities include heading some of the city government's many committees. Walker named Gabrion the chair of the Cemetery Committee, while Circo will lead the Protection Committee.

During his address, Walker spoke of the continuing discussion among local leaders and community members regarding the future of the city's fire department. Walker and others have gone on record stating that a decision about the fire department is a priority for 2016.

To that end, Walker announced and touted a "refocused" Fire Services Study Committee which will hope to address concerns about the department. Robert Duplesis will chair the committee, which includes new councilor Sophie Gabrion, former councilor Mark Sullivan, Dawn Gallagher, Dan Davis, Sandy Stubbs and Pakulski.

Walker stressed that the committee would not tackle the issue of the outdated fire station itself, but rather on how best to provide fire services to the residents of Hallowell.

"I expect it would be a couple of months or more of studying about this issue," Walker said during his address.

In addition to his inaugural address, Walker filled about 100 committee seats except on the conservation commission, which has two vacancies. Walker said the cultural, recreation and Stevens School advisory committees and the tree board will be appointed at council meetings either this month or in February.

The council will hold its first meeting of the year at 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 11, at City Hall on Winthrop Street.

Jason Pafundi -- 621-5663 jpafundi@centralmaine.com Twitter: @jasonpafundiKJ

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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End of Document

Developer moves ahead with plan for former school; Matt Morrill wants to make a Hallowell property into a mix of commercial and residential space.

Portland Press Herald

July 26, 2016 Tuesday

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Length: 775 words

Byline: JASON PAFUNDI

JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

HALLOWELL -- A developer is moving ahead with the creation of a master plan for the Stevens School property now that city officials have voted to allow ordinance changes for the project.

Matt Morrill's attorney, Tom Federle, said the next step is the filing of the master plan, which he expects to happen in September.

"Once the master plan is approved, (Matt) will be in a position to begin applying for development approvals," Federle said.

Federle said Morrill, who purchased the property in April, is continuing to make improvements to the Baker Building, which already has one tenant and should have another soon. He's working on the engineering plans ahead of the necessary infrastructure work on the campus.

"It just takes time and it's a work in progress," he said. "(Matt) has come into this project with the long view that this is going to take time. He's got a long road ahead of him."

Hallowell's City Council approved the ordinance changes in its meeting earlier this month, so Morrill and Federle have begun moving forward in the process. Last week, the Planning Board held a workshop with planning consultant Mark Eyerman to discuss that process and issues that may arise.

Eyerman, of Planning Decisions Inc., said the Stevens School Planned Development District is unique to Hallowell's ordinance and is different than what's required in the other zones around the city.

"The purpose was really simply to walk through the provisions in the district with the board so that they understand what the current process would be for approving the master plan and what requirements there would be," Eyerman said by phone last week.

He said it's a little more challenging because many of the board members were not involved in the discussions about the creation of those requirements and how they would be applied.

Developer moves ahead with plan for former school Matt Morrill wants to make a Hallowell property into a mix of commercial and residential space.

"Danielle (Obery), the board chair, felt it would be worthwhile to sit down and go through and understand what the process is and what the expectations would be for the applicant," Eyerman said.

The initial two-phase process, including approval of the master plan, is long and thorough and could potentially take 270 days, though Planning Board member Jane Orbeton said the board is confident that the process shouldn't take that long.

"I think the process may run fairly smoothly and fairly quickly, though it depends on what the proposal is," Orbeton said.

Federle said the board has the opportunity to approve things sooner than waiting for the 45-day period outlined in the ordinance, and he thinks once the city sees the master plan, they'll move quickly.

"We take comfort and hope in that fact that we think what Matt's going to put before them is something they'll see is aligned with the city's goals," Federle said. "If so, they can process it more quickly."

Federle has years of experience in zoning law, and he said none of the zoning issues related to the Stevens School campus are daunting, nor is the master plan requirement. But the project does have its problems.

"The state of the infrastructure and the state of the buildings is daunting, and the many processes to finance the redevelopment are big hurdles to cross," he said. "All of that combined creates a very large challenge, which is why most developers had taken a pass on the project."

Late last month the Planning Board held a special meeting to discuss ordinance changes proposed by Morrill and Federle. After more than four hours, the board unanimously voted to recommend the changes to the City Council, which approved the amended language at its July meeting.

"Based on that experience, I think they are a well-qualified board and did a really good job asking the right questions while working through the right issues," Eyerman said.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, paid \$215,000 in April for the 54-acre campus on the top of Winthrop Street. The property had been marketed by the state for more than 10 years, and Morrill was interested in the property for several years before making an offer in 2015.

He envisions turning the campus into a mixed-use development with a combination of commercial and residential space including affordable housing, small retail and shared open space. The ordinance changes, Morrill said, allowed him to start marketing the property to other developers and potential tenants. Jason Pafundi can be contacted at 621-5663 or at: jpafundi@centralmaine.com Twitter: @jasonpafundiKJ

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Kennebec Journal

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[Hallowell Council OKs bond reading](#)

Kennebec Journal

January 10, 2017 Tuesday

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Byline: JASON PAFUNDI

JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

The finance committee has proposed a \$2.36 million bond package that includes funding for the Water Street reconstruction, maintenance to several rural Hallowell roads, Central Street parking improvements, stabilization of the Second Street fire station and infrastructure repairs to the Stevens Commons campus.

FULL TEXT

A big crowd is expected in Hallowell Monday night for a joint meeting between the Planning Board and City Council, where they will discuss the Stevens Commons project. A Winthrop developer wants the city and voters to approve a \$500,000 bond to improve the roads and sidewalks in the complex, but a mailer sent to every home is urging residents to rise up against the plan. Photos by freelancer Elise Klysa. LATE

\$2.36M to cover municipal projects, Stevens School

HALLOWELL -- It was standing-room only in the City Hall Auditorium Monday as the City Council approved the first reading of a proposed bond package that would shape the city's future for decades.

The finance committee has proposed a \$2.36 million bond package that includes funding for the Water Street reconstruction, maintenance to several rural Hallowell roads, Central Street parking improvements, stabilization of the Second Street fire station and infrastructure repairs to the Stevens Commons campus.

"The finance committee continues to recommend one bond package because we think the various components of the bond fit together to support the continued economic vitality and development of the town," said chairman George LaPointe.

There are pros and cons to having one bond or multiple bond packages. With one bond, City Manager Nate Rudy said it shows Hallowell is united with the goal of promoting community economic development. However, having just one bond could have an adverse effect if a voter votes against the entire proposal because they didn't like one piece. With multiple bonds, voters can pick and choose which projects to support or oppose.

Hallowell Council OKs bond reading

While the proposed bond package includes nearly \$2 million in funding for other projects, much of the public comment centered on the money allocated to the redevelopment of Stevens School.

"We've gotten a lot of mail and email, which I appreciate very much," LaPointe said. "It shows citizens of Hallowell remain committed to their town."

Stevens Commons owner and developer Matt Morrill has asked the city for \$600,000 to help fix roads and sidewalks within the property which he said would help make the campus more attractive to other developers. Morrill's proposal includes turning ownership of the roads over to the city, which would then oversee all maintenance.

Ken Young, who wrote an opinion piece in Monday's Kennebec Journal and has been one of the most vocal in Hallowell regarding Stevens Commons, said he's in favor of the campus' redevelopment in ways that are good for Hallowell.

"My quarrel is subsidizing infrastructure improvements that are typically the responsibility of the developer," Young said. "A principal concern of mine is borrowing money and putting it into the roads is a static investment."

Morrill has said he estimates completing the redevelopment of the campus with the vision laid out in the master plan would cost about \$20 million. He said he needs other developers to see that vision become a reality, and the property isn't as marketable without infrastructure improvements.

Morrill acquired the former girls boarding school property from the state in April for \$215,000, and he submitted the master plan for the campus in September. He envisions a mixed-use development including affordable senior housing, commercial and retail space, and small, clustered subdivisions. To help make that happen, he's asking the council -- and ultimately voters -- to approve a \$600,000 bond to improve roads that run through the campus. As part of the plan, Morrill would turn over ownership of the roads to the city.

The bond would be paid back over 20 years, but the city has yet to finalize the interest rate or what the overall cost would be.

Last week, Patricia Connors sent out a mailer to everyone in Hallowell because she thinks "giving Morrill a \$1,067 gift is not a good investment," and she re-stated her position during Monday's meeting.

"Developers should bring their own money to the table and build streets and utilities that the city is willing to accept," she said.

Connors' postcards, which she said cost nearly \$600 to mail, said the City Council is rushing to judgment on the development and is trying to "hide a \$600,000 bond to benefit Morrill within the Water Street reconstruction bond" and asked people to come to Monday's meeting to help her keep the proposal from moving forward.

Connors said she favors redevelopment of the Stevens School property, but she said Morrill is going about it the wrong way. She said public money shouldn't be used to help fund a private development and questioned why the city would pay for infrastructure improvements on private property.

Morrill has long contended that the project is a public/private partnership with the city. Under his proposal, the roads within the campus would become city property, and the money from any bonding would be paid directly to contractors.

"It may seem rushed to people who're attending one of these meetings for the first time, but I've put two years into this project," Morrill said. "Just to get people to come to the table, I'm asking the city for a little bit of money to get the road network in place."

Morrill refuted Connors' numbers and said he is concerned that people are getting false information. He said he is committed to the project and wants it to succeed.

Hallowell Council OKs bond reading

"I just need your support," the developer said.

Jason Pafundi -- 621-5663 jpafundi@centralmaine.com Twitter: @jasonpafundiKJ

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Changes proposed for Stevens site

Kennebec Journal

July 4, 2016 Monday

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Byline: JASON PAFUNDI

JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

The proposed change to Section 9-388 governing allowable uses on the property added "residential uses approved by the Planning Board as part of a single Open Space Development pursuant to Hallowell's subdivision ordinance; re-use of existing structures for Business and Professional Offices and Residential Uses; and Private and public streets."

FULL TEXT

Folo on Thursday's Hallowell Planning Board meeting about ordinance changes to benefit the Stevens School developer. Did they vote? More details on the discussion, what happens next.

Hallowell Planning Board ordinance revisions passed on to City Council

HALLOWELL -- It took more than four hours Thursday night, but the Planning Board finally unanimously voted to recommend changes to the city's land use ordinance governing the Stevens School campus.

The board's recommendations will be given to the City Council ahead of the July 11 meeting.

Matt Morrill, who purchased the 54-acre campus from the state in April for \$215,000, and his attorney, Tom Federle, proposed the changes in order for Morrill to be able to market the property to developers and potential tenants.

"These changes should facilitate Matt's ability to move forward with plans for redevelopment and for marketing the property to potential developers and marketers," said Judy Feinstein, vice chair of the Planning Board. Feinstein led Thursday's meeting because board chair Danielle Obery was out of town.

The board engaged in back-and-forth discussion with Morrill and Federle and several members of the public throughout the evening about the policy and practical implications of the proposed changes. When the clock finally struck 11 p.m., one proposed change was withdrawn, another's proposed language was eliminated and its intent was incorporated into another part of the related ordinance, and other proposed language was clarified.

Changes proposed for Stevens site

"Through almost five hours of public hearing a deliberation, it was abundantly clear that the Planning Board has the stamina and the smarts to advance the city's interests and help revitalize the campus," Federle said Sunday by email. "None of this will be easy, but I think everyone left the meeting pleased with the progress made and encouraged to keep moving forward together."

The proposed change to Section 9-388 governing allowable uses on the property added "residential uses approved by the Planning Board as part of a single Open Space Development pursuant to Hallowell's subdivision ordinance; re-use of existing structures for Business and Professional Offices and Residential Uses; and Private and public streets."

Members of the board and the public were concerned that Morrill would begin work on a proposed subdivision without first submitting a master plan, but the board confirmed that these proposed changes do not mean that a master plan would not be required. Feinstein said they hope to move the plan review process along as expeditiously as possible, and Morrill and Federle said a master plan would be submitted soon.

"Policy change is picky work, but we took great care to do our best in developing recommended language that was and will be understood the same way by everyone, will be useful for the purposes for which it was intended and that will, we hope, minimize any unintended negative consequences," Feinstein said by email.

Other recommended proposed changes were made to the minimum setback from the street right-of-way for any new building or structure and any existing building and to the dimensional requirements in an Open Space Development.

"We appreciate that Matt and Tom want to work collaboratively with the city toward what really is a common goal -- getting that area back into good, productive use and making the most of the opportunities it offers," Feinstein said.

The meeting was held in the City Hall Auditorium because of the anticipated large crowd, and since there were no microphones for speakers to use, the room's noisy air conditioning units were turned off, making a sometimes heated discussion even hotter.

Feinstein said the board knew for weeks that Obery would be out of town, so there was time for them to prepare. Feinstein said she's had many opportunities in her time on the board to watch others manage the meeting, so she was comfortable leading Thursday night.

"We have a good group on the board who are committed to Hallowell and to the work and the process we need to follow," Feinstein said. "That helps a lot."

Councilor Alan Stearns attended the meeting along with councilors Kate DuFour, Diano Circo and Phil Lindley and Mayor Mark Walker. Stearns has spent a lot of time with Morrill discussing the property and doesn't expect any resistance to the final enactment by the council at the July meeting.

"I'm impressed that Matt has put on the table some high density housing retaining historic integrity and surrounded by open space and trails and access to the full potential of Howard Hill's natural landscape," Stearns said.

Morrill hosted a site walk with Federle June 27 to show people the vision for the property and to tour several of the buildings, some of which need a lot of work if not a total reconstruction.

Federle said the city and Planning Board have demonstrated a willingness to tackle the challenges that have hindered the Stevens School property.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

Changes proposed for Stevens site

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HALLOWELL City's future seen in plan

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

March 4, 2010 Thursday

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Byline: EDWARDS, KEITH

Body

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- A plan for Hallowell's future, two years in the making, is up for public review Thursday.

The draft Hallowell Comprehensive Plan, aimed at guiding the future of development in the city, has been written by Comprehensive Plan Review Committee, over the span of two years, and counting.

But it's not too late for residents to comment and suggest changes to the document, according to consultant Frank O'Hara, of Planning Decisions. The public hearing tonight is the last chance for people to comment on the plan before it goes to the Hallowell Planning Board, which will recommend a final draft to the City Council.

When and if it's approved by councilors, the Ordinance Review Committee would then begin to draft changes to the city's ordinances to reflect the direction from the Comprehensive Plan, the plan states.

"It's an important time, if people have ideas or changes, to make those suggestions," said O'Hara, of Hallowell.

The general idea of the document, O'Hara said, is to "build on the assets Hallowell has now. The arts and music and the lively downtown waterfront, the nice neighborhoods, the open rural areas."

The public hearing on the plan is tonight at 6 at City Hall.

The plan, in two parts, is online at <http://hallowell.govoffice.com/>.

O'Hara said the plan includes recommendations to create more open space in rural areas; extend the feel of downtown along Water Street; set up a new advisory historical commission; extend the business zone, with a goal of fostering job creation along the Interstate 95 corridor; require more subdivisions to hook into public sewer and water; and create a special zone for the Stevens School complex.

The Legislature has authorized the Bureau of General Services to sell the 63-acre, state-owned Stevens School campus, which includes multiple state offices, by 2011.

What should be done with the site, which the city could purchase, has been a subject of extensive debate in Hallowell. The draft Hallowell Comprehensive Plan recommends a special zoning district be created, encompassing the Stevens School property.

O'Hara said the district would be unique because rather than setting specific standards for development there, the city would instead set a goal of creating a balance of uses, potentially including housing, open space and

HALLOWELL City's future seen in plan

commercial activity that fits in the neighborhood. Developers could then submit plans made with those goals in mind.

The draft's plan for the city's rural areas includes provisions meant to spur developers of subdivisions to connect to the public sewer and water systems.

And for the downtown, O'Hara said, the plan encourages future development to take on the appearance of the existing downtown.

The plan would replace a 1997 Comprehensive Plan update.

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[7 pre-release inmates moved to Kennebec jail](#)

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

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Body

BY SUSAN M. COVER

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- Seven prisoners who lived at the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell, which closed last Thursday, have been moved to the Kennebec County jail in Augusta.

The effort to keep those inmates with ties to the area in central Maine is designed to help with the transition back to the community, said Kennebec County Sheriff Randall Liberty.

"I see this as a natural progression as they come back into the community," Liberty said Wednesday.

A state worker assigned to monitor the inmates takes them to the construction site for the new hospital north of Augusta each day and brings them back to the jail at night, Liberty said. Inmates in the pre-release program are in the final months of incarceration, and they are required to perform community service work and often hold paying jobs.

The program first opened in Hallowell in 1979, according to the Department of Corrections.

State officials surprised Hallowell city leaders and community members earlier this year when they announced the closure of the facility at the former Stevens School complex on Winthrop Street. The pre-release center often provided inmates to help with painting projects at town buildings, heavy lifting needed for book sales, or help at the local homeless shelter.

Residents who spoke at a meeting in February at Hallowell City Hall said they depend on the free labor provided by the inmates.

Liberty said the county jail, which also provides inmates for community projects, will now coordinate local volunteer efforts.

In addition to the seven inmates who went to Augusta, 14 were transferred to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren and seven went to the Maine Correctional Center in Windham, said Scott Fish, spokesman for the state Department of Corrections.

Corrections officials said earlier this year that the move was necessary because the state is trying to sell the Stevens School property.

Employees at the facility have also been scattered to various sites, with five getting promotions or transfers within the system, 15 being reassigned in the system and one returning to a previous assignment, Fish said.

7 pre-release inmates moved to Kennebec jail

"Everything went smooth," Fish said.

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Some residents worried about development, others push for Hallowell parcel to be taxed

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

February 9, 2015 Monday

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Section: Pg. 1.A; ISSN: 0745-2039

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Byline: SHEPHERD, MICHAEL

Body

ABSTRACT

[...]at a meeting of the Stevens School committee in January, the RSU 2 board's chairwoman, Dawn Gallagher, told committee members that the district had been negotiating for that land because it was included by the state, but that it didn't need all the land and is willing to limit negotiations to a small portion of the 14-acre plot, freeing much of that land to potentially come onto Hallowell's property tax rolls.

FULL TEXT

Residents of a northern Hallowell neighborhood are concerned after a city council subcommittee recommended that a state-owned, 14-acre plot of land above Pleasant Street be left open to development, going against a January vote of the full council.

HALLOWELL -- Page and Pleasant street residents are concerned by a city committee's decision to ask councilors to reconsider a vote that signaled support for putting 14 acres of undeveloped land next to the neighborhood in the local school district's control.

It's an early bone of contention in the Stevens School Advisory Committee's work of narrowing down Hallowell's vision for the state-owned, 64-acre complex off of Winthrop Street that features some of the last undeveloped land in the heart of the city.

The last state offices housed there are expected to move by spring, and Gov. Paul LePage's administration has said it will market much of the property to developers with Hallowell's input.

The state began trying to sell the property in 2008, first through a request for proposals and then by listing it for \$1.1 million.

The 14-building property is mostly vacant. Inmates housed at the Central Maine Pre-Release Center were moved out in 2013.

Regional School Unit 2, which has been headquartered at the Reed Center on the campus for two decades, has long been negotiating a transfer with the state for its building that would also include 22 acres of land, made up of a developed eight-acre portion and 14 acres of undeveloped land bordering Pleasant Street yards.

Some residents worried about development, others push for Hallowell parcel to be taxed

However, at a meeting of the Stevens School committee in January, the RSU 2 board's chairwoman, Dawn Gallagher, told committee members that the district had been negotiating for that land because it was included by the state, but that it didn't need all the land and is willing to limit negotiations to a small portion of the 14-acre plot, freeing much of that land to potentially come onto Hallowell's property tax rolls.

After that, the committee voted unanimously to ask the city council to reconsider a January vote in which it expressed support for the district getting the entire piece of land.

But that makes some in the abutting neighborhood nervous.

Last March, Jeremy Sheaffer of Page Street sent a letter signed by 20 neighbors to the state and school district in support of the school district taking ownership.

In an interview, Sheaffer said he "would rather sit across the table with the RSU board, two members of which were elected by Hallowell voters, than a nameless, faceless developer to be named later," adding that commercial development could force a discussion of extending Page Street, which bends atop a hill into Pleasant Street.

"In political terms, it's a third-rail issue for the neighborhood," Sheaffer said. "Page and Pleasant streets are a quiet, peaceful neighborhood and we don't want to see it turned into an off-ramp for a subdivision or a shortcut to shopping in Augusta."

Councilor Phillip Lindley, a committee member who is married to Gallagher, said any plan to extend Page Street would have to be "carefully scrutinized" to gain his support. He also said the sloped and rocky topography of the land could make it difficult to develop and that residents' concerns may be premature.

"Certainly, I understand their nervousness, but there will be plenty of opportunities for input and scrutiny down the road," he said.

Chris Vallee, a real estate agent on the committee, who prompted the discussion with Gallagher at the meeting, said he's not sure the land could be developed and isn't calling for that. However, he said he'd rather see the land attached to parcels marketed to developers so the city can tax it.

"The best interest of the city is to get it on the tax rolls. That's the whole purpose of this committee," he said. "If you don't want that, there's something funny. I don't know why anybody wouldn't want that."

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Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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End of Document

[Housing designer presents strategy; Planning Board hears affordable housing plans](#)

Kennebec Journal

April 20, 2017 Thursday

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Byline: JASON PAFUNDI

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Body

FULL TEXT

The Hallowell Planning Board on Wednesday will begin consideration of a proposal from Community Housing of Maine to restore a 25,000 square foot building at the Stevens School complex for use as affordable apartments for seniors. Meeting starts at 7 p.m. LATE

HALLOWELL -- A Portland-based affordable-housing developer went before the Planning Board Wednesday night and presented its preliminary plans to renovate the Central Building on the Stevens Commons property as housing for the elderly.

Community Housing of Maine has signed a purchase option with Stevens Commons developer Matt Morrill and submitted a preliminary application to the Planning Board for a "historic restoration of the 25,000-square-foot Central Building into affordable apartments for seniors," according to a news release last week from Community Housing of Maine.

Morrill said it's an important first step in the right direction toward the redevelopment of the campus.

"We feel this project meshes well with the master plan (for the property)," he said.

The next steps in the process include Community Housing of Maine submitting a completed application, a site plan review and public hearing; the review and hearing were not scheduled by the Planning Board.

Erin Cooperrider, development director for Community Housing of Maine, said the organization is excited about the opportunity to be involved with the Stevens Commons project. "It's really a beautiful campus," she said.

Cooperrider said there are no plans to change the exterior of the structure, but there are plans to restore the brick and windows while converting the building's interior to about 30 studio and 1-bedroom units. She forecasted a cost of about \$3.5 million to complete the project.

The organization plans to keep a symmetrical design throughout the three levels, and there will be a community area in the building for residents. There will be shared parking and green space, and the building will utilize existing utilities and access points. The building also will stay true to its history by respecting existing corridors and stairwells, Cooperrider said.

Housing designer presents strategy Planning Board hears affordable housing plans

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, bought the former Stevens School property from the state for \$215,000 a year ago. Since he acquired the campus last April, Morrill has stated his vision for the campus includes affordable senior housing, which he said Hallowell and central Maine desperately need.

Cooperrider said an architect and structural engineer already have begun working on building plans and have met with Hallowell Code Enforcement Officer Doug Ide to discuss the subdivision site plans. Cooperrider said that similar projects by her organization take about two years to complete.

In addition to the work being done at Stevens Commons, Hallowell officials and residents are busy preparing for a Water Street reconstruction project set to begin around this time next year, as well as planning the construction of a new fire station -- with up to \$1 million from an anonymous donor -- on the Stevens Commons property.

According to Morrill's master plan for developing the property, the Central Building is in the best condition of the buildings on campus. It has "soaring ceilings and large windows that peer down over the common (to) the Kennebec River" and has a very appealing layout.

Morrill has asked for the city's help in redeveloping the campus, which was built in the 1800s as a boarding school for girls. Voters will go to the polls April 28 for a special election to approve or deny a \$2.36 million bond package that includes \$600,000 for the Stevens Commons redevelopment. The money would help repair the roads and sidewalks on the property, which would become owned and maintained by the city.

Community Housing of Maine, a statewide nonprofit organization, has been developing properties in Kennebec County since 1995 as part of its mission to provide housing for low-income and disadvantaged people, as well as workforce and senior housing.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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End of Document

Hallowell affordable-housing panel disbands empty-handed

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

April 14, 2009 Tuesday

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Body

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- The Affordable Housing Committee has disbanded, after member Dot Mithee told the City Council it had "come to a standstill."

"We've exhausted our options right now in exploring affordable housing and wish to be disbanded at this time," Mithee, a former city councilor, said Monday.

Mithee said the committee, formed last year, looked at various options to provide affordable housing within the city, but with the exception of one, most options proved nonviable.

"We met with landlords downtown, but they seemed rather reluctant to provide such housing," she said. "Many of them have invested quite a bit of their own money into restoring and bringing their buildings up to code and would prefer to keep renting to whomever they like, rather than a lower-income group (of tenants)."

The Affordable Housing Committee also considered building new housing on the west side of town but abandoned the idea, as the land is not within walking distance to town.

One option that could be viable, Mithee said, is using the Stevens School complex.

"This is ideal," Mithee said Monday. "Neighbors and abutters were also favorable to the idea when we talked to them."

The property is still under the ownership of the state. Negotiations between the city and the State Bureau of General Services have yet to formally reopen.

Mithee said she doubted this would be the last word on a panel to seek affordable housing options. "There will need for it again someday," she said. "I doubt this is the end of it."

In other business, Dawn Gallagher, member of the Stevens School Committee, updated the City Council on the activities of the newly-expanded committee.

Gallagher said legislation submitted by Rep. Sharon Anglin Treat, D-Hallowell, would require the state to hold a public hearing before it sells the 63-acre parcel. A second bill, proposed by Sen. Seth Goodall, D-Richmond, would permit the Reed Center on the campus to be sold to the school district for \$1.

Hallowell affordable-housing panel disbands empty-handed

Gallagher said the committee drafted an amendment to be adopted into Treat's legislation that would preserve an agreement first made in 2003, when the state had permission to sell the complex.

In 2003, the state was given permission by lawmakers to sell Stevens School by 2010. The amendment would continue many of the same stipulations as the 2003 law enacted, such as allowing a portion of property be allotted to Hallowell for municipal use and for the Reed Center to be used by the school district.

"We're not looking to change anything or asking the state to do anything different," Gallagher said Monday. "We merely drafted the amendment to continue the same process we have had in the past."

The new amendment states the school district would have the opportunity to buy the Reed Center until September 2011. A group including the city and the school district would have to convene prior to any sale.

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Hallowell Pre-Release Center set to close

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

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Body

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- The Central Maine Pre-Release Center, which has operated on the Stevens School complex since 1979, is closing.

The program, which has 58 inmates and 21 budgeted staff positions, is being relocated to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren, said Jody L. Breton, associate commissioner with the Department of Corrections.

Closing the center will have a direct impact on nonprofit organizations that benefit from the free inmate labor and on local businesses that employ those inmates.

"Right now, it looks like we have six employers that could be impacted," Breton said. "We are committed to these employers and are considering doing transport from Bolduc where it is feasible."

The Windsor and Augusta food banks, for example, have benefited from such labor. Prisoners at the pre-release center form public restitution work crews and participate in work-release programs, according to description of the center on the department's website. They have donated an estimated 22,000 hours of free labor annually.

The center also houses prisoners in a residential substance abuse treatment program.

The loss of free inmate labor would mean less fresh paint and maybe fewer improvements at the Windsor Fairgrounds, where inmate crews have worked annually for at least a dozen years.

Bob Brann, a trustee of the Windsor Fair and president of the Windsor Historical Society, said inmates from the pre-release center "painted everything that's painted down there," and he's never had any trouble with them.

"They move stuff for me, dig trenches by hand," Brann said. "It's the greatest gift for us. I do a barbecue for them because they like it and it's a gift to us. It's a small price."

Brann said he's had five or six men working for up to a month at a time and intermittently throughout the summers. "It would really make a big difference to us if they do move to Warren," he said. "If we're not able to continue to get them, the place will never look as good it does now."

While the labor is donated, Brann offers a token of appreciation if the inmates work a week or so.

Breton said the Hallowell center on Winthrop Street was not designed for adult corrections use. The Maine Industrial School for Girls opened on the site in 1875 as "a refuge for viciously inclined girls between the ages of

Hallowell Pre-Release Center set to close

seven and 15 who by forces of circumstances or associations are in manifest danger of becoming outcasts of society," according to historichallowell.mainememory.net.

It closed as a school for troubled youth in 1970, and became a state office annex before eventually becoming the pre-release center.

"The physical plant has limitations and the Stevens School complex was authorized to be sold in a previous budget initiative," she said.

Breton said department officials met Tuesday with staff at the center to talk about the relocation, which is expected to take place over the next several months. She said the date of the closing hasn't been set.

"This was not part of a budget initiative," Breton said. "We will be transferring the positions and related correctional expenses to other facilities based on operational need."

The Bolduc operation in Warren is a minimum security/community prison that generally houses prisoners with less than five years to go on their sentences.

The Legislature had previously authorized the Bureau of General Services to sell the 63-acre, state-owned Stevens School campus, which at one time included multiple state offices, by 2011. That did not happen.

Donald McCormack, director of the Bureau of General Services, said Thursday the state still owns the property, which continues to house other state offices, including the Department of Marine Resources and human resources and financial offices for natural resources agencies.

Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell, said she wanted to see communication between the community and the state about what is happening there.

"Hopefully something that helps the budget is good land use and good community policy and good correctional policy," she said.

But that communication apparently has yet to occur. Hallowell City Manager Michael Starn said Wednesday he was unaware that the state intended to close the pre-release center.

Published records show that at least several inmates housed at the site have been charged with escape.

The most recent report shows that Justin Ross of East Wilton walked off a work site in Leeds in September.

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A bond for all of Hallowell

Kennebec Journal

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Body

FULL TEXT

HALLOWELL VOTERS WILL go to polls on Friday, April 28, to vote on a bond to invest in Hallowell's infrastructure and future. With much input and public discussion, the City Council unanimously voted to advance one bond of up to \$2.36 million to address infrastructure and development needs throughout Hallowell. This includes approximately \$535,000 for roads in rural Hallowell, \$585,000 for Water Street reconstruction, \$40,000 for street lights on the north end of the Water Street project, \$300,000 for Central Street parking area acquisition, \$220,000 for foundation and structure work needed on Hallowell's historic fire station, \$80,000 for maintenance and enhancement of city properties, and \$600,000 for road work and conservation land at the Stevens School complex.

The council's unanimous decision to combine the various projects into one bond is because the projects benefit all of Hallowell, and taken together they provide significant investments supporting the entire city in a way that is consistent with our comprehensive plan. These investments will position Hallowell to prosper and maintain its position as a great place to live and as a cultural hub in central Maine.

An argument was present for a separation of the bond questions, particularly the Stevens School component, because this component will invest public funds to assist with the development of a private property, and because the project comes with some risks. The City Council believes that the Stevens Commons developer has a good, sound plan for reusing this long-neglected property. The developer has invested more than \$600,000 in the property already and has committed in a binding agreement to producing affordable housing within five years. A key for prospective tenants and buyers at the site is to have a working road and water/sewer infrastructure. This is where the city's bond funds will be invested.

We believe that the risk associated with Stevens Commons investment is small compared to the risk of having the property remain idle and neglected, as happened for years prior to the developer's acquisition. Further, the Stevens Commons development projects that tax revenue to the city will exceed bond payments for the project in four or five years.

The bond investment will help assure that Stevens Commons will be developed in a manner that fits Hallowell's comprehensive plan, including conservation land and access, and to establish a new tax base from which the city will increase its property tax revenue. The recent generous offer of \$1 million to build a new fire station at Stevens Commons is another reason to support investment through the bond. Additionally, former City Council member Joan Sturmthal is giving the city \$100,000 to help the city with Stevens Commons costs; these funds will offset all city borrowing costs in excess of property tax revenue from the property for at least two years. This generous gift

A bond for all of Hallowell

shows the degree to which many Hallowell residents want Stevens Commons to become a hub of housing, recreation, and other uses.

Another bond component will fund the city's costs needed for Water Street reconstruction in 2018. The Maine Department of Transportation commitment to the project totals \$4.84 million, providing financial resources to rebuild the street and provide an improved roadway, better drainage, and enhancements to utilities, which modernize the infrastructure while maintaining the unique look of Hallowell's downtown. The disruption of parking by construction next year will be partially offset by another bond component, namely providing additional parking on Central Street. This parking will be critical for next year's construction and will also provide long-term parking in the downtown area, an ongoing issue for merchants, business customers, and residents living downtown.

Improvements to rural Hallowell roads will help with traffic issues during the reconstruction of Water Street and will also ensure the use and safety of roads that connect Hallowell with neighboring communities. These roads tie together the rural Hallowell neighborhoods with our downtown, thus strengthening Hallowell as a community.

Funds for the historic fire station on Second Street and other city buildings will be used for repairs and needed structural work, helping to maintain the character of downtown Hallowell and making the buildings more efficient and safe for public use.

Taken together, these bond components support a "one city, one bond" approach to support investment in Hallowell as a cohesive community that is a great place to live in and visit. Please vote on April 28.

George Lapointe is a Hallowell city councilor and chairman of the finance committee.

Credit:

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[Council OKs comprehensive plan](#)

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

December 17, 2022 Saturday

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Body

FULL TEXT

The plan, expected to guide the city's actions over the next decade, outlines goals to add affordable housing, increase downtown accessibility for older residents, reuse city-owned buildings and create a "Kennebec arts corridor" with nearby communities.

Hallowell's plan outlines goals, expected to guide city's actions over next decade

HALLOWELL — After two years of hard work, Hallowell has a new comprehensive plan for the first time since 2010.

The plan, expected to guide the city's actions over the next decade, encompasses a plethora of future goals for the city, with a focus on adding affordable housing, increasing downtown accessibility for older residents, finding new uses for city-owned buildings and creating a "Kennebec arts corridor" with the nearby communities of Augusta and Gardiner.

The City Council voted unanimously on Monday to approve the plan after the state completed its review of the document in late October.

Hallowell officials opted to add two sections to the comprehensive plan that are not required by state law, pertaining to arts and culture, and recreation, families and youth.

"We have a whole section on arts and culture and that is not an area that the state planning standards even require, but it's something that is extremely fundamental to what Hallowell is," said Drew Landry, chair of Hallowell's Comprehensive Planning Group. "So we want to recognize that as being a core value of the community, and we wanted to express in the plan ways to try to ensure that that aspect of Hallowell community continues to thrive and hopefully expand."

As for recreational opportunities, the plan outlines a desire to identify underutilized public or private properties that could be used to increase indoor, public activities year-round.

The plan also recommends taking a proactive approach to preparing for solar and electric vehicle infrastructure, investing in and preserving open space, addressing vacant buildings downtown, exploring ways to encourage businesses to stay in Hallowell and creating a Climate Resilience Committee to plan for sea level rise and extreme weather events.

Council OKs comprehensive plan

Stephen Cole, a regional planner for the Maine Department of Transportation, commended the plan in a letter included in the council packet.

“With a population of only 2,500, this ‘Little, Big City’ contributes a great deal more to civic life in Maine than its size would suggest,” he wrote, adding that he particularly liked the goal of addressing mobility issues by devoting more planning and funding to making the city accessible to people with disabilities among other goals such as upgrading public sidewalks.

Throughout the life of the plan, Mayor George Lapointe said the council will meet regularly to discuss the community’s progress in meeting all the goals. He said councilors will likely begin meeting in March to look at a “score sheet” that will help track how far along the city is in meeting each of the plan’s objectives.

“There’s so much in there that we have to break it down into manageable pieces to understand it, and to see where we are with implementation,” he said.

Patrick Cunningham, a member of Hallowell’s Comprehensive Planning Group, said that the previous comprehensive plan was “very clear,” as it focused on addressing and renovating the Stevens School Campus, which at the time had several vacant buildings.

For this plan, on the other hand, Cunningham said the group set a range of municipal goals based on community feedback and work with consultant Jeff Levine of Levine Planning.

“One of the main things we tried to address was guidance around affordable housing in Hallowell,” he said, “and the idea of trying to retain and encourage our artistic residents, like musicians and people of that nature that Hallowell has been known for for so many years.”

Much of their discussion included going over qualities that made Hallowell appealing to residents and business owners.

“We didn’t have any big, huge issues like (the Stevens School campus),” he said. “It was more everyone coming together and discussing all the things that make Hallowell a great place to live.”

He said one of the most difficult parts of the work was obtaining public input and public participation during the pandemic.

“We really tried our hardest to get input through surveys and trying to be present at public goings-on,” he said.

Landry, chair of the Comprehensive Planning Group, said that while the pandemic certainly made public feedback difficult, he felt that they ultimately were able to engage the community and that their concerns were reflected in the plan.

Both Landry and Cunningham said the public showed a great deal of interest in maintaining outdoor activities and recreation opportunities at spots such as Vaughan Woods and the rail trail.

The public also weighed in on accessibility, Cunningham said, and difficulties that older community members can face while walking up and down the hill downtown.

“I think it was a good process,” he said, “and I hope we provided a useful document for city planning in the future.”

The mayor encouraged residents to look at the complete plan on the city website.

“People could look through it and see which parts of it strike their interest or passion,” he said. “And to look at occasionally and see if there are things in there (where we) are doing a good job or we need to accelerate. I think it’s a worthwhile thing for people to look at.”

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Load-Date: December 19, 2022

End of Document

[Stevens Commons seeks proposals](#)

Kennebec Journal

April 30, 2020 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 1.A; ISSN: 07452039

Length: 372 words

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

A commissioned work of art to be displayed in the new University of Maine Augusta dormitory.

Artists asked to create piece of art using reclaimed vintage copper sheeting

HALLOWELL — Stevens Commons invites Maine artists to submit proposals for a commissioned work of art to be displayed in the new University of Maine Augusta dormitory, currently under redevelopment in historic Erskine Hall.

Early this year, roofing contractors removed the building's original copper roof sheeting. In accordance with guiding principles of conservation and support of local arts and culture, Maine artists are invited to submit proposals for the creation of a piece of art using this reclaimed vintage copper sheeting, according to a news release from Kelly Byron with Stevens Commons.

The art should be a wall hanging no bigger than 3 feet by 3 feet by 3 feet and would have to be completed and ready to install by Aug 1. Stevens Commons would like the current health pandemic to be an inspiring factor in this piece as well to help document these unprecedented times.

A \$1,000 commission for this project will be paid directly to the artist, with 50% up front and the balance to be paid when the finished work is delivered.

According to the release, in 2016 Matt Morrill of Mastway Development LLC purchased the Stevens School campus with a focus on cultivating community through conservation, restoration and partnership. The Stevens School, also once known as the Maine Industrial School for Girls, was an education center for wayward girls from 1874 through the mid-1970s.

Recently renamed Stevens Commons, the campus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For many years after the school closed, it housed state office buildings and the Department of Corrections Pre-Release Center.

The submission deadline is Monday, May 25, with selection to be announced Monday, June 1.

For more information on this ongoing redevelopment project, visit the Stevens Commons Facebook page.

Interested parties should submit contact information, including website or other social media links, an artist's CV or resume, a short, written description of idea and a jpg attachment of a concept sketch of initial idea to StevensCopperProject@gmail.com

Stevens Commons seeks proposals

Load-Date: July 8, 2020

End of Document

[Augusta explores options to spur Kennebec Arsenal owner to preserve, redevelop the historic property](#)

Portland Press Herald

August 16, 2021 Monday

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Section: Pg. B.2; ISSN: 26895900

Length: 811 words

Byline: Keith Edwards

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

AUGUSTA -- After 14 years of inaction, city officials plan to try to prompt action from the developer who has done nothing with the historic Kennebec Arsenal property.

Addressing any violations at the property that could pose a harm to the public is the highest priority, city councilors said at their meeting Thursday night. They also plan to direct the city's attorney to look into any violations of the city's property maintenance ordinance, historic preservation rules, a public use agreement for portions of the property and any other potential violations of city ordinances.

North Carolina developer Tom Niemann, who paid a down payment of \$280,000 for the property to the state some 14 years ago and claimed he would redevelop it with new uses such as retail and residential space, has not redeveloped any of the property or its eight primarily granite-block buildings.

"I think what we need to do is make the ownership of this building to him as uncomfortable as we absolutely positively can, so he's ready to move on," Ward 2 City Councilor Kevin Judkins said Thursday, after a group of citizens asked city officials to do something to prevent the Arsenal's further deterioration. "Because so far it has been a very comfortable cushion. And I think we need to turn it into a pin cushion."

Robert Overton, director of code enforcement, said he walked the property last week and it is clearly in violation of the city's property maintenance ordinance. He said 13 or 14 violations were repeated in most of the complex's buildings.

"Certainly we saw a number of items that could cause an injury to somebody," Overton said when asked by city councilors about safety problems at the site. "Deteriorating wooden structures, porches that are unsound. The property is riddled with sinkholes, some a foot deep, 6 inches wide, some of them 5 feet wide, 4 feet deep with an exposed underground electrical cable running through it."

The National Historic Landmark collection of granite buildings, built by the federal government between 1828 and 1838, is considered by some preservationists to be among the best and earliest surviving examples of 19th century munitions depots in the country.

Augusta explores options to spur Kennebec Arsenal owner to preserve, redevelop the historic property

Reached by phone Friday, Niemann insisted his company is maintaining and has invested in the property, including paying for security workers to monitor the site. He said he is working on an application to the city to renovate the complex's Commandant's Quarters into the home of Renewal Family Center, which would offer treatment to families suffering from addiction and mental health issues.

"We're moving forward with the Commandant's Quarters," Niemann said. He declined to address the ongoing concerns of area residents that he hasn't maintained or preserved the property. "We're going to continue to stay the course on what our development plans are. We've got an engineering firm helping us with the plans; we're trying to get going on the first building."

Overton said the only permit application he is aware of the city receiving was for a sign for the site, which he said wasn't granted because it needs to be reviewed by the Planning Board.

Longtime Augusta resident Connie Hanson said she and other citizens formed Concerned Citizens for Augusta Historical Preservation of the Kennebec Arsenal "after 14 years of deterioration, of worsening deterioration" of the Arsenal since the state sold it to Niemann. "We pursue this to see that our beloved Arsenal is preserved and redeveloped into a community asset," she said.

She said she had learned two developers tried to purchase the property from Niemann, for \$1 million, in recent years but said he declined those offers.

Hanson said it has been frustrating to see the successful redevelopment of the former Stevens School property in Hallowell into housing and other new uses, while the Arsenal continues to languish. She said a redeveloped Arsenal property could make Augusta a true destination for visitors.

In 2018 Niemann and a business partner, Dennis Parnell, proposed to locate a facility to offer substance abuse and other treatment to veterans in a building they proposed to build adjacent to the Arsenal property. That project, which Parnell acknowledged under questioning from councilors at the time had no funding, was greeted with skepticism from state and local officials.

Niemann was sued for his handling of the Arsenal by the state in 2013, in a lawsuit that claimed he hadn't adequately preserved or maintained the buildings. The suit was later dropped after both sides reached an agreement in which Niemann committed to better maintaining the site. And in 2017 the Greater Augusta Utility District initiated foreclosure proceedings because Niemann hadn't paid \$60,000 in stormwater fees, but those proceedings were halted when that bill was paid up.

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Load-Date: August 16, 2021

End of Document

[Inmates need help preparing for life after incarceration Maine needs more pre-release centers where prisoners can develop skills they need once they leave custody.](#)

Portland Press Herald

September 2, 2020 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. A.1; ISSN: 26895900

Length: 647 words

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

WARREN -- During this pandemic of biblical proportions, incarcerated men and women and those charged with overseeing and caring for them are looking for positive direction.

President George Washington once said "No country on earth ever had it more in its power to attain blessings than United America. Wondrously strange, then and much to be regretted indeed would it be were we to neglect the means and to depart from the road which Providence has pointed out to us so plainly; I cannot believe it will ever come to pass."

A golden opportunity now exists to create a healthy reset in the Maine correctional system. Careful consideration about releasing inmates who no longer pose a threat to the community, especially those at the end of their sentences, would be a step forward. When any further incarceration is serving no purpose, action should be taken to assess and determine whether that person can function as a valued asset in society.

In the words of one Maine prosecutor, "Sentencing is not a science." In order to take the right path, we must choose the right values and adopt the right perspectives. Once a person has demonstrated significant change for the better during a substantial portion of their sentence, that person should have a full opportunity to reintegrate back into the community.

But inmates need help reintegrating into the community, and services provided by pre-release centers could play a significant role in that preparation.

A short time ago, I arrived at the minimum security Bolduc Correctional Facility, dubbed "The Farm" for its agricultural surroundings and landscape teeming with wildlife.

Bolduc houses inmates with five years or less remaining on their sentences. Its director provides treatment, programming and job training to those preparing to re-enter the community. Building individuals is the top priority for case workers, who provide case management and play a crucial role in assessing needs and linking offenders to services, especially those who are released from prison without supervision.

Inmates need help preparing for life after incarceration Maine needs more pre-release centers where prisoners can develop skills they need once they leave custo....

The Maine Department of Corrections has six adult institutions, but only one pre-release center in operation, located in Belfast. Its total inmate capacity is approximately 24 beds, so not all inmates are provided with suitable preparation for re-entering the community.

An important goal of the corrections system is rehabilitating prisoners and making them less likely to commit crimes after they're released. The public housing options for inmates being released are in disarray - currently, the corrections department has contracts with motels statewide for placement of inmates being released. This costs the state money and creates a continued burden for the released client and the department.

Pre-release centers are critical to helping inmates utilize programs that already exist in the community, such as substance abuse treatment, and anger management and parenting classes. Such programs help prisoners establish relationships with counselors, provide someone to talk to in a positive way, and give them access to mentoring. The Hallowell Pre-Release Center, which was located at the former Stevens School complex on Winthrop Street, opened in 1979 but was ordered closed in 2013.

The facility was valuable to the community through providing labor, services at a local homeless shelter, landscaping, painting and general assistance. These re-entry services also helped reintegrate the inmates back into society and provided them an opportunity to adapt and develop relations with members of the community.

We have to reopen our pre-release centers in Hallowell and Bangor to provide a gateway mechanism for those being released from custody. The Maine correctional system's prospects can change for the better if we incorporate new thinking that is more conducive to a work and therapy mindset.

-- Special to the Press Herald

Load-Date: December 3, 2020

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Maine inmates need to prepare for life after prison

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

September 3, 2020 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 1.A

Length: 664 words

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

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President George Washington once said "No country on earth ever had it more in its power to attain blessings than United America. Wondrously strange, then and much to be regretted indeed would it be were we to neglect the means and to depart from the road which Providence has pointed out to us so plainly; I cannot believe it will ever come to pass."

A golden opportunity now exists to create a healthy reset in the Maine correctional system. Careful consideration about releasing inmates who no longer pose a threat to the community, especially those at the end of their sentences, would be a step forward. When any further incarceration is serving no purpose, action should be taken to assess and determine whether that person can function as a valued asset in society.

In the words of one Maine prosecutor, "Sentencing is not a science." In order to take the right path, we must choose the right values and adopt the right perspectives. Once a person has demonstrated significant change for the better during a substantial portion of their sentence, that person should have a full opportunity to reintegrate back into the community.

But inmates need help reintegrating into the community, and services provided by pre-release centers could play a significant role in that preparation.

A short time ago, I arrived at the minimum security Bolduc Correctional Facility, dubbed "The Farm" for its agricultural surroundings, and which includes a cemetery where prisoners are buried and a wide open landscape teeming with wildlife.

Bolduc houses inmates with five years or less remaining on their sentences. Its director provides treatment, programming and job training to those preparing to re-enter the community. Building individuals is the top priority for case workers, who provide case management and play a crucial role in assessing needs and linking offenders to services, especially those who are released from prison without supervision.

The Maine Department of Corrections has six adult institutions, but only one pre-release center in operation, located in Belfast. Its total inmate capacity is approximately 24 beds, so not all inmates are provided with suitable preparation for re-entering the community.

Maine inmates need to prepare for life after prison

An important goal of the corrections system is rehabilitating prisoners and making them less likely to commit crimes after they're released. The public housing options for inmates being released are in disarray — currently, the corrections department has contracts with motels statewide for placement of inmates being released. This costs the state money and creates a continued burden for the released client and the department.

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The Maine correctional system's prospects can change for the better if we incorporate new thinking that is more conducive to a work and therapy mindset.

Jeffrey Libby is an inmate at the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren.

Load-Date: September 4, 2020

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A historic revival in Augusta?

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

August 16, 2021 Monday

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Section: Pg. 1.A

Length: 984 words

Byline: Keith Edwards

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

A citizen group worried about ongoing deterioration at the site, asked city officials to take action to get developer Tom Niemann to finally redevelop historic riverfront site.

AUGUSTA — After 14 years of deterioration, the historic Kennebec Arsenal property must be spruced up and given new life by the developer who has done nothing substantial with it, city officials said.

Addressing any violations at the property that could pose a harm to the public is the highest priority, city councilors said at their meeting Thursday night. They also plan to direct the city's attorney to look into any violations of the city's property maintenance ordinance, historic preservation rules, a public-use agreement for portions of the property and any other potential violations of city ordinances.

North Carolina developer Tom Niemann, who made a down payment of \$280,000 for the property to the state some 14 years ago and claimed he would redevelop it with new uses such as retail and residential space, has not redeveloped any of the property or its eight primarily granite-block buildings.

"I think what we need to do is make the ownership of this building to him as uncomfortable as we absolutely positively can, so he's ready to move on," Ward 2 City Councilor Kevin Judkins said Thursday, after a group of citizens asked city officials to do something to prevent the Arsenal's further deterioration. "Because so far it has been a very comfortable cushion. And I think we need to turn it into a pin cushion."

Robert Overton, director of code enforcement, said he walked the property earlier this week and it is clearly in violation of the city's property maintenance ordinance. He said 13 or 14 violations were repeated in most of the complex's buildings.

"Certainly we saw a number of items that could cause an injury to somebody," Overton said, when asked by city councilors about safety problems at the site. "Deteriorating wooden structures, porches that are unsound. The property is riddled with sinkholes, some a foot deep, six inches wide, some of them 5 feet wide, 4 feet deep with an exposed underground electrical cable running through it."

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A historic revival in Augusta?

Reached by phone Friday, Niemann insisted his company is maintaining and has invested in the property, including paying for security workers to monitor the site. He said he is working on an application to the city, to renovate the complex's Commandant's Quarters into the home of Renewal Family Center, which would offer treatment to families suffering from addiction and mental health issues.

"We're moving forward with the Commandant's Quarters," Niemann said. He declined to address the ongoing concerns of area residents that he hasn't maintained or preserved the property. "We're going to continue to stay the course on what our development plans are. We've got an engineering firm helping us with the plans, we're trying to get going on the first building."

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She said she had learned two developers tried to purchase the property from Niemann, for \$1 million, in recent years but said he declined those offers.

Hanson said it has been frustrating to see the successful redevelopment of the former Stevens School property in Hallowell into housing and other new uses, while the Arsenal continues to languish. She said a redeveloped Arsenal property could make Augusta a true destination for visitors.

Kim Davis was a city councilor and state legislator when she said Niemann approached the city and state with plans to redevelop the then-vacant Arsenal. Her property abuts the Arsenal's Commandant's Quarters property, and she said the neighborhood deserves a vibrant, compatible use at the Arsenal site. Davis said Niemann has previously indicated the Commandant's Quarters would be his offices and maybe his home, and expressed concern a drug rehabilitation center there would not be compatible with the neighborhood. Nor does she want to see the property remain undeveloped.

"We met with him; we rallied with him. He made us promises we hoped would come to fruition," Davis said. "No one, more than myself, would love to see that property be a viable asset to the community, as Mr. Niemann has promised."

In 2018 Niemann and a business partner, Dennis Parnell, proposed to locate a facility to offer substance abuse and other treatment to veterans in a building they proposed to build adjacent to the Arsenal property. That project, which Parnell acknowledged under questioning from councilors at the time had no funding, was greeted with skepticism from state and local officials.

Niemann was sued for his handling of the Arsenal by the state in 2013, in a lawsuit which claimed he hadn't adequately preserved or maintained the buildings. The suit was dropped after both sides reached an agreement in which Niemann committed to better maintaining the site. In 2017, the Greater Augusta Utility District initiated foreclosure proceedings because Niemann hadn't paid \$60,000 in stormwater fees, but those proceedings were halted when that bill was settled.

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A historic revival in Augusta?

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End of Document

Students move into University of Maine Augusta's first dormitory

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

August 30, 2019 Friday

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Section: Pg. 1.A

Length: 823 words

Byline: Abigail Austin

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

Hallowell's Stevens Hall will house 36 students, with a second dormitory planned for the 2020-2021 school year.

HALLOWELL — Elisabeth Olguin became a student at the University of Maine at Augusta so she could study cybersecurity.

With a new cyber range, the degree program is one of several UMA has that are hand-on, and she will benefit from being close to campus.

Olguin is one of 36 students who will live in Stevens Hall in Hallowell, UMA's first residential hall.

"The students themselves spurred this mission forward," said UMA President Rebecca Wyke. "We saw this as opportunities for those who needed this in order to attend our programs."

UMA has been known for its distance learning, but some programs — like architecture, aviation, contemporary music and nursing — require hands-on participation.

"I live an hour away, so it makes much more sense to live closer," said Vincent Nelson, of Standish, who will be studying aviation.

In 1965 when UMA became a university, it started as an adult education branch of the University of Maine System, Wyke said. Twenty years ago, it offered baccalaureate degrees as well.

"(Providing student housing) is something that has been under consideration for a long time," said Wyke. "The early plans called for a full campus expansion, but that never came to fruition."

The cost of the restoration of the historic Stevens Hall building is \$2.8 million over five years, according to Wyke.

Stevens Hall is UMA's first residential hall, and by the 2020-2021 school year, a second dorm will open at Stevens Commons, Erskine Hall, said Sheri Fraser, UMA's dean of students. It will offer similar living situations.

Around half of the students living in Stevens Hall this year are from Maine, and the other half represent 11 other states and Puerto Rico; the oldest student residing in the dorm is 24. There also are two French tutors living there.

Students move into University of Maine Augusta's first dormitory

Olguin drove 923 miles from Sanford, North Carolina, with her parents, Chad and Scarlett Suarez. In the three-bedroom suite, they unpacked luggage totes, assembled curtain rods and set up pieces that would make Olguin's new residence feel like home.

"Originally we had been looking into renting into an apartment for her," said Scarlett, "but this gives us a more warm and fuzzy feeling for her first year."

As a father, Chad said he thinks Stevens Hall is a safer place for his 18-year-old daughter to live than off campus in an apartment.

"I am pretty pleased with the security," he said.

Fraser said the university has contracted with a security agency, and an officer will be at the hall at night, with hours added on the weekends.

There will also be a full-time residence manager living onsite, and two students will serve as community advisors.

"I get to care for the entire student, not just the academic side or the social," said residence manager Kim Kenniston. "I get to check in and make sure overall they are doing well."

Originally a Hallowell resident, Kenniston has a master's degree in education with a concentration in higher education counseling. She has served in similar capacities in Massachusetts, Connecticut and, most recently, at Colby College in Waterville.

Olguin and Nelson will have private bedrooms and share their suite with two other students. The suites are outfitted with bathrooms and full kitchens, which the roommates will share. The other suites in the hall are set up similarly, though some bedrooms will be double.

The three-story brick building is located on the 53-acre Stevens Commons. The name "Stevens Commons" is a tribute to the Stevens School, which was built there in the 1870s as a girls' school, and more recently occupied by state offices and other agencies.

"The building looked really old," said Nelson, "but then when I came in, it was really modern and nice."

"It is a lovely mix of maintaining a historical building, but it is also very modern," said Fraser.

Students will pay between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per semester per student, Fraser said. If needed, students can finance their board with financial aid, Wyke said.

Preference to live in the dormitory was established by a lottery where priority was given to new UMA students, both freshmen and transfers, those who were not local and those whose degree paths would be hands-on.

In the application, students could indicate living preferences. For example, some suites were co-ed while others were single-gender.

Students in the residence hall are responsible for providing their own food. The kitchens, with modern appliances, will offer a chance students to prepare meals. There is also a cafe on campus that students can utilize for breakfast and lunch, and meal plans are offered there.

A cafe will eventually open on the first floor as early as January, Wyke said. That may be open to the public and offer meals throughout the day all week, but those details have not been finalized.

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Students move into University of Maine Augusta's first dormitory

Twitter: @AbigailAustinKJ

Load-Date: September 2, 2019

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[Ceremony marks opening of Howard Hill park in Augusta Officials and land conservation supporters gather at a scenic overlook to dedicate Howard Hill Historical Park.](#)

Portland Press Herald

October 11, 2019 Friday

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Section: Pg. B.2; ISSN: 26895900

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Byline: Keith Edwards

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

AUGUSTA -- Howard Hill Historical Park has it all when it comes to connecting people to wildlife, the commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife said Thursday at a dedication ceremony for the 164-acre park.

With fall's vibrant display as a backdrop, Commissioner Judy Camuso said Howard Hill's prominence, easy access, and diverse habitat for wildlife make it the perfect spot for people to make and share connections to nature, and instill those connections in future generations.

"An oasis for both people and wildlife, right here in the heart of our state capital," Camuso said on Thursday, addressing a few dozen attendees at the dedication from an overlook with expansive views of Augusta and beyond. "From a wildlife perspective, Howard Hill has it all. With softwoods and hardwoods, it provides a home or stopping off point for a whole host of wildlife species.

"The key for all of Maine's diverse wildlife will be protecting a wide range of habitats and in providing connectivity between those habitats. This dedication is an example of ensuring that not only does Maine's wildlife have a home, but the people of Maine and those that visit have a place to enjoy Maine's wildlife. People will protect what they care about."

The city of Augusta was given the wooded hilltop site, which provides a scenic backdrop to the State House, by Kennebec Land Trust in 2017, after the trust, used a mix of private and public funding, but none from Augusta, to purchase the land for about \$925,000 from local lawyer Sumner Lipman.

A conservation easement the trust attached to the property before turning it over to the city bans development on the site, other than recreational trails and related amenities.

Howard Lake of Readfield, a member of the land trust's board of directors, thanked the numerous volunteers who have cut trails on the property and donors who contributed funds for its purchase. He reminded them that at times it looked like it would not happen.

Ceremony marks opening of Howard Hill park in Augusta Officials and land conservation supporters gather at a scenic overlook to dedicate Howard Hill Historical

The land trust initially was expected to use \$337,500 in Land for Maine's Future money to help pay for the purchase. However, Land for Maine's Future funding for the \$1.2 million project was slashed from the previously promised \$337,500 to \$163,500 in 2016.

Five of six members of the Land for Maine's Future board, all of whom were either appointed by former Gov. Paul LePage or worked for him, voted to reduce the state's contribution to the project, expressing concerns about the accuracy of the roughly \$1 million appraisal of the property done for the land trust. The property was assessed by the city, for tax purposes, at just \$171,000.

Land trust officials have defended what they pay for such properties, stating they have the properties professionally appraised, based upon their "highest and best use," or what their value would be if they were to be developed.

The trust took out a loan to close the funding gap so the project could proceed.

"We had our challenges, there were times it looked pretty bleak," Lake said. "At times, we thought maybe we wouldn't be able to raise the money, and we had already spent a lot of money on it. But we persevered, and here we are."

The \$337,500 loan from Kennebec Savings Bank helped the land trust move ahead with the project before the trust had raised the entire \$1.2 million needed for the project.

Andrew Silsby, president of Kennebec Savings, said his father, David Silsby, worked for the Legislature for 27 years and, because of his belief that a state known for its forests and land should have a forested backdrop to its state capital, fought for years to get the state to preserve the same land, but could not convince state leaders to fund it.

Andrew Silsby said he had lunch Thursday with his dad, who showed him old photographs of the site and gave him a history lesson.

The property is spread between a point just south of Capitol Street to the Hallowell line at the former Stevens School complex. It is accessible from spots off Sewall Street, at the end of Ganneston Drive in Augusta and from a trailhead at Stevens Commons in Hallowell.

Mayor David Rollins, who lives near the Ganneston Drive entrance to the park, said the park is one more example of the many attractions that make Augusta the best small city in New England. He also said it's another example of Augusta preserving the environment and its growing network of recreational trails, a network he hopes will continue to grow.

"Let's evolve this a little more every year, and add more trails, Ansley is going to live out here," Rollins joked, referencing Ansley Sawyer, a member of the Augusta Conservation Commission who has served as a steward of Howard Hill and put extensive time into cutting trails in the park.

The property once was owned by William Howard Gannett, who in the 1890s bought some 450 acres including Howard Hill - where he created Ganneston Park.

The park included gardens, ponds, carriage paths and trails he opened to the public so they could enjoy the natural setting as his family did in their log cabin lodge on the site, Camp Comfort, so named because Gannett was publisher of Comfort Magazine, the first American periodical to reach a circulation of more than 1 million.

The Gannetts had a large treehouse on the property, believed to be on or near the site where a scenic overlook with expansive views is now located.

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Ceremony marks opening of Howard Hill park in Augusta Officials and land conservation supporters gather at a scenic overlook to dedicate Howard Hill Historical

Twitter: @kedwardskj

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Howard Hill's trails, views, dedicated to connecting people with nature in Augusta

Kennebec Journal

October 11, 2019 Friday

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Byline: Keith Edwards

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

Officials gathered at a scenic overlook in the woods Thursday to dedicate Howard Hill Historical Park.

AUGUSTA — When it comes to connecting people to wildlife, Howard Hill Historical Park has it all, the state's commissioner of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife said Thursday at the 164-acre site's dedication.

With fall's array of multicolored leaves on display for miles behind her, Commissioner Judy Camuso said Howard Hill's prominence and easy access for people, combined with its spectacular and diverse habitat for wildlife, make it the perfect spot for people to make and share connections to nature, and instill those connections in future generations.

"An oasis for both people and wildlife, right here in the heart of our state capital," Camuso said from an overlook with expansive views of Augusta and beyond, to a few dozen attendees at the park's dedication Thursday. "From a wildlife perspective, Howard Hill has it all. With softwoods and hardwoods, it provides a home or stopping off point for a whole host of wildlife species.

"The key for all of Maine's diverse wildlife will be protecting a wide range of habitats and in providing connectivity between those habitats. This dedication is an example of ensuring that not only does Maine's wildlife have a home, but the people of Maine and those that visit have a place to enjoy Maine's wildlife. People will protect what they care about."

The city of Augusta was given the wooded hilltop site, which provides a scenic backdrop to the State House, by Kennebec Land Trust in 2017, after the trust, using a mix of privately raised and public, but no city of Augusta, funds to purchase the land for about \$925,000 from local lawyer Sumner Lipman.

A conservation easement the trust attached to the property before turning it over to the city bans development on the site, other than recreational trails and related amenities.

Howard Lake, of Readfield, a member of the land trust's board of directors, thanked the numerous volunteers who have cut trails on the property and donors who contributed funds for its purchase. He reminded them that at times it looked like it would not happen.

Howard Hill's trails, views, dedicated to connecting people with nature in Augusta

The land trust initially was expected to use \$337,500 in Land for Maine's Future money to help pay for the purchase. However, Land for Maine's Future funding for the \$1.2 million project was slashed from the previously promised \$337,500 to \$163,500 in 2016.

Five of six members of the Land for Maine's Future board, all of whom were either appointed by former Gov. Paul LePage or worked for him, voted to reduce the state's contribution to the project, expressing concerns about the accuracy of the roughly \$1 million appraisal of the property done for the land trust. The property was assessed by the city, for tax purposes, at just \$171,000.

Land trust officials have defended what they pay for such properties, stating they have the properties professionally appraised, based upon their "highest and best use," or what their value would be if they were to be developed.

The trust took out a loan to close the funding gap so the project could proceed.

"We had our challenges, there were times it looked pretty bleak," Lake said. "At times, we thought maybe we wouldn't be able to raise the money, and we had already spent a lot of money on it. But we persevered, and here we are."

The \$337,500 loan from Kennebec Savings Bank helped the land trust move ahead with the project before the trust had raised the entire \$1.2 million needed for the project.

Andrew Silsby, president of KSB, said his father, David Silsby, worked for the state Legislature for 27 years and, because of his belief that a state known for its forests and land should have a forested backdrop to its state capital, fought for years to get the state to preserve the same land, but could not convince state leaders to fund it.

Andrew Silsby said he had lunch Thursday with his dad, who showed him old photographs of the site and gave him a history lesson.

The property is spread between a point just south of Capitol Street to the Hallowell line at the former Stevens School complex. It is accessible from spots off Sewall Street, at the end of Ganneston Drive in Augusta and from a trailhead at Stevens Commons in Hallowell.

Mayor David Rollins, who lives near the Ganneston Drive entrance to the park, said the park is one more example of Augusta's many attractions that make Augusta the best small city in New England. He also said its another example of Augusta preserving the environment and its growing network of recreational trails, a network he hopes will continue to grow.

"Let's evolve this a little more every year, and add more trails, Ansley is going to live out here," Rollins joked, referencing Ansley Sawyer, a member of the Augusta Conservation Commission who has served as a steward of Howard Hill and put extensive time into cutting trails in the park.

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Howard Hill's trails, views, dedicated to connecting people with nature in Augusta

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Envisioning Stevens School

Kennebec Journal

June 28, 2016 Tuesday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

Morrill told the assembled crowd, which included councilors, members of the Planning Board and others who were taking notes and asking questions throughout, that he sees additional space on the campus for affordable senior housing, a large conservation area and two cluster developments with single-family homes.

FULL TEXT

Owner Matt Morrill is hosting a site walk at the Stevens School campus in Hallowell.

New owner Matt Morrill proposing changes to Hallowell site

HALLOWELL -- Matt Morrill made a big commitment to Hallowell when he purchased the Stevens School campus in April. He's asking the city to make the same commitment to him.

Morrill hosted more than 40 people for a site walk on the property Monday afternoon to share his short-term and long-term vision for the 54-acre campus. The walk was in advance of Thursday's Planning Board meeting at City Hall which will address several proposed ordinance changes related to the Stevens School campus. For more than an hour, Morrill and his attorney, Tom Federle, answered questions while walking around the property. Morrill first took people from the center quad, which is surrounded by five historic buildings, to Erskine Hall, which Morrill said is the building in the worst condition. He said the floors are buckling in several places and its roof has been leaking for 20 years.

"It's shabby and needs a lot of work to retrofit or rehab the building," said Councilor George LaPointe. "I don't know if it's worth that."

Cleveland Hall and the Stevens Building, which served as the Central Maine Pre-Release Center, are in decent shape and would appear to be salvageable. Morrill sees the Stevens Building as a place for light retail space, artists' workspace and "maybe a coffee shop or small restaurant."

"I'm open to ideas," Morrill said. "My idea isn't final, and I'm willing to listen to suggestions."

Envisioning Stevens School

Morrill told the assembled crowd, which included councilors, members of the Planning Board and others who were taking notes and asking questions throughout, that he sees additional space on the campus for affordable senior housing, a large conservation area and two cluster developments with single-family homes. He is asking the city for about \$1 million for infrastructure improvements to the roads, sewer, drainage and water on the property.

For the city to pony up \$1 million without a guarantee it would see a return on its investment is a lot to ask, Morrill said. Federle said they are asking the city to share some of the risks.

"I'm not trying to do this all myself," Morrill said. "It's our intention to make this something that other developers would come in and want to help develop too."

Ruth LaChance, president of the Hallowell Board of Trade, expressed concern that retail space on the property would take business away from the downtown district, but Morrill said it was his intention that any businesses on the campus would not come at a detriment to the established Water Street businesses.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, purchased the 54-acre property from the state in April for \$215,000. The state had been trying to sell the property for nearly a decade, and it was listed for sale for \$1.1 million in 2008 but had no takers. Appraiser David Dwyer said a 40-acre portion of the property was valued at \$900,000 last May.

Hallowell has long struggled to find something to do with one of the last undeveloped areas in the city. For more than 15 years, there was talk about relocating the city's fire station building, which was built more than 180 years ago, to the Stevens School campus, but ultimately that project stalled.

The only current occupants on the campus are Regional School Unit 2, which has had its headquarters in the Reed Center for more than 20 years, and the state's Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, which has a lease for its administrative building and associated garage until Jan. 15, 2017.

Morrill said he is working on securing a tenant for the Baker Building, and he has already started making small improvements to the structure.

The Planning Board needs to make changes to several ordinances related to Stevens School, which is in its own district, before Morrill can really start working on redevelopment. Morrill said he would like to get the infrastructure work -- roads, sewer, drainage -- started by the fall with the hope of completing the work by winter.

Longtime Planning Board member Jane Orbeton said the board will be making a recommendation to the City Council during Thursday's meeting on whether to approve or deny the proposed ordinance changes.

The Planning Board meets at 7 p.m. Thursday at City Hall.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Stevens School planning advances

Kennebec Journal

July 26, 2016 Tuesday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

Federle has years of experience in zoning law, and he said none of the zoning issues related to the Stevens School campus are daunting, nor is the master plan requirement.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell's Planning Board held a workshop last week with planning consultant Mark Eyerman related to the Stevens School project and possible issues that may arise as the project moves forward.

Ordinance changes release developer to draw up plans

HALLOWELL -- A local developer is moving ahead with the creation of a master plan for the Stevens School property now that city officials have voted to allow ordinance changes for the project.

Morrill's attorney, Tom Federle, said the next step is the filing of the master plan, which he expects to happen in September.

"Once the master plan is approved, (Matt) will be in a position to begin applying for development approvals," Federle said.

Federle said Matt Morrill, who purchased the property in April, is continuing to make improvements to the Baker Building, which already has one tenant and should have another soon. He's working on the engineering plans ahead of the necessary infrastructure work on the campus.

"It just takes time and it's a work in progress," he said. "(Matt) has come into this project with the long view that this is going to take time. He's got a long road ahead of him."

Hallowell's City Council approved the ordinance changes in its meeting earlier this month, so Morrill and Federle have begun moving forward in the process. Last week, the Planning Board held a workshop with planning consultant Mark Eyerman to discuss that process and issues that may arise.

Stevens School planning advances

Eyerman, of Planning Decisions Inc., said the Stevens School Planned Development District is unique to Hallowell's ordinance and is different than what's required in the other zones around the city.

"The purpose was really simply to walk through the provisions in the district with the board so that they understand what the current process would be for approving the master plan and what requirements there would be," Eyerman said by phone last week.

He said it's a little more challenging because many of the board members were not involved in the discussions about the creation of those requirements and how they would be applied.

"Danielle (Obery), the board chair, felt it would be worthwhile to sit down and go through and understand what the process is and what the expectations would be for the applicant," Eyerman said.

The initial two-phase process, including approval of the master plan, is long and thorough and could potentially take 270 days, though Planning Board member Jane Orbeton said the board is confident that the process shouldn't take that long.

"I think the process may run fairly smoothly and fairly quickly, though it depends on what the proposal is," Orbeton said.

Federle said the board has the opportunity to approve things sooner than waiting for the 45-day period outlined in the ordinance, and he thinks once the city sees the master plan, they'll move quickly.

"We take comfort and hope in that fact that we think what Matt's going to put before them is something they'll see is aligned with the city's goals," Federle said. "If so, they can process it more quickly."

Federle has years of experience in zoning law, and he said none of the zoning issues related to the Stevens School campus are daunting, nor is the master plan requirement. But the project does have its problems.

"The state of the infrastructure and the state of the buildings is daunting, and the many processes to finance the redevelopment are big hurdles to cross," he said.

"All of that combined creates a very large challenge, which is why most developers had taken a pass on the project."

Late last month, the Planning Board held a special meeting to discuss ordinance changes proposed by Morrill and Federle. After more than four hours, the board unanimously voted to recommend the changes to the City Council, which approved the amended language at its July meeting.

"Based on that experience, I think they are a well-qualified board and did a really good job asking the right questions while working through the right issues," Eyerman said. "I think they are perfectly equipped (for this work)."

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, paid \$215,000 in April for the 54-acre campus on the top of Winthrop Street. The property had been marketed by the state for more than 10 years, and Morrill was interested in the property for several years before making an offer in 2015.

He envisions turning the campus into a mixed-use development with a combination of commercial and residential space including affordable housing, small retail and shared open space.

The ordinance changes, Morrill said, allowed him to start marketing the property to other developers and potential tenants.

"This enables the Stevens School property to get out from being stuck in the mud, where it's been for a long time," Federle said earlier this month. Morrill will have to make improvements to some of the buildings so tenants can occupy the space, including work to the plumbing and heating systems, Federle said.

Stevens School planning advances

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Hallowell's Stevens School owner hosting site walk

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

June 26, 2016 Sunday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

The proposed ordinance changes to Section 9-388, which addresses permitted uses in the Stevens School Planned Development District, adds residential uses approved by the Planning Board as part of an Open Space Development and allows for the re-use of existing structures for business and professional offices or residential uses.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell is holding a public meeting to discuss proposed ordinance changes related to the Stevens School campus, which was acquired by developer Matt Morrill in April.

Planning Board scheduled to discuss proposed ordinance changes related to campus on Thursday

New Stevens School owner Matt Morrill will host a site walk on his 54-acre property starting at 5 p.m. Monday in Hallowell. The walk is being held in advance of Thursday's special Planning Board meeting on proposed ordinance changes related to the campus.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, bought the property from the state in April for \$215,000; and since the deal was completed, he said he's been busy trying to find tenants for some of the existing buildings and coming up with a long-term plan for the entire campus.

The Stevens School campus is in its own zoning district, and in order for Morrill to market the existing building to potential tenants, ordinance changes would have to happen quickly, Mayor Mark Walker said last month.

The proposed ordinance changes to Section 9-388, which addresses permitted uses in the Stevens School Planned Development District, adds residential uses approved by the Planning Board as part of an Open Space Development and allows for the re-use of existing structures for business and professional offices or residential uses. Morrill said in May that he already has received inquiries from potential tenants about leasing some of the buildings.

Hallowell's Stevens School owner hosting site walk

"Without any ordinance changes, the campus will be vacant this winter, creating no income for the new owner," Councilor Alan Stearns said via email. "I expect the council to continue to vote to breathe new life into the campus, and I'll ask the Planning Board to concur."

The other two amendments to the ordinance include changes to dimensional requirements of new structures and additions to existing structures and a change to the requirement of a master plan.

The campus has been in Hallowell since it was built in the late 1870s as a boarding school for girls, and in 2010, the City Council included it in its Comprehensive Plan, saying "the redevelopment of the Stevens School property will be the single-most important new development in Hallowell in the coming decade." The plan laid out several goals for the property, including the resolution of all existing environmental problems, retention of as much open space as possible and establishing a mix of uses on the site.

Morrill told the council in May that he envisions a combination of affordable housing, senior housing, market-rate condominiums, commercial and retail space and a small residential subdivision. He already has been in contact with people in the affordable-housing industry and has been approached about selling some of the nine buildings he owns on the property.

"We need to learn from the experience of the failed effort to redevelop Augusta's arsenal," Stearns said. "None of us wants (the Stevens School's) buildings to be mothballed any longer."

In Augusta's case, a North Carolina developer bought the old Kennebec Arsenal -- a series of buildings on the city's east side -- in 2007 and promised to redevelop them for residential and business uses. But the latest work on the property occurred in 2013, when new roofs were installed on several of the historic buildings to protect them from further decay.

Hallowell's council has known for years that existing ordinances related to the campus were one reason why developers declined to bid on the property, Stearns said.

"We sent a clear message to the real estate market through council resolutions included in the most recent bid documents that the council would approach the ordinances flexibly," Stearns said. "The pending ordinance changes are the way to make good on that commitment to the new owner of the campus."

In connection with all of the complex issues related to Stevens School, the Planning Board asked the council to approve having a historical consultant on retainer to aid in some of the decisions the board expects to have to make in the future.

Mark Eyerman, of Planning Decisions Inc. in Portland, has worked with the Planning Board in Hallowell in the past, including on some ordinances, and said he will be available to help on anything regarding Stevens School.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Site walk to take place at Stevens School

Kennebec Journal

June 26, 2016 Sunday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

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Planning Board to discuss ordinance changes Thursday

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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[City eyes Stevens School ventures](#)

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

April 6, 2015 Monday

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Body

ABSTRACT

A prerelease center that housed former prison inmates closed in 2013 and last week, the Maine Department of Marine Resources announced that it would leave in mid-April for the Marquardt Building on the former state psychiatric hospital campus on Augusta's east side.

FULL TEXT

The state of Maine is taking steps toward selling the Stevens School property in Hallowell, and the city is eyeing a new pot of tax revenue to incentivize development there.

Sale of campus could bring influx of public money

HALLOWELL -- The state of Maine is moving to sell the Stevens School property as the city eyes a pot of public money that could provide incentives to developers.

The 64-acre campus off Winthrop Street will likely be appraised by the end of May, said Alex Willette, a spokesman for the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services. Once the state pursues a sale, Hallowell officials say they could use money flowing into a fund established last year as part of a plan to woo developers.

"We could be doing stormwater work; we could be fixing up those roads and taking them over as municipal roads," said City Manager Michael Starn. "There's a lot of things that could be done to make that property attractive for a developer."

Over the last few years, state offices have been leaving the campus. A prerelease center that housed former prison inmates closed in 2013 and last week, the Maine Department of Marine Resources announced that it would leave in mid-April for the Marquardt Building on the former state psychiatric hospital campus on Augusta's east side.

Willette said the Natural Resources Service Center will leave by the end of April. After that, only the Maine Conservation Corps and a state parks and lands office will remain, and their departure date hasn't been determined.

There was little interest when Maine tried to sell the Stevens School campus in 2008, and officials blamed it on a bad economy and the prerelease center's presence. Since then, Hallowell has placed many of its future economic development hopes on the 14-building campus, which features a northern 20-acre field and an eastern 14-acre field representing much of the last undeveloped land in the city's core.

City eyes Stevens School ventures

A state map of the property drafted in June envisions residential development in the undeveloped portions and commercial uses. Chris Paszyc, the broker from CBRE/The Boulos Company in Portland who tried to sell the campus in 2008, said the state should "see interest from a variety of developers," including those seeing potential for residential and commercial uses.

Two residential developments about the property -- Hallowell Overlook, managed by builder Matt Morrill of Winthrop, on the west and The Ridges, owned by Blais Property Management, on the east, -- and Mayor Mark Walker said continuations of those developments on the Stevens School property could be "logical."

Neither Walker nor Starn would name potentially interested developers. Morrill declined comment when asked about his interest and Steve Blais of The Ridges said his company hasn't expressed interest.

Money going into the fund established in 2014 with Hallowell's downtown tax increment financing district could be leveraged to aid developers.

It allowed the city to freeze its downtown-area property valuation for 30 years, with Hallowell agreeing to spend all of the money it saves on state and county taxes as development increases on improvements in that area.

By 2024, the city expects to have put \$1.2 million into that fund, and Starn said the city could borrow against that to fund upgrades at the Stevens School complex, which Walker called "a natural use" for some of that money. But Paszyc said that "will certainly help generate interest," but added that the money "also comes with strings attached" that could hinder a developer.

"So, it remains to be seen what the city wants those funds to be used for," he said.

Councilor Alan Stearns, who lives on nearby Pleasant Street, called the Stevens School "a generational opportunity for Hallowell."

But he said a specific borrowing proposal should be vetted by the public, council and committee before advancing, even though using public money there may be appropriate.

"But I think the taxpayers need a lot more information before we approach that," Stearns said. "On an unfocused investment, the risk is as large as the opportunity."

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Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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Stevens School owner to present site plan

Kennebec Journal

May 22, 2016 Sunday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

Since Pakulski's death March 5, Code Enforcement Officer Maureen AuCoin has been the interim city manager, attending meetings and handling a number of issues in relation to Stevens School, the Quarry Tap Room expansion plans and the demolition of a Water Street building.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell's Council is holding a special meeting to discuss the city budget and the progress of finding a new city manager. Matt Morrill, who recently purchased the Stevens School campus, is expected to make a presentation outlining his early thoughts for the 54-acre property.

For more than a decade, nearly 54 acres on Hallowell's Stevens School campus sat idle as the state put it up for sale, only to find no takers.

Last month, developer and builder Matt Morrill bought those acres and the buildings that stand on them and will present his initial thoughts about the property during a special City Council meeting at 6 p.m. Monday.

Mayor Mark Walker said the city has asked Morrill, who paid just \$215,000 for the property, what he would like from the city along with his current thinking about use of the property and the timeline for development. Walker said he wonders whether Morrill will start redeveloping the 54-acre campus this summer, and Walker said the city would have to change some ordinances in connection with any redevelopment.

In an email after the sale was made public last month, Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, said Hallowell is a "cool little city" and the "property deserves new life that will benefit the whole community." He said it's a complex site that presents significant challenges and will require time and cooperation from both local and state agencies.

Also Monday, the council will get an update on the search for a new city manager.

Stevens School owner to present site plan

The city has been looking for a permanent city manager since the unexpected death of Stefan Pakulski in March, and the search process is winding down, according to Councilor Kate DuFour, chairwoman of the personnel committee.

DuFour said the city received 16 applications by the April 15 deadline, and the five-member search committee whittled the list down to six candidates for initial interviews. DuFour said four of the candidates still are being considered, but only one will have a second interview.

"The results of that interview will decide the next steps," DuFour said in an email Thursday. "Either we enter into contract negotiations with the leading candidate or undertake another round of interviews."

DuFour said each candidate demonstrated an overall knowledge of, interest in and passion for municipal government service, especially with respect to Hallowell.

"As we expected, the areas of municipal expertise and mix of strengths and interests varied from candidate to candidate," DuFour said. "One candidate edged out the rest."

Since Pakulski's death March 5, Code Enforcement Officer Maureen AuCoin has been the interim city manager, attending meetings and handling a number of issues in relation to Stevens School, the Quarry Tap Room expansion plans and the demolition of a Water Street building.

The other big topic on the meeting agenda is the city budget, though Walker did not have much information; and the finance committee chairman, Councilor George LaPointe, did not return a request for comment.

Jason Pafundi -- 621-5663jpafundi@centralmaine.com *Twitter: @jasonpafundiKJ*

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Council hears plans for Stevens School

Kennebec Journal

May 24, 2016 Tuesday

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Byline: JASON PAFUNDI

JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, said he envisions the property as a mixed-use development including affordable housing, senior housing, market-rate condos, commercial and retail space and a small residential subdivision.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell's Council is holding a special meeting to discuss the city budget and the progress of finding a new city manager. Matt Morrill, who recently purchased the Stevens School campus, is expected to make a presentation outlining his early thoughts for the 54-acre property.

Developer envisions affordable housing, market rate residences for Hallowell campus

HALLOWELL -- Developer and builder Matt Morrill told the City Council about his plans for the 54-acre Stevens School campus he purchased last month during a special meeting at City Hall on Monday.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, said he envisions the property as a mixed-use development including affordable housing, senior housing, market-rate condos, commercial and retail space and a small residential subdivision. He also hopes for permanent access to the Howard Hill preservation area, and he has spoken with the Kennebec Land Trust and the Hallowell Conservation Commission on the subject.

Morrill paid just \$215,000 for the property, which had been marketed by the state for more than a decade. He said he has already been approached by people in the affordable housing industry, and Morrill had somebody ask him if he was interested in selling some of the nine buildings he owns on the property while he was doing some lawn maintenance Monday.

"The idea I came up with was to make this property more manageable and attractive to other developers," Morrill said.

Council hears plans for Stevens School

Mayor Mark Walker said the council would have to change some ordinances in connection with any redevelopment, and he expects some complex issues to be brought before the city's Planning Board. Several of the board's members attended the council meeting.

Some of the ordinance changes will have to happen quickly, Walker said, in order for Morrill to market existing buildings to potential tenants. The Stevens School campus is in its own zoning district.

Morrill, who was joined at the meeting by his wife and two children, said he hopes to begin leasing space in some of the buildings by the end of the year. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry occupies the administrative building and its associated garage until Jan. 15, 2017, a deal that will pay Morrill \$1,872.92 per month for the building and another \$257.42 per month for the garage.

Morrill had been interested in the Stevens School campus for some time. The campus, which was built in the late 1870s as a boarding school for girls, has several buildings in varying states of deterioration. It will be costly to repurpose the campus, and Morrill admits he cannot undertake this project on his own.

Morrill is no stranger to Hallowell, having built the Hallowell Overlook development up the street from the Stevens School campus in 2013. He said it took about a year to get that project completed; there are four homes in the neighborhood now and a fifth home is expected to be built sometime soon.

Before the sale was announced last month, Walker said the city needs more mixed-use space including affordable housing, and he hopes Morrill includes a good amount of open space that take advantage of the vistas and conservation areas.

"We really appreciate the charm and characteristics of the campus and want to keep as much of it as possible," Morrill said. "But there are at least two buildings that would have to come down because they are too far gone."

The original purpose of the meeting, before Morrill purchased Stevens School, was to hear from Councilor George LaPointe, chair of the finance committee, about the city budget. The current draft of the budget shows a 2.37 percent increase over last year to \$5,563,368, including an increase of \$197,566 for Regional School Unit 2 and a \$10,000 increase in legal expenses in anticipation of a new contract for legal services.

LaPointe said the mil rate would go from 17.6 to 19.21, an increase of 9.16 percent, but LaPointe cautioned this was a preliminary number. He hopes to have the first reading of the budget during the June 13 council meeting.

In other news, Code Enforcement Officer Maureen AuCoin informed the city that she will be leaving the position she has held for nearly six years. AuCoin has also been the interim city manager since the unexpected death of Stefan Pakulski in March and applied for the permanent position but wasn't the finalist recommended by the five-person search committee.

The unnamed finalist, who sat and took notes during the meeting, had a second interview during Monday's meeting, this time with the full council in an executive session.

The meeting began with Planning Board chair Danielle Obery letting the council know that she would be sending a letter on behalf of the board asking the city to help with training and requesting a historical advisor be available to the Planning Board.

After Obery and vice chair Judy Feinstein spoke, Cameron Brown had his application for a transient seller's license tabled until the June meeting, and as he exited, he said he might attend.

Brown was applying to sell books at Granite City Park out of his customized 1967 Cadillac Fleetwood hearse, which he said has been transformed into a "book mobile."

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Council hears plans for Stevens School

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Stevens School property sold to Winthrop builder

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

April 27, 2016 Wednesday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

[...]the Stevens School property is Hallowell has been sold. In connection with the sale, Morrill and the state agreed on a deal for the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to lease the administrative building and its associated garage until Jan. 15, 2017, while renovation of the mechanical building on the state's East Campus are completed.

FULL TEXT

Finally, the Stevens School property is Hallowell has been sold.

HALLOWELL -- After more than a decade on the market, the state of Maine has finally sold the Stevens School property in Hallowell.

Mastway Development LLC acquired nearly 53 acres on the campus for \$215,000, according to David Heidrich, director of communications for the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. The LLC is controlled by Matt Morrill, owner of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop.

Morrill would not disclose details of his plans for the property, but he did say he was excited about the possibilities.

"Hallowell is such cool little city, and this piece of property deserves new life that will benefit the whole community," Morrill said by email. "However, it's a complex site that presents an enormous amount of challenges, and it will take time and a lot of cooperation from both local and state agencies."

The state had been marketing the property for the last 10 years, so it was in the best interest of both Maine and Hallowell to get the property to a private developer, Heidrich said. He said had no knowledge of what Morrill planned to do with the property.

Morrill said he's been interested in the Stevens School campus for some time, and he approached the state more than a year ago when he learned it would be trying to sell the property again.

Stevens School property sold to Winthrop builder

"Our company was the only company to step up and work through all of the nuances to make this deal happen," Morrill said. "Acquiring the property was only the first of many steps needed before any redevelopment can occur."

The sale marks a decade-long endeavor by the state to sell the campus, which was built in the late 1870s as a boarding school for girls. The state first listed the property for \$1.1 million in 2008, but there were no takers. Various reports over the past few years mentioned the presence of the Central Maine Pre-Release Center as a turn-off for potential buyers, but that facility closed in 2013.

Last May, appraiser Daniel Dwyer placed a nearly \$900,000 value on a 40-acre portion of the property and said a mixed use would best suit the property.

Hallowell Mayor Mark Walker has long stated that the city needs more mixed-use space including affordable housing, a point he repeated Tuesday.

"I think (mixed use) makes the most sense with some affordable housing and commercial office space," Walker said. "But we would also include a fair amount of open space, because there are some really nice vistas and conservation areas up there."

Walker said the city has been awaiting an announcement about the property, which has seen a majority of its 14 buildings suffer from deterioration because of lack of maintenance. The condition of the buildings, Walker said, probably contributed to such a low purchase price.

"As the condition of the buildings deteriorated, so did their value," Walker said. "It's going to be a lot of work and a lot of expense."

Morrill built the Hallowell Overlook development, up the street from the Stevens School campus, in 2013; and his familiarity with the city gives Walker comfort.

"He's proven himself to be a good developer, and I'm sure he has some excellent plans and ideas," Walker said. "I'm looking forward to seeing how they are built upon."

Councilor Alan Stearns said he thinks some of the existing buildings are a liability, not an asset. But he said the sale is a big opportunity for the city.

"I see (the property) as an extension of the energy of the village, and bringing in more residents and more workers will only make the whole village stronger," Stearns said. "It's an enormous opportunity for Hallowell to bring private investment and bring new facilities to town."

Stearns said the council realizes that ordinances in the Stevens School area are tight and were adopted a decade ago, when the real estate market was strong. He said he expects any developer to ask for flexibility.

"I think many people in the council will be flexible and consider ordinance changes," Stearns said. The city now receives no tax revenue from the entire parcel, but Stearns said the new developer would be expected to work with the city on TIF financing.

In connection with the sale, Morrill and the state agreed on a deal for the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to lease the administrative building and its associated garage until Jan. 15, 2017, while renovation of the mechanical building on the state's East Campus are completed.

The state will pay Morrill \$1,872.92 per month for the administrative building and \$257.42 per month for the garage.

The Reed Center is the only other occupied building on the campus. Regional School Unit 2 has operated in the complex for about two decades and bought its building and nearly 10 acres from the state last June. Other state agencies that called the campus home over the years included the Department of Marine Resources and the Natural Resources Service Center.

Stevens School property sold to Winthrop builder

Jason Pafundi -- 621-5663 jpafundi@centralmaine.com

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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[Local builder buys Stevens School from state](#)

Kennebec Journal

April 27, 2016 Wednesday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

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FULL TEXT

Finally, the Stevens School property is Hallowell has been sold.

Mastway Development acquiring Hallowell property for \$215,000

HALLOWELL -- After more than a decade on the market, the state of Maine has finally sold the Stevens School property in Hallowell.

Mastway Development LLC acquired nearly 53 acres on the campus for \$215,000, according to David Heidrich, director of communications for the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. The LLC is controlled by Matt Morrill, owner of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop.

Morrill would not disclose details of his plans for the property, but he did say he was excited about the possibilities.

"Hallowell is such a cool little city, and this piece of property deserves new life that will benefit the whole community," Morrill said by email. "However, it's a complex site that presents an enormous amount of challenges, and it will take time and a lot of cooperation from both local and state agencies."

The state had been marketing the property for the last 10 years, so it was in the best interest of both Maine and Hallowell to get the property to a private developer, Heidrich said.

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Morrill said he's been interested in the Stevens School campus for some time, and he approached the state more than a year ago when he learned it would be trying to sell the property again.

Local builder buys Stevens School from state

"Our company was the only company to step up and work through all of the nuances to make this deal happen," Morrill said. "Acquiring the property was only the first of many steps needed before any redevelopment can occur."

The sale marks a decade-long endeavor by the state to sell the campus, which was built in the late 1870s as a boarding school for girls. The state first listed the property for \$1.1 million in 2008, but there were no takers. Various reports over the past few years mentioned the presence of the Central Maine Pre-Release Center as a turn-off for potential buyers, but that facility closed in 2013.

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"I think (mixed use) makes the most sense with some affordable housing and commercial office space," Walker said. "But we would also include a fair amount of open space, because there are some really nice vistas and conservation areas up there."

Walker said the city has been awaiting an announcement about the property, which has seen a majority of its 14 buildings suffer from deterioration because of lack of maintenance. The condition of the buildings, Walker said, probably contributed to such a low purchase price.

"As the condition of the buildings deteriorated, so did their value," Walker said. "It's going to be a lot of work and a lot of expense."

Morrill built the Hallowell Overlook development, up the street from the Stevens School campus, in 2013; and his familiarity with the city gives Walker comfort.

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Local builder buys Stevens School from state

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Stevens School concept reviewed

Kennebec Journal

September 13, 2016 Tuesday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

Live coverage of Hallowell's City Council meeting, where a new councilor will be appointed and the city expects to hear about the Stevens School master plan.

FULL TEXT

Live coverage of Hallowell's City Council meeting, where a new councilor will be appointed and the city expects to hear about the Stevens School master plan.

Hallowell Council also OKs City Charter changes

HALLOWELL -- Developer Matt Morrill revealed a conceptual overview of the master plan for his Stevens School campus during Monday's City Council meeting.

Morrill, who bought the property for \$215,000 from the state in April, unveiled Stevens Commons, a mixed-use development including a mix of offices and commercial space, residential offerings, apartments, duplexes and small, clustered subdivisions.

A glossy, four-page pamphlet says "Stevens Commons will be a landmark development that will enhance the quality of life of residents, tenants and the public."

Morrill said the official master plan application will be submitted this week, and Morrill hopes the plan will go before the Planning Board in October.

Some of the features of the master plan, Morrill said, include granting public access easements from Winthrop Street to the Howard Hill Preserve and providing means for neighborhood/community connectivity with interconnected sidewalks and trails.

Morrill also noted this property was tax-exempt while it was owned by the state, so this redevelopment would grow the city's tax base. He also said a fiber optic network was discovered on site that could provide high-speed internet that "would be very desirable for individual users up to larger tech-based companies."

Stevens School concept reviewed

"I think it's essential that we work together to get this done, because I can't do this on my own," Morrill told the council. "I'll need your assistance to build this out the way it should be."

The Council also discussed a \$248,000 forgivable loan to Morrill's Mastway Development that could provide funding for immediate infrastructure improvements that would ultimately support an affordable-housing development in the next few years at the Stevens Commons site. It approved allowing City Manager Nate Rudy to continue negotiating with Morrill on terms of the loan.

In other business, the Council unanimously approved the final draft of the amended City Charter, which will now be placed on the November ballot.

The eight-person Charter Commission, which was created last year, worked for more than 12 months on reviewing and amending potential revisions to the charter, which hasn't seen many changes since it was created more than 60 years ago.

Chairman Stephen Langsdorf, an attorney at Preti Flaherty Beliveau & Pachios LLP in Augusta and Augusta's city counselor, said the panel went back and forth on a lot of the changes, but ultimately all of them were unanimously approved.

"They did an outstanding job under the able guidance of Steve Langsdorf," Mayor Mark Walker said before the meeting. "It took a tremendous effort to look over a 50-plus-year-old document, and I think what they've drafted will serve the city well."

One of the biggest changes the commission recommended was changing the lengths of the mayor's and city councilor's terms of office. The offices are now two-year positions, but under the revised charter, councilors would serve staggered three-year terms.

Other proposals included stipulating that certain positions that fall under the supervision of the city manager would be subject only to initial approval by the council. After that, the city manager would handle all matters of employment under normal practices. Langsdorf said this change means councilors would not have to decide the future of a city employee without having access to their personnel file or day-to-day performance.

Walker started the meeting by appointing Michael Frett, an attorney originally from Brooklyn, New York, to replace Sophie Gabrion as Ward 2's councilor. Gabrion, 30, resigned last week due to health concerns. Frett will complete Gabrion's term, which expires in January 2018.

"I think (Michael) will be a plus, and we're fortunate that he was able to step up," Walker said. "He has a legal background, and I think he's very knowledgeable and detail oriented." Walker said Frett will take Gabrion's spot on the highway and parking committees. Councilor Diano Circo was named to Gabrion's seat on the fire services committee.

Despite not being from Maine, Frett has lived in the area for years and has been accepted by the community, Walker said. "He's been around, and he's been involved."

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Hallowell board discusses Stevens School

Kennebec Journal

July 1, 2016 Friday

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JASON PAFUNDI

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Body

ABSTRACT

Mayor Mark Walker said after the sale that the council would have to change some ordinances in connection with any redevelopment, and Morrill has pushed for these changes to happen quickly so that he can market the property to other potential developers and tenants.

FULL TEXT

Hallowell's Planning Board is holding a special meeting to discuss proposed ordinance changes as related to the Stevens School campus.

Owner Matt Morrill waits on ordinance approval to market campus to developers, tenants

HALLOWELL -- The Planning Board held a special meeting to discuss proposed ordinance changes connected to the Stevens School property Thursday at City Hall. The board was expected to make a recommendation to the City Council about the proposed changes, but after nearly two hours of discussion and public comment, it hadn't done so yet.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, paid \$215,000 in April for the 54-acre property, which the state had marketed for a decade. He sees a property containing a mix of affordable senior housing, residential and open space, retail space and office space.

Mayor Mark Walker said after the sale that the council would have to change some ordinances in connection with any redevelopment, and Morrill has pushed for these changes to happen quickly so that he can market the property to other potential developers and tenants.

One of the two proposed ordinance changes would add a residential component to Section 9-388. Morrill, the developer of the Hallowell Overlook neighborhood, has spoken many times about his vision of having affordable senior housing and residential space at Stevens School.

Morrill's attorney, Tom Federle, spoke about how the ordinance changes would allow Morrill to begin searching for tenants for several historic buildings, which Federle said was Morrill's focus.

Hallowell board discusses Stevens School

"The worst thing for old historic buildings is to be vacant," Federle said. "They need to be cared for, and Matt has tenants that want to move into some of the historic buildings."

Federle also said there are fundamental issues with the infrastructure within the complex that Morrill needs to fix before he would be able to get tenants into buildings or move forward with a master plan.

"We think this is a modest first step that allows Matt to keep going," Federle said. "There's a lot of attention on this now, and Matt wants to build on it."

Much of the public opposition to the ordinance centered on people who have wondered why the city is changing ordinances, some of which have been on the books for a while, for just one developer. Though nobody in attendance brought up that subject during the public hearing, people did speak about the requirement of a master plan.

Federle said the ordinance changes proposed would allow Morrill to move forward with marketing the existing buildings to potential tenants before submitting a master plan.

But Morrill sees his purchase of the property and his master plan for it, as a huge investment in Hallowell and one that would provide the city with much-needed tax revenue now that the property is privately owned.

Stevens School, which opened in the late 1870s as a school for wayward girls, needs major infrastructure improvements to its roads and sewers, and Morrill has asked that the city pay for it, a cost estimated to be at least \$1 million. Morrill said the city would take over ownership of the roads and maintenance associated with them.

Morrill hosted a site walk for more than two dozen people Monday afternoon to give people a greater and clearer picture of his vision for the campus. The group toured three buildings, including one in severe disrepair, and had a question-and-answer session about Morrill's ideas for the property.

The Planning Board meeting was moved upstairs to the City Hall Auditorium in anticipation of a crowd too big for the council chambers. However, a large portion of the audience was city councilors and other city officials; there were only 12 people from the general public at the meeting.

Before the Planning Board meeting, the City Council held a brief special meeting to appoint an acting code enforcement officer and a new city clerk.

Richard Dolby was named the acting code enforcement officer for a two-days-per week position, replacing Maureen AuCoin, who left the position last month after more than six years. Walker said Dolby does not want the permanent position, so City Manager Nate Rudy will conduct a search for a permanent part-time code enforcement officer.

Dolby spent several years as a code enforcement officer for Augusta. He previously served as an interim code enforcement officer in Gardiner, working under Rudy.

Longtime City Clerk Deanna Mosher Hallett was replaced by Dianne Polky, who has been Hallowell's deputy city clerk for the last 17 years. Hallett was the city clerk for more than 30 years and had retired but was working under a special contract with the city for the last few years.

Both Polky and Dolby start in their new positions July 1.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Report values Stevens School

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

May 29, 2015 Friday

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Byline: SHEPHERD, MICHAEL

Body

ABSTRACT

An appraiser has placed the value of the Stevens School complex in Hallowell at nearly \$900,000 as the state of Maine prepares to market the campus, a key piece of the city's economic development future.

FULL TEXT

An appraiser has placed the value of the Stevens School complex in Hallowell at nearly \$900,000 as the state of Maine prepares to market the campus, a key piece of the city's economic development future.

Appraiser: Offices, senior housing, homes best bets

HALLOWELL -- Land at the Stevens School campus would be best redeveloped to accommodate office space, senior housing and new homes, according to an appraiser who valued 40 acres of the property at nearly \$900,000.

The state-owned complex has long loomed over Hallowell politics as a key piece of the city's economic development future, and the broker who once tried to sell the campus said he's "bullish" on it.

Appraiser Daniel Dwyer's report to the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services earlier this month is the first look at its potential value since the state tried to sell it in 2008, eventually marketing the whole property for \$1.1 million and finding no takers. Maine is preparing to shed it again, likely with a different approach.

Dwyer's report assumes that the state will get city approval to divide much of the campus into four parcels that could be offered separately to different developers. The appraisal excludes the 12 acres of land that the state plans to give to Regional School Unit 2, which includes their leased office and 10 acres of land behind it that the state plans to keep for potential development.

Dwyer places this 40-acre portion's value at \$893,000, pegging three office buildings in the campus' core at \$527,000, an office building along Winthrop Street at \$161,000, five smaller buildings in an area that could be used for senior housing or other residential uses at \$155,000 and 20 acres of open space that could be used for new homes at \$50,000.

The state could start marketing the property this fall, said David Heidrich, a spokesman for the department, adding that "we are encouraged by the appraisal report and hope that there will be significant interest from developers."

Report values Stevens School

Chris Paszyc, the broker from CBRE/The Boulos Company in Portland, who tried to sell the campus before, has said the 2013 closure of the Central Maine Pre-Release Center there improved conditions for a sale. He called Dwyer's report "a good indicator of market value" but that a market price of \$1 million "is still defensible."

"I am bullish on the future prospects for the campus," Paszyc said.

It won't come without challenges. Dwyer said the conditions of buildings, some of which date back to the 1800s, range from good to very poor and that one building, the vacant Erskine Hall, should be demolished. He says the buildings have energy inefficiencies, asbestos pipe insulation and flooring and that many of the interiors would have to be reconfigured for new uses.

Mayor Mark Walker said many people in Hallowell would welcome senior housing at the campus. A market study conducted for an Augusta housing project expected to open this year found that the area will need more rental units to accommodate a projected additional 192 renters over age 65 in the Augusta area between 2013 and 2018.

However, City Manager Michael Starn said "the proof is in the pudding," and it's not until potential developers come forward that leaders will be able to gauge the property's possibilities.

"We can all have opinions about it, but the people who are willing to put money behind their opinions really matter," he said.

Michael Shepherd -- 370-7652 mshepherd@centralmaine.com Twitter: @mikeshepherdme

Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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[State moving on sale of Stevens School site](#)

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

April 6, 2015 Monday

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Byline: SHEPHERD, MICHAEL

Body

ABSTRACT

A prerelease center that housed former prison inmates closed in 2013 and last week, the Maine Department of Marine Resources announced that it would leave in mid-April for the Marquardt Building on the former state psychiatric hospital campus on Augusta's east side.

FULL TEXT

The state of Maine is taking steps toward selling the Stevens School property in Hallowell, and the city is eyeing a new pot of tax revenue to incentivize development there.

HALLOWELL -- The state of Maine is moving to sell the Stevens School property as the city eyes a pot of public money that could provide incentives to developers.

The 64-acre campus off Winthrop Street will likely be appraised by the end of May, said Alex Willette, a spokesman for the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services. Once the state pursues a sale, Hallowell officials say they could use money flowing into a fund established last year as part of a plan to woo developers.

"We could be doing stormwater work; we could be fixing up those roads and taking them over as municipal roads," said City Manager Michael Starn. "There's a lot of things that could be done to make that property attractive for a developer."

Over the last few years, state offices have been leaving the campus. A prerelease center that housed former prison inmates closed in 2013 and last week, the Maine Department of Marine Resources announced that it would leave in mid-April for the Marquardt Building on the former state psychiatric hospital campus on Augusta's east side.

Willette said the Natural Resources Service Center will leave by the end of April. After that, only the Maine Conservation Corps and a state parks and lands office will remain, and their departure date hasn't been determined.

There was little interest when Maine tried to sell the Stevens School campus in 2008, and officials blamed it on a bad economy and the prerelease center's presence.

Since then, Hallowell has placed many of its future economic development hopes on the 14-building campus, which features a northern 20-acre field and an eastern 14-acre field representing much of the last undeveloped land in the city's core.

State moving on sale of Stevens School site

A state map of the property drafted in June envisions residential development in the undeveloped portions and commercial uses. Chris Paszyc, the broker from CBRE/The Boulos Company in Portland who tried to sell the campus in 2008, said the state should "see interest from a variety of developers," including those seeing potential for residential and commercial uses.

Two residential developments about the property -- Hallowell Overlook, managed by builder Matt Morrill of Winthrop, on the west and The Ridges, owned by Blais Property Management, on the east, -- and Mayor Mark Walker said continuations of those developments on the Stevens School property could be "logical."

Neither Walker nor Starn would name potentially interested developers. Morrill declined comment when asked about his interest and Steve Blais of The Ridges said his company hasn't expressed interest.

Money going into the fund established in 2014 with Hallowell's downtown tax increment financing district could be leveraged to aid developers. It allowed the city to freeze its downtown-area property valuation for 30 years, with Hallowell agreeing to spend all of the money it saves on state and county taxes as development increases on improvements in that area.

By 2024, the city expects to have put \$1.2 million into that fund, and Starn said the city could borrow against that to fund upgrades at the Stevens School complex, which Walker called "a natural use" for some of that money.

But Paszyc said that "will certainly help generate interest," but added that the money "also comes with strings attached" that could hinder a developer.

"So, it remains to be seen what the city wants those funds to be used for," he said.

Councilor Alan Stearns, who lives on nearby Pleasant Street, called the Stevens School "a generational opportunity for Hallowell."

But he said a specific borrowing proposal should be vetted by the public, council and committee before advancing, even though using public money there may be appropriate.

"But I think the taxpayers need a lot more information before we approach that," Stearns said. "On an unfocused investment, the risk is as large as the opportunity."

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Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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Stevens School 'high priority' for Hallowell

Morning Sentinel (Waterville, Maine)

November 30, 2015 Monday

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Byline: PAFUNDI, JASON

Body

ABSTRACT

According to Walker and city manager Stefan Pakulski, the state put the Winthrop Street campus up for sale in October and received one bid.

FULL TEXT

The Stevens School campus, a 60-plus acre state-owned facility in Hallowell, was put out for bid in October with a minimum bid of \$600,000. According to Hallowell City Manager Stefan Pakulski, the city has only received one bid, and plans for the mostly-vacant campus are not known.

HALLOWELL -- During the city's inauguration ceremony earlier this year, Hallowell's elected officials, including Mayor Mark Walker, said deciding the future of the state-owned Stevens School campus was a priority for 2015.

With the New Year right around the corner, the future of the 64-acre, 14-building complex on one of the city's busiest streets remains unclear.

"Stevens School and (the Water Street reconstruction) will dictate the future presentability of the city of Hallowell," Walker said. "It is a very high priority."

According to Walker and city manager Stefan Pakulski, the state put the Winthrop Street campus up for sale in October and received one bid. Pakulski said there was a minimum bid of \$600,000 for the complex, which an appraiser valued at nearly \$900,000 in May. State officials did not return a request for comment on the bidding process, but Walker said the proposal was probably being carefully reviewed.

"I think if the bid is close (to what the state wants) and there was good documentation as to why the bid is reasonable and should be accepted, then the state will give it serious consideration," he said.

Walker said it is important to the city that some decisions are made regarding the complex because there are many buildings that are decaying, putting the city at risk because of environmental concerns. Walker and Pakulski agree that the condition of the majority of the buildings may be what keeps developers from making an offer.

"Depending on what you pay for it, you'd have to pour tons of money into rehabbing the buildings to be able to turn them into condo residences or office space," Pakulski said. "Some of the buildings were built for different things than what somebody might be able to use them for now."

Stevens School 'high priority' for Hallowell

One of the buildings used to be an infirmary, so it has small, cubicle like rooms. That was converted into the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in 1979, but that facility was shuttered in 2013.

"Those little infirmary rooms were great as little cells for people to stay in," Pakulski said. "But they are not practical for anything else unless you made it into a call center or something."

The campus, built in the late 1870s as a boarding school for girls, has housed several state agencies over the years, including the Department of Marine Resources and the Natural Resources Service Center. Currently, the only occupied building is the Reed Center, headquarters for Regional School Unit 2, which has operated out of the complex for about two decades.

RSU 2 purchased their building and between five and 10 acres of land from the state after a \$1-a-year lease expired in June. Superintendent William Zima could not be reached for comment, but Walker said the school district "has maintained and improved their building, so it was natural to convey that portion to them."

The mayor pictures the remaining 50-plus acres as a mixed-use facility containing some open space, trails, affordable housing and office space.

"Over the last 10-20 years, we've lost what some would call affordable housing," he said. "We have fewer apartments available today, and some have been built up to where they are desirable but no longer considered affordable, so I think affordable housing would be the No. 1 need."

Back in 2008, the state tried to sell the complex, but due in part to the economic downtown, they found no takers. Walker said the real estate market is emerging and the local area is seeing new development, so it is "a better time now that will make (Stevens School) look more attractive to developers."

But Pakulski cautioned that the property remains problematic the longer it sits vacant.

"To be able to transform the buildings into places that would be safe, comfortable and functional is going to be a lot of effort and a lot of money," he said. "To a buyer, in many respects it's going to look like more trouble than it's worth."

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Council faces Stevens School vote

Kennebec Journal

July 10, 2016 Sunday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

In a letter to the council, the Planning Board said the recommended amendments are consistent with the intent of the original amendments to allow some reuse of the existing buildings and limited residential development prior to the approval of a master plan for the entire parcel.

FULL TEXT

An advance of Hallowell's Monday council meeting, where they should be voting on the Stevens School ordinance amendments.

The Hallowell City Council is expected to vote on proposed ordinance changes related to the Stevens School campus during its meeting Monday at City Hall.

The changes were proposed by Matt Morrill, who bought the 54-acre Stevens School property from the state in April, and his attorney, Tom Federle. Morrill said the changes are necessary so that he may begin marketing the property to other developers and potential tenants.

During a more than four-hour meeting June 30, the Planning Board went back and forth with Morrill and Federle on their proposals before ultimately voting unanimously to recommend several ordinance changes to the council.

In a letter to the council, the Planning Board said the recommended amendments are consistent with the intent of the original amendments to allow some reuse of the existing buildings and limited residential development prior to the approval of a master plan for the entire parcel.

The Planning Board recommended that a change to Section 9-388 to allow Open Space Residential Subdivisions be revised to limit the provision to one subdivision within the core campus. The board also recommended that there be no required setback for existing buildings.

"The Planning Board did a terrific job identifying changes that were not needed while also identifying other sections that may need to be changed," Hallowell Mayor Mark Walker said in an email. "I await to hear if these revisions are satisfactory for the developers and if they accept these revisions."

Council faces Stevens School vote

The agenda for the meeting calls for the second and third readings of the proposed ordinance changes, which requires a suspension of the rules because typically it takes more than one meeting for each reading. Walker said that if all involved parties are satisfied, he expects the council will approve the changes.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, paid \$215,000 in April for the Winthrop Street property and has said he envisions a combination of affordable housing, senior housing, market-rate condominiums, commercial and retail space and at least one small residential subdivision.

Walker said if the ordinance changes are approved, there would be no waiting period and Morrill can get started right away.

Monday's agenda also includes the second reading of the municipal budget, which is expected to rise nearly 5 percent over the current year. Councilor George Lapointe, chairman of the finance committee, said the increase is primarily a result of the continued growth of the Regional School Unit 2 budget and catching up on infrastructure improvements the city has delayed for some time.

The city's commitment to Regional School Unit 2 is up \$211,205.26, or about 8 percent, over last year. Hallowell also has budgeted \$123,643 for a tax increment financing district payment after not budgeting anything last year.

The nearly \$5.6 million budget would result in an increase in the property tax rate from \$17.60 to \$19 per \$1,000 in valuation.

In other business, the personnel committee will recommend adding a whistle-blower protection policy to the city ordinances for the first time. The policy is intended to encourage municipal officials to report suspected or actual occurrences of illegal, unethical or inappropriate behavior or practices without retribution.

Members of the council have discussed publicly adding some sort of whistle-blower policy to the city ordinances over the past few years, according to council minutes.

Also on the agenda are several staffing changes at City Hall. Diane Polky has taken over as the new city clerk, with Dan Kelley moving up to be the deputy city clerk.

City Manager Nate Rudy is looking for a new, permanent code enforcement officer and assistant planner to replace Maureen AuCoin, who left the position in early June. The job is listed on the city's website and says it will be a part-time position with a base wage of \$17 to \$22 per hour, depending on qualifications.

The council is scheduled to meet at 6 p.m. Monday at City Hall.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Matt Morrill rolls out Stevens School vision on site walk

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

June 28, 2016 Tuesday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

Morrill told the assembled crowd, which included councilors, members of the Planning Board and others who were taking notes and asking questions throughout, that he sees additional space on the campus for affordable senior housing, a large conservation area and two cluster developments with single-family homes.

FULL TEXT

Owner Matt Morrill is hosting a site walk at the Stevens School campus in Hallowell.

HALLOWELL -- Matt Morrill made a big commitment to Hallowell when he purchased the Stevens School campus in April. He's asking the city to make the same commitment to him.

Morrill hosted more than 40 people for a site walk on the property Monday afternoon to share his short-term and long-term vision for the 54-acre campus. The walk was in advance of Thursday's Planning Board meeting at City Hall which will address several proposed ordinance changes related to the Stevens School campus.

For more than an hour, Morrill and his attorney, Tom Federle, answered questions while walking around the property. Morrill first took people from the center quad, which is surrounded by five historic buildings, to Erskine Hall, which Morrill said is the building in the worst condition. He said the floors are buckling in several places and its roof has been leaking for 20 years.

"It's shabby and needs a lot of work to retrofit or rehab the building," said Councilor George LaPointe. "I don't know if it's worth that."

Cleveland Hall and the Stevens Building, which served as the Central Maine Pre-Release Center, are in decent shape and would appear to be salvageable. Morrill sees the Stevens Building as a place for light retail space, artists' workspace and "maybe a coffee shop or small restaurant."

"I'm open to ideas," Morrill said. "My idea isn't final, and I'm willing to listen to suggestions."

Matt Morrill rolls out Stevens School vision on site walk

Morrill told the assembled crowd, which included councilors, members of the Planning Board and others who were taking notes and asking questions throughout, that he sees additional space on the campus for affordable senior housing, a large conservation area and two cluster developments with single-family homes. He is asking the city for about \$1 million for infrastructure improvements to the roads, sewer, drainage and water on the property.

For the city to pony up \$1 million without a guarantee it would see a return on its investment is a lot to ask, Morrill said. Federle said they are asking the city to share some of the risks.

"I'm not trying to do this all myself," Morrill said. "It's our intention to make this something that other developers would come in and want to help develop too."

Ruth LaChance, president of the Hallowell Board of Trade, expressed concern that retail space on the property would take business away from the downtown district, but Morrill said it was his intention that any businesses on the campus would not come at a detriment to the established Water Street businesses.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, purchased the 54-acre property from the state in April for \$215,000. The state had been trying to sell the property for nearly a decade, and it was listed for sale for \$1.1 million in 2008 but had no takers. Appraiser David Dwyer said a 40-acre portion of the property was valued at \$900,000 last May.

Hallowell has long struggled to find something to do with one of the last undeveloped areas in the city. For more than 15 years, there was talk about relocating the city's fire station building, which was built more than 180 years ago, to the Stevens School campus, but ultimately that project stalled.

The only current occupants on the campus are Regional School Unit 2, which has had its headquarters in the Reed Center for more than 20 years, and the state's Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, which has a lease for its administrative building and associated garage until Jan. 15, 2017.

Morrill said he is working on securing a tenant for the Baker Building, and he has already started making small improvements to the structure.

The Planning Board needs to make changes to several ordinances related to Stevens School, which is in its own district, before Morrill can really start working on redevelopment. Morrill said he would like to get the infrastructure work -- roads, sewer, drainage -- started by the fall with the hope of completing the work by winter.

The Planning Board meets at 7 p.m. Thursday at City Hall.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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[HALLOWELL Stevens School issue gets its own Web site](#)

Kennebec Journal

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FULL TEXT

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- Residents can now share their thoughts about the Stevens School Complex on the Internet.

A blog, created by Stephen Thompson, covers a variety of topics about Stevens School and the Reed Center building used by Maine School Administrative District 16 -- including possible development if the city purchases it, tax consequences, environmental issues, the effect of a purchase for the city's comprehensive plan and open space.

It also has an online poll asking users the question that has been at the center of council meetings for several months: "Should the city of Hallowell purchase the Stevens School property?"

"I believe one of the concerns expressed by folks I have spoken with about the Stevens School process is that there must be more open discussion," Thompson said. "With a blog, those people can express and act on those concerns. They can share their thoughts and concrete information."

Thompson was appointed Monday to the expanded Stevens School Annex Committee by Hallowell Mayor Anthony Masciadri.

The Stevens School blog address is: stevensschool.blog.spot.com.

Users who want to participate in blog discussions need to create a free Gmail account through Google, Thompson said.

The property, a complex of 10 buildings housing state offices on more than 60 acres, has been discussed by city officials and residents for several years. Interest heightened after councilors voted 4-3 to stop negotiations to buy it.

Some residents berated councilors for making the decision before hearing from the public.

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HALLOWELL Stevens School issue gets its own Web site

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HALLOWELL Stevens School? Another try, maybe

Kennebec Journal

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Dateline: Augusta, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- The city will take once again take up discussion over the Stevens School complex.

Councilors voted 5-1 Monday to refer the question of whether the city should purchase the property back to an expanded version of its Stevens School Annex Committee.

Councilor Andrew J. McPherson voted against.

"I will not vote for this," he stated. "If I wouldn't vote to purchase this in the first place, I sure won't vote to reopen the negotiations again."

While the potential remains for returning to the state's Bureau of General Services to reopen negotiations to buy the 10-building complex, members could also explore what the property could be used for, should the city end up owning the complex's 60-plus acres.

The city offered \$600,000 to buy the site, with a plan to lease space back to the state, which uses the campus for offices. But it pulled the offer Jan. 12 with a 4-3 council vote.

"I would encourage that we go back to the beginning, and that's not negotiations," Councilor Charlotte Warren said. "We need to back up from even discussing buying it. People have questions about what's going with this property, period. I don't think there was enough information about it out there the first time."

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Stevens School negotiations divide Hallowell

Kennebec Journal

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FULL TEXT

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

HALLOWELL -- A number of residents are frustrated with City Council members regarding a decision made Monday night about the Stevens School Complex.

Councilors voted 4-3 Monday to halt negotiations with the state to purchase the 10-building Stevens School complex.

"It was felt that given the dramatic change in the nationwide economy in the last 12 to 18 months that the city would be wise not to pursue this project," Mayor Anthony Masciadri wrote to Bill Leet, director of the Division of Leased Space at the state Bureau of General Services.

The city had offered to buy the property for \$600,000, then lease it back to the state, which uses it for offices.

Resident Sybil Baker questions the method she and others believe was used to make that decision.

"I'm not quarreling with (the council's) reasoning for doing it, but I'm appalled at how it was done," Baker said. "It was done prematurely, it was abrupt and without public opinion. There was a public forum (scheduled for Jan. 22), so what was the hurry?"

Baker did not attend Monday's meeting.

The item was not on Monday's agenda, although, according to Hallowell city ordinance, it does not have to be in order for councilors to vote on it.

The council is within its rights to discuss and act upon any matter if five of the seven members choose to, according to Masciadri and city ordinances.

Masciadri said the council did not cross any legal lines when the decision was made.

"Was the decision made abruptly? Yes. Illegally? No," Masciadri said. "In hindsight, it was not a smart move. But if the council makes a motion and it's seconded, I have no power to overturn that. It must be put up for a vote."

Stevens School negotiations divide Hallowell

Masciadri said councilors went into an executive session to discuss whether the negotiations should be axed or not. After a session, councilors reappeared in public and made a motion to withdraw the bid.

Four of the seven councilors approved the motion. The mayor does not vote.

According to interim city manager Todd Shea, councilors Charlotte Warren, David Bustin, Stephen Vellani and Andrew McPherson voted in favor of ceasing negotiations with the state. Councilors Peter Schumacher, Phillip Lindley and Gail Wippelhauser voted to continue.

No one from the public, aside from Stevens School Committee member Dawn Gallagher, was present for the vote.

Gallagher declined to comment Thursday but confirmed she was at the meeting.

Baker called the fact that the vote was held with almost no one present "disappointing."

"Certainly, it was unwise and undiplomatic," Baker said. "It was almost as if the council was turning up their noses at their constituents who couldn't voice their opinions."

"The public is upset that they didn't know the details of this negotiation, and I get that," Masciadri said. "But once the deal was terminated, it wasn't apparent why the public would need to know those details after the fact."

In an e-mail to the Kennebec Journal, Warren -- who voted to end negotiations -- said that, since July, the council has discussed the Stevens School property issue in executive sessions, away from the public.

"These meetings have been held in executive session in order to protect the city's interest in the bargaining process ... not to tip our hand," she wrote. Other names appearing on the e-mail were Masciadri, Vellani, McPherson, Bustin and Shumacher.

Wipplehauser and Lindley declined to sign the e-mail.

Warren said that, last Monday, most council members felt they no longer wanted to move forward with the deal.

"Once the state came back with their figures, I knew that we were going to have to raise taxes to buy (Stevens School)," Warren said. "It would have been fiscally irresponsible for us as a council to move forward on this."

In response to residents wanting to know why the council did not hold off until after the public hearing, Warren said: "It wouldn't have been the right thing to wait, when we already knew it was clear that this was not the right thing to do for Hallowell."

A meeting to explain the council's decision to the public will be held at 6 p.m. Thursday in the City Hall Auditorium.

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[Retail draws attention at Stevens School workshop](#)

Kennebec Journal

December 1, 2016 Thursday

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JASON PAFUNDI

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Body

ABSTRACT

There is no feeling from Walker or City Manager Nate Rudy about when the council may take a final vote on the master plan. Since taking ownership of the 54-acre campus, Morrill has expressed his vision for the property on Winthrop Street as a mixed-use development featuring affordable senior housing, commercial and residential space and small, clustered subdivisions.

FULL TEXT

Live coverage of the Stevens School public hearing, where people will get a chance to give feedback about the redevelopment of the old school. LATE

Residents discuss possible effect on downtown Hallowell

HALLOWELL -- Potential retail development at the Stevens Commons property on Winthrop Street attracted the most scrutiny during a public workshop in Hallowell Wednesday night on owner Matt Morrill's master plan for the campus.

More than 40 people filled seats in the City Hall Auditorium, including Mayor Mark Walker, councilors Michael Frett and Phil Lindley and incoming councilors Kara Walker, Lynn Irish and Maureen Aucoin-Giroux and members of the Planning Board.

Throughout the meeting, which lasted only 75 minutes, people spoke in favor of limited retail development and against the possibility of retail at the 54-acre campus, but everyone agreed that anything that would hurt Hallowell's downtown would be unacceptable.

Ruth LaChance, president of the Hallowell Board of Trade, did not attend the meeting, but she said recently that her organization would not support the Stevens Commons plan if it included any retail development.

During Wednesday's meeting, many people expressed concerns about retail development, but most seemed open to the idea.

Retail draws attention at Stevens School workshop

Deb Fahy, the executive director of the Harlow Gallery on Water Street, said having more than one art gallery in downtown Hallowell makes the city a destination. Nate Pierce, a relatively new resident of Hallowell, said people would move to the Stevens Commons campus in part because of the city's vibrant downtown.

"There's nothing that I saw in the plan that would draw people away from downtown," he said. "I think it would just enhance it."

Carolyn Manson said Row House, Hallowell's historical preservation organization, appreciates Morrill's efforts to prioritize preserving the historic nature of the campus' nine buildings.

"We are willing to help Matt in any way that we can to ensure, if possible, that these buildings are historically preserved," Manson said.

Manson also said Row House supports limited retail development and said it would be "appropriate."

Several people expressed their concerns about the potential increase in traffic that may result from the new mixed-use development, especially with so many children living around Pleasant and Page streets.

Morrill can make changes to the plan before the Planning Board and council review the application. The Planning Board would then make a recommendation to the council, and then the council would vote whether to approve, approve with conditions or deny the master plan.

Each of these steps must happen within 45 days of the completion of the previous step. There is no feeling from Walker or City Manager Nate Rudy about when the council may take a final vote on the master plan.

Since taking ownership of the 54-acre campus, Morrill has expressed his vision for the property on Winthrop Street as a mixed-use development featuring affordable senior housing, commercial and residential space and small, clustered subdivisions. He has never officially mentioned a specific type of retail establishment that he would like to see on the campus.

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, bought the property from the state for \$215,000 in April. He has been working on finding other investors and developers to help turn the former girls boarding school into a showcase piece of Hallowell real estate.

"My email address and phone number is out there, and I am listening to everyone's concerns," Morrill said at the end of the meeting. "I look forward to working with the community to come up with a plan that is a benefit to the whole community."

The master plan was submitted in September and reviewed by interim Code Enforcement Officer Dick Dolby before the Planning Board deemed it complete.

Dolby, who spent more than 20 years heading the code enforcement office in Augusta, agreed to help Hallowell's new Code Enforcement Officer, Douglas Ide, to continue reviewing documents and applications related to the Stevens School redevelopment. Ide, a Manchester selectman, was hired as a part-time code enforcement officer earlier this month after a four-month search.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Bill preserves city's Stevens School interests

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

June 15, 2011 Wednesday

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Byline: SHEPHERD, MICHAEL

Body

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- If the state sells the Stevens School complex, Hallowell's interests would be preserved under emergency legislation, the bill's sponsor said.

L.D. 1584 -- offered by Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell -- would reserve a portion of the land for city uses, preserve city use of open space at the property, and allow Regional School Unit 2 to lease office space on the property until at least 2015.

There was a public hearing for the bill -- essentially a continuation of a similar bill Treat sponsored in 2009 -- on June 9. It was voted "ought to pass" Tuesday by the Committee on State and Local Government.

Councilor Peter Schumacher said open space on the property includes fields and a "good parcel of woods."

Monday night, the City Council briefly discussed an ordinance banning any new roads through the complex.

"The city is really hoping for responsible development of that property," Schumacher said.

Provisions in an earlier legislative resolve allowing RSU 2 to lease office space in the complex were set to expire in September, she said.

"It was just an oversight, so we had to submit separate legislation to keep those provisions," Treat said.

The state has had the 13-building complex off Winthrop Street for sale since 2008.

The campus dates to 1872, when the Maine Industrial School for Girls there served mostly wards of the state. In 1915, the name was changed to the Stevens School for Girls. Five buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Central Maine Pre-Release Center is on the center's grounds -- and has no plans to leave, Treat said.

"It's a challenging property to sell because the pre-release center is there," she said.

Chris Paszyc, property broker for CB Richard Ellis, said the pre-release center has "raised eyebrows" for some potential developers and been "a perceptive problem."

The size of the 63.5-acre property and its many buildings has been a hard sell in a tough economic climate. The property is listed for \$1.1 million.

Bill preserves city's Stevens School interests

"The biggest challenge is the size and scope of the undertaking," he said. "You're going to have to have significant capital to carry through the development and redevelop the properties."

He said there are interested parties -- senior housing and office space are being discussed. He said he has been charged to sell the property to a single developer, likely for different uses.

RSU 2 Superintendent Donald Siviski testified in support of the bill last week at a public hearing, saying the Hallowell-based school district has paid for numerous upgrades at its offices on the campus.

Betty Lamoreau, acting director of the Maine Bureau of General Services, which is handling the management and sale of the complex, also testified on Treat's bill.

A separate measure -- L.D. 1552, which passed in the Legislature on June 7 and was signed into law by Gov. Paul LePage on June 10 -- extended the dates to sell property in several Maine cities and towns, including the Stevens School complex.

Now, the state has until September 2016 to complete a sale.

"That extension failed to address certain conditions of sale or transfer included in the current resolve," Lamoreau said in testimony. "LD 1584 simply continues the existing conditions and would have no new impact on our efforts to sell or lease the property."

Treat said the bill has seen "no opposition" and should pass by the end of the week -- presumably the last of the legislative session.

The emergency legislation would become law immediately with LePage's signature.

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State announces sale of Stevens School campus in Hallowell ; Private developer Matt Morrill's purchase ends a 10-year effort to sell the nearly 53-acre property.

Portland Press Herald (Maine)

April 27, 2016 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 2.B

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Byline: JASON PAFUNDI, By JASON PAFUNDI Kennebec Journal

Body

HALLOWELL -- After more than a decade on the market, the state of Maine has finally sold the Stevens School property in Hallowell.

Mastway Development LLC acquired nearly 53 acres on the campus for \$215,000, according to David Heidrich, director of communications for the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. The LLC is controlled by Matt Morrill, owner of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop.

Morrill would not disclose details of his plans for the property, but he did say he was excited about the possibilities.

"Hallowell is such cool little city, and this piece of property deserves new life that will benefit the whole community," Morrill said by email. "However, it's a complex site that presents an enormous amount of challenges, and it will take time and a lot of cooperation from both local and state agencies."

The state had been marketing the property for the last 10 years, so it was in the best interest of both Maine and Hallowell to get the property to a private developer, Heidrich said. He said had no knowledge of what Morrill planned to do with the property.

Morrill said he's been interested in the Stevens School campus for some time, and he approached the state more than a year ago when he learned it would be trying to sell the property again.

"Our company was the only company to step up and work through all of the nuances to make this deal happen," Morrill said. "Acquiring the property was only the first of many steps needed before any redevelopment can occur."

The sale marks a decade-long endeavor by the state to sell the campus, which was built in the late 1870s as a boarding school for girls. The state first listed the property for \$1.1 million in 2008, but there were no takers. Various reports over the past few years mentioned the presence of the Central Maine Pre-Release Center as a turn-off for potential buyers, but that facility closed in 2013.

Last May, appraiser Daniel Dwyer placed a nearly \$900,000 value on a 40-acre portion of the property and said a mixed use would best suit the property.

Hallowell Mayor Mark Walker has long stated that the city needs more mixed-use space including affordable housing, a point he repeated Tuesday.

State announces sale of Stevens School campus in Hallowell ; Private developer Matt Morrill's purchase ends a 10-year effort to sell the nearly 53-acre property....

Walker said the city has been awaiting an announcement about the property, which has seen a majority of its 14 buildings suffer from deterioration because of lack of maintenance. The condition of the buildings, Walker said, probably contributed to such a low purchase price.

Morrill built the Hallowell Overlook development, up the street from the Stevens School campus, in 2013; and his familiarity with the city gives Walker comfort.

"He's proven himself to be a good developer, and I'm sure he has some excellent plans and ideas," Walker said.

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[State announces sale of Stevens School campus in Hallowell; Private developer Matt Morrill's purchase ends a 10-year effort to sell the nearly 53-acre property.](#)

Portland Press Herald

April 27, 2016 Wednesday

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Byline: JASON PAFUNDI

JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Portland, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Kennebec Journal

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End of Document

Stevens School bill awaiting final vote

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

June 1, 2009 Monday

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Section: LOCAL NEWS; Pg. A.1; ISSN: 0745-2039

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Body

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- A bill requiring the establishment of a stakeholders' group if the state decides to sell Hallowell's Stevens School Complex needs only to undergo a final vote before being signed into law.

The House of Representatives passed an amended bill, L.D. 905, on Wednesday. The Senate approved it Friday.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Sharon Anglin Treat, D-Hallowell, establishes a stakeholder's group of state and Hallowell officials, Hall-Dale school district administrators and other interested parties. The group would work together to seek and select a bidder.

In addition, the bill guarantees a section of the land will be set aside for Hallowell's use, a parcel of green space must be preserved, and the preservation and rehabilitation of the campus's five buildings must be honored. "I think we feel better about everything being spelled out in black and white," Treat said Sunday.

A separate bill, L.D. 1098, was submitted by Sen. Seth Goodall, D-Richmond, requiring the state to sell the Reed Center to Regional School Unit 2 for \$1. The two bills were combined in the amended version of L.D. 905.

Both state and city officials gave positive reactions for the chance to work together on a potential sale after the State and Local Government Committee voted to send L.D. 905 to the full Legislature.

The bill will undergo a final vote for approval before going to Gov. John Baldacci's desk for his signature, though Treat said Sunday she did not know when lawmakers will vote again.

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State to keep 10 acres at Stevens School

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

May 20, 2015 Wednesday

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Byline: SHEPHERD, MICHAEL

Body

ABSTRACT

Walker, who has been working with state officials on a sale plan, said there will be "plenty of opportunities" for the city to oversee development on the land, and he said stormwater improvements should be included in any developer's plans for the property, which the city would have to review.

FULL TEXT

Several acres of open space along Pleasant Street have been excluded from an eventual land transfer between Regional School Unit 2 and the state of Maine and could be open to development, upsetting some in the neighborhood who thought the land would be given to the school district.

Agreement may spur growth, but counters Hallowell neighbors' wishes

HALLOWELL -- The state of Maine will keep 10 acres at the Stevens School complex instead of giving it to the local school district, a move that could spur development but goes against the wishes of city councilors and neighbors.

It's the latest flashpoint in a debate about a parcel of open space abutting Pleasant Street that is wrapped up in the state's latest effort to sell the largely vacant 64-acre campus off Winthrop Street, where Regional School Unit 2 leases its headquarters.

The district has long been discussing a land transfer with the state for the 8 acres on which its office stands and 14 acres of open space behind it. But the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services and RSU 2 have agreed to keep 10 acres of the open portion in the state's hands, with department spokesman David Heidrich saying the move "may better fit with our plans" for marketing the rest of the campus, which he said "are undetermined at present."

In February, Hallowell city councilors stood by an earlier endorsement of transferring all of that land to the district. That vote came after residents of Page and Pleasant streets expressed concern that development on the parcel could change their neighborhood.

Sharon Treat, a former Democratic legislator from Pleasant Street, said water running downhill from the parcel already affects homes on the street, a problem that could worsen if land is paved.

"We're just kind of sitting ducks here in the neighborhood," she said. "It seems like we don't have a lot of say over it."

State to keep 10 acres at Stevens School

Under the deal's current calculus, the school district would get a total of 12 acres.

An appraisal of the agreed-upon parcel of land is set for this week, and both Heidrich and RSU 2 board chairwoman Dawn Gallagher, of Hallowell, said a final agreement might be reached by the end of summer. The district has been passive on whether it would take the full 14 acres. Gallagher said the school district -- which consists of Hallowell, Farmingdale, Richmond, Dresden and Monmouth -- was willing to take the land if the community wanted to keep it public, but "it doesn't really matter to us" as long as RSU 2 gets its office and a suitable land buffer.

Councilor Alan Stearns, who lives on Pleasant Street, said the state's move to keep 10 acres calls into question its willingness to collaborate with Hallowell and Mayor Mark Walker's "ability to shape the state's approach to this parcel." But Heidrich said Hallowell "remains a valued stakeholder and will continue to be involved in the property's disposition to the greatest extent practical."

Walker, who has been working with state officials on a sale plan, said there will be "plenty of opportunities" for the city to oversee development on the land, and he said stormwater improvements should be included in any developer's plans for the property, which the city would have to review.

"I don't think they're working against our interests at all," the mayor said of the state.

The RSU deal is one part of the state's plan to shed the complex, which it tried to sell to no avail in 2008. The last state offices at the complex haven't left yet, and the property isn't yet on the market.

Still, the local concerns have been an early hurdle. Stearns said the city has "acted as if this is a municipal discussion, when in fact the state has a very big role in what happens to the Stevens School," adding that he's "not convinced that the state is working with the mayor and the process the mayor has described to the city."

However, Walker said some city and state interests are the same and that getting the property into the hands of a developer and on the city's tax rolls should be a main goal.

"That's not in the city of Hallowell's interest, to let that complex sit there undeveloped," he said. "We need to find somebody to take that over."

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Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

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End of Document

Stevens School taking shape

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

April 23, 2017 Sunday

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Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

FULL TEXT

A look at how much has been accomplished in the past year since Matt Morrill purchased the 54-acre Stevens School property from the state and what he hopes to get done in the next 12 months. Timely ahead of the April 28 special election bond vote which includes \$600,000 to repair the infrastructure on the campus.

Residents to vote on crucial \$2.36M bond on Friday

HALLOWELL -- About a year ago, the 54-acre Stevens School property sat dormant and decaying and was considered an eyesore at the top of Winthrop Street.

But in the nearly 12 months since developer Matt Morrill purchased the parcel of land, its buildings and its road network from the state, the Stevens Commons campus has undergone many changes. Hallowell voters will have their say in the campus' future when they vote Friday on a \$2.36 million bond package which includes \$600,000 to repair the infrastructure on campus. Many of the projects planned for the campus are contingent on the bond's passing, Morrill said.

Morrill's acquisition of the campus just off Winthrop Street was announced April 26, 2016, thus ending more than a decade of uncertainty about what would happen to the former boarding school for girls site. The state listed the property for \$1.1 million in 2008, but there were no takers. Morrill bought it for \$215,000.

Most of the changes the property has undergone in the past year have been under-the-surface infrastructure improvements. During a walking tour of the property and two buildings Thursday, Morrill said the brick-and-mortar work is yet to come.

In the 9,000-square-foot, three-floor Erskine Building, Morrill and his team replaced about 120 panes of glass and removed what he said was about two inches of pigeon excrement from the second floor. Many of the rooms on the first floor were stacked to the ceiling with boxes of state records, and though Morrill said the state came and shredded the paper, they left all the boxes.

His office for this project and others under his Mastway Development umbrella is on the renovated first floor of the Baker Building. There are six tenants leasing additional office space with two more tenants expected in the next few weeks. Ceiling tiles and floors have been replaced and the interior has been painted.

The changes made outside near the Baker Building aren't as easily noticed.

Stevens School taking shape

"We've built the first 300-foot leg of the new city streets, we brought in 12-inch water lines, fire suppression with new hydrants, new streetlights and new sidewalks," he said. He hasn't said specifically how much he's already invested in the property, but he has publicly stated on several occasions that it's more than he's seeking in the bond. He did say the master plan process was about \$100,000 including the design, permitting and consultants cost.

The developer said he's made more progress on the property than he thought he would in the first year, but he said there's been some missed opportunities as well. He said he's lost a few tenants because of some of the public negativity surrounding the project.

However, now that he's got tenants leasing office space in the Baker Building and Community Housing of Maine proposing a 30-unit affordable senior housing facility in the Central Building, Morrill foresees additional developers coming on board soon. But a lot of that hinges on the bond passing.

"The road system and infrastructure improvements (as a result of the bond) is the foundation of this whole project," he said. "It paints a nice starting point for other people to participate, and it's already a real project with real tenants."

Morrill said that, provided the bond is approved, he hopes to have the road network improvements, including paving, completed by the end of this year's construction season. The project will be put out to public bid before the suitors are narrowed to three contractors during what Morrill described as a "selective bidding process."

There are plans to hold a school's class reunion on the property's central greenspace, which is also where the Hallowell Farmers Market will set up shop this summer. Morrill also said there'll be an outdoor wedding on that piece of property later this year.

He also expects to work with city officials to help Hallowell and its residents and business owners.

With the Water Street reconstruction project causing downtown Hallowell business owners sleepless nights already, Morrill hopes he and the Stevens Commons property could be of assistance during next year's construction period. He's sent emails to all downtown business owners asking about ways he could help.

"If we can help them in any way to relieve some of the angst or stress during (the project next year), we're willing to entertain that to offer a hand," Morrill said. Some of the ideas floated by Morrill and Hallowell Board of Trade president Chris Vallee include temporary relocation of some businesses and help with parking and shuttling visitors from Stevens Commons to Water Street.

"Chris has a million ideas and the energy behind it that's going to bring many of them to fruition," Morrill said.

Many of the good things planned for Stevens Commons -- the fire station, the affordable senior housing, the infrastructure improvements -- hinge on voters approving the \$2.36 million bond package during the special referendum election Friday. While the anonymous donor who offered to pay \$1 million for a new fire station didn't specify that the bond must pass, City Manager Nate Rudy said it wouldn't be feasible or practical to build a new fire station at Stevens Commons without the road network improvements.

In addition to the Stevens Commons and Water Street components, the bond includes \$535,000 for work on rural Hallowell roads, \$300,000 for downtown parking improvements and \$220,000 to begin restoring and preserving the city's fire station tower on Second Street.

Hallowell resident Ken Young has been the most outspoken at meetings and hearings and in the Kennebec Journal in his opposition to the bond proposal. He thinks the Stevens Commons component is too expensive and burdens the city with too much risk, but he said the biggest problem is the bond being structured in one question.

He said the council talked about being sensitive and inclusive to everyone in Hallowell as reasons for just a single question, but Young called that a "classic political decision" typically used by Congress or the Legislature.

Stevens School taking shape

"They put in a sweetener to ease the distaste people might have for some of the issues," Young said by phone Friday. "But people want the ability to vote on these questions on an individual basis."

Young said he doesn't think there's a downside to voting 'no' Friday because if the bond isn't approved, the council will turn around and put out several separate questions within 30 days or so.

"Then you can exercise your individual judgment," he said.

But Mayor Mark Walker disagreed and said the only bond question that would have to be put out again immediately would be the \$575,000 for the Water Street project.

"There is more cost in floating four smaller bonds rather than one large bond," Walker said. "That's just not good government."

In addition to letters and editorial pieces in the newspaper and 'vote no' signs around Hallowell, there was also a postcard sent to Hallowell residents last week urging people to vote against the bond.

The letter from an unnamed sender questions the city helping Morrill redevelop Stevens Commons and said it "should be built without your money." It asks people to 'vote no' to avoid a guaranteed tax increase, and it also incorrectly states that when the single bond fails, the council "will be required to separate the projects."

Patricia Connors spent her own money in January to send a postcard opposing the bond. Her mailer said Hallowell residents were going to give Morrill "\$1,067 of YOUR OWN MONEY FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL GAIN." She said the money was a gift and said the city shouldn't give anything to a private developer. She also questioned Morrill's motivation, financial contributions and financial stability.

Morrill said he knew this was a sensitive property when he got involved, and he's been willing to take on the challenges and some of the negative comments that have come with it.

"I've kept my chin up through the whole thing, but there have been some punches below the belt," he said. "It's hard not to take it personally, and I'd come home and vent, but by the next morning, I'd move on."

The bond is a topic of conversation around the city and among its residents, Walker said, and he's been getting a lot of good questions leading up to the vote.

The mayor said he made infrastructure improvements a priority when he got elected a few years ago, and he thinks this bond is something that will benefit all of Hallowell.

"I believe that this bond is an investment in Hallowell," Walker said.

While Young says he has no idea how the vote will turn out, Morrill is going into it with a positive outlook.

"We have a tremendous amount of support throughout the city, and I see this as being such a positive thing for more than just Stevens Commons," he said. "There are six other elements that are significantly going to improve Hallowell."

Voting takes place from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday at Hall-Dale Elementary School on Winthrop Street. Morrill said he'll be sitting around with his family waiting for the results.

"We've been discussing this bond package since the summer," he said. "It's exciting."

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Stevens School taking shape

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

PLANS FOR THE NEXT YEAR

BOND VOTE HOLDS THE KEY

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Hallowell officials to review Stevens School master plan

Morning Sentinel; Waterville, Me.

September 25, 2016 Sunday

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JASON PAFUNDI

Dateline: Waterville, Me.

Body

ABSTRACT

The code enforcement officer, Planning Board and City Council will now review the plan, and it's a process that could extended well into next year. The collaboration between Morrill and the Planning Board will continue for quite some time, Stearns said, so the Planning Board "will need solid staff and consultant support," and Stearns has "a lot of confidence in the board to roll up their sleeves and shape this project for the best."

FULL TEXT

A look at the Stevens Commons project in Hallowell now that owner/developer Matt Morrill has submitted his Master Plan to the city. Next step: review by the Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Board.

HALLOWELL -- The proposed re-use of the Stevens School complex -- a multi-million dollar, multi-year project -- is now in the hands of the city Planning Board.

The master plan for the Stevens School property at the top of Winthrop Street in Hallowell lays out a proposal that if completed, would be the biggest redevelopment project in city history.

Owner and developer Matt Morrill submitted his vision for the campus, which is now known as Stevens Commons, to the city Sept. 16. The code enforcement officer, Planning Board and City Council will now review the plan, and it's a process that could extended well into next year.

"I think there's an energy, and there are a lot of people in the city that are excited," Mayor Mark Walker said. "We need to keep the momentum going and this is the next step."

Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, acquired the property from the state in April for \$215,000. His vision for the property, which was originally a boarding school for girls in the late 1800s, is as a mixed-use development featuring affordable senior housing, commercial and residential space and small, clustered subdivisions.

"We're excited and relieved that (the plan) is submitted, because it was a long process," Morrill said. "We had 12 different engineers and architects involved, along with other consultants. Now we begin the review process."

Hallowell officials to review Stevens School master plan

The first part of that process is reviewing the application's completeness. Interim Code Enforcement Officer Dick Dolby, who spent 20-plus years heading the code enforcement office in Augusta, is a good fit for the city, Councilor Alan Stearns said.

"We're lucky to have Dick where he is today, though I think the Planning Board might rely on outside consultants to help them through the process," Stearns said. "If Dolby stays (as CEO), then we're in a good position."

Dolby asked for assistance from the Planning Board in reviewing the master plan's completeness. Morrill is confident Dolby's experience in dealing with plans of this magnitude will help smooth the process.

"I am more comfortable because he has a good knowledge base to start from," Morrill said. "He knows how to interpret the ordinances and work through his part of the process."

Earlier this summer, Walker made several new appointments to the Planning Board in anticipation of the Stevens Commons project.

"I feel great after going through some of the steps we've already taken with them that have gone fairly smooth, and I think if we keep that general understanding and good working relationship, we'll get through this," Morrill said.

The collaboration between Morrill and the Planning Board will continue for quite some time, Stearns said, so the Planning Board "will need solid staff and consultant support," and Stearns has "a lot of confidence in the board to roll up their sleeves and shape this project for the best."

The re-development of the property will be a welcome addition to the city's tax base. The property was tax-exempt when it was owned by the state, so the city where the property has been located for more than a century will finally reap some financial reward. Morrill said the biggest immediate challenge for him is funding.

"We're talking about nine buildings and 54 acres, so it's a huge undertaking financially and physically," Morrill said. He was not comfortable offering a guess on how much the complete redevelopment of the property would cost, but it'd be safe to say it would be in the millions.

Morrill and his company aren't going to be developing the entire property. The master plan was set up so that more developers could participate; Morrill expects to keep one or two buildings for his company.

"It's a matter of recouping costs at some point because it's been a constant stream of money going out," he said. "At some point we need to change that."

As part of the deal with the state, the state agreed to lease the administrative building and its associated garage for the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry until Jan. 15, 2017, for \$2,130 per month. Morrill said the state will not be extending the lease after it expires early next year.

The master plan is a conceptual drawing of a list of potential uses and potential layout, but it's not an actual construction drawing. Morrill is open to continued feedback from other developers and members of the public if they "come with a potential use that we hadn't thought of. It leaves the door open for that potential use."

Morrill expects work will begin immediately to repair some of the infrastructure of the property, including the installation of a new water main and fire suppression system, thanks to a \$248,000 forgivable loan from the city to Morrill's Mastway Development.

The infrastructure improvements will ultimately support an affordable housing development in the next few years at the Stevens Commons site.

Another financial arrangement that has been discussed involves the city getting \$1 million in bonding and putting that toward repairing sections of roads, adding sidewalks and street lighting around Beech Street and other

Hallowell officials to review Stevens School master plan

improvements. As part of the deal, the city would take ownership of the roads within the property, and Morrill thinks it's a necessity for the city to participate in the effort to repair the property's infrastructure.

"It's such a selling point when there are city-owned roads, infrastructure that is all redone and utilities owned by the utilities district," Morrill said. "Any money the city can get from this property at this point is a bonus."

A project of this magnitude is a first for Morrill and his company, though he said they have done some light commercial projects in the past. He said it's challenging but "the work is the same, just with a bigger concept."

"It's always been my intention to move further into the development world," Morrill said. "Residential (development) has been great for us, and we still want to continue that part of the business, but we want to grow more in the commercial sector."

The property currently has three tenants -- two psychology practices and Regional School Unit 2. The school district owns the Reed Building on the campus, but that building is having some work done to it, so the district is leasing additional space at Stevens Commons.

If all goes according to schedule, the Planning Board will take up the master plan at its meeting Oct. 19 before it goes to City Council.

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Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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End of Document

HALLOWELL -- Ruth LaChance looks at the Stevens School redevelopment... [Derived headline]

Kennebec Journal

October 2, 2016 Sunday

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JASON PAFUNDI

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Body

ABSTRACT

Morrill, who purchased the 54-acre Stevens Commons complex from the state in April for \$215,000, submitted his master plan for the site last month and is awaiting its initial approval of completion by the city's Planning Board. The plan calls for a mixed-use development featuring affordable senior housing, commercial and residential space, and small, clustered subdivisions.

FULL TEXT

Some downtown Hallowell businesses have concerns about the proposed Stevens Commons project.

HALLOWELL -- Ruth LaChance looks at the Stevens School redevelopment plan not just as a Hallowell resident, but as a downtown business owner and as the president of the Hallowell Board of Trade. And she is clear about her support for developer Matt Morrill's plan, with one large caveat.

"There's no bones about it, because downtown Hallowell is bustling and we want to keep it that way," LaChance said at Boynton's Market, which she part-owns and helps operate with her husband, Bob. "If he wants the support of the businesses, he has to say no retail."

Morrill, who purchased the 54-acre Stevens Commons complex from the state in April for \$215,000, submitted his master plan for the site last month and is awaiting its initial approval of completion by the city's Planning Board. The plan calls for a mixed-use development featuring affordable senior housing, commercial and residential space, and small, clustered subdivisions.

"Our plan shows a variety of conceptual uses, and I understand there may be things that may not meet everybody's desires," Morrill said in an email Saturday, "but we want to engage the community and the Board of Trade in the process so that we can arrive at a set of mixed uses on the campus that best serves the needs of the community."

Hallowell's comprehensive plan does not allow for retail usage at the former Stevens School site, so the city would have to amend the related ordinance. LaChance is worried that the city will drift from the intentions of the comprehensive plan.

"Retail will kill us," she said emphatically. "We are pretty clear that we don't need or want another coffee shop, another flower shop or another restaurant up there."

LaChance said there is support among the Board of Trade members for the affordable-housing aspect of Morrill's plan. There is so much employment along Water Street, she said, and businesses constantly are searching for affordable places where employees can live.

"We all understand that with the aging population, we're always going to need senior housing, and the biggest relief will be affordable housing not just for the elderly, but for everybody," she said. "We're all for the housing plan."

But LaChance just can't get past the idea of retail usage at Stevens Commons and admits she's "extremely concerned."

In the months since he acquired the property, Morrill and the city have discussed a \$1 million bonding that would allow for infrastructure improvements to the campus's roads, of which the city then would take ownership. Bonding would have to be approved by voters, something LaChance vows to oppose as long as retail space is part of Morrill's plan.

"If this developer wants a bond issue to pass, and if he wants the support of the Board of Trade, we have to hear that there will be no retail," she stated.

Aside from the competition, LaChance said, it will be hard to get people to "come back down" to Water Street if they get used to shopping at Stevens Commons, especially during the Water Street reconstruction set to begin in 2018.

"If they have another place to go park and get similar items, we're going to be on the short end down here," LaChance said. "The road construction is going to be a big deterrent to people, and we'll need all the help we can get."

Kim Davis, of Scrummy Afters Candy Shoppe on Water Street, isn't worried about another candy store opening at Stevens Commons. But she is concerned, like LaChance, that people will forget about shopping in downtown Hallowell if they can get what they need at Stevens Commons.

"Competition is good, but if they go to Stevens (Commons) where it's easy to get in and out of, people would bypass us to go there," Davis said. "Then what? Pretty soon an art gallery would go there? It's endless, and the city as a whole has to decide what they want."

Others say that any new business coming to Hallowell is good business, but Davis said that's not true in her mind and mentioned how officials from Augusta said something similar about their downtown.

The candy store owner also is concerned about the new development's tax implications. When it was owned by the state, the city received no tax revenue from the campus. She wonders whether the senior housing or affordable housing residents or property owners would be adding to the tax coffers.

"You'd have more people using services and going to the schools, but we'd be no further ahead," Davis said. "Property taxes and other taxes would go up to sustain those services. I'd hate to see that happen here."

People are so anxious to get any money in, Davis said, that they don't look at the long-term effect on the city and its residents. Some might see the property and think that it'll help lower taxes, but, Davis said, "it never does. It never works out that way."

LaChance said Morrill attended the Board of Trade meeting in July, and there was a little discussion about his plans. She hopes the communication between the developer and the board's membership stays open. Morrill, of Grand View Log and Timber Frames in Winthrop, said they are just at the beginning of vetting the appropriate mixture of residential and nonresidential uses with the Planning Board and then the City Council.

HALLOWELL -- Ruth LaChance looks at the Stevens School redevelopment... [Derived headline]

Interim Code Enforcement Officer Dick Dolby, who spent more than 20 years leading the code enforcement office in Augusta, has been reviewing the Stevens Commons master plan since it was submitted in mid-September. The Planning Board is expected to take up the issue at its next meeting, scheduled for Oct. 19.

Jason Pafundi -- 621-5663 jpafundi@centralmaine.com Twitter: @jasonpafundiKJ

Credit: By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

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Councilors to receive update on Stevens School development proposals

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

December 12, 2010 Sunday

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Section: LOCAL NEWS; Pg. B.3; ISSN: 0745-2039

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Body

STAFF REPORT

HALLOWELL -- An update on the proposals submitted to the state for redevelopment of the 64-acre Stevens School property on Winthrop Street is one of several items on the agenda for Hallowell's City Council meeting Monday.

The council meets at 6 p.m. in City Hall.

Ed Cervone, at-large councilor, is scheduled to offer the update. He said Saturday that he will be speaking to state officials Monday prior to the meeting.

The state, which owns the land, has been seeking proposals from private firms to purchase and redevelop the land.

The request for qualifications says interested parties should include a lead design firm and developer. The deadline for applications was Dec. 2.

A brochure advertising the redevelopment opportunity says, "The redevelopment project specifically seeks to explore options as part of any sale for reserving or otherwise making available portions of the parcel for potential municipal use, educational use, open space and other public purposes."

Current tenants include the Maine Department of Corrections Pre-Release Center and the offices of Regional School Unit 2, which includes Dresden, Farmingdale, Hallowell, Monmouth and Richmond.

The hillside property contains 13 buildings; at least two tenants left recently.

The Maine Human Rights Commission offices and the state auditor's office recently relocated to Union Street in Augusta, nearer the capitol.

In December 2008, the city made a bid of \$600,000 for the state-owned property but rescinded the offer after councilors voted to break off negotiations.

Five of the buildings are on the National Register for Historic Places.

A number of other items also are on Monday's agenda:

* Money matters, including moving unexpended funds into accounts for the upcoming year: \$100,000 for small projects involving road reconstruction; \$83,527 for unanticipated expenditures; \$50,000 for a public safety vehicle/equipment fund and another \$50,000 for a public safety building fund.

Councilors to receive update on Stevens School development proposals

- * An update on the status of the Bodwell House;
- * A request from the Vaughan Field Committee for almost \$10,700 to complete paving of driveway, parking lot and basketball courts;
- * A request from Peter Schumacher, at-large councilor, to tap maple trees at the cemetery to make syrup.

Load-Date: December 13, 2010

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HALLOWELL -- Land at the Stevens School campus would be... [Derived headline]

Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine)

May 29, 2015 Friday

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Body

ABSTRACT

The state-owned complex has long loomed over Hallowell politics as a key piece of the city's economic development future, and the broker who once tried to sell the campus said he's "bullish" on it.

FULL TEXT

HALLOWELL -- Land at the Stevens School campus would be best redeveloped to accommodate office space, senior housing and new homes, according to an appraiser who valued 40 acres of the property at nearly \$900,000.

The state-owned complex has long loomed over Hallowell politics as a key piece of the city's economic development future, and the broker who once tried to sell the campus said he's "bullish" on it.

Appraiser Daniel Dwyer's report to the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services earlier this month is the first look at its potential value since the state tried to sell it in 2008, eventually marketing the whole property for \$1.1 million and finding no takers. Maine is preparing to shed it again, likely with a different approach.

Dwyer's report assumes that the state will get city approval to divide much of the campus into four parcels that could be offered separately to different developers. The appraisal excludes the 12 acres of land that the state plans to give to Regional School Unit 2, which includes their leased office and 10 acres of land behind it that the state plans to keep for potential development.

Dwyer places this 40-acre portion's value at \$893,000, pegging three office buildings in the campus' core at \$527,000, an office building along Winthrop Street at \$161,000, five smaller buildings in an area that could be used for senior housing or other residential uses at \$155,000 and 20 acres of open space that could be used for new homes at \$50,000.

The state could start marketing the property this fall, said David Heidrich, a spokesman for the department, adding that "we are encouraged by the appraisal report and hope that there will be significant interest from developers."

Chris Paszyc, the broker from CBRE/The Boulos Company in Portland, who tried to sell the campus before, has said the 2013 closure of the Central Maine Pre-Release Center there improved conditions for a sale. He called Dwyer's report "a good indicator of market value" but that a market price of \$1 million "is still defensible."

"I am bullish on the future prospects for the campus," Paszyc said.

HALLOWELL -- Land at the Stevens School campus would be... [Derived headline]

It won't come without challenges. Dwyer said the conditions of buildings, some of which date back to the 1800s, range from good to very poor and that one building, the vacant Erskine Hall, should be demolished. He says the buildings have energy inefficiencies, asbestos pipe insulation and flooring and that many of the interiors would have to be reconfigured for new uses.

Mayor Mark Walker said many people in Hallowell would welcome senior housing at the campus. A market study conducted for an Augusta housing project expected to open this year found that the area will need more rental units to accommodate a projected additional 192 renters over age 65 in the Augusta area between 2013 and 2018.

However, City Manager Michael Starn said "the proof is in the pudding," and it's not until potential developers come forward that leaders will be able to gauge the property's possibilities.

"We can all have opinions about it, but the people who are willing to put money behind their opinions really matter," he said.

Michael Shepherd -- 370-7652 mshepherd@centralmaine.com Twitter: @mikeshepherdme

Credit: By MICHAEL SHEPHERD Staff Writer

Load-Date: June 4, 2015

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HALLOWELL & PRE-RELEASE CENTER

● The Central Maine Pre-Release Center, the red brick building in the upper center, sits atop Winthrop Hill in Hallowell. The center which houses community-security prisoners is surrounded by other state buildings and the community. The center currently houses 43 inmates (46 is its maximum), all within 14 months of completing their sentences.

Staff photo / JOE PHELAN



Jails
**A good fit
 for both
 places . . .**

KENNEBEC JOURNAL

OCT 29 1995

Central Maine Pre-Release Center Community Services Report for 1990 - 1994

YEAR	COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS	VALUE AT \$4.25 / HOUR
1994	19,482.5	\$ 82,800.63
1993	31,014.0	131,809.50
1992	38,255.5	162,585.88
1991	29,763.5	122,991.29
1990	30,173.5 (@\$3.85/hr.)	116,167.98



Inmates who work on community service crews are not paid, but if they were these are the cost savings.



Graphic / SUSAN VARNEY

By DREW W. MORRIS
 Staff Writer

HALLOWELL — Wilson Arroyo considers himself part of Hallowell's community although he is serving out the rest of a five-year sentence at the Central Maine Pre-Release Center on Winthrop Street.

"It feels like you have a home," Arroyo, 31, said recently while sitting at a picnic table on the center's grounds. He was transferred to the center in May of this year.

"It's still jail," he added. "Jail is jail until I sign my release papers and go home."

Just weeks after he was released on probation in 1993 for a drug trafficking charge, Lewiston Police arrested him for robbery. An Auburn Superior Court judge sentenced the Boston native to five more years in jail, to be served concurrent with his prior drug trafficking sentence, with all but three years suspended.

Over the years, correctional facilities in Windham, Charleston and Androscoggin County have been home to Arroyo. Now, he is spending the last five months of his sentence in the unimposing brick building on top of Winthrop Hill.

"It feels good to me because I'm this close to the community," he said.

The community he is referring to is Hallowell, where just yards from the center are homes owned by city taxpayers. Directly across the street from the center, families are being raised.

Since May of 1979, when the pre-release center first opened in the Stevens Building, Hallowell has played host to hundreds of convicts serving time for a varying degree of crimes.

Hallowell's outcry at the time, heard from the legislative hearing rooms to the governor's office, couldn't stop the former state Department of Mental Health and Corrections from opening the center.

In the past 16 years, that outcry has toned down. Most residents don't think much of the center as they drive by — some even wonder what goes on inside the century-old building, once a home and school to girls considered at risk.

But those that do ponder the center, generally think of its positive contributions. For example, after the flood of 1987, a majority of the center's inmates cleaned up downtown at no expense to the city.

"My experience is (the center) bends over backwards to accommodate our requests," said City Manager Patrick Gilbert.

HELP FROM CONVICTS

The city of Hallowell, like other local communities and state departments, often request help from the convicts with clearing snow, mixing salt and sand, painting city-owned buildings, or a number of other labor-intensive services.

"I would otherwise have to pay for these services," said Gilbert, who estimates a cost savings to the town somewhere between \$8,000 and \$10,000 annually.

Civic organizations, such as churches and Grange halls, also benefit from the free labor offered through the center.

"We keep busy and we like to keep these guys busy because it is part of the rehabilitation process," said Michael Morin, director of the center. "We try to spread the work around from cities to civic organizations."

Because the center is in Hallowell, Morin said he will try to accommodate the city's requests first. "We try to work hand and hand with the community," he said.

Please see HALLOWELL, Page A10



ARROYO

Continued from A1

In 1994, inmates from the center worked a total of 19,482.5 man-hours in the community. Morin figures if the inmates were paid even minimum wage, the cost-savings to the communities would total \$82,800.

The center currently houses 43 inmates (46 is its maximum), all within 14 months of completing their sentences. When good time is subtracted from the convicts' sentence, they average just under eight months at the center, said Morin.

The main goal of the center is to help these inmates make the transition from years of life behind bars to the real world.

"The pre-release center is an opportunity for offenders who are approaching release to demonstrate their capacity to behave responsibly,

to have contact with pro-social, law-abiding citizens," said Joseph Lehman, commissioner of the state's Department of Corrections.

IMPORTANT PROGRAM

"It is a very important transition program that plays the role of access to legitimate work opportunities," Lehman said.

The center also offers the inmates an opportunity participate in adult-education programs through Hall-Dale, counseling services, parenting classes and a variety of self-help groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

Prior to their arrival at the center, officials screen prisoners to see if they can benefit from the structured life at the center. Predatory sex offenders and convicts with a history of escape are the only ones not considered suitable for a stay.

Prisoners, during their first seven months at the center, are assigned to the public service crews that work out in the community. They are not paid for their work.

But prisoners with less than seven months left to serve are allowed to take part in a work-release program. A coordinator at the center helps some inmates find jobs with private employers, while others find their own employment.

Arroyo, for instance, works 70 to 80 hours each week on a Maine Turnpike Authority bridge construction project in Auburn.

At 4:45 each morning, Arroyo and another inmate are picked up outside the center and driven to the job site, he said. They return later that evening.

"It's a lot of hours, but it's better than being here," he said. But when asked if he prefers the pre-release center over the other jails he has stayed in, he said, "Yes. This is kiddy camp."

Those who are part of the work-release program are paid for their work. Aside from taxes paid back to the state, the state also takes some of their earnings to pay for room and board while at the center, restitution for their crimes, medical expenses, and any child support

they may be responsible for.

"If you took all these figures off an inmate's cost, it would be considerably lower," said Morin. The funds taken from the state, however, do not go back into the Department of Corrections. They are added to the state's general fund, he said.

In 1994, Morin figured the inmates saved the state \$308,533 it would have otherwise paid had the inmates been in any other institution.

As a community-security prison, inmates are free to go outside during daylight hours if they are not on a work assignment. At dusk, the center's doors are locked and only opened to allow inmates on work-release back inside.

When outside, the prisoners must stay in a small area in front of the center and are subject to periodic security checks. Although there are no security fences keeping them on the grounds, each inmate knows the boundaries. Over the years, the prisoners have worn a deep path in the grass along part of the center's

perimeter.

Stepping one foot beyond the invisible lines is considered escape from the center, and wins the inmate a trip back to one of Maine's more strict correctional institutions.

The center records about one prisoner escape each year, said Morin. In May, two inmates escaped but were captured a month later in Florida.

Because the prisoners are all within a short time of finishing their "bit," as Arroyo calls it, escapes are few.

"Why run," Arroyo asked. "I can leave this place after my whole bit and have no worries.

"I've already lost too much since I've been in," he continued. "I wouldn't want to go through this crap again."

VERY FEW FEARS

Residents express very few fears of having the center in their community. What fears they do have can be directed through the city council-appointed advisory

committee known as the Pre-Release Committee.

Seven residents, one from each ward and two at-large, make up the committee and meet with the center's director four times each year.

"Our purpose is to keep an eye on how this is impacting the community," said Pat Truman, a member of the committee since its inception in 1979. When the center first came into the community, she didn't like the idea of it being so close to the primary and middle schools.

But those fears have dissipated. "They have proven themselves," she said. "We haven't had any adverse things that have happened yet."

The committee does have some influence over the day-to-day operation of the center.

"How much influence is hard to say," Truman said. "I believe, and it is proven, they listen to our input. They know they have the confidence of the committee and they don't want to lose it."

PORTLAND EVENING EXPRESS

PORTLAND, MAINE, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1967

There's More To Know

The release of more than half the population of the Stevens School in the few short weeks of the new administration is a matter of great interest. Whether it should be a source of equal gratification is uncertain on the amount of evidence offered the public.

Since Miss Ward Murphy took over superintendency of the Hallowell School from controversial Dr. Pauline McCready, the institution's population has been reduced from 154 to 67. Most of the 87 girls discharged have been returned to their own homes or other private homes. A "very few" have been transferred to the Women's Reformatory at Skowhegan. Walter F. Ulmer, commissioner of mental health and corrections, finds the population decrease "unbelievable" and regards it as "one of the finest things I've seen in a long time."

Instinctively, we would like to share his view which we sincerely hope is justified. But in the absence of an explanation as to how the reduction was effected we can only hope that the truth of the situation sustains the implication which is that many girls were there unnecessarily.

The population of any correctional institution to which persons are assigned for an indeterminate period can be reduced by an im-

pressive number at any time. But it is scarcely fulfilling the purpose of the institution if the reduction is accomplished merely to keep the occupancy level at a prescribed figure. The desire is to hold that level at the Hallowell school under 100.

The implication here is that the Stevens School has been made the home for a considerable number of girls who shouldn't have been there for so long a period. It cannot be assumed that the new administration has achieved such spectacular results in a couple of months that all those girls have progressed to the discharge point within that period.

So there are questions. Were the discharges made strictly on a basis of the qualifications of the individuals or were decisions influenced by the desire to reduce population and thereby ease some of the demand upon staff and facilities? If the discharges were strictly on merit, why weren't more girls released earlier? And what of the girls transferred to the Women's Reformatory?

We raise no challenge to this development on the Hallowell hill. We hope it reflects the progressive course the commissioner indicates. But in view of the so recent controversy some further explanation would be desirable.

State Argues Closing Of Skowhegan Center

KJ 6-26-68

(AP)—State penal authorities and other officials are talking seriously about closing the Women's Correctional Center in Skowhegan and sending female felons to prison in Massachusetts.

PRACTICAL

The plan is regarded as more practical—and far less expensive—than an earlier proposal to build a combined women's institution for adult and juvenile offenders at Skowhegan.

Gov. Curtis is said to favor the idea, which also envisages the renovation of about a half dozen county jails to pro-

vide district facilities for women convicted of minor crimes.

The cost of sending serious offenders to the Massachusetts Correctional Institution for Women at Framingham would amount to about \$12 a day per inmate, according to Robert R. Raines, the Maine director of corrections.

That's about \$4,500 each per year. The per capita cost at Skowhegan runs nearly twice that high.

SEND

New Hampshire and Vermont now send female convicts there and Rhode Island is considering it, Raines said.

The Skowhegan center usually has only about 15 or 20 felons at any one time, so the yearly cost of keeping them in the Massachusetts prison would be about \$87,000.

In comparison, it costs more than \$350,000 a year to operate the Skowhegan Center, whose inmate population now numbers about 40. About half are minor offenders or juveniles who, under the proposal, would be transferred either to the district jails or to Maine's correctional center for girls, Stevens School in Hallowell.

The \$250,000 or so saved annually by moving the prisoners out of Skowhegan could be spent on improving Stevens and the state's other correctional facilities, Raines said.

'EMPHASIS'

"I think that's where our emphasis should be—on the young people," he said, referring to Stevens. "If we could do a better job with them at an early age, when they're impressionable and easier to rehabilitate, we'd see fewer of them in trouble when they're older."

Some months ago, Raines and State Sen. Jon Lund, R-Augusta, proposed transferring the Stevens girls to an enlarged institution at Skowhegan. But this would require considerable expense in erecting new buildings. Raines likes the new plan better and Lund says it makes "very good sense."

Lund, who is running for a House seat in the 1969 legislature, says he will, if elected, introduce a bill on the new plan or a variant of it.

Raines suggests that the Skowhegan institution could be turned into the diagnostic and pre-release center long sought by state penologists.

If it were shut down completely, he said, its staff could be transferred to strengthen the staffs of other institutions.

Institution Heads Blame

Solons For Deficiencies

PPH

8-12-67

By MURROUGH H. O'BRIEN

The heads of two state institutions Friday blamed any deficiencies in their program on legislative inaction and not on lack of support from the Department of Mental Health and Corrections.

Dr. Peter W. Bowman, director of Pineland Hospital and Training Center in Pownal, and William H. Hughes, superintendent of the Boys Training Center in South Portland, both, in effect, refuted charges leveled at the department by Dr. Pauline I. McCready.

THE OFFICIALS, who commented in separate, carefully worded statements, made no mention of Dr. McCready by name.

Both men said they felt the policies and philosophy of the department have been "pro-

gressive" insofar as it affected their institutions.

At the same time, they took a whack at the 103rd Legislature and the executive leadership of Gov. Kenneth M. Curtis.

Dr. Bowman said "the legislative-executive stalemate of 1967 has been disheartening to many." Hughes cited the "standstill" as "discouraging" and said it has resulted in reductions of our rehabilitative and treatment programs at the Boys Training Center."

The Pineland head praised the outlook of the department and says the full accreditation of the hospital in the last decade "speaks for itself" as an example of progress.

HE REFERRED to custodial

**Turn to back page
of this section**

Institution Heads Blame Solons For Deficiencies

(Continued From Page One)

care — Dr. McCready had charged the department was turning Stevens School, where she was superintendent, into a custodial institution—and said it was a necessary part of the department's commitments "whether we like it or not."

Dr. Bowman also said while "progress in some areas has perhaps been more rapid than in others, sometimes the bureaucratic machinery has been slow and cumbersome because of involvement of various state agencies and departments in decision making."

HE SAID lack of support from the legislature has resulted in a severe recruiting problem at the hospital but added "this problem is not caused—nor can it be remedied—by the Department of Mental Health and Corrections. To assume otherwise is an obvious error."

Hughes praised departmental policy "insofar as I'm concerned" and said in terms of juveniles it "has been generally toward positive rehabilitation programs."

He added, however, "It is a known fact that insufficient funds and low salaries have and are hindering programs and progress."

Miss Murphy Accepts Shift To Direct Stevens

PPH 8-12-67

AUGUSTA (AP) — A nationally recognized specialist in rehabilitation of female delinquents took charge of the Stevens School in Hallowell Friday, succeeding a superintendent reportedly asked to resign.

Miss Ward E. Murphy, superintendent of the Skowhegan Women's Reformatory, accepted a transfer to head the Hallowell girls' training school. Dr. Pauline I. McCready, whose resignation takes effect Sept. 15,

surrendered authority at the school although her employment will continue another month while she remains technically on sick leave.

Commissioner Walter F. Ulmer of the Mental Health & Corrections Department announced the shift after conferring with Gov. Curtis, who said Miss Murphy's history justifies full confidence that she will be successful in her new assignment.

State Sen. Edwin H. Greeley, R-Morrill, chairman of the legislative Health & Institutional Services Committee, said that Ulmer gave Dr. McCready a choice of resigning or being dismissed. Ulmer didn't deny it, although he declined comment.

Greeley said he and other legislators studied the institution through the last legislative session. And he said that although he would prefer not to elaborate on his findings, he will hold a news conference if necessary to protect Ulmer from unfounded attacks.

Dr. McCready criticized Ulmer and the 103rd legislature severely, when she announced her resignation, for alleged failure to support her program. Ulmer so far has declined to answer her charges.

Curtis said in a statement that he has had a "task force" of citizens studying the operation of the school for about four

**Turn to back page
of this section**

Miss Murphy Accepts Shift To Stevens

(Continued From Page One)

months, and requested the group Friday to continue.

His chief concern, he said, is that the girls committed to Stevens do not become victims of the present controversy. He said he plans to send Dr. McCready a letter commending her four years of state service.

Ulmer said that Miss Murphy has "demonstrated outstanding ability to organize and direct a carefully thought out program of modern rehabilitation. She, along with the department adheres strongly to the belief in vocational, occupational and rehabilitative therapy, as opposed to mere custodial care."

In this, Ulmer contradicted one of Dr. McCready's complaints, which was that the department has not been willing to support a modern, progressive program of rehabilitation and apparently wants the school to remain chiefly a custodial center.

The commissioner said that Miss Murphy's work at Skowhegan has been outstanding in spite of inadequate facilities. Two years ago her program of rehabilitation there received national attention. It includes operation of one of the nation's first "halfway houses" in which inmates nearing discharge are allowed limited access to the community to prepare them for freedom.

She is a graduate of Wayne State University in Detroit and did graduate work at American University in Washington.

Her assistant, Mrs. Dorothy Hanauer, was made acting superintendent of the Reformatory.

Miss Ward Murphy Named Head Of Stevens School

Officials Put Blame On Legislature P-3

KJ

8-12-67

(AP) — A nationally recognized specialist in rehabilitation of female delinquents took charge of the Stevens School in Hallowell Friday, succeeding a superintendent reportedly asked to resign.

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Curtis said in a statement that he has had a "task force" of citizens studying the operation of the school for about four months, and requested the group Friday to continue.

MEMBERS OF the task force are Dr. Dean Fisher, commissioner of Health and Welfare; William Logan, commissioner of Education; Clyde Bartlett, director of the Office of Economic Opportunity; Linwood Ross, a special aid to the governor; Walter F. Ulmer, commissioner of Mental Health and Corrections; and Dr. McCready.

His chief concern, Curtis said, is that the girls committed to Stevens do not become victims of the present controversy. He said he plans to send Dr. McCready a letter commending her four years of state service.

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—KJ Photo by MacMaster

MISS WARD E. MURPHY

... a change in command

WARD MURPHY

KJ 8-12-67

— A PROFILE

She Instituted 'Halfway House'

SKOWHEGAN — Miss Ward Murphy, superintendent of the State Reformatory for Women here, is widely known for her work in rehabilitation.

Miss Murphy, who has been superintendent here since July 17, 1961, was named Friday as head of the Stevens School in Hallowell.

SHE IS CURRENTLY on vacation from her duties here and was unavailable for comment on the appointment to succeed Dr. Pauline McCready, who resigned in a dispute over policies at Stevens.

However, members of Miss Murphy's staff noted that she is a strong believer in rehabilitation for those remanded to custody of the reformatory.

She initiated 'Halfway House' here in 1963, a program under which those in the reformatory who appear to be ready for it are allowed to attend the local high school or work in local stores.

She has a program of supervised cooperative living for girls who are allowed to work outside. The Maine Legislature in 1964 passed a "Halfway House" statute.

THE PROGRAM in Skowhegan is a community action one and in the four years it has been in operation has tripled in size. It is anticipated that 16 will be taking part in it next month.

Members of Miss Murphy's reformatory staff point out that any community in the state could have a halfway house to aid women to move from custodial care to full participation in community life.

While at Skowhegan Miss Murphy has enlarged the policy of paroling women to their own communities under supervision of a parole officer.

This means that women are serving part of their parole, but in their own community, reformatory staff members said.

THEY SAID Miss Murphy has often enunciated the policy giving "the girl the best chance to succeed we can."

Girls who are allowed to go out and work pay room and board and are taught to budget their money. "That way the girls become taxpayers, not just tax consumers," one staff member said.

The reformatory has brought in more professional services since Miss Murphy became superintendent and now has a consulting psychologist once a week. There are also weekly visits by a doctor and a dentist as well as semi-weekly visits by an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist. The institution has a part-time social worker.

Since the elimination of the institutional farm, Miss Murphy has had a kitchen garden at the reformatory to supply table vegetables.

The People Of Maine Must Make A Decision

PPH
8-18-67

Most of the furor that has arisen concerning state institutions during the last couple of weeks stems directly from lack of financial support.

The basis of the controversy that resulted in the resignation of Dr. Pauline McCready as head of Stevens School was money, or lack thereof, to do what Dr. McCready felt ought to be done. Her superiors felt her demands were too large in view of the needs of other institutions under the Department of Health and Corrections.

Now there is the raging argument over the future of Pineland Hospital and whether or not it can hire the necessary personnel to remain open.

And, naturally, there are accusations being made against, and blame being heaped upon, the State Legislature for its stinginess.

But actually the blame must go further than that. The Legislature is, after all, only carrying out what it believes to be the people's wishes and much of the time it accurately reflects those wishes.

So perhaps it is really all of us who are to blame.

There are those who call for

more support for the institutions but oppose taxes that would pay for this. Yet they can't have it both ways.

This is something that each and every voter ought to think about before the next Legislature, which will undoubtedly be confronted with passing a major tax increase.

Since the present Legislature later this fall will probably raise the sales tax to four and one-half cents and revenue needs by 1969 undoubtedly cannot be met by another half cent rise, the 104th Legislature will be faced with passing a state income tax.

This tax is anathema to a great many voters, yet the debate should not concern so much the principle of the thing but whether or not the state's needs are sufficient for the taxpayers to take on this additional burden.

In the light of the recently emphasized needs of state institutions as well as the continually rising demands for educational improvement and other services, Maine voters ought to give some serious thoughts during the next few months as to how essential these needs are and how they are to be met.

Stevens Head Looks To Future, Not Past

PST 10-22-67

By JOHN K. MURPHY

HALLOWELL — Ask me a question and I'll tell you no lies, says the new superintendent of Stevens School, Miss Ward Murphy.

But she won't answer all of your questions.

That is, she won't make comparisons between her program and those of her predecessor, Dr. Pauline McCready, who resigned in August with a blast at her bosses and the legislature.

"IT'S NOT my job to talk about problems that existed here," says Miss Murphy. "It wouldn't be fair to me or to her to discuss differences in philosophy. Many things here were good and I'm continuing those 'things.'"

She will, however, talk at length about her philosophy, about what she's done during her two months on the job and about what she hopes to do.

(Inevitably, these comments can be related to what went on before. The school received a great deal of publicity during Dr. McCready's tenure and upon her exodus even more.)

When she resigned she charged that the Department of Mental Health and Corrections had failed to meet needs, thus indicating it wanted a custodial rather than a rehabilitative center.)



Ward Murphy

First off, Miss Murphy's philosophy:

"THIS IS a facility for troubled children. Our obligation is to help them solve the problems that brought them here and ultimately to return them to live in the community.

"This means schooling, vocational education, work experience, also they can live or work in their own community. These girls are still in the process of growing. They are learning hab-

its instead of having to relearn them.

"They're not here for punishment but for help with their social problems. Commitment doesn't take them out of the normal world and the public should want and accept their successful return to the community."

This belief in rehabilitation, Miss Murphy said, is what guided her before she came here. She was head of the Reformatory for Women in Skowhegan. Her rehabilitation program there, including a half-way house for inmates preparing to leave, drew national attention.

HER PHILOSOPHY is supported by the Department of Mental Health and Corrections and its commissioner, Walter F. Ulmer. "The department's philosophy as a whole has been directed toward returning the youngster to the community," Miss Murphy said.

Miss Murphy said she's starting with a good staff and a good teaching force. Two new buildings should be ready by the first of the year and money for another is part of a bond issue that will go to voters Nov. 7.

She plans soon to establish, on the Stevens grounds, a half-

Turn to back page
of this section

way house, believing it "an integral part of any institutional program."

Such a facility, she feels, will provide the privileges they have earned to girls who have no suitable home to go. She likens it to a YWCA, providing outside freedom, a place to date and to participate in community activities just as though they were in a private home.

This can be started within the school's budget, and if it works well she'll ask the next legislature to give it further financial support.

AN IMMEDIATE objective is to reduce the length of time that girls spend in the institution.

Last May the average stay was 14.6 months. The current girls now have been there an average of 9.5 months. At one time, the average stay was 19 months.

Director of Corrections Robert R. Raines said national figures indicate nine out of 10 children in institutions stay from six months to a year.

Noting that Maine is primarily rural and lacks the problems of the nation's largest cities, he said it's inconceivable that Maine should take longer to prepare a child to return to community life.

"You cannot teach children to live normal lives in an abnormal setting," he said. "No institution can substitute adequately for normal family life."

LAST JUNE the school population hit a high of 156 girls. Eighteen others were on "entrustment," which means juvenile probation. Now there are 65 girls on the grounds and 85 on entrustment.

The normal count at Stevens should run about 80 girls, Miss Murphy believes, basing this on statistics from states no larger than Maine. It's hard for her to believe Maine should be any different from these other states.

Miss Murphy says there was some misunderstanding in a news story early this month reporting that more than half of the Stevens girls had been discharged since the start of her administration.

Most of those who left are on entrustment and thus still under supervision and control of the state.

She noted that fall is the normal time for a substantial drop in the school's population. That's because many girls are placed on entrustment to attend schools or to fill jobs left vacant when summer workers return to classes.

Most of the plans for entrustment had been made by Dr. McCready and were carried through by the social work force with the new superintendent's blessing after Dr. McCready left.

MISS MURPHY has taken steps to provide more training and more activities and hopes the institution's school will soon be accredited.

She's taking steps to meet the physical shortcomings by obtaining science equipment, library books and a drinking fountain. The reduction in the Stevens population has made the teacher - student ratio acceptable, she said.

Once it is accredited, she hopes the school will be eligible for more federal funds.

She also hopes some students from Maine colleges will do their practice teaching at the school. And she hopes to make more use of Hallowell and Augusta schools so students interested in college can take language and science courses not available at Stevens.

A VOCATIONAL training program will start soon, under the direction of the State Education Department's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The division will provide staff, equipment and perhaps even textbooks.

This will teach the girls "saleable skills," such as training in beauty culture, as nursing aides and for office and clerical work.

The home economics program has been expanded into classrooms in the new recreation building. Two new stoves have been purchased.

Bates Manufacturing Co. will provide material and staff training so the girls can make bedspreads and drapes for their rooms and Miss Murphy hopes sewing classes eventually will enable them to make and alter their own clothing — "for hand-made, not homemade, clothing."

She's expanding the recreation program and will make more use of the gymnasium in the recreation building, and has ordered basketball backboards, adjustable nets for volleyball and tennis, and rollerskates.

MISS MURPHY'S concept of a "full program of typical teenage activities and interests" so far has included use of the school's two buses for trips to such points of interest as Acadia National Park and Boothbay Harbor (for a ride aboard the Guardian, the state's boat), formation of a bowling league, organization of an art club, showing of a movie weekly at the school and attendance at community concerts and local theatrical productions.

She hopes to form other clubs (camera, art, music, crafts, Girl Scouts and 4-H are examples) and eventually to have dances at the school.

These activities obviously will involve volunteer aid. She hopes a member of her staff can take on additional duties as a supervisor of volunteers.

Community understanding and participation in activities both inside and outside the institution are vital, Miss Murphy said.

Important to this will be Supporters of Stevens, an organization of friends of the school. She didn't say so, but it's obvious Miss Murphy hopes this group will maintain its interest and assist her now that Dr. McCready is gone.

Gardiner's Jaycees will pitch in Nov. 1 to repaint one of the girls' cottages.

Curtis Seeks To Marshal Help For Stevens School

PPH 8-16-67

AUGUSTA (AP)—Gov. Curtis said he has been greatly concerned about conditions at the Stevens School in Hallowell since he made a visit there in February, and is still trying to marshal help for the girls' training school from state and federal agencies.

He said he has written a letter to the resigned superintendent, Dr. Pauline I. McCready, thanking her for her four years of service and wishing her well in new employment. Dr. McCready quit with a blast at the legislature and the Department of Mental Health & Corrections for failing to support her program.

But Curtis told a news conference the problems are old ones which go back far beyond the current legislature or current administration of the department.

"The fault has to lie at many doors," he said. "It can be traced to the people of the state for not directing their legislators to correct these conditions long ago."

Physical conditions at the

school are "very, very poor," he said, and "you have to put the girls in a decent environment if you expect to be able to work with them."

"There are several old dormitories which I would recommend strongly be bulldozed to the ground and new ones built in their place," he said.

He said he will continue to press for aid for the school from the Health & Welfare and Education Departments and perhaps chiefly from the Office of Economical Opportunity, through its "Upward Bound" program of aid to deprived young people.

Dr. McCready will be replaced on the "task force" by the new interim superintendent, Miss Ward E. Murphy, he said, but "we will be glad to have her Dr. McCready's advice at any time."

Penal System Needs Reorganizing . . .

Maine Corrections Head Backs Stevens Center Merger

IN STAFF REPORTS

KJ 3-28-68

(AP)—Maine should prepare to meet a future "crisis" in crime by reorganizing its penal system, including a merger of its two correctional institutions for females, the state corrections director said Wednesday.

ALTHOUGH THE NUMBER of inmates in Maine's correctional centers is holding about even now, current events may well be followed by a "population explosion" in penal institutions, he said.

Robert R. Raines recommended in a report to the governor:

—The merger of Stevens School for girls at Hallowell with the Women's Correctional Center at Skowhegan. The combined center would be at Skowhegan where there is "a more desirable institutional setting."

—The transformation of Stevens into a diagnostic reception center for juvenile offenders, of both sexes.

—Establishment of a pre-release center for adult prisoners. It would be along the lines of the present "Halfway House" at Skowhegan, except there would be a wide program of instruction to prepare them for the outside.

—A diagnostic and treatment center for felons, to give them physical and mental examinations and recommend the institution in which they should be imprisoned.

—Expanded vocational training and educational facilities at the Men's Correctional Center in South Windham. Raines said that at present the center doesn't meet standards for a basic and sound rehabilitative program.

—Incentive pay for inmates.

—A rewriting of probation and parole laws.

THE INCORPORATION of Stevens and the

Women's Correctional Center first was proposed three weeks ago by Sen. Jon Lund, R-Augusta, as a Republican platform plank. He also recommended merging the Men's Correctional Center and the Maine State Prison.

Raines made it clear in his report that he supported the joining of the two female centers "only if proper facilities could be constructed, combined with a modernized, realistic and rehabilitative program."

He told The Associated Press that he did not favor the merger of the men's institutions because of their large numbers of inmates. The state prison now has about 400 inmates and the Men's Correctional Center about 200. The combined population of Stevens and the Women's Correctional Center probably would never go over 150, Raines said.

IN HIS REPORT—which Gov. Curtis is considering in preliminary studies for next year's budget

—Raines said that the number of inmates has reached a leveling-off period in Maine's penal institutions because of several factors. He listed the Vietnam War, recent court decisions affecting convictions, the state of the economy and expanded probation and parole systems.

However, he said, "history has proven that situations such as these are usually followed by population explosions in our correctional institutions. We should . . . be well prepared to meet this crisis when it comes."

Raines urged long-range planning and steady effort to attain his recommendations. He said he realized they would "involve the state of Maine in spending a great deal more money in its correctional program than has been spent in the past."

BUT INITIAL EXPENSE would be outweighed by savings in the long run, and the state would have a "truly good correctional program," he said.

Dr. Pauline McCready's Resignation Calls For A Full Legislative Probe

PPH
8-8-67

The resignation of Dr. Pauline McCready as superintendent of the Stevens School at Hallowell comes as a shock to those who have supported the record she has made during the past four years.

Years ago the institution was known as the State School for Girls and later as the Stevens Training Center. It was operated more or less as a penal institution on the theory that any girl unlucky enough to be sent there was probably "bad" and deserved to be punished. The buildings were inadequate and the staff even more so. Mrs. McCready stepped into a situation in 1963 that cried out for drastic improvement, and she has devoted a great amount of time in an effort to transform Stevens into a facility that would rescue and rehabilitate girls rather than incarcerate them for a time and then return them to the environment chiefly responsible for their problems.

Yet at a time when conditions were beginning to improve, in spite of a lack of staff and new buildings, Dr. McCready feels compelled to resign and there ought to be a full-fledged inquiry by a legislative committee to discover the reasons. In her letter of resignation she alleged that the Mental Health and Corrections Department's philosophy is not in accord with the law which assigns to Stevens the rehabilitation of children and youth, and this appears to be a key factor in her dissatisfaction with the department, "political figures" and others.

A legislative probe, in which we are sure Gov. Kenneth M. Curtis will concur, will help all of us evaluate Dr. McCready's record. Whatever the findings, it should strengthen the resolution of those who feel as she does — that the Stevens School should be equipped to give the girls sent there a fresh start in life.

PORTLAND EVENING EXPRESS

PORTLAND, MAINE, TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 1967

The Resignation

Two matters of major concern present themselves in the resignation of Dr. Pauline I. McCready, superintendent of the Stevens School at Hallowell.

The first is Dr. McCready's allegation that there exists within the State Department of Mental Health and Corrections, and among some politicians, an untenable philosophy which she feels is at variance with the law which states that the school is for rehabilitation of children and youth.

The second area to invite intense exploration at this time is the possibility of merging the Stevens School and the Boys Training Center at South Portland into one coeducational institution.

It would seem to us extremely difficult for any investigative commission, legislative or otherwise, to prove satisfactorily the existence and application of a philosophy of which the resigned administrator complains. That is not to say that it could not exist.

But it is an uncommon premise and conclusive evidence would be required to support it. It would not be sufficient, for example, to cite legislative or departmental failure to implement or encourage certain programs or recommendations of Dr. McCready or any other administration. We suspect that frustration through inability to get departmental and political support for all programs and projects manifestly desirable, and within the scope of available professional resources, is an ailment that

plagues every institution's administration.

This is not necessarily the deliberate application of a philosophy but rather the inevitable compromise of politicians and department heads who must, as a practical proposition, forever do the best they can for all institutions. At least, that could be a defense hard to penetrate, if nothing more. But since the charge has been made it should be pursued for should such a philosophy exist it would be intolerable.

The idea of a coeducational training school is neither new nor radical. Some 25 or more schools, like the Maine institutions called "reformatories" in earlier times, have gone coeducational with highly satisfactory results. The boys have improved in conduct and speech as well as in dress. The biggest concerns, misconduct and pregnancies, have proved to be little concerns probably because boys and girls are more closely supervised than they would be in normal circumstances.

It should be possible to operate one school more economically and more effectively than two. Since Dr. McCready's resignation precipitates another change at the Hallowell school this would seem an opportune time to explore the merger possibility. The best possible rehabilitation program is what Maine wants for its young people with problems. If this could be achieved in one school any resulting financial savings would be a bonus.

Boiling Point At Stevens

Stevens School Superintendent McCready's letter of resignation contains charges too serious to go unanswered. In the absence of a compelling reply, a full-scale investigation is necessary.

Her most serious charge was that the Department of Mental Health and Correction had failed utterly to support her efforts to meet requirements of the law. They are, she said, that care, custody and discipline of juveniles shall approximate that which they receive from their parents. They should be treated "not as criminals but as young persons in need of aid, encouragement and guidance."

Instead she accused the department of riding along on the obsolete policy of "utilizing Stevens as a temporary custodial center."

Her impatience with "the political hierarchy" is somewhat less serious, although it should be part of the investigation. Otherwise her parting shot will be regarded by many as failure of an idealistic, over-zealous sociologist to cope with the political realities of public life.

Now that the fat is in the fire it

must be accepted that a thorough probe splashes on the just and the unjust alike. Ugly rumors have been rampant, and some have been officially investigated, with no resulting public exposure. Disgruntled former employees are a fertile source of complaints.

If the resignation statement contains weaknesses they include acknowledgement of some administrative deficiencies and the claim that her administration has succeeded in its aims "far beyond expectations when the disgraceful limitation of staff, facilities and equipment are considered." The latter reflects again impatience with the harsh world of public affairs where progress, however slight, is often accepted as a feather in an administrator's cap.

Dr. McCready said the school's best friends have been the public during her efforts to install a modern, progressive program of rehabilitation. It is that same public's dismay that calls for a full investigation that will lay the facts out in the open free of bias. Otherwise there may be spreading concern for other, larger institutions under the same department where affairs are currently in a state of calm.

KJ8-9-67

Girls On 'Hill' Find Neglect Rules Roost

PPH8-16-67

By WILLIS JOHNSON

Associate Press Writer

HALLOWELL (AP)—Three young inmates saw the director of corrections touring the grounds of the state school for girls and approached apprehensively.

"Will you help us?" one said.

"How?" asked Robert R. Raines.

"I've been here nearly a year and a half and they won't let me out," said a frail-looking girl with a blue heart self-tattooed on her arm.

One of her companions, a stout girl with sandy hair, interrupted:

"And they won't let me have a picture of my baby."

"WHY NOT?" asked Raines.

"I don't know," she shrugged. "It's the rule on the hill."

"The Hill" is the girls' name for Stevens School, a controversial cluster of mostly old brick buildings on a hill above the Kennebec River.

The "school" title was given it by the legislature at the request of its former superintendent, Dr. Pauline I. McCready. She resigned two weeks ago with a bitter attack upon the legislature and the Department of Mental Health and Corrections.

Dr. McCready, who blamed both for not supporting her policies, thought the former name, Stevens Training Center, was too stark. If so, it probably expressed at least the physical appearance of the place more precisely than the present euphemism.

IN THE DORMITORIES, which house 120 girls, the rooms are small and the plaster cracked. Old wooden floors creak underfoot. Administrative officers and the classroom building are sparsely furnished with ancient chairs and scarred desks.

In one dormitory, built in the late 1800s, is a line of cells where girls who seriously misbehave are kept in solitary confinement.

They are narrow rooms unfurnished except for a mattress on the floor.

"Where do they go to the bathroom?" a house-mother was asked.

She pointed to a plastic pail in the corner.

"It's emptied twice a day," she said.

SOME GIRLS have stayed in solitary as long as 36 days, the housemother said.

"I don't believe in keeping them in that long," she said. "A good spanking would be better."

Some of the cells were occupied. The girls heard the talking and cried out.

"What are you in there for?" Raines asked at one door.

"I ran away," came the answer.

There are two new buildings on the grounds.

A small, modern dormitory is on a rise in back of the other structures. The \$248,000 Reed Recreation Center, a building with a gymnasium and meeting rooms, brightens the foot of a hill.

BUT THE DORMITORY is unfinished and the center is seldom used.

The center was the site for the staging of "Stars over Stevens," a musical review that Dr. McCready had the girls put on last winter. The center was finished some time before the show but wasn't used until then.

Since the show, "we don't get to use the place unless it rains," one of the girls complained.

"That's the trouble, there hasn't been a real program here," Raines said as he walked along. "Look around."

Girls sat in small groups on the grass. Some leaned against a couple of cars parked in front of the administrative building. Others, clad in housecoats, yelled down from dormitory windows.

Raines borrowed a key from Michael Malloy, the school's recreation director, and let himself into the Reed Center.

IT WAS MODERN and well equipped and silent except for the noise of water gurgling from two drinking fountains.

Raines tried to turn them off. The faucets were locked in place.

"What are they left running like that for?" he asked.

"That's the only way we can keep the water cold," answered Malloy.

"Doesn't that run up the water bill?"

"Shhhhh," Malloy said.

The business office is in a building apart from the other offices, and water was running from a tap there too.

"That's the only way to . . ." a clerk started to explain.

The business manager, Edward Witham Jr., got up when Raines entered and they shook hands. The office was very big, but the only furniture was a desk and two straight-backed chairs.

Witham has been working directly under the department in Augusta, and was not under Dr. McCready's direction.

"We've finally got the people across the way

Turn to back page of this section

Girls On 'Hill' Find Neglect Rules Roost

(Continued From Page One)

to tell us when girls are discharged," the manager informed Raines.

"He just started here a little while ago," Raines said later. "He's got an awful mess to straighten out."

Many of the personnel at Stevens are new. It maintains a staff of about 60 and its turnover rate has been high.

In the past four years, 95 have left. Many gave their reason as "personal." Some said they weren't able to get along with the superintendent. Others complained about the working hours and conditions. So far this year, 22 have left.

Dr. McCready's resignation attracted wide attention, as did a later report by a state senator that she had been asked to leave because of poor administration.

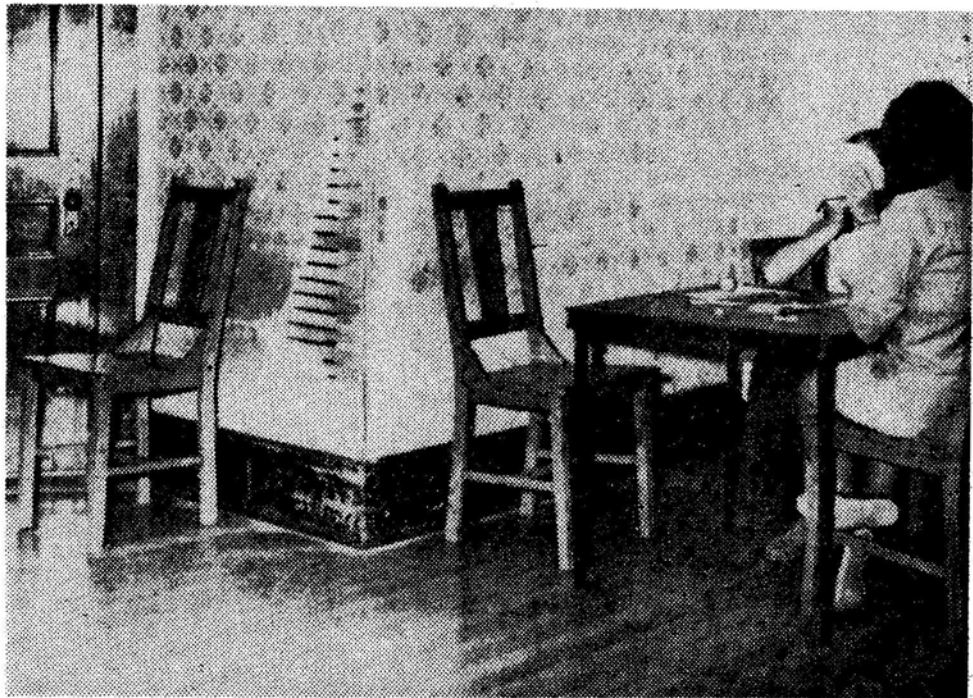
The school, though small, is well-known. A public relations woman was paid \$146 a week to publicize its name and Dr. McCready often made news with complaints of too little money and an exhausted staff. She once suggested that the school should be closed if more money wasn't forthcoming.

Her interim replacement, Miss Ward E. Murphy, toured the institution with Raines.

She is a large, stern looking woman. But her modern rehabilitation programs at the Women's Reformatory at Skowhegan have been winning national attention.

She answered a reporter's questions with experienced circumspection.

"Come back in a month and ask me what I plan," she said. "Today, I'm just listening."



RECREATION ROOM — Recreation room at Stevens School, Hallowell, contains only a bed (not shown),

table and chairs. Cracked plaster underlines the dismal atmosphere. (AP)

New Head Reported For Stevens School

AUGUSTA (AP) — A report circulated Tuesday that Ward Murphy, superintendent of the Skowhegan Women's Reformatory and a specialist in rehabilitation, would be given at least temporary charge of the Stevens School in Hallowell.

Walter F. Ulmer, commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Corrections, declined comment.

Miss Murphy would succeed Dr. Pauline I. McCready, who announced last weekend that she is resigning effective Sept. 15. Dr. McCready criticized sharply the Ulmer administration of the department and the legislature for not supporting her efforts to improve the girls' training school and its rehabilitation program. No one in the department has been willing to reply.

During Miss Murphy's tenure as superintendent at Skowhegan, she has maintained a low proportion of women returned to the Reformatory for new offenses and has established a "halfway house" program to help inmates prepare for their return to society.

Miss Murphy is a native of Detroit. She was educated at Wayne State University there and re-



Miss Ward Murphy

ceived a graduate degree from American University in Washington.

She has been employed at the reformatory since 1961, coming from the Federal Reformatory for Women in Alderson, W. Va., where she was in classification and parole work.

PPH 8-10-67

State Hospital, Prison Inmates Reported Fewer

AUGUSTA (AP). — Maine state hospitals and penal institutions have fewer patients and inmates, more staff and bigger budgets than they had eight years ago, the commissioner of Mental Health & Corrections said Tuesday.

Walter F. Ulmer provided these statistics at a conference of institutional superintendents:

—The population of state institutions has decreased five per cent to 5,058. PPH 1-10-68

—Staff strength has increased 11 per cent to 2,337 employees.

—The operating budgets of the Mental Health & Corrections Department have risen by 45 per cent to \$33.4 million for the present biennium.

He also noted that nearly \$3 million was being spent for capital improvements—some \$2 million more than eight years ago. The institutions receiving the biggest shares of these funds, he said, were the Boys Training Center in South Portland, the Maine State Prison in Thomaston and Stevens School for girls in Hallowell.

Institutions' Visitor Boards To Meet Soon On Duties

AUGUSTA — Five-man boards of visitors for 11 Maine institutions within the Department of Mental Health and Corrections will meet with Commissioner William F. Kearns Jr. soon to discuss their responsibilities and duties.

The boards were named recently by Gov. Kenneth M. Curtis.

Under a statute enacted by the 105th Legislature at least two members of a board will be from the minority party. Members will be appointed for one-year periods and may be reappointed. They will receive no compensation.

Their duties will be to inspect the institution to which they are assigned and make recommendations on its management to Kearns.

Board members are as follows:

Maine State Prison, Thomaston — Sidney L. Cullen, editor and publisher of the Rockland Courier-Gazette; Harry P. Glassman, professor of law at the University of Maine, Portland; Attorney Richard C. Sawyer, Manchester; Dr. Sawyer Sylvester, sociology professor at Bates College, Lewiston; and Charles E. Meserve of Portland, an alcoholic rehabilitation counselor.

Men's Correctional Center, South Windham — Clifford A. Blake of Portland, a YMCA official; William B. Troubh of Portland, former county attorney of Cumberland County; John W. Meredith of Portland, a tire company official; John M. Romanyshyn, a sociology professor at the University of Maine in Portland-Gorham, and Daniel W. Mooers

of Portland, an attorney.

Boy's Training Center, South Portland — Prof. Cushman Anthony of the University of Maine School of Law, Portland; Harold Reynolds, superintendent of school at Cape Elizabeth; Dr. Alan Elkins, director of psychiatry at Maine Medical Center, Portland; Sgt. Richard L. Thayer of the Portland Police Department and Attorney Walter E. Corey Jr. of Portland.

Pineland Hospital and Training Center, Pownal — Marcel H. Michaud of Lewiston, president of the Pineland Parents and Friends Associates; Gerald F. Petrucelli of Cape Elizabeth, an attorney; Mrs. James J. Garrity of Cape Elizabeth; Dr. Russell Morrissette, Lewiston physician, and the Rt. Rev. Fred-

erick B. Wolf of Portland, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine.

Women's Correctional Center, Skowhegan, and the Stevens School, Hallowell — Mrs. Paula Elkins, a housewife and law student of Cape Elizabeth; Stanley Ferguson of Farmington, a counselor-instructor at the University of Maine at Farmington; Miss Elizabeth Hoglund of Augusta, former staffer of the State Planning Office; George H. Hunt, an attorney of Hallowell and E. Parker Johnson, an instructor at Colby College.

Elizabeth Levinson Developmental Center, Bangor — Mrs. Mary Louise Kurr of Winterport, a Pine Tree Legal Association attorney; Dr. Mary Dietrich of the University of Maine in Orono; Richard T. Lamping, director of the

Bangor Counseling Center; Dr. John W. Nichols, professor of psychology at the University of Maine, Orono, and Sterling Dymond, an instructor at the University of Maine, Orono.

Bangor State Hospital — Timothy P. Wilson, high school athletic coach of Dexter; the Rev. Richard Rokos of Indian Island's St. Anne's Church and human relations official; Miss Patricia A. Danisinka of Skowhegan, a Pine Tree Legal Association attorney; Dr. Walter R. Christie of Cape Elizabeth, a psychiatrist at Maine Medical Center, and Marshall A. Stern, a Bangor attorney.

Augusta State Hospital — Dr. Richard Steinman, professor at the University of Maine in Portland-Gorham; Lee Pridgen, administrator of Augusta General

Hospital; F. Boardman Fish Jr. of Harrison, a Pine Tree Legal Association attorney; Miss Sharon Shaw of Waterville and Dr. Stephen M. Soreff, a MMC psychiatrist.

Gov. Baxter State School for the Deaf, Falmouth — Gilbert Lea, Portland publisher and printer; Mrs. Robert Follansbee of South Portland, mother of a deaf child; Stephen Woodbury, an official of the Associated Hospital Services of Maine, and Dr. John Knowles of Portland, an ear, nose and throat specialist.

The board for the Military and Naval Children's Home in Bath is expected to be named soon.

Each board will name its own chairman.

Half-way out of Stevens

Program offers privilege, responsibility KJ 10-8-70

The girls that live in half-way house at Stevens School set themselves apart from the rest of the institution. They know they are about to return to the community, they have new goals, new responsibilities.

One who has been working as a waitress in Augusta was asked how things were down at Stevens. "Oh, I'm not connected with Stevens any more, I'm in half-way house now," she said.

Her social worker relating the incident said, "that's the way we want it. The time has come for them to divorce the institution, and go back to the community."

Mrs. Margaret Brown, who heads the project, said, "we're trying all kinds of new things. Their mail is no longer censored. They're going to have their own pay 'phone (pay 'phone because they have little conception of time while talking even if its long distance).

"They have privileges," said Mrs. Brown. "They can go off the hill to visit their families or friends, they can participate in school activities, go to football games, go shopping, do their own banking."

Mrs. Brown said dating is being considered one of the privileges.

The social worker and the rest of the half-way house team have their work cut out for them. They deal with 12 girls, with typical teen-age problems.

Recently the team met with the girls (a weekly practice). They criticize each other and talk things over generally. "Write a list of what you'd like

to do," Mrs. Brown told the girls.

"Go out and get drunk," one of the teens wrote. "You'll have to wait until you're of age," Mrs. Brown said, "Then we'll talk about it."

Half-Way House girls working full time are self maintaining. They pay their own medical and dental bills, buy their own clothes, pay for their social activities and save for their nest egg, so they'll have money when they leave.

The girls also save and budget their money.

The girls in Half-way House have four house mothers who work eight hour shifts around the clock. One is an ADC

mother, who Mrs. Brown described as "doing a wonderful job because she understands their problems."

The girls cook their own breakfast, eat at school or where they work and have dinner in the Stevens dining room at night. They also have facilities for snacks.

"The program isn't perfect," Mrs. Brown said, "Sometimes we goof and have to bring them back to rework their program."

"Community sentiment and support is very important," Mrs. Brown said. "I want the girls out in the community and I'm going out in the community myself to tell the people about the program."

Visitor Boards Posted For 11 State Institutions

BDW
10/19-10/21

AUGUSTA—Five-man boards of visitors for 11 Maine institutions within the Department of Mental Health and Corrections, named by Gov. Kenneth M. Curtis will meet with Commissioner William F. Kearns, Jr. shortly to discuss their responsibilities and duties.

Under a statute enacted by the 105th Legislature, the boards consist of five members. At least two members will belong to the minority party, and will be appointed for one year periods. He may be re-appointed. Each board member will receive no compensation of any kind and shall have the right to inspect the institution to which it is assigned and to make recommendations concerning management of the institution to the commissioner.

New board members are:

Maine State Prison, Thomaston: Sidney L. Cullen, editor and publisher of the Rockland Courier-Gazette; Harry P. Glassman, Professor of Law at the University of Maine, Portland; Attorney Richard C. Sawyer, Manchester; Dr. Sawyer Sylvester, sociology professor at Bates College, Lewiston; and Charles E. Meserve, an alcoholic rehabilitation counsellor of Portland.

Men's Correctional Center, South Windham: Clifford A. Blake of Portland, a Y.M.C.A. official; William B. Troubh, of Portland, former county attorney of Cumberland County; John W. Meredith of Portland, a tire company official; John M. Romanyshyn, a sociology professor at the University of Maine in Portland, and Daniel W. Mooers of Portland, an attorney.

Boys Training Center: Professor Cushman Anthony, University of Maine Law professor of Portland; Harold Reynolds, superintendent of schools at Cape Elizabeth; Dr. Alan Elkins, director of psychiatry at the Maine Medical Center in Portland; Sgt. Richard L. Thayer of the Portland Police Department, and Attorney Walter E. Corey, Jr. of Portland.

Pineland Hospital and training Center: Marcel H. Michaud of Lewiston, president of the Pineland Parents and Friends Associates; Gerald F. Petrucelli, Cape Elizabeth, an attorney; Mrs. James J. Garrity, Cape Elizabeth; Dr. Russell Morrissette, Lewiston physician; and the Right Reverend Frederick B. Wolf of Portland, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine.

Women's Correctional Center, Skowhegan, and the Stevens School at Hallowell: Mrs. Paula Elkins, a housewife and law student from Cape Elizabeth; Stanley Ferguson of Farmington, a counsellor-instructor at the U. of M. Farmington; Miss Elizabeth Hoglund of Augusta, former staffer of the State Planning Office; George H. Hunt, an attorney from Hallowell; and E. Parker Johnson, an instructor at Colby College.

The Elizabeth Levinson Developmental Center of Bangor: Mrs. Mary Louise Kurr of Winterport, a Pine Tree Legal Association attorney; Dr. Mary Dietrich of the University of Maine in Orono; Richard T. Lamping, director of the Bangor Counselling Center; Dr. John W. Nichols, professor of psychology at the University of Maine, Orono; and Sterling Dymond, an instructor at the University of Maine, Orono.

All board members will have orientation discussions this month with Kearns and other chairman.

Real Father Image Pushed in Stevens School Program

HALLOWELL (AP) — "I like what I see. . . and I hope to expand the program so we can have a real father image in all phases of the institution."

Miss Ward Murphy uses this summation often in talking about the early results of the Stevens School's new training service counselor program.

Started last July, the program seeks to make the male image more realistic to the 100 inmates at the state correctional school for girls here.

Miss Murphy, superintendent of Stevens and the Woman's Correctional Center at Skowhegan, said:

"Rather than have watchmen or security guards who just watch buildings or those who are strictly maintenance workers or teachers, we wanted to have men working closely with the girls to give them a true father image.

"Many of the girls have had problems with their families, especially their fathers. "We are trying to show them that men can be firm but kind."

"The girls are responding very favorably to this. They don't seem to resent it at all."

The portly superintendent, who has been in corrections work for almost 20 years, added:

"Half of the world is made up of men. If this institution is to be a true community, we have to have men acting in this kind of role."

The 1969 legislature approved funds to add more personnel to the institution. Miss Murphy hired two men and reclassified two others for the new program.

"The primary requirement for the job is related to interest in children, reputation in the community and personality," she said. "There is no college degree requirement."

"The men must be able to understand and make comprehensive verbal and written reports," Miss Murphy continued. "They must also be able to understand a girl's behavior without necessarily wanting to change it."

In addition to seeing that the girls remain at the school, the counselors give advice to the girls; spend part of their evenings in the living quarters with the housemothers and youngsters; and accompany them on

"fun" trips as well as "problem" trips, such as going to court.

"The counselors are kindly people...a soft touch," said Miss Murphy. "They are family men themselves and have been interested in young people for a long time."

Counselor John Somerville fits this description to a tee. A gray-haired former salesman, Somerville has a winning smile and a deep concern for the girls at Stevens.

"For 19 years I have taught teenagers in Sunday School. Thinking back, I had no idea I would ever work with kids in this way."

However Somerville explained that his wife worked at the correctional institution at Skowhegan and then at Stevens, "so I got involved in one capacity and then another."

"We don't like to be fuz to the kids," said the father of three daughters. "We give them a chance to talk with men, trust men."

"Quite a few now confide in us rather than their housemothers," Somerville said.

"This experience is so meaningful to me," he added. "I will be satisfied if we can reach one of the girls and get her back into the community as a normal citizen."

Hallowell 'nay' on women's center won't alter state plans

KJ 11-11-72

By MARY V. PLUMER

HALLOWELL — A two-to-one vote against the proposed relocation of the Women's Correctional Center at Skowhegan to Stevens School in Hallowell has not altered the plans of the state Bureau of Corrections

to carry this proposal to the 106th Legislature.

Hallowell voters, in a referendum inspired by the mayor and City Council, cast 845 votes opposing the re-location of the Skowhegan inmates to the Hallowell facility and 451 approved of the proposal.

Hallowell Mayor Robert G.

Stubbs, a prime opponent to this move, said "the voters of Hallowell have sent the state legislature a message that will not go unnoticed" and promised to testify in opposition to the move before legislative committees if the state persisted in going ahead with the plan.

Miss Ward E. Murphy, direc-

tor of the State Bureau of Corrections, said Friday her immediate reaction to the thumbs-down vote was that "the people of Hallowell have not been adequately informed of what we want to do and all of its implications."

Miss Murphy said she felt a

public hearing held in September at Stevens and attended by the mayor, council and Hallowell residents answered a great many questions in the minds of Hallowell citizens and that she personally felt the majority of the people at that meeting voted in favor of the proposal election day.

Miss Murphy said the sentiment vote "cannot affect our plans." She said this proposal to combine the Women's Correctional Center and Stevens has been considered by prior legislatures and is a direct inclu-

(Continued On Page 2—Col. 1)

Hallowell nay vote won't alter state plans

(Continued from Page One)
sion of a recently completed
correctional study.

She maintains that the relocation of the Women's Correctional Center to the Stevens campus makes sense, both to the taxpaying citizen and professionals in the field of corrections.

A new building is needed, she said, at the Skowhegan facility but in view of the correctional study and the changes taking place in corrections, it makes more sense to construct this unit in Hallowell and move the 20 or so Skowhegan women to it.

This \$500,000 structure would be a "self-contained" unit, she said, explaining that the women from Skowhegan would be separated from the Stevens population because the building would have separate food services, counseling and educational units.

It will not be a maximum security building, but certain areas of it will be designed for maximum security. And by maximum security, she says, this doesn't mean high walls — it means special doors and windows.

She said they aren't asking for additional property, that

construction of this building doesn't require it.

A successful half-way house program at Skowhegan would continue and be expanded there, Miss Murphy said, and suggested the possibility of other existing buildings there serving maybe alcoholics and/or drug addicts.

The Women's Correctional Center is "a very integral part of the Skowhegan community," Miss Murphy says and Skowhegan residents have been supportive of it and recently expressed concern that it would close.

"Skowhegan doesn't particularly want to lose the Correctional Center," Miss Murphy says contending that Skowhegan residents have become knowledgeable in areas of rehabilitation and have ceased to be afraid of the offender.

Stubbs has suggested that the state move Stevens to Skowhegan, but this, Miss Murphy says, is not financially feasible because of the new buildings constructed in recent years at Stevens. "There would be a very legitimate public scream if we were to build these buildings and renovate other older ones and then not use

them."

Miss Murphy said she feels strongly that unless these two programs (Skowhegan and Stevens) are combined, two separate superintendents will be required. Currently Mrs. Dorothy Hanauer is filling a "temporary assignment" as superintendent of both facilities.

Further, Miss Murphy said it is important that if these two facilities are combined, acceptance on the part of the citizens of Hallowell is pertinent to its success because Stevens does require the services of Hallowell police and community involvement is a very real part of the program.

"If we're going to treat kids to live a normal life in a com-

munity, you've got to bring the community in and get the kids out into the community."

She said Stevens, as a public service, has made the Reed Auditorium on the Stevens campus available to any organization asking for its use and that Stevens has benefited Hallowell economically as well.

Miss Murphy issued an invitation to Hallowell residents to become familiar with the institution and its program. "Stevens is very proud of its program and enjoys showing the public what it's doing." She urged that Hallowell clubs and groups arrange for tours of the institution to "make themselves more knowledgeable."

The student population at

Stevens is around 70, Miss Murphy said, and the population at the Women's Correctional Center averages around 20, not including those in the half-way house program.

There are 86 full-time people on the Stevens payroll and another 16 part-time employees. If the Women's Correctional Center is moved to Hallowell, another 20 employees would be required, she said, primarily correctional officers.

"We don't want change just for change's sake," Miss Murphy said. "We want better programs that can help young people in trouble become better citizens—in or out of institutions."

Controversy expected

Bill would shift women offenders

KJ 12-28-72

By MARY PLUMER
KJ staff writer

(Editor's Note: One of a series of articles on legislation proposed by the Maine Dept. of Mental Health & Corrections)

A bill permitting the shift of the Women's Correctional Center at Skowhegan to Stevens School in Hallowell has the mak-

ings for a lively and controversial committee hearing.

The Bureau of Corrections will ask for \$475,000 to construct a facility for adult offenders, now housed at Skowhegan on the campus of Stevens School.

The initial proposal caused a flurry of written exchanges between the Hallowell City Council, that went on record in opposition to this move, the Gov-

ernor's Office and the Dept. of Mental Health and Corrections.

Miss Ward E. Murphy, director of the Bureau of Corrections said additional property will not be required for construction of this building in Hallowell which, she says, should accommodate both living and program facilities for adult female offenders.

Hallowell Mayor Robert G. Stubbs, a prime opponent of this move, said, on learning of the plan several months ago, "once again the state of Maine is preparing to saddle the citizens of Hallowell with the onerous task of providing municipal services, free of charge,

for a division of the state government."

He said Hallowell's selection as the "number one choice for a maximum security prison" was the last straw.

Stubbs has recommended moving Stevens to Skowhegan and using existing buildings at Stevens to relieve overcrowding at the Capitol complex.

Hallowell citizens are expected to make themselves heard when this proposal comes before the committee hearing, since they opposed the relocation during the November election in a referendum "sentiment" vote 845 to 451.

After the sentiment vote Mayor Stubbs said "the voters of Hallowell have sent the State Legislature a message that will not go unnoticed."

Miss Murphy, after the vote, said this could not affect their plans. Both Miss Murphy and Governor Curtis have said they felt Hallowell citizens mis-

understood the plans for housing the Correctional Center women in Hallowell.

State officials have cited the significance of the institutional payroll in the city and Governor Curtis has contended, in writing to the council, that the entire plan is predicated on the desire to save tax dollars by eliminating the Skowhegan facility.

Miss Murphy maintains that the relocation of the Women's Correctional Center at Skowhegan to the Stevens campus makes sense, both to the tax-paying citizen and professionals in the field of corrections.

Miss Murphy said if the Legislature approves the proposal, three major functioning units at Skowhegan would be closed. An alternate use for these structures has not been determined because of the time involved in erecting a new facility and

(Continued on Page 2—Col. 1)

carrying out the actual move. Under consideration for the 106th Legislature are plans for utilizing the buildings for drug offenders, alcoholics and for vocational training, among others.

Of the existing Women's Correctional Center operating budget, it's anticipated that approximately half would be designated for the half-way house program there, allowing the

operation of two separate units. Of the current Skowhegan staff of 39, about half will be required to run the two separate units and to maintain grounds and closed buildings.

Miss Murphy said she hopes to see the Women's Correctional Center move into the new Hallowell building by July 1, 1974. "Construction time tables might make this difficult to meet." And since capital con-

struction can be relegated to bond issue referendum approval, it could drag out a little longer.

The Bureau also asks for a statutory change to eliminate the word Skowhegan from existing Women's Correctional Center statutes and transferring, legally, the half-way house program from the Women's Correctional Center and placing it under the direct jurisdiction of the Bureau of Corrections.

Transfer of women prisoners defended by commissioner

By LLOYD FERRISS

KJ-Sentinel News Service

AUGUSTA — The commissioner of Maine's Department of Mental Health and Corrections said Saturday that recent transfer of 10 adult offenders from the Women's Correctional Center at Skowhegan to the Stevens School in Hallowell represents a move "entirely consistent with legislative policy."

That statement, made during an interview, came just two days after Hallowell Mayor Robert G. Stubbs branded the transfer an "outrageous" action that thrust the Department of Mental Health and Corrections "into the role of dictators of the people rather than their servants."

In labeling the department defiant, Stubbs was referring to what he thinks is a corrections department plan to move all adult offenders to Hallowell against the wishes of that community and against the intent of the 106th Legislature, which knocked down a department-backed bill to close the Skowhegan reformatory.

"I firmly believe," says Stubbs of the Transfer, "that this is nothing less than a big foot in the door; a foot that will soon result in the entire body of the remaining women at WCC being moved to Hallowell and, soon after, the establishment of the planned co-ed institution."

Kearns says, however, that the women transferred are a part of a work-release program well within the guidelines set by the legislature. Work experience and adjustment to the outside world are goals of the program he explained.

"Hopefully," he continued, "we'll be able to get them back into the community. Our goal is actually to keep them in the community rather than have them institutionalized."

Meanwhile members of the legislature's Health and Institutional Service Committee, who sometimes are critical of department policies, say they are adopting a wait-and-see attitude on the issue.

State Sen. Walter W. Hichens (R-Eliot), says he will meet

early this week with the superintendent of the Hallowell Institution, Mrs. Dorothy Hanauer and fellow Health and Institutional Services committee member Roswell E. Dyar (R-Strong). Already he has discussed the matter with Mayor Stubbs and Corrections Bureau head Ward Murphy

"Rather than come out with a blank statement now," says Sen. Hichens, "I think it would be better if we looked into it a little bit more."

Among his many criticisms of the 10-offender transfer (there are 16 women remaining at Skowhegan), Stubbs is angered by the swiftness of the move.

"What bothers me," he says, "is that no warning was given whatsoever. No contact was made with me whatever. No telephone calls, no postcards, no nothing. There was a complete lack of communication and this is symptomatic of the entire controversy."

Hallowell, a small city whose downtown is lined with antique

shops, held an opinion referendum last fall in which the proposal to transfer adult offenders to the municipality was soundly trounced.

"Townpeople, almost without exception," are very upset about this (the recent transfer)," says Stubbs. "For 100 years the juvenile girls have been here and we feel we've been doing our fair share . . . It's apparent they want to make a complex here. Pretty soon we'll be known as 'Prison Town.'"

Kearns, who makes no secret of his wish to serve both adult and juvenile offenders at Hallowell, says there are few differences in the profile of inmates from either institution. The median age of offenders at Skowhegan, he observes, is not much over 20.

"They're not dangerous or maniacal type of people running around (at Skowhegan) any more than there are at our state hospitals . . . Basically the difference is a few years in age. To call it a women's prison clouds the issue."

A swivel-blade vegetable peeler is a "must" in a well-outfitted kitchen. It's sharp and speedy, removing paper-thin parings from vegetables and fruit so there is no waste.

Staff outnumber girls 8 to 3 at state school

BDN 10/18/73

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — The Legislative Council was told Wednesday the resident population at Stevens School for Girls in Hallowell has dropped to "something less than 30... and there are something like 80-plus employes down there."

The assessment came from Henry L. Cranshaw, administrative services director for the Department of Mental Health and Corrections. Cranshaw represented commissioner William F. Kearns Jr. at the meeting.

The population at the juvenile school dropped from its earlier average of 60 when the legislature passed a law prohibiting the jailing of any minor for offenses which wouldn't constitute adult crimes.

"I agree that we should now take a new look at it," said Cranshaw of the school's new resident-employee ratio. He said Kearns and Miss Ward E. Murphy, the state's corrections director, had discussed the situation.

Kearns was asked to appear at the council's Nov. 7 meeting to discuss the situation, as well as a proposed renovation of the Ray Building at Augusta State Hospitals. The council asked hospital officials to suspend the renovations

until further notice, and directed the Bureau of Public Improvements to survey all hospital building facilities.

Council chairman Larry E. Simpson of Standish said the panel learned during a morning tour that there are about 700 employes at the hospital for 600 patients

there. He suggested the review of that situation.

Council members want to use the 35,000-square foot Ray Building for state office space. The current renovations would dedicate 9,000-square feet to relocation of a training workshop previously

housed in a building now used by the state museum.

Kearns will be asked to report on the hospital space situation, as well as the resident-employee ratio, at the November meeting. A report on the space survey progress is also expected from BPI.

Ward Murphy wants to put herself out of corrections job

By Brenda Rotzoll

AUGUSTA, Maine (UPI) — Ward Murphy, the first woman in the nation to head a state corrections system, says her goal in life is to eliminate the need for her job.

But she isn't optimistic about total success in that respect. So she is working for hard on next-best goals: reintegration of former criminals into the community and the task of preventing people from becoming offenders in the first place.

"An ultimate goal which I do not think we will ever reach is to put ourselves out of business," she said in a recent interview. "This requires adequate supervision of offenders. I would like a vast expansion of our probation and parole system, which nationwide is where the last amount of corrections money has been put."

Maine has been held up as a model of modern methods of dealing with offenders. Miss Murphy's soft, pleasant voice has been arguing for and helping achieve those methods since she came here in 1961 to head the Women's Correctional Center at Skowhegan.

She entered the field as a corrections officer in

Detroit while working her way through Wayne State University, then went to Washington and worked in the federal Bureau of Prisons.

Maine now has a broad-based work release program at all its correctional facilities. These are the maximum security Maine State Prison at Thomaston (capacity 500 prisoners, present population about 370), the Men's Correctional Center at South Windham (200-134), the Women's Correctional Center at Skowhegan (40-24), the Boys Training Center at South Portland (280-160) and the Stevens School for Girls at Hallowell (88-60).

The juvenile facilities always had work release authority. The adult institutions were pushed into the program by Miss Murphy, who demanded and won such a program in 1963 for the women's center. Men's work release programs followed.

The legislature this year passed a law — Miss Murphy beams all over when she speaks of it — which says juveniles can't be committed to correctional institutions for offenses which would not be crimes if committed by an

adult. An example is truancy.

"I'm hoping we'll have a youth bureau before long with a primary goal to keep kids out of trouble," she said.

In the future, Maine will have a halfway house law applying to all correctional institutions. That's another of the improvements pioneered for the women's facility in 1963 by Miss Murphy.

"Our policies are very liberal compared to a lot of states," Miss Murphy said, noting no court has ever had to force the bureau to make a change.

"As a bureau we have tried to address respect for the individual and the civil rights of the offender, while at the same time presuming there are obligations of the offender," she said.

The bureau uses federal funds to train its people, and its director hopes that all prison guards soon will become correctional officers — with a change in training and outlook as well as in title.

"In a state of similar size there might be 25 people in the bureau," Miss Murphy said. "In Maine, the bureau consists of myself and a secretary."

Oppose women's correctional center move to Stevens School

Hallowell officials returned to the legislature Tuesday to oppose a bill allowing the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Corrections to choose the site of the women's correctional center.

The officials, who already have opposed \$500,000 for a new facility in Hallowell before the Appropriations Committee, told members of the Health and Institutional Services Committee that the wording change would open the door for a new center.

"When the camel gets his head in the tent," Basil Payne, Hallowell city councilman, said, "pretty soon he is in the tent."

Current legislation ties the Women's Correctional Center to its present location in Skowhegan. The proposed bill, L.D. 1541, would allow Commissioner Ward Murphy to "designate" the site of the facility.

The legislation would also separate the budget and supervision of the halfway house

at Skowhegan from the control of the Women's Correctional Center and transfer it to the corrections department.

The change would allow the department to establish halfway houses for males in locations other than Skowhegan, Miss Murphy told the committee. The halfway house change was not opposed.

Hallowell Mayor Robert Stubbs said the citizens didn't want the center and didn't want Miss Murphy choosing the site, a procedure which would lead to the center's location at Stevens School.

Councilman Payne said he respected the work at Stevens, but added that insufficient planning had been done in deciding to move the maximum security facility to Hallowell.

Miss Dorothy Hanauer, superintendent of the Skowhegan Center, said most of the 23 women now at the facility had once been at Stevens. The population of Stevens has dropped from 125 in 1966 to 78 today, she added, and the

median age of the prisoners is 19. **KJ 5-2-73**

The 10 women in the halfway house would remain in Skowhegan, Miss Murphy added.

Hallowell Councilman Ernest Hunt presented another view at the hearing. He said citizens weren't pushing against the facility until the council and mayor started opposing it.

Hunt said if the intention of town officials is to pursue safety, they should be investigating escapes at the Kennebec County Jail. Few women escape from Stevens, he said, and those who do don't commit crimes in town.

Hunt said the officials' position on coed dorms is "selfish."

"They don't mind coed dorms if they are at Skowhegan, they just don't want them in Hallowell," Hunt said.

Eventual projections of a planning study call for coed dorms at the Stevens School. The corrections department isn't asking for coed dorms this session, Miss Murphy said.

Friday, March 23, 1973

Kearns Has No Comment On Report

By JIM MCGREGOR

AUGUSTA, Maine (UPI) — The commissioner of the Maine Mental Health and Corrections Department says he will not have an immediate comment on a legislative report that has criticized his handling of state mental and penal institutions.

William F. Kearns Jr. said Thursday he had not seen a copy of the report of the legislature's Health and Institutional Committee and would not comment until he read the findings.

The committee issued a report saying the Departments of Mental Health and Corrections, and Health and Welfare were definitely not making effective use of appropriations for the institutions.

The report said the departments needed to be cleaned up, but it made no specific recommendations for dismissals.

However, Rep. Roswell E. Dyar, R-Strong, said a minority report would be issued Monday and predicted it would be stronger than the majority report.

"It will be stronger in that it will place the blame on certain people," said Dyar, who acknowledged that Kearns would be one of those blamed.

Dyar accused the departments of not establishing priorities and spending money to renovate buildings that subsequently were closed or torn down.

The report accused Kearns of refusing to cooperate with the legislative investigation.

The report recommended that the Bureau of Corrections of the Department of Mental Health and Corrections be placed under the Department of Public Safety. It also recommended that the women's correctional center be consolidated with the Stevens school for girls and that the facility be located at Skowhegan instead of Hallowell.

The document was submitted to the legislature Thursday, and committee members said legislation was being drafted to carry out the recommendations included in the report.

Special Aide Is Appointed To Corrections

AUGUSTA (AP) — Michael J. Molloy of Hallowell has been named special programs coordinator for the state corrections bureau, it was announced Monday.

PPH 2-2-71
Miss Ward E. Murphy, bureau director, said Molloy is on a six-months loan from the Stevens School in Hallowell where he has been special services director for several years.

In his new job, Molloy will also be a special administrative aide to Miss Murphy, assisting in procurement of federal and private grants in corrections, a study of the feasibility of regional jails in Maine, demonstration projects and changes and refinements of existing programs in Maine's correctional institutions.

Panel keeps tabs on pre-release center

By MECHELE COOPER MAR 20 2000
Staff Writer

KENNEBEC JOURNAL

HALLOWELL — When the state's pre-release center was about to initiate a new drug program, the center's acting director called the city manager and scheduled a meeting of the Hallowell Pre-release Advisory Committee.

For more than a decade, the committee has been the liaison between the Central Maine Pre-release Center — in the former Stevens School — and the City Council.

Deanna Hallett, a committee member, said she came out of the meeting, organized by pre-release center acting director Joseph DeFilipp, with a good feeling about the new drug program.

She said the advisory committee is made up of pre-release center officials and community

members appointed by the City Council.

"I think it's an excellent idea to have a committee in town that works with pre-release officers, because they keep us in touch with what's going on," Hallett said. "They respect what we say. And it helps with getting the word out to other residents. If you're talking to someone in town, and they've said they've heard a rumor that such-and-such is going to happen. Because you're on the committee, what you say has more of an impact."

The advisory committee was formed about 10 years ago when the pre-release center first moved into the Stevens School complex, Hallett said. On average, prisoners stay eight to nine months. The facility's capacity is 50, and DeFilipp said between 75 and 100 prisoners per year are sent there.

"The committee makes us accountable and makes us explain our programs and open up to the public, so they know there's not a hidden-ball trick, that we're not trying to fool anybody," DeFilipp said Friday.

"We want them to know we are part of the community and we care about what happens here. My staff are people who live in this community, and we want the public to feel safe. Our first mandate is public safety, and we're very serious about that."

The pre-release center is a place where community-rated prisoners go to prepare for reintegration into the community.

"Traditionally, the way to do this is through work-release, but that's changing now," he said.

Please see **PANEL**, A2



Joseph DeFilipp, acting director of the Maine Pre-release Center in Hallowell, says the center's advisory committee "makes us accountable and makes us explain our programs and open up to the public"

Staff photo

• Panel

Continued from A1

"Now we're feeling that programming is a more important component than just work-release."

With the help of School Administrative District 16, School Union 42 and the University of Maine at Augusta staff, the pre-release center started to implement educational programs.

The drug program, developed in concert with the Office of Substance Abuse, is one of the overriding issues in Maine corrections today, he said.

"Substance abuse is a way bigger issue than people realize," he said. "Many of the people who have gone through the criminal justice system have been involved with drugs. And by far, the biggest drug in Maine is alcohol. And that's a very difficult concept for some, because it's legal and easily available."

DeFilipp said prisoners do not arrive at the pre-release center without preparation. First, they go to a transitional treatment facility at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham.

The Hallowell center classifies them by the degree of their substance-abuse problem, not by their crimes.

Currently, 11 prisoners reside at the pre-release center who received intensive treatment at the Windham facility while incarcerated in the correctional center.

Those prisoners are not allowed to mix with other prisoners in the Hallowell program, he said.

"They're here for at least six months," he said.

"They continue their treatment and then they also have the opportunity to engage in furlough, public service work and things like that."

'The last thing we need here is a jail'

Chelsea, county spar over inmates' housing

By MECHELE COOPER
Staff Writer

CHELSEA — Chris Daggett is against low-risk inmates moving into an office building three-quarters of a mile from his home.

In an effort to reduce crowding at the jail, the county is proposing to lease the former Apgar Office Systems building on Route 9 for a community housing project for inmates.

Daggett, a father of three, told county officials at a public hearing Wednesday that the plan makes him worried about his children's safety.

"Is anyone aware that three inmates escaped in a two-month period from

the Cumberland County Community Correction Center?" he asked county officials at the hearing, held at the Apgar building.

"One was OUI and proceeded to get drunk and showed up at his girlfriend's house," Daggett said. "Are we going to have police presence in town other than the people watching the minimum security facility?"

Residents who attend the meeting agreed that takes between a half-hour and 45 minutes for a Kennebec sheriff's deputy to respond to emergency calls in Chelsea. They were concerned that if something did happen, such as an inmate walking off, their families could be in jeopardy.

Kennebec County Sheriff-elect Randall Liberty assured them the inmates were harmless.

Those eligible to live in the proposed facility would be incarcerated for of-

fenses such as bad check writing or operating under the influence.

"These are minimum-security (inmates)," Liberty told the 150 people at the meeting. "He's an OUI who does three days in jail. He's your neighbor today, and when he gets out, he's your neighbor again."

Currently, the jail on State Street, built to house 132 inmates, has permission from the state to keep 170 inmates. But more often than not, it's upwards of 200 inmates, Liberty said.

He said state variances that allow an excess of prisoners will end in September 2007.

The county could expand the existing jail, he said, or build a new minimum-security unit, but it would be more cost-effective to create a community housing project for inmates in the

PLEASE SEE JAIL B4

Jail

from B1

Apgar building.

He said the county is trying to be creative and come up with solutions that satisfy the state Department of Corrections and local residents.

Devlin said 50 percent of the county's budget goes to its correctional facility.

"I often compare the county jail budget to school budgets," Devlin said. "That's our big egg and we're not getting enough subsidy from the state to cover that."

A number of residents wanted to know what it would take for the county to abandon the idea and find a more suitable location.

Peggy True of Chelsea suggested they look at the Augusta Mental Health Institute. She said there were five vacant buildings

"These are minimum-security (inmates). He's an OUI who does three days in jail. He's your neighbor today, and when he gets out, he's your neighbor again."

RANDALL LIBERTY

Kennebec County Sheriff-elect on potential inmates living in Chelsea

in Augusta that could be used.

"This site is one of many that we're looking at," Liberty said. "In order for this to be successful, it has to be accepted by the community and be fiscally sound."

Liberty said he and County Administrator Bob Devlin had an appointment today to inspect a building in the old Stevens School complex in Hal- lowell.

Former Chelsea Fire Chief Joe Mills said the smart thing for the county to do would be to build a

minimum-security facility.

"Why waste tax money (leasing the property)?" Mills said. "Find a chunk of land away from neighborhoods and go for a bond, or whatever it takes and build. Not a maximum-security facility, but a minimum-security facility."

Dick Condon of Chelsea said just a few years ago the town enacted some rules and regulations to try and clean up junk in people's yards.

He said housing inmates in town would hurt the commu-

nity.

"We're trying to turn Chelsea around," Condon said. "The last thing we need here is a jail."

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The Juvenile Delinquency Problem

KJ 9-16-57

New Way of Life for Girls in State School

(Editor's Note: Another in a series.)

By JIM COLLINS

The language of the law is not always the language of love.

Take, for example, the phraseology on a municipal court mittimus committing a girl to this institution. The youngster, the impressive legal document reads, has fallen or is "in danger of falling" into habits of "vice and immorality."

She has been guilty of leading "an idle or vicious life."

Strong words to describe a child. And yet here are shoplifters, truants, vandals, offenders (or at the least potential offenders) against society.

What are they like, these youngsters, many of whom have broken the law and the remainder of whom have been deemed by courts to be in strong danger of doing so?

Criminals in the making? Jail bait?

The answer is an unequivocal no, and it comes from Miss Nellie Stevens who in her 22 years as superintendent of the State School has known thousands of these girls intimately.

Miss Stevens is an unusual person — and she holds an unusual position. What she is not, she will tell you most emphatically, is a warden. There is a fence around the State School — but to keep people out and not to keep the girls in. And the fence extends only part way. The girls can leave without much difficulty by merely walking out the front entrance and down the hill to Hallowell.

But few of them do — because they find here a direction and purpose in life they didn't know existed.

That this is true becomes apparent after one has talked to Miss Stevens about "her girls" for a very short period of time; it becomes a matter of indisputable fact after one has made a tour of the institution and seen the girls, watched them at work and play, heard them at their lessons.

In a very real sense the Hallowell school is a "finishing school" because it marks an end to the poverty, neglect and indifference most of these young girls have been subjected to all their young lives.

They are, as Miss Stevens will



MISS NELLIE STEVENS

tell you, no "different" from other girls; what is different is society's attitude toward them. The stigma is not upon them, but upon the community which will not help them, upon the parent who will not love them, upon the

court too blinded by criminality to understand them.

Society put a girl here whose compassion is so great and powers of expression so fine that she could feel pity for the scarred oaks and love them in particular "because they are scarred".

Another girl has painted a mural, a vivid Maine coastal scene that stretches across four complete walls of one of the school's dining rooms.

Yet another is taking dancing lessons in Augusta; another is a pianist.

There are a little over 100 girls at the school now. Miss Stevens and her staff of teachers have learned the particular talent of each, and work with the girl to develop it.

The homecraft and sewing shops are filled with products the girls have turned out. Beautiful rugs and comforters, shawls, and when we visited the sewing shop, graduation dresses.

Graduation for the grammar school girls is held each June in the school auditorium, located in one of the dormitories. Although the usual stay here is 1-2 years, classes are conduct-

ed up through the third year in high school. Some girls finish high school in Hallowell.

Each girl here has her own room, which is papered in colors and patterns of her own choosing. Dormitories are arranged according to age groups, and each dorm is an independent unit with its own kitchen and dining facilities. The girls do all the cooking, serving and cleaning—and no dorm runs on exactly the same schedule as another. Time, and to a limited extent the rules (such as use of the television set) are matters ironed out with the "house mother."

This spirit of individuality, complete lack of regimentation, is astounding to an outsider coming to the school with
(Continued on Page 3—Col. 6)

New Way of Life

(Continued from Page One)

preconceived notions of how places "of this type" are run.

Miss Stevens would like to have you believe the place runs itself. It does not, but it would seem to. We spotted three or four husky girls pushing power mowers, and with no effort at all. Another group was playing softball. Some were in their rooms studying. We visited the laundry and there were girls ironing and washing clothes. Two were in the store-room putting up orders for the various dormitories. A girl was being given piano lessons in the auditorium.

No one girl wore the same type of outfit. We asked Miss Stevens about this and she told us most of the clothes were bought by the school, some she bought herself, but that the girls, by preference, often wore clothes they were able to buy themselves.

She also told us that when she arrived she found girls wore "state uniforms," and went to classes in formation and under supervision.

"That," she remarked, "was one of the first things changed. I had just come from working in a women's prison and had seen quite enough of that sort of thing. The State School for Girls is not a prison."

And we, for our part, agreed.

Ideas surface

SUN-JOURNAL

for girls at MYC

JUL 25 2000

BY NICOLE BISSONNETTE
Staff Writer

SOUTH PORTLAND – Some officials in the state's juvenile corrections services would like to build a separate facility for girls. Others would like to see them housed in a "pod" at the new youth center to be completed in 2001.

Those ideas were floated at a recent meeting with experts to discuss more effective ways of addressing the needs of girls at the Maine Youth Center.

The meeting took place nearly four months after conditions for females at the center were criticized by the Mainely Girls organization, a nonprofit group that looks at women's issues all over the state. The girls, who account for only a small fraction of the facility's population, are housed in a single cottage, regardless of offense or age. Citing inappropriate behavior of the boys in the classroom and lack of access to counseling, the report said girls' issues were not properly addressed.

"There was a lot of frustration around the fact that this is old. There has been a task force for at least three years, but it sounds like there's a resurgence in the movement," Susan Levine of Youth Alternatives Inc. Heritage House said.

Maine Youth Center Superintendent Lars Olsen called the meeting, with Linda Albrecht, a nationally recognized expert on gender-specific programming, leading the discussion. The group, which included Mainely Girls Executive Director Mary Orear and members of the correctional system, discussed plans to address women's issues at the facility.

"We are far from anything being set in stone," said Donna Williams, Maine Youth Center Juvenile Program Manager for the girls' cottage. The group is currently planning a retreat for sometime in September to further investigate the topic.

"The question is where do we want to go from here? Studies have been done for 10 years – and people

felt it was time to act," Orear said. "What's great is that you have some of the top people in the state concerned about this."

Levine wants change. "People need to recognize the needs of girls and act on them."

Williams agreed.

"When girls have contact with boys, they have a hard time focusing," she said. Though the girls are forbidden to have contact with the boys outside the classroom, the fact that hundreds of boys are quartered with only a handful of girls is a problem, she said.

A number of those in attendance expressed their desire to see a completely separate facility built for the girls. "Girls don't need to be in a boys' facility," Department of Corrections Juvenile Services Planner Roxy Hennings said. Before the Maine Youth Center became co-educational in 1976, girls were housed separately at the Stevens School.

Williams does not believe building another facility is necessary, though she does feel it is important to separate the sexes. The girls will have a separate pod in the new facility to be completed in 2001, and Williams hopes that the girls will be more secluded there. "I don't want the girls to leave the pod at all," she said. She is looking into the option of bringing teachers into the pod so girls would not be in classes with the boys.

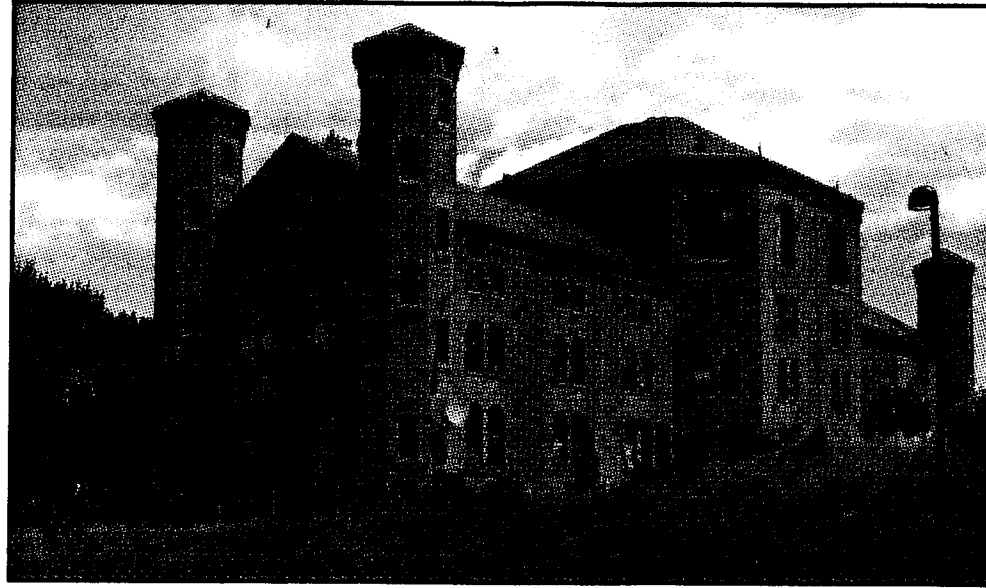
"I think the turnaround time between the time the girls get here and the time they leave would be a lot shorter" if they were separated from the boys, she said.

They also discussed new training for the staff dealing with the girls, Hennings said. The training, developed in 1998, will be used to sensitize staff members to the various differences between the sexes and how to best work with girls, she said. "Right now people are doing double shifts, so finding time for the training is difficult."

"We know what needs to be done," Hennings said. And as soon as they find the money, they are going to work toward that goal, she said.

Door opens to development as former Youth Center closes

One concern about the former Maine Youth Center involves the "Castle," which would need extensive structural work.



Staff photo by Gordon Chibroski

● A developer and a local committee have high hopes for a facility long seen as a blemish.

By GREGORY D. KESICH
Staff Writer

SOUTH PORTLAND — For the first time in 149 years, there were no young people on the Maine Youth Center campus Wednesday. The stately brick cottages that housed generations of Maine's most troubled children were also empty. The residents have moved into the Long Creek Youth Development Center, a modern, self-contained facility closer to

INSIDE

A time line of the facility built in 1853 to educate and rehabilitate young male offenders, 12A.

Westbrook Street.

The Youth Center campus, which existed in isolation as the Maine Mall, the Portland Jetport and Redbank sprang up around it, will finally be open to development. A picture of what the development might look like will begin to take shape at a meeting at 7 p.m. today at the South Portland Community Center.

"It's a chance to take what many people

viewed as a real liability and turn it into an asset for the community," said Ed Suslovic, a consultant working with developer Richard Berman, who was awarded a 50-year lease on the property. "To me, it's really exciting."

The development of the property spells the end of the old facility, which was started as a humane alternative to prison for children in trouble, but became in recent years an embarrassment for the state. As funding for the Youth Center shrank in the 1990s, the institution came under fire for its inadequate school program and inhumane use of restraints and isolation.

Please see **YOUTH**
Back page this section

LONG CREEK YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER

1853
The Boys Training Center, which became the Maine Youth Center in 1976 and is now known as the Long Creek Youth Development Center, is established by an act of the Legislature.

After a careful investigation by a legislative committee appointed to select a site, a farm is purchased in South Portland for \$9,000. The training center is established for the education and rehabilitation of young male offenders. It is built to house 100 boys.

1976
The Stevens School for Girls in Hallowell is closed and the juvenile girls are transferred to the facility, renamed the Maine Youth Center.

1992
State funding for the Youth Center is cut 21 percent.

1996

More cuts are made. Critics will later blame the cuts for contributing to the dramatic decline in conditions and programs at the institution.

The Maine National Guard builds a 15-foot-high security fence around the 300-acre complex. And for the first time in its 140-year history, the Youth Center will be considered a secure facility.

1997
A Maine Department of Education report on the school cites filthy conditions, outdated books and a lack of teachers and guidance services.

1998
Amnesty International criticizes what it calls inadequate programs and mistreatment of youths, highlighting the common use of a restraint chair. The complaints prompt reviews of the center.

1999
Edward Loughran, an expert hired by the state to

assess the center, issues a scathing report, blaming budget cuts for a creating a "prison-like culture" from which residents "are returning to the community in worse shape than when they entered."

Gov. Angus King pledges dramatic changes, saying the center will again be a model facility within two years. He unveils a \$25.5 million improvement plan for the state's juvenile corrections system.

2000
Loughran, the state's consultant, says the Youth Center reforms have made "substantial progress," but the institution is still struggling with inadequate staff training and a "custodial culture."

2001
The Maine Youth Center is being overhauled. It becomes the Long Creek Youth Development

Center. Its outmoded cottage-style living arrangements are being replaced with individual, secure rooms.

The Mountain View Youth Development Center opens in Charleston. The northern facility takes some of the inmates from South Portland, reducing Long Creek's population from about 150 residents to 95. The new Long Creek has a capacity for 154 offenders.

2002
A \$34 million building replaces cottages that housed as many as 60 young people and lacked air conditioning. The overhaul consolidates the center's campus of 14 historic buildings into a modern 183,000-square-foot facility.

Compiled by staff researcher Beth Murphy

YOUTH

Continued from Page 1A

The Youth Center was targeted by a letter-writing campaign by Amnesty International, and a consultant hired by the state called it prison-like and a "warehouse" for children with problems.

In recent years, new administrators said they shifted their focus from punishment to rehabilitation. The key is the \$34 million new facility — and an identical one in northern Maine — with housing, school and treatment programs under a single roof. That leaves the buildings and grounds of another era empty.

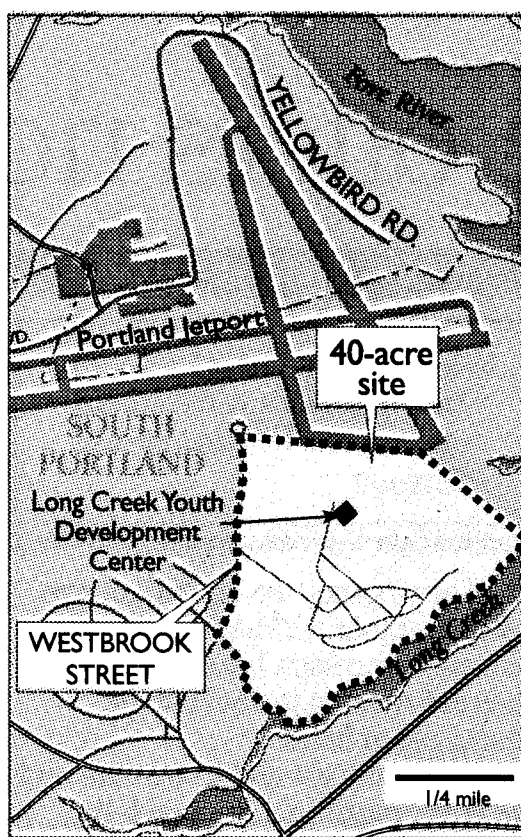
A committee of legislators, city officials and community members was set up last year to work with Berman. Both sides are committed to a project that will fill needs of the community and remain compatible with the Long Creek center, which shares the property.

What they have to work with is more than 40 acres that abut the Portland Jetport and Interstate 295, with sweeping views of Portland. At the center is a turreted Victorian castle, surrounded by sturdy brick residences, facing each other across a tree-lined central lawn. They were built in stages over 20 years beginning in 1871, and comprise a state historic preservation district.

The developer also faces considerable challenges. The only road into the site is Westbrook Street, which dead-ends into the jetport fence. Although the Youth Center abuts the jetport, there is no way to drive to the terminal without taking a circular route back out to Western Avenue.

The state Department of Corrections has veto power over any project proposed for the site, and the state will continue to own the land in case Long Creek ever needs to expand.

Although no specific project will be proposed at the meeting tonight, Suslovic said a housing project combining market-rate and affordable units seems the most likely plan that could raise enough revenue to support the project and meet the other challenges. The Youth Center property, which is much larger than the fenced-in area visible from the highway, could support as many as 500 units of rental



Staff art

housing under current zoning.

Suslovic said a recent housing survey showed an 1,800-unit deficit in Greater Portland. Financing for the Youth Center project could come from a federal tax credit program, which was used to fund another Berman project, 33-unit Unity Village in Portland's Bayside.

Not everyone on the committee is convinced the property should be turned into apartments. State Rep. Michael Quint, D-Portland, said he



Staff photo by Gordon Chibroski

"It's a chance to take what many people viewed as a real liability and turn it into an asset for the community," says consultant Ed Suslovic, who is working with developer Richard Berman on the South Portland project.

has lobbied for it to be developed with its original purpose in mind.

"It was supposed to be used for rehabilitating youth," he said. "My hope for the whole process is that we can slow it down and see what the

best usage really is."

Quint said he would like to see the old campus become a complex of youth-related services compatible with programs offered at Long Creek. The state has a shortage of

residential drug treatment programs and forensic mental health facilities for children, and judges have few options when confronted with children who need help.

South Portland Rep. Kevin Glynn,

a Republican, said the project could boost the city budget. He said an office park, housing complex, retail center and airport hotel could all be developed at the site.

"This is a tremendously valuable piece of prime real estate, adjacent to the Maine Mall and right off the Maine Turnpike," he said.

One question concerns the 1871 administration building, the "Castle." Glynn said Boston's Old Charlestown Jail was recently converted into a luxury hotel, and a similar renovation could be done here.

Suslovic said renovation is possible, but difficult. The building would need millions of dollars in structural work. It is also less than 200 feet from the Long Creek center, with clear views of the outside exercise area. The state would not approve a use that would risk having inmates recognized by the public.

"Everyone wants to save the castle," Suslovic said. "The question is, how do you come up with a use that would generate enough income to justify spending the money needed to preserve it?"

Suslovic said the committee could decide to protect the building from future deterioration, and develop the rest of the site around it.

Staff Writer Gregory D. Kesich can be contacted at 791-6336 or at: gkesich@pressherald.com

Mun gov

land use
land dev

HALLOWELL Treat wants city's say on complex

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer **KENNEBEC JOURNAL** *Morning Sentinel* 03/24/2009

AUGUSTA -- Hallowell residents and officials will have a say in the sale of Stevens School complex, if a proposal considered Monday by the Legislature is passed.

The bill would require the State Bureau of General Services to consult with and hold a public hearing in Hallowell if the state chooses to sell the 63-acre land parcel to a party other than the city.

"My legislation will make sure there is a public hearing and could be amended to provide for a specific process that more formally involves the city," Rep. Sharon Anglin Treat, D-Hallowell, said Monday.

She filed the legislation, LD 905, Jan. 16.

The "specific process" would include language allowing Hallowell residents to evaluate outside developers' proposals in a "request for quotation," or RFQ, system.

"There are a lot of worries about (Stevens School complex) being sold off in short order and the city not having an input," Treat said after the hearing.

The proposal received public support from Hallowell Mayor Anthony Masciadri and Bureau of General Services Director Chip Gavin.

"As you know, the city informed us in January they chose to stop negotiations, and that door has been left ajar should the interest (in buying the complex) be renewed," Gavin said.

The state was authorized in 2003 to sell the complex. That authority, according to legislation, expires next year.

In 2008, the bureau started sale proceedings, with Hallowell among the interested parties.

On Jan. 12, Hallowell's City Council voted 4-to-3 to stop negotiations for the property.

Under pressure from residents who said the Council's decision to pull out of the deal was premature, city officials put the possibility of re-examining the purchase back on the table.

In the meantime, the state said it would proceed to sell Stevens School to a private party. As of Monday, no negotiations had been entered and no sale was imminent.

No one spoke in opposition to the bill.

A separate bill, LD 1098, has been submitted by Sen. Seth Goodall, D-Richmond, with the intention to sell the Reed Center, which houses School Administrative District 16's officials, for \$1. The Reed Center sits on the Stevens School property.

The Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government said both bills would likely be considered together.

A work session on Treat's legislation will not be held until after Goodall's bill is referred to the committee.

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<http://kennebecjournal.maintoday.com/news/local/6359256.html> Retrieved 6/4/09 p.

Retrieved 6/4/09 p. B1, B5

HALLOWELL: Stevens School bill in works

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer **KENNEBEC JOURNAL** *Flourish Sentinel* 05/20/2009

An amended bill concerning the Stevens School complex in Hallowell now requires state and city officials to form a stakeholders' group if the state decides to sell the 63-acre parcel.

The bill, L.D. 905, also requires the stakeholders group to draft a "request for quotation," or RFQ, which asks bidders for proposals. This group will then select a bidder, and will agree upon a parcel of the land to be set aside for Hallowell and the school district.

The bill also extends a lease the school district has on the Reed Center from the state.

L.D. 905, was drafted by Rep. Sharon Anglin Treat, D-Hallowell.

A separate bill, L.D. 1098, was submitted by Sen. Seth Goodall, D-Richmond, requiring the state to sell the Reed Center to Regional School Unit 2 for \$1.

School Administrative District 16 -- one of the districts being consolidated into RSU 2 -- currently uses the Reed Center at the Stevens School site as the administrative office.

The bills were combined into L.D. 905 and amended, and the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government voted "ought to pass" unanimously last Wednesday to send the bill to the floor.

"I certainly hope it does pass," said Chip Gavin, director of the state's Bureau of General Services. "We are excited to work with the community."

L.D. 905 had originally required the Bureau of General Services to consult with Hallowell, and hold a public hearing in the city, if the state chooses to sell the site to a party other than the city. The amendment, Gavin said, further specified that consultation and establishes the stakeholders' group.

The group would include representatives of the Bureau of General Services, the city of Hallowell, the school district, the state historic commission and other interested individuals.

Dawn Gallagher, a member of the Stevens School Committee and chairman of the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee in Hallowell, said the bill fosters a working relationship between the city and the Bureau of General Services.

"In all likelihood, we hope to see this pass under the hammer, so to speak, and start to put the stakeholders group together," Gallagher said. "We'd like to draft the RFQ by the end of the year or the beginning of 2010."

Treat filed the bill Jan. 16 as an emergency placeholder days after Hallowell's City Council voted 4-3 to stop purchase negotiations with the state.

Gallagher said the bill or stakeholders group does not exclude Hallowell from being a bidder.

Treat was pleased with the amendment.

"I'd say everyone's happy," she said Tuesday. "We were able to get the community, the school and the state on the same page with this, and that's huge."

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2009
real estate

Stevens School bill awaiting final vote

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer **KENNEBEC JOURNAL Morning Sentinel** 06/01/2009

AUGUSTA -- A bill requiring the establishment of a stakeholder's group if the state decides to sell Hallowell's Stevens School Complex needs only to undergo a final vote before being signed into law.

The House of Representatives passed an amended bill, L.D. 905, on Wednesday. The Senate approved it Friday.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Sharon Anglin Treat, D-Hallowell, establishes a stakeholder's group of state and Hallowell officials, Hall-Dale school district administrators and other interested parties. The group would work together to seek and select a bidder.

In addition, the bill guarantees a section of the land will be set aside for Hallowell's use, a parcel of green space must be preserved, and the preservation and rehabilitation of the campus's five buildings must be honored. "I think we feel better about everything being spelled out in black and white," Treat said Sunday.

A separate bill, L.D. 1098, was submitted by Sen. Seth Goodall, D-Richmond, requiring the state to sell the Reed Center to Regional School Unit 2 for \$1. The two bills were combined in the amended version of L.D. 905.

Both state and city officials gave positive reactions for the chance to work together on a potential sale after the State and Local Government Committee voted to send L.D. 905 to the full Legislature.

The bill will undergo a final vote for approval before going to Gov. John Baldacci's desk for his signature, though Treat said Sunday she did not know when lawmakers will vote again.

Meghan V. Malloy -- 623-3811, ext. 431

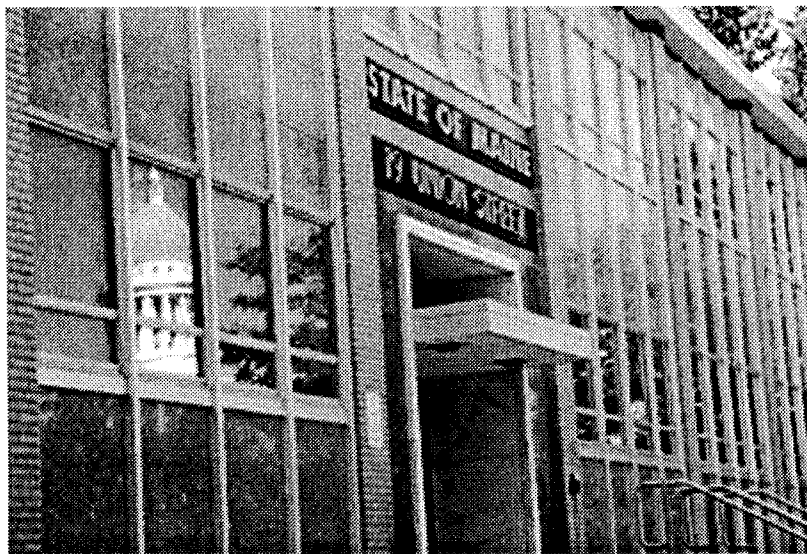
State agencies play musical chairs

Three government bodies will relocate to 19 Union St., former home of the Labor Department

By [Betty Adams badams@centralmaine.com](mailto:badams@centralmaine.com)

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- The former headquarters of the state Department of Labor will be the new home of three state agencies by the end of September.



[click image to enlarge](#)

IN THE SHADOW OF THE CAPITOL: Several state agencies are relocating to the former Department of Labor building in Augusta, which has been outfitted with \$2.5 million in renovations.

Staff photo by Andy Molloy

The juggling of state facilities -- part of a state facilities master plan -- will affect dozens of state employees, the state bureaucracy's footprint in Augusta and Hallowell, and the city of Hallowell's long-standing pursuit of the Stevens School complex.

Employees of the State Planning Office, the state Department of Audit, and the Maine Human Rights Commission -- more than 100 total -- will move into the refurbished former Department of Labor headquarters at 19 Union St., said Chip Gavin, director of the Bureau of General Services.

The building, which was erected in 1960 with an addition constructed in 1970, has undergone a \$2.5 million renovation since the Department of Labor moved out more than a year ago. Gavin said the improvements include strengthening the roof, installing a new heating-and-ventilation system and interior and environmental improvements.

"Some of the work started in 2009 and the core of the work occurred this year," Gavin said.

Gavin said the project cost was a significant savings compared to the \$15 million-to-\$25 million estimate for removing and replacing the building.

"All of this is in the context of implementing the legislatively approved Master Plan for state facilities," Gavin said.

Other State Facilities Master Plan items include reuse of the current State Planning Office at 184 State St. -- the historic 1910 Guy Gannett house near the Blaine House.

"The intention is for it to be the focus of a stakeholder process this fall and the next calendar year," Gavin said. "We're seeking to expedite that house so it can be actively reused."

Two other State Planning Office sites across State Street from the Gannett building will be sold, he said.

Those houses -- at 187 and 189 State St. -- are connected but are actually two properties, according to State Historian Earle Shettleworth.

The state refers to them as the Smith-Merrill House.

The house at 189 State St., which is on the corner of State and Child streets, was built in 1830 by Jacob H. Arnold. The Queen Anne-style turret was added in the 1890s, Shettleworth said.

Next door, the home with the green shutters was built in 1830 by Edward Williams, a merchant who helped lay out nearby Capitol Park, he said.

The Department of Audit will be moving from the Flagg Dummer building to its new offices.

The Maine Human Rights Commission will vacate its current facilities at the state annex in the Stevens School complex on Winthrop Street, Hallowell. The State Facilities Master Plan calls for state agencies to move off the school campus and for the property to be sold.

"The disposal, sale and redevelopment of Stevens School (property) has long been called for in the master plan," Gavin said. "We will be working with the community to see that plan come to fruition. This effort is totally in keeping with that."

The city of Hallowell has made numerous overtures toward the state seeking to obtain the Stevens School property.

Department of Labor offices are now in the Central Maine Commerce Center, Civic Center Drive.

Bill preserves Stevens School interests

By Michael Shepherd mshepherd@mainetoday.com

Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- If the state sells the Stevens School complex, Hallowell's interests would be preserved under emergency legislation, the bill's sponsor said.

L.D. 1584 -- offered by Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell -- would reserve a portion of the land for city uses, preserve city use of open space at the property, and allow Regional School Unit 2 to lease office space on the property until at least 2015.

There was a public hearing for the bill -- essentially a continuation of a similar bill Treat sponsored in 2009 -- on June 9. It was voted "ought to pass" Tuesday by the Committee on State and Local Government.

Councilor Peter Schumacher said open space on the property includes fields and a "good parcel of woods."

Monday night, the City Council briefly discussed an ordinance banning any new roads through the complex.

"The city is really hoping for responsible development of that property," Schumacher said.

Provisions in an earlier legislative resolve allowing RSU 2 to lease office space in the complex were set to expire in September, she said.

"It was just an oversight, so we had to submit separate legislation to keep those provisions," Treat said.

The state has had the 13-building complex off Winthrop Street for sale since 2008.

The campus dates to 1872, when the Maine Industrial School for Girls there served mostly wards of the state. In 1915, the name was changed to the Stevens School for Girls. Five buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Central Maine Pre-Release Center is on the center's grounds -- and has no plans to leave, Treat said.

"It's a challenging property to sell because the pre-release center is there," she said.

Chris Paszyc, property broker for CB Richard Ellis, said the pre-release center has "raised eyebrows" for some potential developers and been "a perceptive problem."

The size of the 63.5-acre property and its many buildings has been a hard sell in a tough economic climate. The property is listed for \$1.1 million.

"The biggest challenge is the size and scope of the undertaking," he said. "You're going to have to have significant capital to carry through the development and redevelop the properties."

He said there are interested parties -- senior housing and office space are being discussed. He said he has been charged to sell the property to a single developer, likely for different uses.

RSU 2 Superintendent Donald Siviski testified in support of the bill last week at a public hearing, saying the Hallowell-based school district has paid for numerous upgrades at its offices on the campus.

Betty Lamoreau, acting director of the Maine Bureau of General Services, which is handling the management and sale of the complex, also testified on Treat's bill.

A separate measure -- L.D. 1552, which passed in the Legislature on June 7 and was signed into law by Gov. Paul LePage on June 10 -- extended the dates to sell property in several Maine cities and towns, including the Stevens School complex.

Now, the state has until September 2016 to complete a sale.

"That extension failed to address certain conditions of sale or transfer included in the current resolve," Lamoreau said in testimony. "LD 1584 simply continues the existing conditions and would have no new impact on our efforts to sell or lease the property."

Treat said the bill has seen "no opposition" and should pass by the end of the week -- presumably the last of the legislative session.

The emergency legislation would become law immediately with LePage's signature.

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Jails

Hallowell Pre-Release Center to close

The facility's 58 inmates and 21 budgeted staff positions are being relocated to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren

By Betty Adams badams@centralmaine.com
Staff Writer

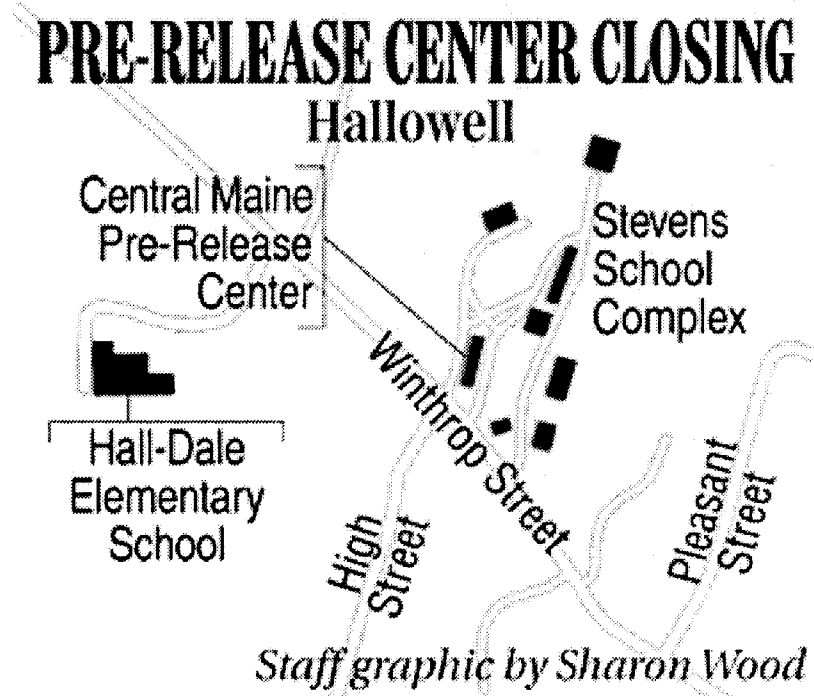
HALLOWELL -- The Central Maine Pre-Release Center, which has operated on the Stevens School Complex since 1979, is closing.



click image to enlarge

The Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell has operated on the Stevens School Complex since 1979 and will be closing.

Staff photo by Joe Phelan



Staff graphic by Sharon Wood

The program, which has 58 inmates and 21 budgeted staff positions, is being relocated to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren, said Jody L. Breton, associate commissioner with the Department of Corrections.

Closing the center will have a direct impact on nonprofit organizations that benefit from the free inmate labor and on local businesses that employ those inmates.

"Right now, it looks like we have six employers that could be impacted," Breton said. "We are committed to these employers and are considering doing transport from Bolduc where it is feasible."

The Windsor and Augusta food banks, for example, have benefited from such labor. Prisoners at the pre-release center form public restitution work crews and participate in work-release programs, according to description of the center on the department's website. They have donated an estimated 22,000 hours of free labor annually.

The center also houses prisoners in a residential substance abuse treatment program.

The loss of free inmate labor would mean less fresh paint and maybe fewer improvements at the Windsor Fairgrounds, where inmate crews have worked annually for at least a dozen years.

Bob Brann, a trustee of the Windsor Fair and president of the Windsor Historical Society, said inmates from the pre-release center "painted everything that's painted down there," and he's never had any trouble with them.

"They move stuff for me, dig trenches by hand," Brann said. "It's the greatest gift for us. I do a barbecue for them because they like it and it's a gift to us. It's a small price."

Brann said he's had five or six men working for up to a month at a time and intermittently throughout the summers. "It would really make a big difference to us if they do move to Warren," he said. "If we're not able to continue to get them, the place will never look as good it does now."

While the labor is donated, Brann offers a token of appreciation if the inmates work a week or so.

Breton said the Hallowell center on Winthrop Street was not designed for adult corrections use. The Maine Industrial School for Girls opened on the site in 1875 as "a refuge for viciously inclined girls between the ages of seven and 15 who by forces of circumstances or associations are in manifest danger of becoming outcasts of society," according to historichallowell.mainememory.net.

It closed as a school for troubled youth in 1970, and became a state office annex before eventually becoming the pre-release center.

"The physical plant has limitations and the Stevens School complex was authorized to be sold in a previous budget initiative," she said.

Breton said department officials met Tuesday with staff at the center to talk about the relocation, which is expected to take place over the next several months. She said the date of the closing hasn't been set.

"This was not part of a budget initiative," Breton said. "We will be transferring the positions and related correctional expenses to other facilities based on operational need."

The Bolduc operation in Warren is a minimum security/community prison that generally houses prisoners with less than five years to go on their sentences.

The Legislature had previously authorized the Bureau of General Services to sell the 63-acre, state-owned Stevens School campus, which at one time included multiple state offices, by 2011. That did not happen.

Donald McCormack, director of the Bureau of General Services, said Thursday the state still owns the property, which continues to house other state offices, including the Department of Marine Resources and human resources and financial offices for natural resources agencies.

Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell, said she wanted to see communication between the community and the state about what is happening there.

"Hopefully something that helps the budget is good land use and good community policy and good correctional policy," she said.

But that communication apparently has yet to occur. Hallowell City Manager Michael Starn said Wednesday he was unaware that the state intended to close the pre-release center.

Published records show that at least several inmates housed at the site have been charged with escape.

The most recent report shows that Justin Ross of East Wilton walked off a work site in Leeds in September.

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Jan 12

Hallowell residents express support for keeping pre-release center in town

Community meeting allowed residents to express concerns about proposed move to Warren facility

By Susan M. Cover scover@mainetoday.com

State House Bureau

HALLOWELL -- Local residents said Wednesday they have benefited from the work provided by the inmates from the Central Maine Pre-Release Center, and they urged their local representative to find a way to keep the program in central Maine.

About 50 people attended a meeting at Hallowell City Hall organized by Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell, who wanted to see what community members had to say about a plan to move the center to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren. Today there are about 58 prisoners and 21 employees at the Hallowell facility.

The Department of Corrections told workers at the pre-release center last month that the state will move the program out of Hallowell. Commissioner Joseph Ponte told lawmakers Monday he hoped to have the move complete by July 1.

On Wednesday, however, residents who represent local communities and nonprofits said they don't want to lose a valuable resource.

"They have given us a countless number of hours," said Dean Lachance, executive director of Bread of Life in Augusta.

Lachance said the inmates painted his 30-bed shelter last year, put new flooring in his veterans homeless shelter and performed work in other housing units around the city. He said the program helps the inmates, too, by giving them skills and introducing them to the community services they might need once they are released.

Jack Walsh, of the Hallowell Food Bank and the Hubbard Free Library, said his agencies often need the manpower to haul food and books.

"We would hate to lose what these guys have done for us," he said.

Those who live in Manchester, Windsor and Litchfield also said they have saved large amounts of tax money through the years because of the program.

The Stevens School complex was first put up for sale in 2008. Initially, the city of Hallowell expressed interest in buying the 63-acre, 13-building complex. It later rescinded a \$600,000 offer, and the property has been listed for sale in recent years for \$1.1 million.

The complex was one of the state properties that was supposed to be sold to balance the state budget, Treat said. It hasn't sold, however, and it isn't being marketed for sale.

"We have heard nothing for two entire years," she said.

Jennifer Smith, director of legislative affairs and communications at the state Department of Administrative and Financial Services, said discussions about moving all state offices off the campus have been going on for the past year. The Department of Marine Resources and other offices also are on the campus.

"There has been an ongoing dialogue between the Bureau of General Services and Corrections for at least a year," she said.

The bureau is putting together a five-to-10-year plan for all state properties in the capital area, as well as in Bangor and Portland. While some state offices may stay on the Stevens campus as anchor tenants, it was never envisioned that the pre-release center would be an appropriate anchor for a private developer, she said.

In an interview Wednesday afternoon, Chris Paszyc, a property broker with CBRE/The Boulos Co., which had the listing at one time, said the presence of the pre-release center on the property made it a tough sell.

"I would say that was the major stumbling block," he said.

At the meeting Wednesday night, some suggested that other state office space in Augusta might be an option. Others said it would be better to stay in Hallowell, where local residents have reported few problems with the inmates.

Jim Durkin, a labor union representative for the employees at the pre-release center, said he was encouraged to see so much support for the program.

"I hope in the coming weeks and months we can build a coalition to put a stop to this and find a better solution," he said.

Treat said she would talk to fellow lawmakers, some of whom expressed concern Monday about the proposed move, to see whether anything can be done.

"It's pretty sudden for us," she said. "It's still pretty new. I don't know whether we can affect the outcome."

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Jan 12

Hallowell pre-release center closing worries local legislators, officials

Limited job opportunities for inmates, loss of help for local organizations expected from July 1 move to Warren

By Susan M. Cover scover@mainetoday.com

State House Bureau

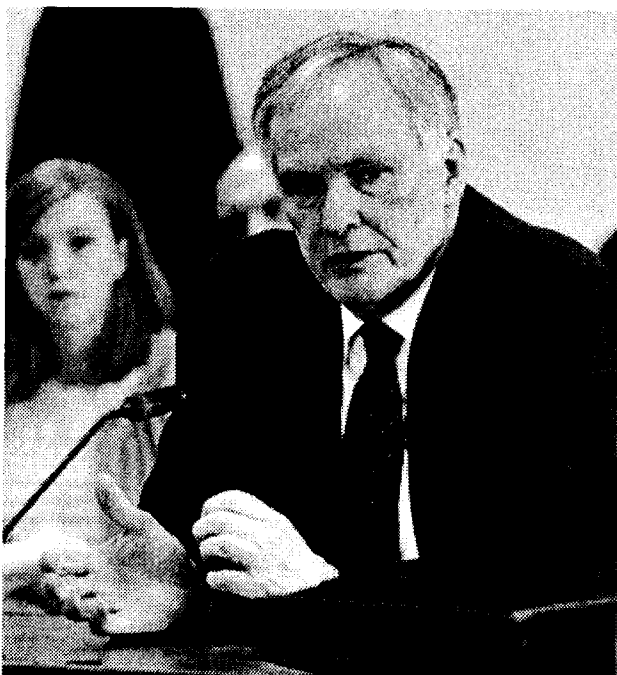
AUGUSTA — Rep. Corey Wilson said he's concerned that the inmates who will be moved from the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell to one in Warren won't have the same kind of job opportunities they have now.



[click image to enlarge](#)

Rep. Corey Wilson, right, listens as corrections Commissioner Joseph Ponte answers his questions about plans to close the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell, during a meeting of the Legislature's Criminal Justice and Public Safety committee on Monday, on the fourth floor of the State House in Augusta.

Staff photo by Joe Phelan



[click image to enlarge](#)

Corrections Commissioner Joseph Ponte talks about plans to close the Central Maine Pre-Release Center in Hallowell during a meeting of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety committee on Monday.

Staff photo by Joe Phelan

Wilson, R-Augusta, asked Department of Corrections Commissioner Joseph Ponte several questions Monday during a meeting with the Legislature's Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

Last month, Ponte told employees at the center that the 58 inmates — many of whom hold full-time jobs in the Hallowell area while they are finishing the last 12 months of their sentences — will be moved to the Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren.

“How are we going to find these people work if we move them to Bolduc?” Wilson asked. “We may be moving them away from what is important to curb the recidivism rates.”

Ponte said the goal is to close the Hallowell center no later than July 1. He said the department ordered the move because the state Bureau of General Services is trying to sell the 63-acre campus.

He said the Winthrop Street center, in the former Stevens School, which opened in 1975, is in tough shape, with asbestos, lead paint and heating problems.

The department will continue to take inmates to jobs in central Maine until they are released from the program, while new enrollees will be placed in jobs in the Warren area, he said.

“I believe we can do just as good of a job in Bolduc that we did in Hallowell,” he said.

Hallowell officials and Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell, said they were surprised by Ponte's decision to close the center. Treat is hosting a community meeting at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Hallowell City Hall to hear from residents about the state's decision.

Sen. Gary Plummer, R-Windham, said there's been talk of closing the Hallowell center for years. He asked Jim Mackie, the union representative for center employees, why it came as a surprise.

“How many times do you cry wolf?” Mackie said. “We were surprised to get the call that quickly that now it was going to happen. Why has it now been so immediate that we have to get out of there?”

Dave Gott, a correctional officer who works at the Hallowell center, said while he agrees the program needs to be moved out of the aging buildings in Hallowell, he thinks the job prospects for inmates will be limited in Warren.

“I don't see enough industry down there to give them jobs,” he said. “There are opportunities up here in Augusta to keep more people working than there is on the coast of Maine.”

Gott said the move has the staff at the center worried about picking up a commute to the new facility in Warren or the possibility of being transferred to other jobs in Windham.

“I'm sure my blood pressure is up 10 points,” he said. “For some people, it's affecting their personal lives.”

About three-quarters of the inmates in the program work off site, while the others participate in supervised community service projects. A large group of the Hallowell inmates work at the Alford Center for Health, the regional hospital under construction in north Augusta, Ponte said.

Rep. Tim Marks, D-Pittston, said his town has benefited from the community service provided by the inmates, including work at the town office, fire department and fairgrounds.

“I’m concerned when the prisoners go, so does some of our help,” he said.

Sen. Stan Gerzofsky, D-Brunswick, asked Ponte if the department looked at other sites in central Maine, including the former Augusta Mental Health Institute campus or other places in Hallowell.

“How much effort did we really put in trying to keep this here?” he asked.

Ponte said the department did look at some of the state-owned buildings on Augusta’s east side, but that they would have required millions of dollars in renovations. He also said the department got the impression that a pre-release facility might not be welcomed in Augusta.

While Ponte said he wasn’t sure who his staff spoke with, Augusta City Manager William Bridgeo said he remembers having a conversation with the department in late summer or early fall.

Bridgeo said he told the state officials they would need to pitch the idea to the City Council, and told them that he thought there would be some concern about bringing a facility to the city. For instance, he said the city would want to know if it would mean taking another building off the property tax rolls, if inmates released from the program were likely to end up on General Assistance, and whether it would mean convicted felons would be concentrated in Augusta.

“Augusta is already home to a huge number of social service agencies and forensic group homes and other institutions that require local resources to support,” he said.

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3/2/13
buildings

http://www.kjonline.com/news/Augusta-Arsenal-Hallowell-Stevens-School-added-to-endangered-properties-list.html

Kennebec Journal 8/30/2013 p.A1, A4 retrieved 9/3/2013

Augusta Arsenal, Hallowell Stevens School added to endangered properties list

By Keith Edwards kedwards@centralmaine.com

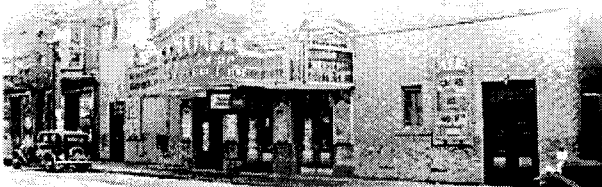
Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — The Kennebec Arsenal in Augusta and Stevens School in Hallowell are among the state's most endangered historic properties according to preservation advocates.

ON THE LIST

Since 1986, Maine Preservation, a Yarmouth-based nonprofit, has released the Most Endangered Historic Resources List to draw attention to threatened places. Below is a list of area buildings, the year they were placed on the list and the current status as of 2012. "In motion" means positive efforts are being made to rescue the resource.

Augusta	Bond Street Neighborhood	2001	Saved
Augusta	Colonial Theater	2011	Threatened
Augusta	Kennebec County YMCA	2006	Demolished
China	China Masonic Hall	1999	Demolished
Fairfield	The Gerald Hotel	2007	In motion
Hallowell	81 Winthrop St. (Jacob Abbott House)	2000	Burned
Hallowell	Governor Bodwell House	2000	Gated/In motion
New Sharon	New Sharon Iron Bridge #2608	1998	Threatened
Norridgewock	Norridgewock Bridge	2000	Demolished
Richmond	Hathorn Block	1997	Threatened
Richmond	Richmond Hotel	1997	Saved
Richmond	Swan Island	2001	In motion
Skowhegan	Abrer Coburn House	1998	Threatened
Union	Matthews Mill	2005	Threatened
Waterville	Hains Building	2002	Saved



click image to enlarge



click image to enlarge

The Niemann Capital sign, next to the north gate of the Kennebec Arsenal, is seen half fallen over in this 2011 file photo.

Staff photo by Joe Phelan

The properties are among 12 added to Maine Preservation's Maine's Most Endangered Historic Properties List, which was announced Thursday.

"These are very well built, solid buildings. There is no reason they could not be repurposed and used," said Greg Paxton, executive director of Maine Preservation, a statewide nonprofit organization that advocates for preservation of historic buildings and places. "Oftentimes these buildings are a deterrent to development where they are located, because in many cases they are

in need of repair. If they are rehabilitated, they'll serve the exact opposite role — they will be catalysts for economic development. And they are really important beacons of our history.”

The Arsenal was built between 1828 and 1838. In 2000, it was designated a National Historic Landmark, one of 43 in Maine. North Carolina developer Tom Niemann, who planned to redevelop it into new uses including office, retail and dining space, bought it from the state in 2007.

However, the state has filed a still-unresolved lawsuit alleging Niemann has failed to prevent vandalism, theft and deterioration at the riverside collection of buildings. The lawsuit, which has not yet been taken up by the courts, seeks to either have the property returned to the state, or have a \$1 million bond and assurances from Niemann he will protect, preserve and develop the property.

The Arsenal is considered by some preservationists to be one of the best and earliest surviving examples of 19th century munitions depots in the country.

“It’s not just a mound of bricks. It’s a great set of buildings on a campus, so I think there is some real potential” for redevelopment, Paxton said.

Maine Preservation noted the theft of historically significant features, including copper piping, cast iron balusters and bronze handrails, has occurred at the Arsenal since the sale to Niemann.

Niemann said he’s hopeful being named to the list could open up additional potential resources to help preserve and restore the complex of eight Greek and Gothic revival granite buildings.

Work on the Arsenal over the last year has included a new roof on the small gatehouse building and electricity has been restored to part of the complex, enabling security cameras to function.

Niemann said he and state officials will get together in October to see if they can work out their differences.

“We’re staying the course, preserving the property, and talking to some interested parties, but we’re into litigation with the state, which has slowed us down a little bit,” Niemann said Thursday. “I’m still optimistic about the potential the site has.”

The state-owned Stevens School complex is for sale, with the state seeking a buyer to redevelop and preserve the multiple buildings on 63.5 acres, which still houses office space and previously housed the Central Maine Pre-Release Center until it moved earlier this year.

Stevens School was originally founded in the 1870s as a school for wayward girls. It has several Colonial revival-style buildings, which over the years have been used as state office space. However, many of them are now empty.

City officials and others have expressed concern the historic property will fall into disrepair because of its underutilization, according to Maine Preservation.

“Any building not being used becomes more endangered, simply because no one is there monitoring it,” Paxton said. “There does not appear to be a long-term plan for the complex. And it’s a large complex to simply put on the market.”

Officials at the state Bureau of General Services, which oversees state property, could not be reached for comment Thursday.

Maine’s Most Endangered Historic Properties List started in 1996 as a way to identify and raise public awareness of endangered historic properties and materials, according to a news release from Maine Preservation.

Earle Shettleworth, state historian, said he believes being publicly identified as “most endangered” on the list has likely helped save some historic buildings in Maine.

“In some cases buildings have been lost, in some cases there’s no change, but in a number of cases buildings’ situations do improve,” Shettleworth said. “I think (the list) is an effective tool and valuable.”

A Maine Preservation database of properties on the list from 1996 to 2012 says 41 properties have been saved, 19 were “in motion,” meaning positive efforts are being made to rescue the property, and 18 remain threatened. Some 15 have been demolished, including the Masonic Hall in China, which went on the list in 1999.

The Gerald Hotel, under renovation in Fairfield, went on the list in 2007 and is “in motion,” but several Waterville-area buildings on the list are considered threatened, including the Hains building in Waterville, which went on the list last year, and the Abner Coburn House in Skowhegan and the New Sharon Iron Bridge, which have both been on the list since 1998.

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Augusta's Marquardt Building gets new life as state offices

The \$4.3 million project to renovate the building is part of a larger state plan to reuse some of the state-owned buildings on the former grounds of Augusta Mental Health Institute.

BY KEITH EDWARDS STAFF WRITER

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The Marquardt Building on Augusta's east side was rededicated Monday after the Department of Marine Resources relocated to newly renovated office space inside. **Staff photo by Andy Molloy**

AUGUSTA — More than five decades after it was built to house 160 female psychiatric patients and after sitting largely vacant since its interior was gutted in 2000, the Marquardt Building on the state's east side campus has a new life as offices for 220 state workers in three departments.

The \$4.3 million project to renovate the building is part of a larger state plan to reuse some of the state-owned buildings on the former grounds of Augusta Mental Health Institute.

“The future of this campus, and the approach the state is interested in taking, is making this entire campus a modern, vital, active site for state employees to conduct their work, part of the long-term vision,” said Department of Administrative and Financial Services Commissioner Richard Rosen at Monday's building dedication.

But the state's vision for increased use of vacant or underused state-owned buildings on the east side campus is also a plan that has city officials and owners of some prominent local buildings now leased to the state worried about the loss of lease and property tax revenue.

The city of Augusta commissioned a study of the costs of the state owning versus leasing space. City officials anticipate the study will show it isn't just better for Augusta that the state continue leasing office space locally instead of moving into state-owned space, but it's also better for the state and city budgets.

City Manager William Bridgeo said the study by Augusta consultant Lock Kiemaier updated a previous one done a few years ago for Kevin Mattson, partner in the Central Maine Commerce Center in Augusta.

The updated study indicates the state's cost at the Cross State Office Building is \$9.60 per square foot when all costs are considered compared with \$8.05 per square foot at the privately owned Central Maine Commerce Center.

City officials said the state's long-range facilities plan to move some workers from leased space in Augusta to state-owned buildings could hurt the city of Augusta because the owners of buildings where the state leases space now pay property taxes, but the state is exempt and thus does not pay the city property taxes on property it owns.

If those privately owned commercial buildings now leased by the state in Augusta were to become vacant, their taxable value would drop. Bridgeo has said the plan could cost the city more than \$1 million a year in lost property tax revenue.

Local buildings that could eventually be vacated by the state when leases expire include Key Plaza at 286 Water St., the Central Maine Commerce Center off Civic Center Drive, and multiple buildings occupied by the Department of Health and Human Services on Anthony Avenue in north Augusta.

Rosen has said the state's long-term plan to move more state workers into state-owned buildings on the east side campus and potentially a proposed new consolidated DHHS building could save \$46.5 million over 35 years compared with the cost of leasing the space where state workers are now, according to a state analysis.

The long-term plan would use \$112 million from a state bond included as part of Gov. Paul LePage's proposed state budget to fund renovations for state workers. The proposed budget is currently under consideration by the state Legislature.

Sen. Roger Katz, R-Augusta, a member of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee, said a proposed budget change package under consideration by the committee this week would make changes to the state bonding proposal. While declining to reveal specifics, he said the issue could be resolved later this week.

"I'm optimistic it's going to be resolved in a way that is acceptable to the city of Augusta," Katz said. "Hopefully we'll get this done."

Katz noted, however, that even if the proposed change to that part of the budget is approved by the committee, it would still have to be approved by the entire Legislature as part of the overall budget.

REUSED AND PRESERVED

The \$4.3 million in renovations at the Marquardt Building was funded in 2013. Construction started last June and it was substantially complete in February.

About 220 workers from the Department of Marine Resources, Natural Resource Service Center, and Bureau of Motor Vehicles moved in this April.

State officials said renovating the building, which Edward Dahl, director of the state Bureau of General Services, said was largely vacant since 2000, cost about one-third what it would cost to build a new building.

Rosen and Dahl also noted modular cubicle walls and desks were taken from the Department of Health and Human Services' former office building on Marginal Way in Portland for use in the building, saving about \$500,000 compared with the cost of buying new ones.

Earle Shettleworth Jr., state historian, said the renovation allows the building to be reused and preserved.

“As with earlier rehabilitations of the Elkins, Tyson, Harlow and Ray buildings, the Marquardt Building can be seen as part of a state and national trend to creatively reuse commercial, industrial, educational and institutional facilities,” Shettleworth said. “This represents a winning combination of practicality, fiscal responsibility, sustainability and historic preservation.”

The building was completed in 1959. The Augusta firm Bunker and Savage were the architects.

The brick and concrete building was named for then assistant superintendent Matthias Marquardt, who had worked at the state hospital since 1928.

“To the staff of the Natural Resource Service Center and Department of Marine Resources, I say welcome home, and I hope you take as much pride in occupying this building as the Bureau of General Services feels having completed this project,” Rosen said. “In the name of Dr. Marquardt, we rededicate this building, and ourselves, to uphold his sense of service to his fellow Mainers.”

‘A TREMENDOUS SPACE’

The Natural Resource Service Center, which is on the second floor, is a division of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, which handles accounting, human resources and payroll for the state departments of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Environmental Protection, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Marine Resources.

The approximately 115 Bureau of Motor Vehicles employees there, who are on the third floor, will only be in the building temporarily.

A new roof is being put on that bureau's headquarters across Hospital Street so workers who normally work on the top floor of that building were moved out of the building and into Marquardt to make way for the construction. They are expected to move back when the roof is done, likely in August.

Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap joked that Bureau of Motor Vehicles workers like their renovated space in the building so much they may not want to move back out when work on their roof is done.

Dahl said moving the Bureau of Motor Vehicle workers into the building saved the state about \$250,000 compared with the cost of leasing temporary space. He said once those workers move out, workers from other state departments whose buildings may undergo renovations could also be moved in to use the space.

Patrick Keliher, commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources, said the new space replaces the department's dated former home at the Stevens School complex in Hallowell, a facility which, he said, has outlived its usefulness.

"It's tremendous space, comfortable space to work in," said Keliher, whose office has sweeping views across the Kennebec River of the State House and Howard Hill. "For the last 10 years, we kept hearing every year 'you're going to move next year.' It finally came true and we're incredibly pleased with the project."

The renovations for Marine Resources included the creation of lab space, where workers can test fish and other aquatic life, interview rooms for the Maine Marine Patrol and a licensing office on the north end of the building with its own public entrance.

David Nazaroff, president of Rockport-based The Penobscot Company, the general contractor for the job, said 39 different companies employed 264 workers on the project.

He said an industry formula used to calculate the impact of construction projects indicates the project "supported" a total of 792 jobs, if both direct and indirect jobs, such as those working for construction materials suppliers, are included.

"It's simple. When the building industry is working, Maine is moving," Nazaroff said.

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Maine to keep 10 acres of open space at Stevens School complex

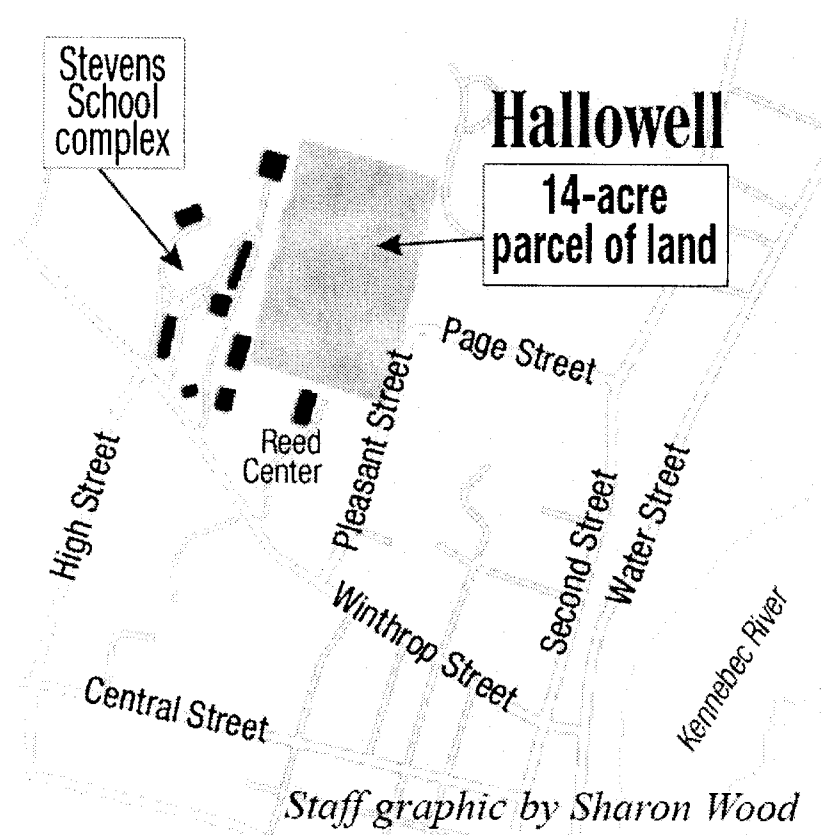
The agreement between the state and local school district could spur future development at the Hallowell campus, but it goes against the wishes of city councilors and neighbors.

BY MICHAEL SHEPHERD STAFF WRITER

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HALLOWELL — The state of Maine will keep 10 acres at the Stevens School complex instead of giving it to the local school district, a move that could spur development but goes against the wishes of city councilors and neighbors.

It's the latest flashpoint in a debate about a parcel of open space abutting Pleasant Street that is wrapped up in the state's latest effort to sell the largely vacant 64-acre campus off Winthrop Street, where Regional School Unit 2 leases its headquarters.



The district has long been discussing a land transfer with the state for the 8 acres on which its office stands and 14 acres of open space behind it. But the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services and RSU 2 have agreed to keep 10 acres of the open portion in the state's hands, with department spokesman David Heidrich saying the move "may better fit with our plans" for marketing the rest of the campus, which he said "are undetermined at present."

In February, Hallowell city councilors stood by an earlier endorsement of transferring all of that land to the district. That vote came after residents of Page and Pleasant streets expressed concern that development on the parcel could

change their neighborhood. Sharon Treat, a former Democratic legislator from Pleasant Street, said water running downhill from the parcel already affects homes on the street, a problem that could worsen if land is paved.

“We’re just kind of sitting ducks here in the neighborhood,” she said. “It seems like we don’t have a lot of say over it.”

Under the deal’s current calculus, the school district would get a total of 12 acres. An appraisal of the agreed-upon parcel of land is set for this week, and both Heidrich and RSU 2 board chairwoman Dawn Gallagher, of Hallowell, said a final agreement might be reached by the end of summer. The district has been passive on whether it would take the full 14 acres. Gallagher said the school district — which consists of Hallowell, Farmingdale, Richmond, Dresden and Monmouth — was willing to take the land if the community wanted to keep it public, but “it doesn’t really matter to us” as long as RSU 2 gets its office and a suitable land buffer.

Councilor Alan Stearns, who lives on Pleasant Street, said the state’s move to keep 10 acres calls into question its willingness to collaborate with Hallowell and Mayor Mark Walker’s “ability to shape the state’s approach to this parcel.” But Heidrich said Hallowell “remains a valued stakeholder and will continue to be involved in the property’s disposition to the greatest extent practical.”

Walker, who has been working with state officials on a sale plan, said there will be “plenty of opportunities” for the city to oversee development on the land, and he said stormwater improvements should be included in any developer’s plans for the property, which the city would have to review.

“I don’t think they’re working against our interests at all,” the mayor said of the state.

The RSU deal is one part of the state’s plan to shed the complex, which it tried to sell to no avail in 2008. The last state offices at the complex haven’t left yet, and the property isn’t yet on the market.

Still, the local concerns have been an early hurdle. Stearns said the city has “acted as if this is a municipal discussion, when in fact the state has a very big role in what happens to the Stevens School,” adding that he’s “not convinced that the state is working with the mayor and the process the mayor has described to the city.”

However, Walker said some city and state interests are the same and that getting the property into the hands of a developer and on the city’s tax rolls should be a main goal.

“That’s not in the city of Hallowell’s interest, to let that complex sit there undeveloped,” he said. “We need to find somebody to take that over.”

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Campbell Barn in Augusta gets new lease on life

The 1904 barn was used to house 200 animals during the era of the Maine Insane Hospital, but now it's been re-purposed for use by the Department of Marine Resources and other state agencies.

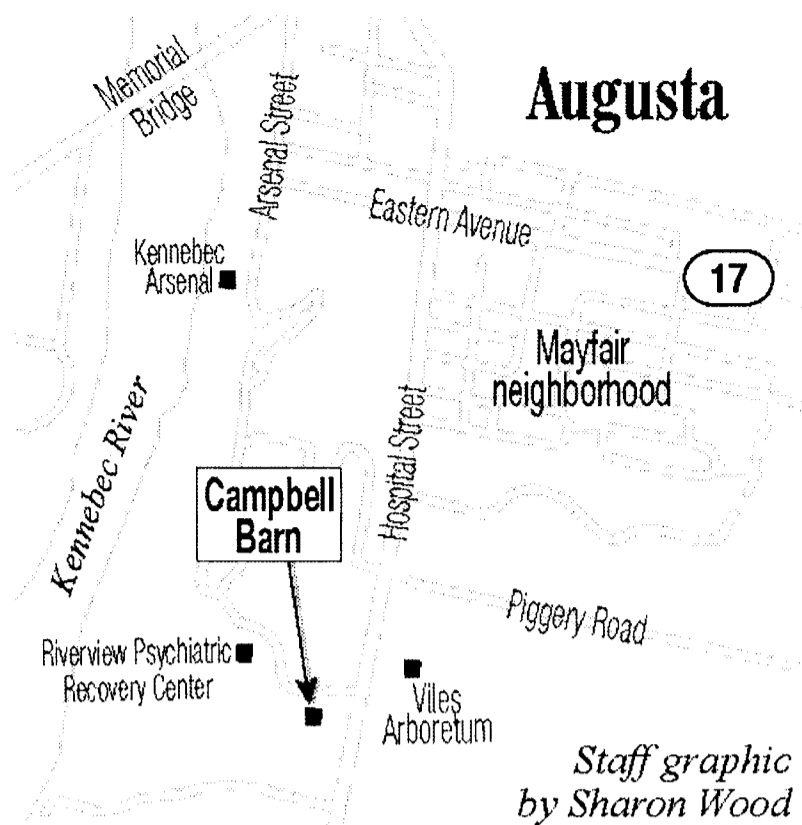
BY BETTY ADAMS STAFF WRITER
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Posted September 21
Updated September 22



State officials gather Monday outside of the Campbell Barn in Augusta during a dedication ceremony for the renovated structure at the state complex on the city's east side. *Staff photo by Andy Molloy*



Walter E. Whitcomb, commissioner of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, inspects the interior of the Campbell Barn in Augusta Monday during a dedication ceremony for the renovated structure at the state complex on the city's east side. *Staff photo by Andy Molloy*



AUGUSTA — The interior of the Campbell Barn, completed in 1904 on the state’s east side campus, is pristine. No smell of hay or manure. No animals neighing or mooing.

Heavy doors roll silently on overhead rails.

The concrete floors are newly poured. The wooden areas are pieced in precisely and new piping for fire alarm and sprinkler systems peek from the ceiling.

Only the top story with its wide plank floors and expansive hay-drying rack resembles a working barn.

The white clapboards gleam on the outside of the three-story historic barn that sits just off Hospital Street and close to Riverview Psychiatric Center.

Rather than housing 200 animals such as those used on the 400-acre Maine Insane Hospital’s farm, the recently renovated barn is earmarked to hold other workhorses, including the “ready boat” used by the Department of Marine Resources.

“It will give us very good access for anything that happens here on the Kennebec (River),” said Major Rene Cloutier. The Marine Patrol also uses the craft for striped bass enforcement checks.

In fact, the 158-foot-by-50-foot barn will be used for storage by three other state agencies as well: the Bureau of General Services/Surplus Property, Maine Parks & Lands and the Maine Conservation Corps.

Edward A. Dahl, director of the Bureau of General Services, welcomed representatives of all those agencies at a building re-dedication ceremony Monday to mark the completion of the \$460,000-plus restoration project.

Dahl told the three dozen attendees that the barn's deterioration had reached a structural tipping point, and it was decided to renovate it rather than remove it partly because the various agencies needed storage as a result of the closing of the state-owned Stevens School complex across the river in Hallowell.

"The reactivation of the barn cost a fraction of what new construction would have cost," he said.

But the work, which began in the spring of 2014, wasn't light. Some 200 tons of concrete had to be removed from the second floor.

Then the Maine State Prison Industries Program rebuilt the wide wooden doors that lead to the second floor levels, reinstalling glass panes removed from the old doors.

And a colony of bees had to be relocated.

The building now has a full security system as well.

"Saving the barn has many aspects to it," said Walter Whitcomb, commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. He recalled the loss to fire of a similar barn at the University of Maine and praised the effort to save the barn in Augusta and re-purpose it to make it more functional. He also said his great-uncle worked there keeping the cattle.

State Historian Earle Shettleworth offered a historical perspective on the building and grounds, noting that hospital patients worked on the farm, a form of therapy since so many of them came from rural areas and were familiar with farming.

Records show banner years for crops, he said, including one year that produced 92 bushels of strawberries and 60 bushels of onions.

"As Mainers, barns speak to us," said Richard Rosen, commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. "It's an important connection to the past, a connection to the present and a bridge to the future."

He told the new users, "We wish you happy occupancy."

After the re-dedication ceremony, Dahl led a group on a tour of the building. Prior to the renovation, he said, "It was filled with junk."

He pointed to the new beams and outlined where two troughs for manure had run along the length of the ground floor.

“This is such a great old structure,” said state Rep. Donna Doore, D-Augusta, who took the tour. “I’m glad we still have it.”

According to the application form filed with the National Register of Historic Places, “The Campbell Barn replaced the barn that was acquired with the Farm Managers House in 1890. The Campbell Barn is a horse barn erected in 1903, the last of a series of farm buildings designed for the hospital by Coombs & Gibbs. The timber frame barn is traditional construction with a brick foundation partially above grade. The superstructure has clapboard siding and a slate roof with a brick chimney and three metal ventilators. The front of the barn faces east and has two small horse doors and a large hay door with transom lights interspersed with windows for the horse stalls. At the north end of the barn is the tack room with a door flanked by windows. Double doors in the south gable end were probably part of the conveyor device for manure removal.”

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Kennebec Land Trust celebrates acquisition of Augusta's Howard Hill

The group plans to donate the land to the city with a conservation easement after paying off a bank loan it took out to buy the property.

BY KEITH EDWARDS STAFF WRITER
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AUGUSTA — Howard Hill, 164 acres that provide a wooded, undeveloped backdrop to the State House tucked between otherwise largely developed areas of Augusta and Hallowell, now belongs to the Kennebec Land Trust.

Land trust officials closed on the property last week and plan, eventually, to give it to the city of Augusta to be preserved, they hope, forever.

They did so without \$337,500 in voter-approved Land for Maine's Future funds awarded to assist in the purchase but held up by Gov. Paul LePage's refusal to issue \$6.5 million in bonds approved by voters in 2010 and \$5 million approved in 2012. Those bonds include money the Land for Maine's Future program has approved for 30 conservation projects, including the \$337,500 Kennebec Land Trust officials were counting on to help fund the \$1.2 million Howard Hill project.

To replace that held-up state money and still meet its deadline to close on the Howard Hill property, the land trust took out a loan from Kennebec Savings Bank. Land trust board members said they hope and expect the Land For Maine's Future program will resume awarding money after the Legislature reconvenes in January 2016, and the trust finally will be awarded the money it then can use to repay the loan.

At a celebration of its 25th-anniversary capital campaign Thursday, land trust leaders announced \$961,000 has been pledged toward the \$1.2 million fundraising goal for the Howard Hill project with \$438,000 of that received already. However, that \$961,000 "pledged" includes the \$337,500 that LePage refuses to release.

"The biggest hole in our budget is the big number Land for Maine's Future awarded us, but which we have not received," said Howard Lake, a member of the land trust's board of directors. "We really hope there can be a resolution for this and other projects also funded by the bonds the governor has refused to issue."

LePage has acknowledged he held back the Land for Maine's Future money to try to gain support for a proposal to increase timber harvesting on state-owned land to help pay for home energy-efficiency programs. He has also asked the Office of Policy and Management to review Land for Maine's Future, and his three appointees to the Land for Maine's Future board have been absent from its last two meetings, leaving the board without a quorum.

The land trust acquired Howard Hill on Oct. 7, paying \$925,000 for the property, according to Theresa Kerchner, executive director of the Kennebec Land Trust.

The land is made up of three parcels previously owned by Sumner Lipman and two corporations run by him and valued at about \$171,000 for tax purposes, according to city assessment records.

The scenic, undeveloped property accessible from a number of informal access points in Augusta could provide and protect recreational opportunities, scenic views and wildlife habitat a short walk from the urban areas of both Augusta and Hallowell. It also provides an unspoiled backdrop of trees behind the State House.

City Manager William Bridgeo praised the land trust for saving the property, which he said he had feared would be developed. He described driving into Augusta, seeing the spectacular backdrop of forest of Howard Hill above the State House as he neared the city and how he "felt, with despair, that backdrop was going to go away."

Mary Denison, president of the Kennebec Land Trust, said the group already was planning a major capital campaign as part of its 25th anniversary to increase the number of acres it can help preserve, establish endowment and conservation funds, and increase membership, when the opportunity came along to acquire and preserve Howard Hill. So the group ended up conducting two major fundraising campaigns at once.

"Everyone stepped up, especially in the face of the tragic news about Land for Maine's Future," she said, praising donors and fundraisers.

The public can use the property now, at its own risk, though there are no maintained trails there, trust officials said.

The property is spread between a point just south of Capitol Street to the Hallowell line at the former Stevens School complex off Winthrop Street. Informal hiking trails extend from the Stevens School site into and through Howard Hill. There are other unofficial access points off Sewall Street and Ganneston Drive.

Public meetings are planned this winter to seek community input on the long-term development of a management plan for Howard Hill, which officials anticipate eventually will include development of parking areas and trails.

The land trust plans to give the land to the city with a conservation easement attached requiring it to remain undeveloped. Its future use, trust officials said, could include outdoor recreation, timber harvesting and the protection of scenic views, water quality and wildlife habitat. It could remain open to hunting, though that will be decided by the city as the future landowner.

However, the city won't get the land until the land trust pays off the loan it took out for the purchase, because it can't give away land that hasn't been fully paid off.

Trust officials also plan to raise \$100,000 to give to the city as an endowment to help care for the property.

Andrew Silsby, president of Kennebec Savings Bank, which made the loan to the land trust, said Thursday's event was special for him because his father, David Silsby, was there at the celebration at the Viles Homestead in Augusta, and his father had fought for years to get the state to preserve the land.

Newspaper clips indicate the state sought to acquire the land in 1969 but didn't go through with the proposed purchase of 190 acres for about \$500,000.

The announcement the nonprofit land trust had closed on Howard Hill came at a celebration of the trust's 25th anniversary and its fundraising campaign tied to the anniversary.

To date, the Conservation Across Generations 25th Anniversary Capital Campaign has generated \$910,000 in pledges, \$631,000 of it received, toward the \$1 million goal for a conservation fund; \$961,000 in pledges, \$438,000 of it received, toward the \$1.2 million goal for Howard Hill; \$360,000 in pledges, \$53,000 of it received, toward a 10-year goal of \$1 million for an endowment; \$322,000 in pledges, all of it received, toward a \$500,000 two-year goal for a gifted lands program; and a campaign total of \$2.55 million in pledges, \$1.44 million of it received, toward the goal of \$3.7 million.

The trust still is raising money for the Howard Hill project. Kerchner said a donor has committed \$150,000 as a challenge grant to match other gifts dollar for dollar. Those wishing to make a donation for the Howard Hill project or other Kennebec Land Trust conservation projects may contact its office at 377-2848; mail to P.O. Box 261, Winthrop ME 04364; or make contact online at www.tkl.org.

Framed photographs of Howard Hill were given to the city, Kennebec Savings Bank and Kennebec Land Trust board members Thursday for their contributions to the Howard Hill project.

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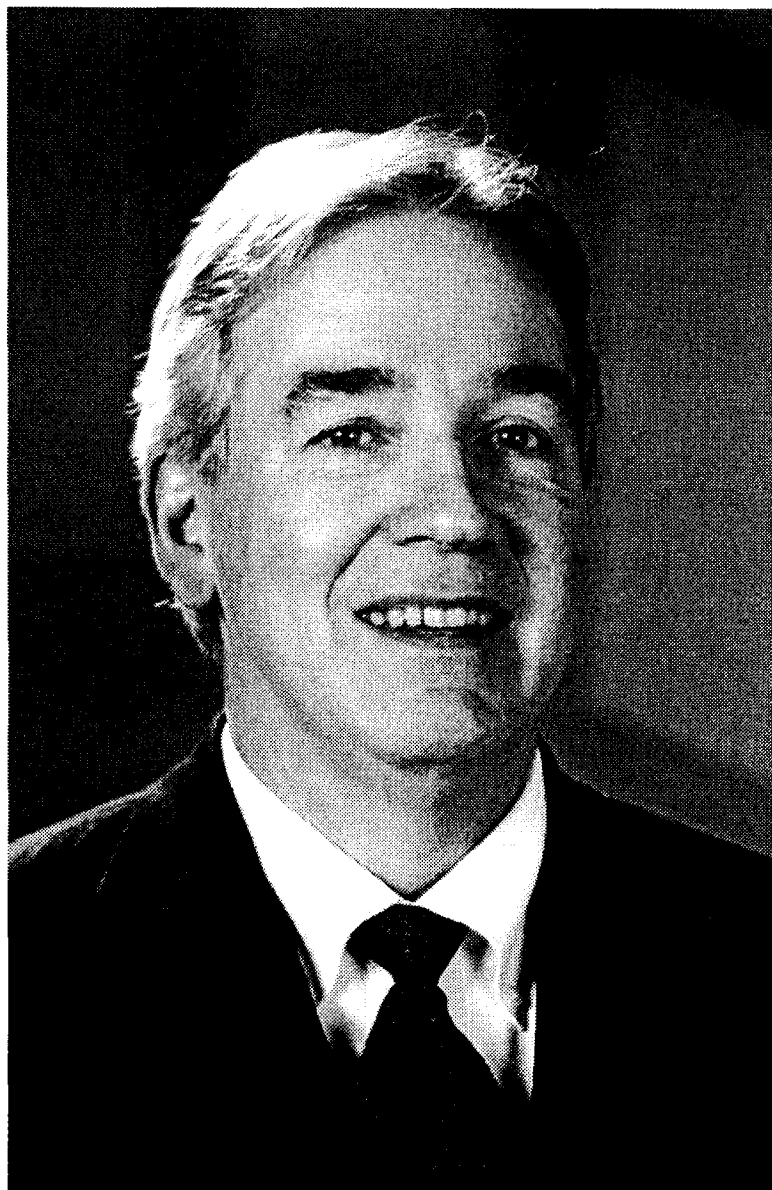
Candidates speak to voters during Hallowell forum

The three people vying for Senate District 14 and six running for local Hallowell office addressed a crowd of about 30 Monday night.

BY JASON PAFUNDI KENNEBEC JOURNAL
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HALLOWELL — Veteran councilor Phil Lindley talked about his experience and his opponent Kara Walker touted her fresh perspective to about 30 people during a candidates forum in the City Hall Auditorium Monday night.

Lindley, 66, is the executive director of the ConnectME Authority and has been a councilor for 15 years. Walker, 40, the director of the Central Maine Regional Resource Center in Lewiston, has never been elected to public office and said it was time for new ideas on the council.



Phil Lindley



Kara Walker

Hallowell Mayor Mark Walker moderated the forum. Topics included the Water Street reconstruction, the increase in property taxes and the future of the city's fire protection services. The Stevens Commons project is in the master plan review process, so the City Council said it could not be discussed at the forum.

"I want to help Hallowell grow by making sure all citizens are involved in the conversation about Hallowell's future," said Walker, who made sure to tell everyone in attendance that she is not related to the mayor. "I love Hallowell, and I want to make sure the city maintains its unique character as it faces many challenges."

Lindley said the fire services and Stevens Commons issues have been around for as long as he's been on the council, and he hopes there is a resolution soon.

"I think my 15 years of experience will be critical as we move forward," Lindley said.

Two people very familiar to Hallowell are running unopposed for two other council seats. Former councilor Lynn Irish, who represented Ward 2 from 2014 to 2016, is running to fill the at-large seat being vacated by Alan Stearns. Stearns was elected to the council in 2012 and was often viewed as an outspoken opposition voice.

Former code enforcement officer Maureen Aucoin-Giroux is running to represent the northern Ward 1. Councilor Kate Dufour, a lobbyist for the Maine Municipal Association, said work commitments would have made continuing to serve on the council difficult.

Irish is a downtown Hallowell resident and business owner and said by taking a year off from the council, she's been able to reassess how to better focus on the issues without getting distracted.

"I have an understanding of the constraints of budgets and differences of opinion about how and where the city should be moving forward," Irish said last week. She said she wants to be involved in the conversations about the Water Street reconstruction and the redevelopment of Stevens School, and she's "ready to dive right back in."

Aucoin-Giroux was the city's code enforcement officer for about six years, and in March, she was named the interim city manager after the unexpected death of Stefan Pakulski. Aucoin-Giroux was a finalist for the permanent city manager position that ultimately went to Nate Rudy. She has since been hired as an inspector for the Maine Housing Authority.

"I have quite a history with the city, and with all the various hats I've worn, I'm quite familiar with all the issues the city is facing," Aucoin-Giroux said. "There are a lot of decisions to be made, and they are tough decisions. But I think it's going to be a great council, and I'm looking forward to the challenges ahead."

Aucoin-Giroux vaguely spoke about the big issues surrounding the Stevens Commons redevelopment and said it should be a collaborative effort.

Longtime councilor Lisa Harvey-McPherson is running unopposed to continue representing Ward 5, which is on the west side of the Maine Turnpike. Harvey-McPherson was first elected to the council in November 2010, and she echoed the other candidates' views about the challenges facing Hallowell.

There will be two new councilors and one fairly new councilor when the calendar turns to January. In addition to Irish and Aucoin-Giroux, Michael Frett was named to fill the Ward 2 council seat vacated when Sophie Gabrion resigned in September less than a year into her term. Frett will complete Gabrion's term, which runs through December 2017.

The three candidates vying for the Senate District 14 seat gave brief remarks and answered a question about the city budget at the beginning of the forum. Democrat Shenna Bellows, Republican Bryan Cutchen and Independent Joseph Pietroski are competing to fill the seat of Earle McCormick, R-West Gardiner, who did not seek re-election.

Bellows, of Manchester, said she's spent her career in public service and said she'll build coalitions within the Legislature to get things going. While knocking on doors getting to know voters, Bellows said the overwhelming concern has been rising property taxes, and she wants the state to be more fiscally responsible.

Cutchen, a retired Navy rear admiral from West Gardiner, said he learned while working at the Pentagon how to work with large organizations with large budgets, and he thinks the state can run more efficiently, which would lower the tax burden on Maine's people.

An independent from Winthrop, Pietroski noted that he's lived in the district for 45 years and said the state hasn't adapted to the skills many Mainers could bring to the workforce. He also mentioned senior citizens and was disappointed his two opponents didn't address that demographic during their opening remarks.

Dawn Gallagher, the wife of Lindley, is running unopposed for re-election to her spot on the Regional School Unit 2 board. Gallagher spoke briefly about the continued reduction of the RSU's budget and the shortfalls it creates within the district.

The ballot in November also includes a referendum for a new city charter. One of the changes to the charter would stagger the terms of each councilor so that there is less turnover on the council each year.

Letter

Stevens Commons will benefit Hallowell

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to express my support for Stevens Commons. This project will enhance our community in a meaningful way, not only in the short term, but with long-term benefits for generations to come. One example is the creation of housing opportunities we so badly need in Hallowell.

In purchasing the parcel, local developer Matt Morrill has stepped up to the plate in a big way. And he has invited every single Hallowell resident to partner with him in the project. He's hosted tours, attended multiple Planning Board and City Council meetings, and met with reporters to keep us all informed.

As many of you know, for the last 17 years, I have been involved in Hallowell's municipal government, including as a Planning Board alternate for two years, City Councilor for eight years, mayor for four years, and now representing our city, along with Manchester and West Gardiner, in the Maine House of Representatives.

Throughout the years, we've struggled with the need for both affordable housing and elderly housing. We've worked to sustain affordable apartments. We've brainstormed ways to create single level housing. But despite all the hard work and good intentions, we're losing our artists, musicians, and aging Hallowellians. We are struggling to meet their needs. With Stevens Commons, and the attached housing requirements, we can keep our beloved Hallowell residents where they belong — in Hallowell.

Further, the Stevens School property has been sitting as a dangerous deserted eyesore for years. I'm thankful that we have the opportunity to partner with Matt and Tammy Morrill. They have a proven track record of executing quality thoughtful development in Hallowell. They earned my trust through the process of creating the Hallowell Overlook project. I am thrilled to lend my support for Stevens Commons.

Rep. Charlotte Warren

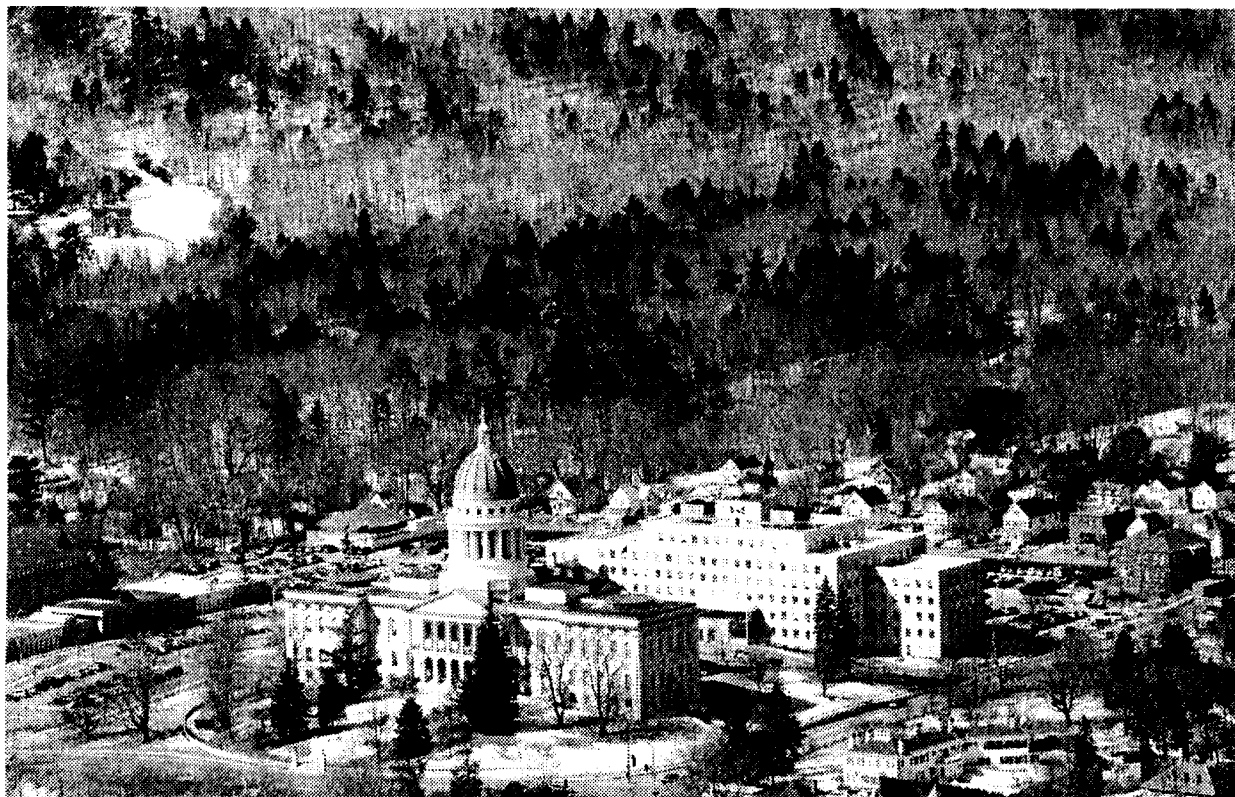
D-Hallowell

<http://www.centralmaine.com/2017/01/13/kennebec-land-trust-close-to-giving-howard-hill-to-augusta/>

Kennebec Journal 1/14/2017 p.A1, A2 retrieved 1/18/2017

Kennebec Land Trust close to giving Howard Hill to Augusta

If the City Council votes next week to approve an agreement between the land trust and the city, the largely unspoiled 164-acre property could be given to the city the very next day.



The transfer agreement specifies that the wooded tract behind the State House complex shall never be developed. *Joe Phelan/Kennebec Journal*

BY KEITH EDWARDS KENNEBEC JOURNAL

AUGUSTA — After nearly three years of fundraising and repeated criticism from Gov. Paul LePage, the effort to preserve the Howard Hill property and transfer it to the city of Augusta is nearly complete.

If the City Council votes to approve an agreement with the Kennebec Land Trust, the largely unspoiled 164-acre tract could be given to the city on Friday.

Mayor David Rollins praised land trust officials Thursday for their persistence in pursuing the project and raising the money to preserve Howard Hill. Theresa Kerchner, executive director of the Winthrop-based land trust, said people in the area have suggested for decades that the land needed to be preserved.

“You certainly were given a few hurdles and obstacles and some discouragement, but persistence is a grand word,” Rollins said to Kerchner after a presentation to city councilors. “It is one I’ve used in my life. I may not have talent, but I have persistence, and I recognize it when I see it. So congratulations, and we know you’ll be as happy as everybody in the city when we finalize this and get things going.”

The terms of the agreement conveying the land, which is best known for providing a scenic wooded backdrop to the State House complex, specify the hilly property shall never be developed nor subdivided, shall have its natural resources protected, and shall remain open to the public.

The originally proposed terms of the agreement with the city stated the privately funded land trust would give the city, in addition to the land, a \$100,000 endowment to help the city maintain the property and form a plan for it.

However, since state Land for Maine's Future funding for the \$1.2 million project was slashed from the previously promised \$337,500 to \$163,500 last October, the land trust has proposed to modify its agreement with the city.

Instead, the land trust, according to City Manager William Bridgeo, will give the city \$25,000, be credited \$7,500 spent to have a forest management plan done for the property, and pay the remaining \$67,500 to the city in the next two years.

Bridgeo said that seems fair and that he has no doubt the land trust will be able to raise the additional money and give it to the city.

Five of six members of the Land for Maine's Future Board, all of whom were either appointed by LePage in 2016 or are officials in his administration, voted to reduce the state's contribution to the project, expressing concerns about the accuracy of the roughly \$1 million appraisal of the property, which was sold to the land trust for about \$925,000 by local attorney Sumner Lipman.

The property is assessed by the city, for tax purposes, at \$171,000.

Over the last year, LePage and members of his administration have criticized the Howard Hill project and the Land for Maine's Future program, saying it overpays for properties.

LePage, in 2015, also withheld \$11.4 million in voter-approved conservation bonds, including the \$337,500 for the Howard Hill project, though he later agreed to issue those bonds.

Land trust officials have defended what they pay for such properties, stating they have the properties professionally appraised based upon their "highest and best use," or what their value would be if they were developed.

The trust took out a loan to close the funding gap so the project could proceed.

"There was a setback when the governor decided he didn't like this project and did everything he could to block it," Bridgeo said. "In the end, recently, Land for Maine's Future, which originally promised \$337,500 toward the project, cut its allocation in half. Not to be deterred, the champions from the land trust redoubled their efforts to make that money up. And now they're ready to proceed. They're ready to have a closing with the city."

Kerchner said numerous individuals, businesses and foundations donated money so the trust could buy the land.

The property is named for the family of Capt. James Howard, one of the founders of Augusta.

It was later owned by local publishing magnate William Howard Gannett, who in the 1890s bought some 450 acres, including Howard Hill, where he created Ganneston Park.

The park included gardens, ponds, carriage paths and trails he opened to the public. The property, tucked between developed parcels in Augusta and extending to the Augusta-Hallowell line, provides sweeping views of the area, including the Maine State House dome.

"We want everyone to realize what a remarkable landscape this is for the city of Augusta," Kerchner said.

City officials said a plan will need to be developed to provide public access points to the property. Among the limited existing access points is an old carriage road where Ganneston Drive comes to a dead end.

Rollins, a resident of the Ganneston Park neighborhood, said the city has work to do to figure out how people will obtain access to the site.

He said it's possible a parking lot could be built at the end of Ganneston Drive.

Kerchner said the land trust already has had discussions with the developer of the formerly state-owned Stevens School campus in Hallowell, Matt Morrill, about also providing public access to Howard Hill from the proposed development there.

Terms of the proposed agreement require the city to complete a conservation plan within a year of receiving the property.

Kerchner said the land trust doesn't want to limit how the property may be used, other than four basic requirements included in the deal: that the city, in perpetuity, protect the natural resources of the site, never develop it, never subdivide it and guarantee public access.

Augusta accepts gift of 164-acre Howard Hill property

The pristine wooded property is to be preserved forever.

BY KEITH EDWARDS

STAFF WRITER

Posted January 19

Updated January 20



This aerial view from March 2014 shows Howard Hill, 164 wooded acres that serve as the scenic forested backdrop for the State House in Augusta. *Staff file photo by Joe Phelan*

AUGUSTA — City councilors voted Thursday night to accept the donation of the 164-acre Howard Hill property, which provides a scenic wooded backdrop to the State House and which prompted a good deal of heated debate within the State House's walls.

Councilors voted unanimously Thursday to receive the largely undeveloped property from the Kennebec Land Trust, and the city and the locally based land trust could close a deal to transfer the property as soon as Friday.



Sue Bell, left, City Councilor Dale McCormick and Brian Kent look down on Kennedy Brook on April 18, 2014, during a walking tour of Howard Hill in Augusta. The Augusta City Council voted Thursday night to accept the land from the Kennebec Land Trust. *Staff file photo by Joe Phelan*

The terms of the agreement conveying the land specify the property never shall be developed or subdivided, shall have its natural resources protected, and shall remain open to the public.

“This is just a tremendous example of public-private partnership,” said Augusta resident Michael Seitzinger, a former land trust board member. “The result here for the people of the city of Augusta, the entire capital community, and the entire state of Maine, is outstanding.”

Gov. Paul LePage and members of his administration, over the last year, have criticized the Land for Maine’s Future program for overpaying for properties, and specifically cited Howard Hill as an example.

The Kennebec Land Trust bought the land for about \$925,000 from local attorney Sumner Lipman in 2015, with plans to give the property to the city.

The land trust initially was expected to use \$337,500 in Land for Maine’s Future money to help pay for the purchase. However, Land for Maine’s Future funding for the \$1.2 million project was slashed from the previously promised \$337,500 to \$163,500 last October,

Five of six members of the Land for Maine’s Future Board, all of whom were either appointed by LePage last year or work for him, voted to reduce the state’s contribution to the project, expressing concerns about the accuracy of the roughly \$1 million appraisal of the property, The property is assessed by the city, for tax purposes, at \$171,000.

Land trust officials have defended what they pay for such properties, stating they have the properties professionally appraised, based upon their “highest and best use,” or what their value would be if they were to be developed.

The trust took out a loan to close the funding gap so the project could proceed.

The originally proposed terms of the agreement with the city stated the privately funded land trust would give the city, in addition to the land, a \$100,000 endowment to help the city form a plan for the property and to maintain it.

However, since the state reduced its funding of the purchase, the land trust proposed to modify its agreement with the city.

Instead, the land trust, according to City Manager William Bridgeo, will give the city \$25,000, will be credited \$7,500 it spent to have a forest management plan done for the property, and

will pay the city the remaining \$67,500 in the next two years. City officials said they accept the arrangement and have no doubt the land trust will pay the remaining money as promised.

“Some roadblocks were placed along the way, and you folks overcame them,” Mayor David Rollins told land trust officials. “This will be a treasure for the city of Augusta, one of our collection of gems.”

Theresa Kerchner, executive director of the Winthrop-based land trust, said people in the area have suggested for decades that the land needed to be preserved.

Kerchner said numerous individuals, businesses and foundations donated money so the trust could buy the land.

The property is named for the family of Capt. James Howard, one of the founders of Augusta. It was later owned by local publishing magnate William Howard Gannett, who in the 1890s bought some 450 acres, including Howard Hill, where he created Ganneston Park. The park included gardens, ponds, carriage paths and trails he opened to the public. The property, tucked between developed parcels in Augusta and extending to the Augusta-Hallowell city boundary, provides sweeping views of the area, including the Maine State House dome.

City officials said a plan will need to be developed to provide public access points to the property. Among the limited existing access points is an old carriage road where Ganneston Drive comes to a dead end.

Kerchner said the land trust already has had discussions with the developer of the formerly state-owned Stevens School campus in Hallowell, Matt Morrill, about also providing public access to Howard Hill from the proposed development there.

Terms of the proposed agreement require the city to complete a conservation plan within a year of receiving the property.

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Hallowell council approves tax deal for senior housing

Community Housing of Maine plans to build 29 affordable housing units for the elderly in the Central Building on the 54-acre Stevens Commons campus.

BY JASON PAFUNDI STAFF WRITER



Community Housing of Maine is seeking a Credit Enhancement Agreement for a fixed tax rate to support development of housing at the Stevens Commons complex in Hallowell. Staff file photo by Joe Phelan

HALLOWELL — The City Council has approved a Portland-based affordable-housing developer's Credit Enhancement Agreement request for a fixed tax rate to support the development aimed at the elderly.

The vote Tuesday night authorizing the tax deal was 6-1. Ward 5 councilor Lisa Harvey-McPherson was the lone dissenter.

Community Housing of Maine asked the council to approve a tax rate of \$17,400 per year for 20 years, or \$348,000, helping to ensure that enough money is available for the nonprofit organization to manage and maintain the property, located at Stevens Commons.

The housing group also asked Hallowell to return to the project any required property taxes above and beyond \$17,400 annually for a period of 24 years, beginning at the time the building is completed and the property is occupied. The city also will reap the rewards of elderly residents of the housing project spending money in Hallowell and being a part of the wider community.

"We hope it's a catalyst for other development on the Stevens Commons campus," said Bree LaCasse, project manager for Community Housing of Maine and the manager of the Central Commons effort.

The organization signed a purchase option last year for a multimillion-dollar renovation of the 25,000-square-foot Central Building on the 54-acre campus into affordable housing for the elderly. There will be 29 units of permanent affordable housing for seniors 55 and older. It will be a reuse project that completely rehabilitates one of five historic buildings on the Stevens Commons campus.

The Stevens Commons campus, formerly the site of Stevens School, was built in the late 1870s as a boarding school for girls. In recent years it was occupied by state offices and other agencies. Matt Morrill, of Mastway Development, paid the state \$215,000 for the campus in April 2016; the state had tried to sell it for 10 years.

Harvey-McPherson, a member of the council's finance committee, said the council told Morrill when he first acquired the property that the investments in the campus by the city — including a \$238,000 forgivable loan — would affect potential credit enhancement deals in the future. She said she didn't like the city making less than half of market value in annual taxes from this project.

"I can see this project having value at a future date," Harvey-McPherson said. "I think this is the wrong (project) to do right out of the gate."

The other councilors said they appreciated Harvey-McPherson's concerns; however, they all thought the time is now for a project of this magnitude.

The city's comprehensive plan of 2010 stipulated that 10 percent of all new housing developed over a decade be affordable, and this project would be the first affordable housing for seniors to come to Hallowell since the Cotton Mill housing complex opened several decades ago. Ward 3 councilor Kara Walker said it was clear in 2010 that Hallowell residents found affordable housing important.

According to LaCasse, the development would include 13 studio and one-bedroom units available to residents with incomes 50 percent or less of the area median income — \$21,700 for an individual and \$24,800 for a family of two. The remaining 16 one-bedroom units would be available to people with incomes 60 percent or less of the area median income, which is \$26,040 for an individual and \$29,760 for a family of two. Homeless veterans will be given preference in 20 percent of the units.

If the plan moves forward, LaCasse said, construction would begin in September and should be completed by September 2019.

Ward 1 Councilor Maureen Aucoin said she thinks Morrill's ability to repay the loan or have it forgiven would be much harder without the Central Commons development.

"If we don't approve this project, I think we set Matt up for failure with his loan," Aucoin said.

At-large Councilor Lynn Irish echoed those sentiments and said she can't foresee any economic development happening in Hallowell without the city contributing.

Since acquiring the property on Winthrop Street, Morrill has signed an agreement with Community Housing of Maine, overseen the reconstruction of several roads within the campus, made numerous infrastructure improvements with the help of money from a voter-approved bond and signed nearly a dozen commercial leases in one of the buildings. He also donated a parcel of land where the city's new fire station is being built.

"Without infrastructure upgrades, a project like ours just wouldn't be possible," LaCasse said. "That investment paved the way for this project."

Community Housing of Maine, a statewide nonprofit organization, has developed properties in Kennebec County since 1995, in accordance with its mission to develop and provide housing for low-income and disadvantaged people as well as workforce and senior housing.

During a public hearing about the proposal, Hallowell resident Frank O'Hara said he strongly endorses the project, in part because of the options it would provide for seniors wanting to stay in or move to Hallowell.

"This is a low-cost alternative for people who've been in Hallowell and to keep people in Hallowell," he said. "(Hallowell) is a place where there's not a lot of choice."

O'Hara, a municipal planning and economic development expert, said Community Housing of Maine completes high-quality projects, and he said this one would be an anchor at Stevens Commons.

"It's going to make the next investment (at Stevens Commons) more likely," O'Hara said.

Andy McPherson, a former Hallowell mayor and councilor, said he's concerned that the city wouldn't be receiving the full taxable value of the project — around \$40,000 per year — considering other taxable properties in the city pay their full value and typically see their taxes increase from year to year.

“I'm standing here for the homeowners, because the taxpayers have already paid,” McPherson said in reference to a \$2.3 million bond package approved by voters last year that included funding for improvements at Stevens Commons. “I'm sure the next people coming (to develop in Hallowell) will be looking for this (deal).”

Community Housing of Maine completed a similar project in 2011 in Bangor, converting a former dormitory of the Bangor Theological Seminary into 28 units for the elderly, now known as Maine Hall. Similar projects, such as Central Commons in Hallowell, take about two years to complete.

The Cony Flatiron Senior Residence in Augusta opened as housing for the elderly in the summer of 2015. Because that \$11 million project by Housing Initiatives of New England was partially funded by \$6.8 million from the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, residents who make more than predetermined incomes each year can't live there.

The council's regular monthly meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. Monday at City Hall. The agenda for the meeting will be released later this week.

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<https://www.centralmaine.com/2019/10/10/howard-hills-trails-views-dedicated-to-connecting-people-with-nature-in-augusta/>

Kennebec Journal 10/11/2019 p.A1, A4 retrieved 10/15/2019

Howard Hill's trails, views dedicated to connecting people with nature in Augusta

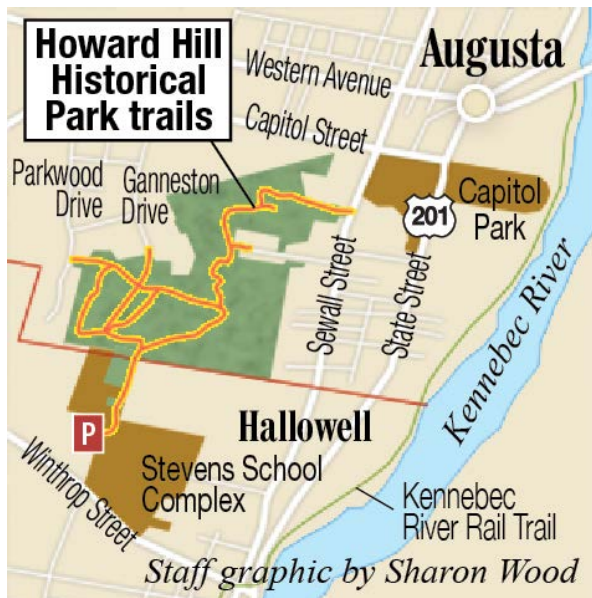
Officials gathered at a scenic overlook in the woods Thursday to dedicate Howard Hill Historical Park.



Jean-Luc Theriault, stewardship director for the Kennebec Land Trust, holds rusty bolts Tuesday that were found near a set of granite steps where the Gannettston House in the Trees used to be in the Howard Hill Historical Park in Augusta. Kennebec Journal photo by Joe Phelan



This undated photo from the Kennebec Journal archives shows the tree house in Gannett Estate on Western Avenue in Augusta. The steps to ramp is all that remains on the site which is now a scenic overlook in recently opened Howard Hill Historic Park. Kennebec Journal file photo



BY KEITH EDWARDS KENNEBEC JOURNAL

AUGUSTA — When it comes to connecting people to wildlife, Howard Hill Historical Park has it all, the state's commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife said Thursday at the 164-acre site's dedication.

With fall's array of multicolored leaves on display for miles behind her, Commissioner Judy Camuso said Howard Hill's prominence and easy access for people, combined with its spectacular and diverse habitat for wildlife, make it the perfect spot for people to make and share connections to nature, and instill those connections in future generations.

"An oasis for both people and wildlife, right here in the heart of our state capital," Camuso said from an overlook with expansive views of Augusta and beyond, to a few dozen attendees at the park's dedication Thursday. "From a wildlife perspective, Howard Hill has it all. With softwoods and hardwoods, it provides a home or stopping off point for a whole host of wildlife species.

"The key for all of Maine's diverse wildlife will be protecting a wide range of habitats and in providing connectivity between those habitats. This dedication is an example of ensuring that not only does Maine's wildlife have a home, but the people of Maine and those that visit have a place to enjoy Maine's wildlife. People will protect what they care about."

The city of Augusta was given the wooded hilltop site, which provides a scenic backdrop to the State House, by Kennebec Land Trust in 2017, after the trust, using a mix of privately raised and public, but no city of Augusta, funds to purchase the land for about \$925,000 from local lawyer Sumner Lipman.

A conservation easement the trust attached to the property before turning it over to the city bans development on the site, other than recreational trails and related amenities.

Howard Lake, of Readfield, a member of the land trust's board of directors, thanked the numerous volunteers who have cut trails on the property and donors who contributed funds for its purchase. He reminded them that at times it looked like it would not happen.

The land trust initially was expected to use \$337,500 in Land for Maine's Future money to help pay for the purchase. However, Land for Maine's Future funding for the \$1.2 million project was slashed from the previously promised \$337,500 to \$163,500 in 2016.

Five of six members of the Land for Maine's Future board, all of whom were either appointed by former Gov. Paul LePage or worked for him, voted to reduce the state's contribution to the project, expressing concerns about the accuracy of the roughly \$1 million appraisal of the

property done for the land trust. The property was assessed by the city, for tax purposes, at just \$171,000.

Land trust officials have defended what they pay for such properties, stating they have the properties professionally appraised, based upon their “highest and best use,” or what their value would be if they were to be developed.

The trust took out a loan to close the funding gap so the project could proceed.

“We had our challenges, there were times it looked pretty bleak,” Lake said. “At times, we thought maybe we wouldn’t be able to raise the money, and we had already spent a lot of money on it. But we persevered, and here we are.”

The \$337,500 loan from Kennebec Savings Bank helped the land trust move ahead with the project before the trust had raised the entire \$1.2 million needed for the project.

Andrew Silsby, president of KSB, said his father, David Silsby, worked for the state Legislature for 27 years and, because of his belief that a state known for its forests and land should have a forested backdrop to its state capital, fought for years to get the state to preserve the same land, but could not convince state leaders to fund it.

Andrew Silsby said he had lunch Thursday with his dad, who showed him old photographs of the site and gave him a history lesson.

The property is spread between a point just south of Capitol Street to the Hallowell line at the former Stevens School complex. It is accessible from spots off Sewall Street, at the end of Ganneston Drive in Augusta and from a trailhead at Stevens Commons in Hallowell.

Mayor David Rollins, who lives near the Ganneston Drive entrance to the park, said the park is one more example of Augusta’s many attractions that make Augusta the best small city in New England. He also said its another example of Augusta preserving the environment and its growing network of recreational trails, a network he hopes will continue to grow.

“Let’s evolve this a little more every year, and add more trails, Ansley is going to live out here,” Rollins joked, referencing Ansley Sawyer, a member of the Augusta Conservation Commission who has served as a steward of Howard Hill and put extensive time into cutting trails in the park.

The property once was owned by William Howard Gannett, who in the 1890s bought some 450 acres including Howard Hill — where he created Ganneston Park.

The park included gardens, ponds, carriage paths and trails he opened to the public so they could enjoy the natural setting as his family did in their log cabin lodge on the site, Camp Comfort, so named because Gannett was publisher of Comfort Magazine, the first American periodical to reach a circulation of more than 1 million.

The Gannetts had a large, cliffside treehouse on the property, believed to be on or near the site where a scenic overlook with expansive views is now located.



Staff photo

Author Carolyn Chute, center, and two sympathizers await the bail decision outside the Kennebec County Jail in Augusta for five protesters arrested Monday morning in Hallowell. Chute attended the protest in Hallowell, according to police.

OCT 3 2000

KENNEBEC JOURNAL

Protesters seize state office

Police arrest 5; demonstrators slam importation of workers

By MECHELE COOPER
Staff Writer

HALLOWELL — Police arrested five protesters early Monday morning after the group barricaded itself in the office of the director of Bureau of Labor Standards in the old Stevens School complex.

The protesters intended to occupy the Winthrop Street building until 5 p.m. to voice their anger about a federal program that allows out-of-state workers to come here for less money, snatching jobs from Maine workers. Instead, five protesters were taken to jail.

Hallowell Police Chief Rod Myrick said police received a 5:54 a.m. report by telephone about 20 protesters who were at the building entrance, and that a few of them had broken into the building before it officially opened.

“They were there to demonstrate, to protest, and refused to leave,” Myrick said Monday. “We tried to get them to leave peacefully, but they barricaded themselves in the back part of the office, so we forcibly opened the door and they were all removed.”

Those arrested and charged with burglary and criminal trespass include: Christian Neils, 23, of Appleton; James Freeman, 51, of Verona; Willa Rippberger, 24, of Carlsbad, Calif.; Jennifer Beatty, 21, of Minneapolis, Minn.; and Laura Childs, 25, of Belgrade.

They were taken to the Kennebec County jail, where bail was set. Apparently, the protesters could not come up with bail money, Myrick said.

State police and the Kennebec

Please see PROTEST, A2

REPORT CARD

Last month, the Maine Center for Economic Policy issued its report on “The State of Working Maine,” which called upon the Department of Labor and legislators to guarantee Maine’s workers a living wage. According to the report:

- **Mainers are working** more hours than any other state in the nation, at lower-paying jobs and are taking on more debt when they can’t make ends meet.
- **Actual wage growth** in the last decade for all Maine workers was only slightly more than 2 percent.
- **Yet incomes** of the heads of corporations throughout Maine grew 91 percent in the last decade.
- **A third of Maine’s children** and almost a quarter of working-age adults live with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. National and state research suggests that an income more than 200 percent of the federal poverty level is required to meet basic needs in the geographic area where most Maine people live.

✓ Protest

Continued from A1

Sheriff's Office assisted Hallowell police.

Jose Soto, director of the Maine Rural Workers Coalition, who took part in the protest, said the Department of Labor and Gov. Angus S. King always side with companies instead of workers.

"They are in the pockets of big corporation," Soto said during Monday's protest.

Stephen Perry, senior organizer for the New England Regional Council of Carpenters, said the program affect not only loggers, who are upset because the program allows Canadians to work in the Maine woods at below-market wages, but also rural, migrant and factory workers.

"This is a convergence of many people's interests," Perry said. "We're sick of the state government refusing to enforce state law and allowing abuse of workers. They (protesters) wanted the public to know that the Department of Labor has not been serving the people of Maine, but the corporations."

Michael Frett was not in his office when the protesters arrived.

Frett, who recently became the director of Bureau of Labor Standards, said he is familiar with the issue of Canadian loggers, but not with problems other workers are having.

"This office has no prior notice of their interests in discussing these issues as they're being presented today, and it is for that reason that I am unprepared to discuss them," Frett said. "Also, I'm unwilling to meet with them only because of the circumstance (un-

der which) this has been brought to my attention. I'm not opposed to protesting, but this is a government agency, and to take over my office is outside the realm of a peaceful demonstration."

Perry said Maine employers are hiring people from other states and countries and classifying them as independent contractors. The workers are paid in cash, he said. Canadians working in Maine woods get \$20 per hour, Perry said, and are not required to pay any taxes on that money. And when they return to Canada, they get universal health care, unlike workers in this country, he said.

"Employers pay no taxes, which is an unfair advantage, because Maine residents' employers have to pay workmen's comp," he said. "And, also, they're avoiding paying taxes to the state and federal government."

A year ago, supporters filed a complaint with the Department of Labor, and gave written evidence to the attorney general; Valerie Landry, the commissioner of the Maine Department of Labor; and Bureau of Workmen's Compensation.

"We asked them to investigate and enforce the laws, and they haven't done anything yet," Perry said. "We had a worker who stepped up to the plate and admitted he had been a misclassified worker and had never filed state taxes. Between the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) and the state, nobody has done anything."

Frett said the Department of Labor has reduced the numbers of workers entering the state, he said, adding that the state is monitoring the situation to prevent workers from taking advantage of the program.

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Hallowell panel eyes state property

By MECHELE COOPER
Staff Writer

HALLOWELL — A committee looking at options for 63 acres of state-owned property now used as an office center will meet Friday at City Hall.

The Stevens School Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet at 8:30 a.m.

Members will discuss consolidating the police and fire departments in a building at the old Stevens School complex on Winthrop Street.

Committee Chairman Charlie Jacobs, deputy commissioner of the state Administrative and Financial Services, said that building is referred to as the Farwell Building. Currently it houses the corrections department's division of probation and parole.

Jacobs said the state plans to sell the property in accordance with the master plan for state facilities adopted by the Legislature last year.

The school buildings are inefficient as office space and expensive to maintain, he said.

If city officials decide to purchase the Farwell Building, City Manager James Rhodes said an addition would be necessary to accommodate both departments.

"The city wants the corrections building so we can combine our police and fire departments," Rhodes said. "That's where we think we should be."

Currently, the police department is on the lower floor of City Hall. Rhodes said the city's red brick fire station on Second Street built in the early 1800s is the oldest in the state. He would like to see that

building become a museum and the home of Row House, Inc., the city's historic preservation group.

Rhodes said the city would purchase the building at market value. But the state still has to do a marketing analysis of the property. Until that's completed, Rhodes said he wouldn't speculate on the cost of the building.

The committee, which consists of representatives from the state and city, the school district, the Historic Preservation Commission and residents, was given the task of developing a plan to guide the state as it phases out the property over the next few years.

According to the city's historian, Sumner Webber, the Industrial School For Girls, which was later named Stevens School, was established in 1872 so "they

(girls) might be rescued from perils of vicious homes and debasing influences." It became a state institution 1899, he said.

State agencies in the complex include a pre-release center, Department of Conservation and Maine Human Rights Commission.

One of the committee's recommendations for the property could be a combination of residential and light commercial development, Jacobs said.

"There's beautiful views from some of those buildings, so it's not hard to imagine residential development there," he said.

He said another major goal of the state is to preserve the historic buildings on the property. There is some question

Please see **MEETING**. B3

for an elementary school.

"We want to work together on this to meet our needs, and do it in a way that benefits the city," Jacobs said. "The goal here is to accomplish both those objectives."

A public hearing to discuss committee recommendations is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Nov. 7 at Hall-Dale High School.

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• Meeting

Continued from B1

whether a portion of the property should be listed on the historic register.

Other topics that will be discussed Friday include buildings to be preserved or demolished, areas available for development and the Reed Auditorium parcel. The Legislature said the school district could have that portion

Research Committee To Report On Four Pressing Problems

DPH 8-17-67

AUGUSTA (AP) — The Legislative Research Committee plans to report to the special session of the current legislature on four pressing problems and perhaps a fifth. Chairman Horace A. Hildreth Jr., R-Falmouth, said Wednesday.

The full committee and all 12 of its subcommittees held organizing and planning sessions Wednesday.

SEN. HILDRETH said that studies ordered by the legislature on transportation by motor common carrier, salaries of county employes, collective bargaining by municipalities and land acquisition and private water supplies will be finished in time for the special session.

No date for the session has

been set but it is expected to be in late fall or early winter.

A study of the possibility of restricting the use of wild lands through a commission charged with preserving the value of this resource may be done for the special session, Hildreth said, but it is not yet certain.

The other studies are too complex, or not urgent enough, to be finished in such a short time, he said.

Hildreth said the Maine State Bar Association may be asked to take over a study of a Probate District Court system, acting as technical adviser to the Research Committee. Hildreth is a lawyer but there are only two other attorneys on the committee, he said, and this is too technical a job for a group mostly of laymen.

THE CHAIRMAN also said he will make it a personal project to look into the matter of the state's obligation to Mars Hill and advise the committee how to proceed with this study.

After the legislature classified Prestile Stream as relatively clear water, the Aroostook town was forced to spend a large sum for a sewage treatment plant.

Then the 1965 legislature lowered the classification again to permit waste disposal upstream by the Vahlsing potato and sugar factories in Easton. This made the Mars Hill plant unnecessary — probably for many

years. The question, referred to the committee by the 1967

session, is whether Mars Hill should be reimbursed by the state and how much.

The chairman added that the committee is free to extend the scope of the study as far as it wants, including the matter of the Vahlsing sewage disposal privileges.

HILDRETH SAID the committee also considered the situation at the Stevens School in Hallowell but decided to do no more at this time than keep a watchful eye on developments there.

The Boys Training Center at South Portland and Pineland Hospital & Training Center at Pownal also will be observed, with the possibility that the committee may wish to make policy recommendations for the future concerning rehabilitation programs.

Since the former superintendent of Stevens School, Dr. Pauline I. McCready, has resigned and there is no practical possibility that she would wish to return, Hildreth said, "we have no interest in investigating whether she should or should not have resigned."

The committee also agreed to review the Cresap, McCormick & Paget report on state personnel administration. The report was made for the last legislature but was largely rejected or deferred.

Parole Board Members Must Make Tough Decisions

AUGUSTA — The eight State Prison inmates who faced the Maine State Probation and Parole Board at a recent meeting were clean shaven, neatly dressed in the prison garb of denims and work shirt. Each had a trim haircut, and each was facing the moment of truth after confinement, for some, of many years.

They had one thing in common as they came alone into the board room to sit and face the men who were to decide whether they would go outside the walls or whether they would stay.

They were all nervous, frightened and hopeful.

SOME DEMONSTRATED it by pretending a casual air. Others were almost tongue-tied, and some sat twisting their fingers in sweaty palms.

The three men who sit in sole judgment on these inmates all know their decision could greatly affect not only the lives of the inmates but also of their waiting families.

They must protect society against further criminal acts by these men, but they must also protect the rights and hopes of these men who have earned the privilege through "good" time of possibly being released before their maximum sentence has been reached.

Some win approval; a few are denied. The Board always hopes that parole will help toward rehabilitation.

The Board members do not have an easy decision to make. They realize that some of these men, promising to go straight, won't last long before they are returned. But which ones? There is no way of looking into the minds of these convicted criminals to know who will make good and who won't.

Each member of the parole board has studied the records of these applicants for at least a week before they come to sit in judgment. They have reports from other people involved with the inmate; the warden, his deputies, guards and parole officer assigned full time to the prison, and members of the Probation and Parole division.

SOME INMATES' files are several inches thick. The record of past arrests and convictions is long. The files also contain information about almost everything the inmate has done since he has been in prison, did he violate the prison rules and regulations, did he work well on his job, did he attend church services, did he try to earn money by making and selling novelties, was he a ring leader, did he serve his time easily or did he do "hard" time? In addition, information pertaining to family background, education, employment, health, dependents, plus other pertinent information pertaining to the inmate is made a matter of record in the classification summary made available to the State Probation and Parole Board.

All this material is weighed carefully and completely by the board members in reaching their decision as to whether the inmate is now ready to be released to the community.

The Parole Board holds hearings at the Prison, the

Men's Correctional Center at South Windham and the Women's Correctional Center at Skowhegan.

NO PAROLE HEARINGS are held at the Boys Training Center at South Portland and the Stevens School at Hallowell. Release of the inmates of these juvenile institutions are determined by the Superintendents under existing statutes.

Also attending the hearings in the small parole board room at the Prison are the warden, the prison parole officer and the director or assistant director of the Division of Probation and Parole.

A full pre-parole investigation of his future plans as submitted by the inmate has already been compiled by Probation and Parole officers in the community to which he desires to return and the recommendations of these men are also weighed by the Board. But the decision is the Board's alone. It is almost always given after the inmates leave the room, and it is almost always unanimous. However, a majority vote of two out of three is the deciding factor in the event there is not a unanimous vote.

Inmates usually appear for a hearing six to eight weeks prior to their eligibility release date. This gives the parole officer time to help the inmates prepare for their release, help find them jobs, even homes where needed, and countless other small details which will assist the inmate to make the adjustment from harsh prison life to a life on the outside which may be strange, and even confusing. For a man who has just served eight or ten years behind bars, who has never ridden in an automobile in those years, who has never worn a suit, who has never sat alone with a girl or his wife, who hasn't seen his children since they were babies, it can be a grim experience, as well as a happy one.

SOME MEN, who have become so used to the security of life behind bars, can't make it on the outside and will intentionally violate parole or commit some act to get back into prison.

The rate of recidivism, or return, for inmates at the State Prison during the past ten years is less than 35 per cent.

Leroy Morong, one of the Board members, tells candidates for parole: "You must realize and understand clearly that parole means you are actually serving the balance of your sentence on the outside of the prison, but you are still bound to comply with the rules and regulations set up for parole. You cannot drink, you must keep the parole officer informed of your whereabouts and report at specified times, and many other rules which will be fully explained to you before you leave. Any violation of these rules means you can be immediately returned here."

"Parole is not freedom," Richard Ross, chairman of the Board, adds. "That comes only when you have served the maximum time of your sentence, whether that time is served within the prison or on parole."

Two members of the Parole Board are named by the Governor, with Executive Council approval, for four-year terms. The third member, by law, is the Commissioner of Mental Health and Corrections, or any person named by the Commissioner to act in his stead.

THE PAROLE BOARD must meet "at least once a month" by law and in addition may meet as often as necessary, and wherever the chairman designates, which is usually the state prison, men's correctional center or women's correctional center.

Commissioner William F. Kearns, Jr., of the Department of Mental Health and Corrections is the newest member. Kearns assumed his new post in Mental Health and Corrections in February.

Another duty of the Board, in addition to granting paroles, is making recommendations to the Governor and Council, when requested, on the granting of reprieves, commutations and pardons.

G. Raymond Nichols, of Portland, a career member of the Division of Probation and Parole, is director of the Division.

Walter Manchester of Thomaston has been the full time parole officer at the Prison since March of 1968. However, due to a vacancy in the position of Probation and Parole in Knox County, it has recently become necessary for Manchester to also assume the added duties of Parole-Probation officer in that area.

THE INTERVIEWS at the prison are informal, and the board members try to get the inmate to relax, not always an easy job. His attitude, feelings, hopes and past performance inside and outside the prison are discussed with him.

The decision of the Board is made known to the inmate the same day as the hearing.

Although probation and parole are commonly linked together, they are actually two entirely difference functions, though both aim toward rehabilitation.

Probation is granted only by the courts and is given to a person convicted of a crime with the knowledge that further offenses or violation of probation would mean the person could serve the sentence originally imposed. Thus, a person convicted and sentenced to two to four years in prison may be granted probation and possibly never serve any time.

PROBATION MAY be granted for less than, but may not exceed, a two-year period.

If the person violates probation he is returned to the court which may then declare him in violation of his probation and order him sent to prison for the two to four-year term.

Parole is given to a person who is actually serving a sentence in the State Prison or one of the two correctional institutions.

By state law a person sentenced to prison for any length of time, even life, is eligible to have seven days a month deducted from his sentence for good behavior. Thus, a person sentenced to five to ten years at State Prison is eligible for parole at the end of five years, less 420 days or in approximately three years and ten months.

The Parole Board may grant the parole at that time or deny it, usually for a period of one year, at which time the inmate's case will automatically be brought up again for a parole hearing. At this time he may again either be denied or the parole granted.

A person sentenced to life imprisonment in Maine may be eligible for parole at the end of 30 years less good time or after approximately 23 years and one month.

INMATES AT the Men's Correctional Center become eligible for a hearing by the Parole Board after six months, less good time, if their sentence was for a misdemeanor. If it was for a felony they must wait one year, less good time, before being eligible for a parole hearing.

Juvenile offenders may be paroled from the Men's Correctional Center at any time after commitment upon recommendation of the Superintendent.

Some inmates at Thomaston may be granted up to two additional days a month good time if they are assigned to a job which is deemed by the warden "to be of sufficient importance and responsibility to merit such deduction". At the Men's Correctional Center one additional day a month good time may be awarded if the work is deemed by the superintendent "to be of sufficient importance and responsibility to merit such deduction".

THE MAXIMUM term for a commitment to the Women's Correctional Center is three years. However, a woman can be committed to the Maine State Prison for a longer term, up to life, but serves her sentence at the Women's Correctional Center.

When a person violates his or her parole, the probation-parole officer secures a warrant for his return to prison from the Parole Board. Parole violators do not get court action. At the first Parole Board hearing after his return to prison the violator is given a hearing before the Board to ascertain whether or not the person actually did violate his parole. If the Board finds that the parolee has violated his parole, the parole is revoked and he is remanded to the institution. The Board also sets the length of time which must be served before he again is eligible for a parole hearing.

Persons are normally discharged from parole when they have completed their maximum sentence by faithfully performing all the conditions of parole. The Parole Board may, however, discharge a parolee at any time after he has completed his minimum sentence. The one exception to this is that lifers must serve a minimum of ten years on parole.

Legislators eye changes in juvenile corrections



The future of Long Creek Youth Development Center in South Portland is one of the things being studied by a state task force and a legislative committee. (Portland Phoenix/Jim Neuger)

By Douglas Rooks

Maine Corrections Commissioner Randall Liberty acknowledged last week that “not much good comes of juveniles and youth being incarcerated,” adding that such sentences “can do more harm than good.”

He was testifying on a Department of Corrections bill during a Feb. 5 Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee hearing.

Issues of juvenile corrections are in the forefront in Augusta as the Juvenile Justice Task Force, chaired by Rep. Michael Brennan, D-Portland, Jill Ward of the Maine Center for Juvenile Policy & Law, and Liberty, wrestles with a 172-page report prepared for it by the Center for Children’s Law in Washington, D.C. The report includes detailed recommendations for sweeping changes in how the state handles juvenile cases.

At least half a dozen bills before the committee address some of the consultant’s key recommendations, including the age at which children can be detained or incarcerated, what community services must be provided, and – one of the most contentious points – whether to move adult women incarcerated at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham to Long Creek in South Portland, the state’s only “youth prison,” which is operating at one-third of capacity.

Sen. Susan Deschambault, D-Biddeford, the Criminal Justice Committee’s co-chairwoman, has been there before. Her three decades as a Department of Corrections employee began at the long-closed Stevens School for Girls in Hallowell, where “incorrigible” runaways were sent under the guardianship of the Department of Human Services.

The 1976 Code of Juvenile Justice had just been enacted, with cases transferred to the Department of Corrections. While the code's reforms were seen as progressive, the corrections model is now being questioned in states across the nation.

"We now call them 'incarcerated children,'" Deschambault said in an interview. "That makes you think differently."

Unlike the 1990s, when criminal penalties were being increased, "We're now seeing the damage that prisons can do to everyone, but especially children," she said. "And the problems are different. Not just runaways, but substance abuse, mental health issues, and homelessness."

The consultant's report focuses on several topics, including whether juvenile services should remain with the Corrections Department or, as most states have done, be transferred to independent agencies or to the Department of Human Services.

For now, however, the action is more likely on bills already in the pipeline.

Rep. Victoria Morales, D-South Portland, sponsored LD 1684, which would prohibit incarceration of any juvenile younger than 14, and detention of any child under 12 – in line with task force recommendations. Morales said the changes would affect only a handful of recent cases. She also said, however, it's important to establish firm age limits because data on early incarceration show clearly it can be profoundly damaging.

The consultant's report also zeroed in on the typical length of stay at Long Creek. Morales pointed out that Maine's juvenile sentences have a "mandatory minimum" of one year.

"The evidence shows that anything over three to six months can be harmful," she said, "yet we require at least a year."

The report also warns against the Corrections Department's plan to move women to Long Creek, in addition to the youths already housed there.

It states, "Do not co-locate youth and women in DOC custody to Long Creek," pointing to "significant logistical challenges" and "significant financial investments" for the changeover. Co-location would put Maine "outside the mainstream" in mixing adults and youth, "which does not happen in other states," according to the report.

A Department bill, LD 1723, would authorize the transfer of women, while a competing bill, LD 1108, sponsored by Brennan, would require Long Creek to close by 2022, with youth services provided elsewhere.

Rep. Charlotte Warren, D-Hallowell, the committee's House chairwoman, strongly supports this recommendation. "There's no real provision for programs for women (in the department bill), and the children's programs would definitely suffer," she said. "There's no other way to create the sight-and-sound separation federal law requires."

More evidence supporting closure is that, according to the report's detailed analysis, 59 percent of those held at Long Creek "present no danger to themselves or others," and are being held primarily because there's nowhere else for them to go.

The situation owes much to the success of efforts by a previous task force, in 2010, to strictly limit incarceration. As Chief Justice Leigh Saufley told task force members last May, "It's 10 years later, and we have hit two of those benchmarks with a vengeance" – the ones advocating reduced incarceration and arrests. Arrests have dropped by 58 percent, and commitments by 68 percent.

Long Creek, with a daily population that hovers around 60 kids, both committed and detained, could be replaced; on that most task force members agree. “We’re at the gateway,” Deschambault said. “We can look through to the other side, but the picture isn’t clear.”

Other states, including South Dakota, Utah, and Kentucky, have moved to limit commitments and create a presumption for community treatment. Deschambault is hoping to hear more from the public: “It looks a lot different back in the community – especially rural towns where there are few services – than it does at the Statehouse,” she said.

For Saufley, the goal is the one also articulated by Liberty.

At the close of her Jan. 28 State of the Judiciary address she asked, “Are we incarcerating our youth because we have nothing else for them?” and answered the question herself: “It’s time to take the next step and create the community-based options that we all know are needed.”

Douglas Rooks has covered Maine issues for 35 years as a reporter, editorial writer, columnist and former editor of Maine Times.

Edited Feb. 13, 2020, to correctly identify Jill Ward’s affiliation with the Maine Center for Juvenile Policy & Law.

SAD 16 parents question safety of Stevens site

ENGLAND JOURNAL

By MECHELE COOPER
Staff Writer

MAR 1 2011

FARMINGDALE — Parents' concerns and questions at a public forum Wednesday centered around the proximity of the Central Maine Pre-Release Center and another building in the old Stevens School complex under consideration for a kindergarten-to-grade 5 elementary school.

The pre-release center administers a community-release program designed to reintegrate inmates into society.

Nancy Bouchard, associate commissioner

of corrections for the state Department of Corrections, said the center has been at Stevens School since 1979. Inmates in the facility, she said, are there an average nine months before they re-enter the community.

"This is the lowest level (in risk) of inmates in our system who participate in this program," Bouchard told those at the forum at the high school theater. "There's few, if any, with disciplinary problems. They've earned (the privilege) to go in a less restrictive facility."

There are 54 inmates, she said. Some are in a transitional treatment program for substance abuse. They reside at the center and receive intensive treatment at the Maine

Correctional Center, in Windham.

Others already work in the community as they finish their sentences, she said.

One parent wanted to know whether any sex offenders are at the center.

"Yes. There are sex offenders on the Hallowell campus," she said. "There are 16 types. These are convicted of incest offenses. They're not high risk (or) known as predators, and are willing to continue with treatment ... It's a very small population."

Another resident asked whether any inmates have escaped from the center. Bouchard told him 28 prisoners had escaped, but that the number is small, consid-

ering how many had gone through the facility since it opened.

Most who escape have some kind of an emotional trauma, she said, and return to a particular place. Either they've received divorce papers or someone they love is terminally ill or their girlfriend broke up with them, she said.

Bouchard said she would be willing to work with the school board to develop a system in the event an inmate escapes.

"I'd want to know, as a parent, and would want the school to be alerted," one mother said.

One resident asked whether, given the fact

that the primary school isn't much farther from the center, whether the school board should be collaborating with Bouchard already.

School Superintendent Nora Murray said that is possible. She said the school board, at its next meeting, will discuss hiring a school resource officer for the elementary school as additional security.

"We could have someone in the building to assist with that (inmates escaping)," Murray said.

Marsha Cottrell, elementary and primary

Please see MEETING, A2

Meeting

school principal, said she has never had any problems with inmates at her schools.

"I've been here 10 years, and we've had a number of lockdowns (at other jails) that were potentially dangerous — we were notified by the state police — but never from

the pre-release center," Cottrell said Wednesday.

Bouchard said she feels confident with the level of supervision provided at the center. The inmates' needs are met, she said, and the facility provides treatment to help them become good citizens.

School administrators were asked whether other sites are being considered for the K-5 school. Cottrell said the elementary school, which

has been closed because of poor indoor-air quality, and the primary school were considered, but the sites were not large enough for a 400-student facility.

The board initially wanted a K-12 campus, but there was concern about ledges at the high school-middle school site, she said.

"Then the state presented the opportunity for the Reed Auditorium," Murray said. "We wanted to look at

the land and the facility. The state will transfer that to us for a small amount of money."

The Legislature is considering two bills calling for the transfer of the auditorium and land in the old Stevens School complex to the Hallowell-Farmingdale school district.

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Hall-Dale land deals await action

By MECHELE COOPER
Staff Writer

HALLOWELL — The fate of the elementary school building is in the hands of the Legislature.

School officials said lawmakers will consider several proposals in the new session, including a bill drafted by Rep. Scott Cowger, D-Hallowell, asking for the transfer of Reed Auditorium, of the former Stevens School complex, to the Hall-Dale school system.

The state owns the complex and houses a number of agencies there.

Cowger initially proposed the Reed Auditorium as a permanent site for an elementary school after Sheldon Street School closed in June because of poor air quality.

Students in grades 3-5 are in a modular building at the primary school in Hallowell.

According to state statute, a school board cannot begin the process of officially closing a school until the district is involved in a construction project, or the building has been condemned, according to Scott Clark, school board chairman.

He said the modular building is a temporary solution, not a construction project. And the school has yet to be condemned. Until the school board knows for certain the Reed Auditorium is in the mix for a permanent facility

and the school board can apply for state funding, nothing can be done.

Once the Reed Auditorium becomes an option, the board will apply for state funding to renovate the building or to construct a new facility.

Clark said the district is paying to heat the old school building, and for minimum maintenance.

"We have to put ourselves back on the list for school construction (funding), and look at the option of the Reed center," Clark said Friday. "There are two or three bills (in the Legislature) to turn over the building to the district; one is in the governor's proposal."

He said part of the legal closing process in-

cludes offering the school to the town.

Meanwhile, Cowger said he hopes the Legislature will deal with the transfer early in the session.

"I believe that the state has an overall bill they put in every couple of years to deal with land transfers. And the Reed center, indeed, may be part of that," Cowger said. "I decided to draft one so we won't lose focus on that specific transfer."

He said a state transfer does not go into effect until 90 days after a legislative session. So the district would not receive ownership of the property until sometime in September 2001,

Please see **HALL-DALE**, B2

✓ • Hall-Dale

Continued from B1

he said.

Cowger's bill will ask for the Reed Auditorium and accompanying land sufficient to meet the needs of the school district.

"I don't want to get the building and land and not get any more funding to renovate and put on an addition," he said.

A possibility would be to attach a request for appropriate funding to the bill or work with the state Department of Education to receive separate renovation funds, he said.

Clark said the board asked school superintendent Nora Murray to advertise for architectural and engineering services to do a feasibility study on the Reed Auditorium.

There also would be a study on expansion plans for the high school and available space for the superintendent's office.

In other business on Wednesday, the board approved appropriating \$6,500 from the current budget's reserve fund for additional school nursing services to accommodate an increase of student health and medication needs.

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Plan would shift state workers

By GARY J. REMAL
Staff Writer

State
Gov

AMHI campus could see increase of 240 employees

AUGUSTA — Maine State Government could see consolidation and increases in the number of state employees at both the Augusta Mental Health Institute Campus and in a new 1,000-person state office building adjacent to the Capitol in a long-range plan that has received broad support from a state master plan panel.

Under a long-range plan yet to get final approval, the Augusta Mental Health Institute campus would see an increase of 240 state workers, not counting those who might work at a possible new state psychiatric hospital on the complex.

Also, the total number of employees at the State House complex would drop by a handful of workers, but at the existing state Department of Transportation garage the plan

calls for construction of an 1,100-person state office building.

State consultants who drew up the plan for the Augusta State Facilities Master Planning Committee said many of the buildings scheduled for renovation or construction also would include space for future expansion which could further increase the number of state workers.

"The plan represents everything we've dealt with to date in this committee," architect Malcolm L. Collins of SMRT Architecture, Engineering and Planning of Portland, the state's master plan consultant, told committee members recently.

The plan combines the elements of previous plans by consultants. It does not take a stand on the location of a new state psychi-

atric hospital to replace AMHI, but it does include a provision to house several hundred state employees in Augusta's Water Street downtown area. The agency and specific location have not been determined.

Included in the proposal is a provision to renovate and expand AMHI's Stone Building, which has served as the central part of the state hospital since it was founded in 1840.

Use of the building would depend on the construction of a state psychiatric hospital, which has become somewhat less likely since Gov. Angus S. King left it out of his supplemental budget for the coming 18 months.

Collins told the group the building could comfortably house 970 people, but the mas-

ter plan calls for only 674 workers to allow for future expansion.

Preliminary proposals for use of the Stone Building include consolidating either the Department of Human Services or the agencies dealing with natural resources. The plan also calls for the demolition of several other AMHI buildings and construction of at least one parking garage.

State General Services Director Elaine L. Clark said the Stone Building project probably would cost at least \$20 million, and possibly more.

Augusta City Councilor A. Delaine Nye, a member of the master plan group, said she had begun the planning process questioning the wisdom of expanding the number of state employees on the east-side state office

campus. But she said she has changed her mind.

"I came around to the point where I think it is important to develop on the AMHI campus," Nye told the master planning committee. "I also think it is important to maintain a lot of green space... The other reason I'm in favor of utilizing that campus is the Stone Building. If we don't develop that campus, we'll have just another big, empty, ugly building."

Collins said two parts of the master plan committee's tentative proposal have generated opposition from planners for the Capitol Riverfront Improvement District, a joint city-state project aimed at developing Augusta's waterfront, downtown and surrounding areas.

District planners have expressed an in-

• AMHI

Continued from A1

terest in having the state turn over the Department of Transportation garage complex to a private developer and building the state office complex on parking lots surrounding the Department of Transportation headquarters just off Capitol Park, Collins said.

Riverfront Improvement District officials have also urged the state master plan committee not to designate a large central section of the AMHI campus for green space because they believe it may offer one of the best locations for an east-side connection with a new bridge to replace Memorial Bridge in coming years.

The committee's original schedule called for the master plan to be completed by now, but more time was needed and the group is trying to coordinate with planning panels looking at the future of the Capitol Riverfront Improvement District and plans for a proposed new state psychiatric hospital.

The new schedule calls for final approval of an Augusta-area state master plan by the end of February.

CURRENT

Current distribution of state employees in Augusta — 6,000 state workers.

■ **Capitol complex** — 1,275 state workers

State House — 413

State Office Building (after renovations) — 750

State Library/Museum — 103

Nash School Building — 8

■ **West side locations** — 2,400 state workers.

55 Capitol St. — 23

105 Capitol St. — 98

151 Capitol St. — 135

157 Capitol St. — 105

219 Capitol St. — 107

184 State St. — 28

187 State St. — 20

189 State St. — 10

193 State St. — 10

242 State St. — 63

284 State St. — 70

285 State St. — 11

20 Union St. — 180

Dept. of Transportation — 595

Edison Drive — 384

331 Water St. — 28

323 State St. — 5

397 Water St. — 88

249 Western Ave. — 185

■ **Stevens School campus, Halliwell** — 230 state workers

■ **Anthony Avenue** — 220 state

workers

■ **AMHI campus** — 965 state workers

Marquardt Building — 143

Deering Building — 118

Harlow Building — 100

Ray Building — 290

Tyson Building — 37

Old Max^r building — 60

Upham Building — 50

Dept. Environmental Protection Re-

sponse Building — 20

Williams Pavillion — 4

Greenlaw Building — 84

Former Nurses Building — 52

Elkins Building — 5

■ **East Side locations** — 450 state workers

50 Hospital St. — 8

159 Hospital St. — 12

34A Hospital St. — 3

34 Hospital St. — 20

36 Hospital St. — 70

Bureau of Motor Vehicles Building — 287

VA Togus campus — 28

24 Stone St. — 26

■ **Other locations** — 460 state workers

10 Water St. — 32

18 Meadow Road — 36

765 Riverside Drive — 8

Leighton Road — 12

122 Northern Ave. — 162

2 Bangor St. — 89

73 Winthrop St. — 28

Whitten Road — 93

PROPOSAL

Proposed distribution of state workers in Augusta following consolidation and construction projects in new state master plan — 6,000 state workers.

(Many buildings planned under the new state master plan would be built with room for future expansion included. The number of state workers listed represents those planned to first occupy these buildings.)

■ **Capitol complex** — 1,275 state workers

State House — 750

State Office Building (after renovations) — 750

State Library/Museum — 103

Nash School Building — 8

■ **West side locations** — 2,587 state workers

20 Union St. (expanded) — 307

55 Capitol St. — 23

193 State St. — 10

221 State St. (renovated) — 180

Dept. of Transportation — 595

Edison Drive — 378

Proposed new building at 105 Capitol St. (DOT garage) — 1,094

■ **Stevens School campus** — 0 state workers

■ **Anthony Avenue** — 100 state workers

■ **Downtown leased space** — 295 state workers

■ **AMHI campus** — 1,210 state workers (not including proposed new state psychiatric hospital or room for future expansion)

Harlow Building — 161

Former Nurses Building — 19

Ray Building — 228

Stone Building (with additions) — 674

Tyson Building — 127

■ **East side locations** — 520 state workers

34A Hospital St. — 3

34 Hospital St. — 20

36 Hospital St. (expanded) — 211

Bureau of Motor Vehicles Building — 287

■ **Other locations** — 190 state employees

New DOT garage — 110

Dept. of Administrative and Financial Services — 62

New Dept. of Environmental Protection response building — 20

Source: SMRT, state master plan consultant.

2 Hallowell buildings on list of endangered

By MECHELE COOPER
Staff Writer

HALLOWELL — Maine Preservation's Most Endangered Historic Properties list released this month includes two 19th-century homes here.

The Jacob Abbott House at 61 Winthrop St. and the Governor Bodwell House at 15 Middle St., both in the historic district, have fallen into disrepair, according to Roxanne Eflin, Maine Preservation executive director.

Located in the state-owned Stevens School complex, the Jacob Abbott House is state-owned property.

The building, vacant for many years, is the former Maine Publicity Bureau headquarters, and is in serious need of immediate stabilization and repair, Eflin said. Peeling paint, broken windows and overgrown vegetation are the visible signs of the property's deterioration.

Abbott, born in 1803, was a Bowdoin College graduate, a mathematics and natural philosophy teacher, headmaster of a Boston girls' school, a pastor and author of the "Rollo" series for boys.

Eflin said immediate attention is needed while the state's Bureau of General Services, which owns the building, decides on its divestiture plan for the entire Stevens campus.

"The state needs to do something," Eflin



The Jacob Abbott House at 61 Winthrop St., Hallowell.

said Thursday. "There has been a state facilities master plan report published that addresses a number of state-owned buildings both in Augusta and Hallowell. It doesn't spend much time on what to do with the Stevens School campus, but clearly, that's a situation where the state and city of Hallowell need to be in regular contact."

State officials had intended to tear down the Jacob Abbott House in 1968, because the state had no use for it, she said. They put that project on hold when local and state historians told them the building is of historical significance.

The land on which the white, Federal-style structure stands could be separated legally and easily from the Stevens School, creating a

a conforming lot within its zoning district, she said.

Charlie Jacobs, deputy commissioner of the state Administrative and Financial Services, said the state is considering selling the old Stevens School complex in accordance to the master plan for state facilities.

"We have been reluctant to sell the property, because we anticipated long-term use of that campus," Jacobs said. "Now we're headed in another direction, so it would be appropriate to sell the property and that building with some sort of historic preservation easement to someone interested in restoring it."

Jacobs said a structural evaluation of the building will precede the sale.

The Governor Bodwell House's fate is on shakier ground, according to Sumner Webber, Hallowell historian. The property is privately owned.

"It's owned by Gary Elwell, and his whereabouts are somewhat unknown," Webber said Thursday. "The taxes were all paid, but it's just going to wrack and ruin. A couple from Ohio called me, and they would like to buy it; and I heard that a movie company coming to Maine wants to fix it up. It's really sad, because that was built by the governor."

Built in 1875 for Joseph Bodwell, who was a former mayor, former legislator and governor, the Victorian-style house has been the subject of significant community outrage, Eflin said. Bodwell, born in 1818, also was president of the Hallowell Granite Works Co.

Eflin said she has tried to contact Elwell and his attorney, and has had no response. She said the city should adopt legislation regarding minimum maintenance standards for historic buildings. It does not have such standards now.

"Of course, it is legal action that would be necessary in order to enforce minimum maintenance standards, so if they can't find the owner, it becomes a problem," Eflin said. "We urge the city to step up any possible alternatives they have to getting this property out of the jaws of deterioration. If a property owner cannot or will not be a steward for a historic property, they should consider selling it."

The city publicly notified Elwell, whose phone has been disconnected, in May about a civil lawsuit against him for allegedly operating an illegal junkyard. This was after the code enforcement officer, Ed Sullivan, who inspected Elwell's property, sent Elwell three compliance letters. The compliance orders were returned unclaimed.

Other properties on the Maine Preservation list are Liberty Hall, in Machiasport; and a 1928 concrete, through-arch bridge that spans the Kennebec River in Norridgewock.

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Stevens school property still at issue

State & Public Buildings

By MECHELE COOPER
Staff Writer

HALLOWELL — Hallowell officials hope state officials make their minds up soon about the old Stevens School property on Winthrop Hill.

The State Facilities Master Plan calls for state agencies to move off the school campus and the property to be sold. State offices on campus include the departments of Corrections and Marine Services.

The main campus has 26½ acres that includes 10 buildings — five of which are historic — and Reed Auditorium, which the state leases to School Administrative District 16 for its superintendent's office.

The rest of the property is split into 20½ acres of undeveloped land at the rear of the main campus, 14 acres along Pleasant

Street, two half-acre lots and a 1½-acre lot.

Chip Gavin, director of the state Bureau of General Services, said the buildings are vacant if not occupied by state employees.

Mayor-elect Barry Timson said he wants to get the buildings back on the tax rolls. He also said city officials have talked about moving fire and police departments into a building on the western edge of the campus.

"We certainly feel what goes on at that complex is critical to the city," Timson said Thursday.

Gavin said there are no imminent plans to turn the property over to the city of Hallowell or sell it to a developer. He said it is recognized that redevelopment of the site should be a joint effort and include state resources to facilitate any changeover.

He said it was premature to talk about deadlines because the state still actively uses the property.

"The situation remains unchanged," Gavin said. "The long-term vision for that site is to work in partnership with the community in redevelopment. We will continue to talk with municipal officials."

"At the (Kennebec) Arsenal and other places, we're trying to be creative with reutilizing properties the state has so they can be put to good use," he added.

Gavin said it would be more cost-efficient to have fewer buildings occupied, since they wouldn't have to be maintained.

"We're looking forward to continue working with the state in the disposition of those buildings and get them back on the tax roll, hopefully in the next

two or three years," Timson said. "They realize they should move away and then we can develop those buildings into offices and housing."

City Councilor Phillip Lindley said putting the property back on the tax roll would help out taxpayers in Hallowell.

On the other hand, the city desperately needs a new place for its fire department, with the fire station on Second Street, built in 1828, in need of major repair.

"We need a place for our fire engines," Lindley said. "We have calls at Granite Hill Estates and having a fire engine up there rather than at the bottom of the hill really helps with response time. It would make sense to put fire and police all in one spot."

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King's office seeks Hallowell hall's release

Bills would give Reed Auditorium to SAD 16 to ease space crunch

By GARY J. REMAL
Staff Writer

KENNEBEC JOURNAL

FEB 26 2001

AUGUSTA — Officials in Gov. Angus S. King's administration are urging the Legislature to approve the transfer of ownership of the state-owned Reed Auditorium in Hallowell for use as a school at little or no cost.

Two bills calling for the transfer to Hallowell and Farmingdale's School Administrative District 16 have been introduced in the Legislature, one authored by state Rep. Scott W. Cowger, D-Hallowell, and the other by the state Department of Administrative and Financial Services, which oversees state real estate for the King administration.

Cowger said the state's gift of the property, which is only a short distance from other school buildings in Hallowell, would help the district cope with an emergency caused when health problems forced school officials to close a school and move children to portable classrooms.

The project is not high enough on the state school construction priority list to make state assistance likely this year, he said, so the state's gift of the land and building would provide state help to the district to get a new school up and running as soon as possible.

"This way, perhaps, the state could help us before they get to us on the list," he said. "I'm hoping the state will give us the land and the building."

An architect hired by the school district will present options for use of the property Wednesday even before the Legislature makes its decision on the transfer of the property, Cowger said. Planning for the building is moving ahead concurrently with plans to acquire the property, to minimize completion time if all goes as proposed.

The two major options, he said, would be either to divide the existing Reed Auditorium building into classrooms, perhaps phased with later expansions, as a quick way to get students into permanent housing, or to build a new structure attached to the auditorium.

Cowger said the King administration has worked closely with local officials on the project. He said he hoped the property would be handed over to the school district for free.

"They knew the school district wants to move quickly," he said.

Elaine L. Clark, director of the state Bureau of General Services, which oversees all state properties, said the administration will urge the Legislature to donate the property to the school district.

"There is no intention of having them pay market value for the property," she said.

Her agency's bill also seeks authorization for the state to sell or transfer the historic Jacob Abbott house as well as the Reed Auditorium. She said the house is deteriorated and state officials hope to find a person or historic preservation group willing to make a significant

"There is no intention of having them pay market value for the property."

Elaine L. Clark, director
Bureau of General Services

investment in its restoration in return for receiving the property essentially free.

Disposal of any state property requires an act of the Legislature.

Clark said the state turned over another piece of property on the grounds of the former Pineland Center for a school.

Later, she said, the state plans to turn over much of the remaining former Stevens School complex to the city of Hallowell. But before that happens, she said, the state wants to flesh out a development plan with city officials for the property. She said the state might want to continue to use some part of the campus for state agencies if that use fits in with the city's plans.

"We want to do that before we transfer it," she said.

The state printing plant is housed in the Reed building. Cowger worried that finding a new location for that and moving the plant might slow the process down. But Clark

said that should not impede the project. She promised to move the printing operation sooner, if necessary.

The plant will not move until the Legislature approves the transfer of ownership, she said.

"I would guess we'll need a good six to eight months to get that out of there, but if they need to be in sooner, we could ask the committee to take this as an emergency bill," which would mean the transfer of ownership would take effect as soon as the bill were enacted, she said.

Cowger said he hopes the school project will be separated from the Abbott house to ensure the auditorium transfer moves as quickly as possible.

"I put it in a separate bill because I did not want to lump it in with the other land transfers," he said.

Gary J. Remal can be reached at the Kennebec Journal State House Bureau at 623-1056.

Government facilities master plan touted by city, state officials

Capitol Street residents fret about proposed office building

7-12-01
Capitol Weekly

BY JOHN HALE

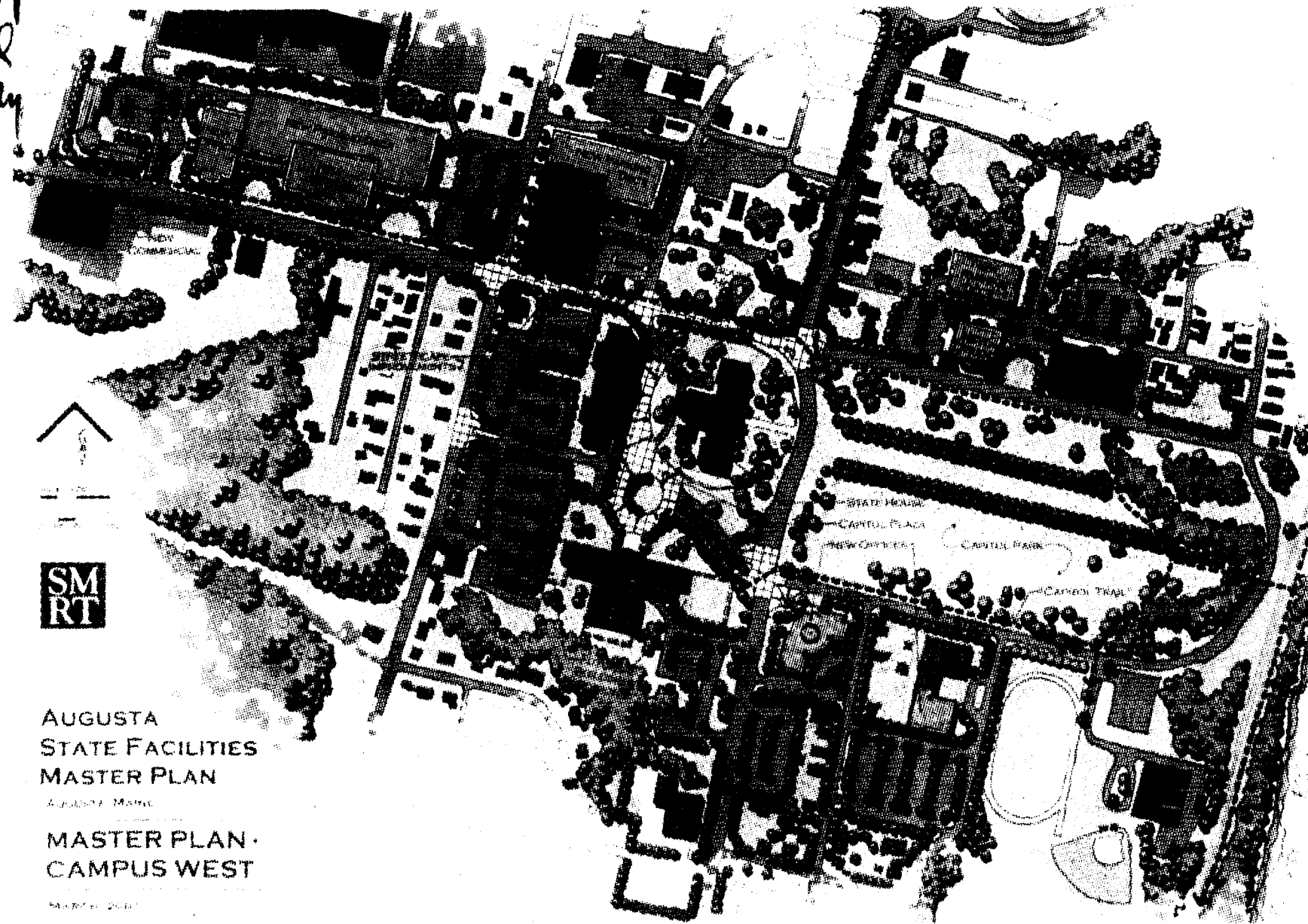
AUGUSTA — The master plan for state buildings and land in Augusta has been completed and approved without controversy, though some neighbors are concerned about the state's plans for the future.

The Legislature in May approved the Augusta State Facilities Master Plan and Gov. Angus King signed it into law. The plan is intended to guide the use of state buildings and land in Augusta, Hallowell and Gardiner for the next 20 years.

A 13-member committee met for a year-and-a-half with state government staff members and architects from SMRT Inc. to develop the plan.

Several major recommendations include:

- A major presence of up to 300 state employees will work in leased space in downtown Augusta to help revive the economy of Water Street. The State Planning Office, with 75



AUGUSTA STATE FACILITIES MASTER PLAN
AUGUSTA, MAINE
MASTER PLAN - CAMPUS WEST

This is a drawing by SMRT Architecture of the west side campus of state government, centered on the Statehouse. Several new structures are proposed for Capitol Street. AUGUSTA STATE FACILITIES MASTER PLAN SUMMARY REPORT

employees, has expressed an interest in moving to Water Street.

- The Maine Department of

Transportation motor transport garage on Capitol Street should be torn down. In its place, an office

building as big as 250,000 square feet should be built to house up to 1,000 employees. This would allow

the Department of Human Services, now scattered over 11 locations in Augusta, to consolidate in one building. By comparison, the Burton Cross Office Building, the largest current state office building, houses about 750 employees.

- The parking garage on Capitol Street should be doubled in size by adding 500 spaces.

- State workers should be moved out of the Stevens School in Hallowell and consolidated in Augusta offices. Then the Stevens School should be closed and turned over to Hallowell, which should be helped in finding uses for the buildings.

- The cultural building should be expanded to the east, south and west to provide added space at the Maine State Library, Maine State Museum, Maine State Archives and possibly the Law and Legislative Reference Library, currently housed at the Statehouse.

- Historic buildings at the former Augusta Mental Health Institute should be preserved for state use. The Stone, Harlow and Ray buildings should be renovated, the Department of Public Safety should be consolidated on the existing Hospital Street site, and there should be no state development on the east side

■ see PLAN page A4

PLAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

of Hospital Street across from the East Campus. The Marquardt, Greenlaw and Deering buildings should be removed.

Some neighbors have complained about the size of the proposed Capitol Street office building and the doubling of the Capitol Street parking garage. They fear the new facilities could overwhelm an already congested area with traffic.

But those who worked on the plan say the final use of the land is likely to be different than what is recommended in the plan.

"Something like the relocation of the motor pool and use of that space is not grandiose. It makes sense," said Augusta City Manager William Bridgeo, who helped draft the plan.

A feature of the plan's creation was that it employed city and state representatives about equally.

"The primary reaction I have is that process was as important as product," said Bridgeo. "Of 13 members of

the committee, five represented interests of the city of Augusta. There was a marvelous inclusion of city representation."

"I think it's a great plan," said Bridgeo.

As for moving 300 state employees downtown, the manager said, "If you have a commitment from state government for 300 employees downtown, that does a lot for economic vitality."

CITIZEN CONCERNS

Jay Hoffman lives on Sewall Street near the Burton Cross Office Building. He's bothered that some of the ideas in the master plan could overwhelm his residential neighborhood.

"They didn't take our concerns about it into consideration," said Hoffman. "We're concerned with the traffic that will come from a 1,000-person office building."

Hoffman said West Side neighbors had a good hearing before the Legislature's State

and Local Government Committee and, "The Legislature listened very, very closely."

"I'm hopeful it will be changed," Hoffman said. "The plan is not done. There may be a better use for it. The transportation facility is not very attractive, but we all prefer that to a 1,000-person office building."

The master plan is intended to be periodically reevaluated and updated.

"There are good ideas in the plan, but this part of the plan needs to be reworked. They worked very hard on the master plan, and it shows, but this is a part that needs to be reworked," Hoffman said.

"The city does not seem to be concerned about this neighborhood at all," he said. "This is a vital neighborhood. It's a mix of incomes. It's a low-crime area. It's the kind of neighborhood you want in a city."

"Even if the building is not built, they need to do something to lower speeds on

Sewall Street."

Charles Jacobs, deputy commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, helped write the master plan.

"The people raised legitimate concerns about traffic," Jacobs said. "Whenever that project goes forward, they'll have to deal with traffic as it exists then. Things might be better then."

"What we have here is a concept that will have to be implemented in light of what we have down the road."

Jacobs said adding 500 spaces to the state parking garage is only intended to meet existing parking needs so it should not add to traffic woes. The new office building on Capitol Street would have its own attached parking facility.

Jacobs said there are already about 200 state employees downtown, working mostly in the Key Plaza building. He said they would count toward the goal of 300

downtown workers but, "We want to have a long-term commitment to downtown."

He said it's still early in the planning stages for the State Planning Office to move downtown.

Of the plan, Jacobs said, "It's a huge step forward for state government to have a master plan in place. It will allow us to move forward in a planned way."

Rep. Julie O'Brien, R-Augusta, thinks Augusta residents need to keep a close watch on the doings of state government, even with the master plan.

"I feel we need to keep a close eye on what is going on," said O'Brien. "We've been assured that each project will have full public input and will have a traffic impact study. I don't want to see anything happening until it's had a full public airing. Too many times, legislators don't see Augusta as a city, as a place to live."

Sen. Beverly Daggett, D-Augusta, served on the master plan committee and was concerned by the scale proposed for the Capitol Street office building.

"That piece of the master plan was one I felt did not work with the Capital Riverfront Improvement District plan," said Daggett. "The master plan is an overall concept. It does not mean it will happen in that way. An autho-

rization of a building of that scope would need state and public approval. Whether or not that really happens is anybody's guess."

Daggett said it makes sense to move the MDOT fleet garage from Capitol Street closer to the interstate highway, possibly in Gardiner.

"The one thing that is beneficial about the plan is it identifies the future reach of state property," said Daggett. "It's intended to make neighborhoods feel safer. It lends some degree of predictability to people who wish to live near the Statehouse."

The master plan says the state generally has enough property in Augusta to meet all of its future needs.

The only properties targeted for potential state acquisition are on Columbia Street at the corner of Union Street and the Child Street-Valley Street-Center Street portion of Gage Street near the existing MDOT building. The Columbia Street parcel would be for expansion of the Department of Labor building. The Gage Street section would be for parking.

"All other neighborhoods," says the plan, "would be unaffected by state real estate needs."

Jacobs said the land would be acquired as it came on the market. There would be no taking of land by eminent domain, he said. ■

Arsenal developer may add projects

By DAN MCGILLVRAY
Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — The future developer of Kennebec Arsenal may eventually take on other work in Augusta.

"It's more worthwhile for them to have more going on, rather than less," said Rep. Arthur Lerman, D-Augusta.

Lerman spent several hours last week with Tom Niemann, the North Carolina developer who will direct the refurbishing of the arsenal property.

Work on the site — the former Army compound of eight buildings abutting the state's east-side office campus along the Kennebec River — could start by the fall of 2006 and take 14 to 16 months to complete.

Lerman said he showed Niemann other Augusta buildings worthy of restoration and new uses. They include the YMCA building at the corner of Winthrop and State streets, and Cony High School's flatiron building.

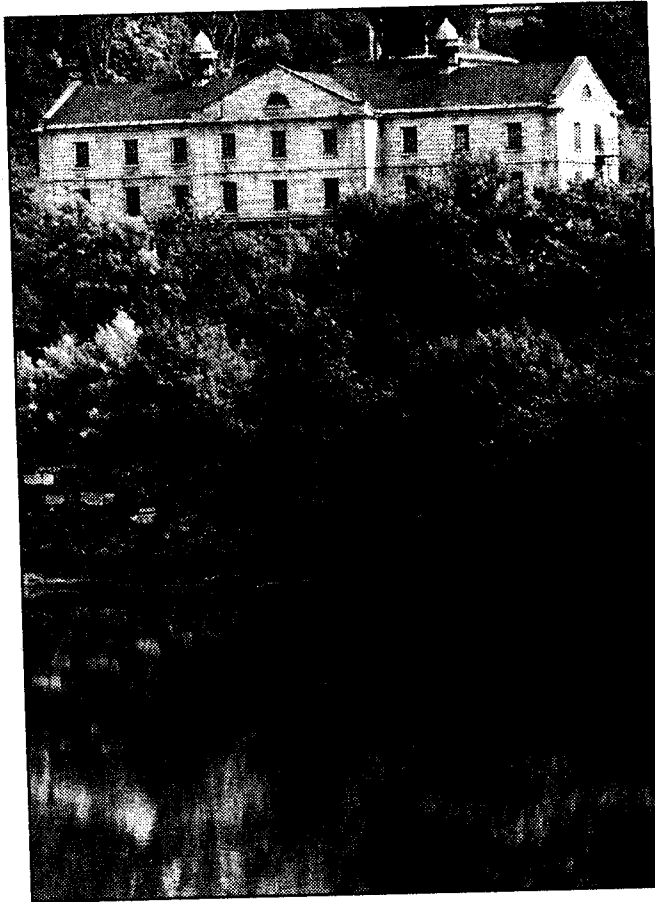
The Y building and the school building will be vacated next year after a new Y and new high school open.

Niemann also learned that the state-owned Stevens School property in Hallowell could be ripe for refurbishing and reuse. The State Facilities Master Plan calls for state agencies to move from that annex along Winthrop Street, and for the property to be sold.

"I'm impressed with him," Lerman said of Niemann. "I've met with him four or five times over the past nine months."

Blue Devil Ventures of Durham, N.C., has plans to spend \$11 million to develop the 177-year-old Kennebec Arsenal into housing and office space. Niemann is a managing partner with the company.

So far, the company has raised about \$10 million to carry out the project, said Elaine Clark, director of the state Bureau of General Services, the agency that has custody of



Staff file photo by Joe Phelan

ARSENAL COMEBACK: The development company that plans to refurbish the old Kennebec Arsenal along the Kennebec River in Augusta has raised \$10 million for the project, which is expected to provide new housing units.

the arsenal.

She said the developers could make up the \$1 million shortfall through a state tax credit program. Save America's Treasures, a private-public partnership that awards grants to preserve historic properties, also is a possibility for some funds as is qualifying the property as a state Pine Tree Zone, she said.

"There's a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for the project, and we're trying to make the numbers work."

ELAINE CLARK
Bureau of General Services director

Lerman; Sen. Elizabeth "Libby" Mitchell, D-Vassalboro; City Manager William Bridges; and Clark met with Gov. John Baldacci and Niemann last week to talk about the arsenal's redevelopment plans and further funding sources.

"There's a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for the project, and we're trying to make the numbers work," Clark said.

Kennebec Arsenal, a National Historic Landmark, served as a military post from 1828 to the first decade of the 1900s. Mentally ill patients were later housed there under state care.

The eight granite buildings have deteriorated over the years.

"They'll need an awful lot of work, and the (heating and electrical) systems are obsolete," Clark said. Contractors will use the latest in energy-efficient standards when they install the new systems and windows, she said.

In a related matter, contractors since last week have been clearing vegetation and debris from the arsenal's riverside retaining wall and wharf. When that job is completed, the granite-rock structures will be fully exposed for the first time in years.

Trees and shrubs that have been cut down will be chipped, and the remains will be spread on the land.

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proposed legislation

<http://kennebecjournal.maintoday.com/news/local/5830208.html>

HALLOWELL Treat's bill holds Stevens for city

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer

KENNEBEC JOURNAL *Hallowell Sentinel*

01/17/2009

HALLOWELL — Rep. Sharon Anglin Treat announced Friday she has submitted a placeholder bill regarding the fate of the Stevens School complex.

In an e-mail to several constituents, including some City Council members, Treat, D-Hallowell, said she submitted the bill "to make sure the state doesn't do anything rash that city residents may come to regret."

The placeholder would require the state to consult with the city and hold a public hearing before the complex is sold to a party other than the city.

Treat said the request that the property not be sold before consulting with Hallowell was not submitted with the intent of involving state lawmakers into city business.

"I'm focused on what the state is going to do, not what the city is doing," she said. "I want to make sure the people of Hallowell are protected if the state does choose to move forward with the selling of this property."

Hallowell City Councilors Monday voted this week to end negotiations for the complex, which houses state offices.

In their proposal, Hallowell had offered to purchase the property for \$600,000 and lease the space back to the state. Four of the seven councilors decided to cease those negotiations.

Meghan V. Malloy -- 623-3811, ext. 431

<http://kennebecjournal.maintoday.com/news/local/5853541.html>

Officials defend vote to end talks

BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY

Staff Writer **KENNEBEC JOURNAL** Morning Sentinel

01/23/2009

HALLOWELL -- City councilors said they would have been "gambling" with taxpayer dollars had they not terminated negotiations between the city and state over the purchase of a historic campus in the heart of Hallowell.

On Jan. 6, city officials announced they had submitted a proposal and bid of \$600,000 to purchase the Stevens School complex from the state. The plan was to buy the campus, then lease it back to the state, which currently uses it for offices.

The decision was made during a regular City Council meeting Jan. 12 to cease those negotiations. Four of seven councilors -- Charlotte Warren, David Bustin, Stephen Vellani and Andrew McPherson -- voted to halt negotiations.

The City Council meeting Thursday was to air the circumstances around the Jan. 12 vote, after some residents said the decision to ax negotiations was made prematurely or that residents were left in the dark about the proceedings.

Warren told the Kennebec Journal last week when she saw the figures returned by the state, going forward "would be financially irresponsible."

She stood by her vote Thursday night.

"I want the public involved in this," Warren said. "I want to be able to talk to my voters and know what they're thinking. I was very uncomfortable moving forward because there had been no public involvement up to that point."

Councilors also cited the recession as part of the reason for ending negotiations. "We're in bad shape economically," Bustin said. "We're going to be seeing a loss of revenue sharing, school funding and excise tax. This would be gambling with taxpayers' money."

The three councilors who opted to proceed with negotiations -- Phillip Lindley, Gail Wippelhauser and Peter Schumacher -- opted not to speak during the meeting. Lindley and Schumacher said briefly after the meeting they stood by their votes.

Many Hallowell residents disagreed with the council's decision to stop purchase talks, though few residents Thursday appeared to show a preference as to whether the city buys the property or not.

Those who spoke Thursday, including Rep. Sharon Anglin Treat, D-Hallowell, urged councilors to reopen negotiations with the state and to re-examine their vote more closely before moving on.

Stephen Langsdorf, a Hallowell resident, said he believed that, because the council voted after an initial figure was offered by the state, the negotiation process was short-sighted. "You had

the legal right to do what you did (by voting), but please, I ask you to allow (the Stevens School negotiating committee) to go back to the state to get the best deal," Langsdorf said.

Resident Alan Stearns and Treat both urged the council to open conversations again with the state's Bureau of General Services to continue parleys, rather than return to the state and ask for a bottom line, final offer for the 60-plus acre campus, and that the negotiations be done as publicly as possible.

"I have no opinion of what happens here, but do want to make sure all the options will be explored," Treat said.

Councilors did not agree to any future action or another vote Thursday, though Bustin said he would be willing at the February City Council meeting to make a motion to establish a committee to return to state officials and request a last best offer, hold a public hearing and follow it with a second vote.

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KENNEBEC JOURNAL

State workers released

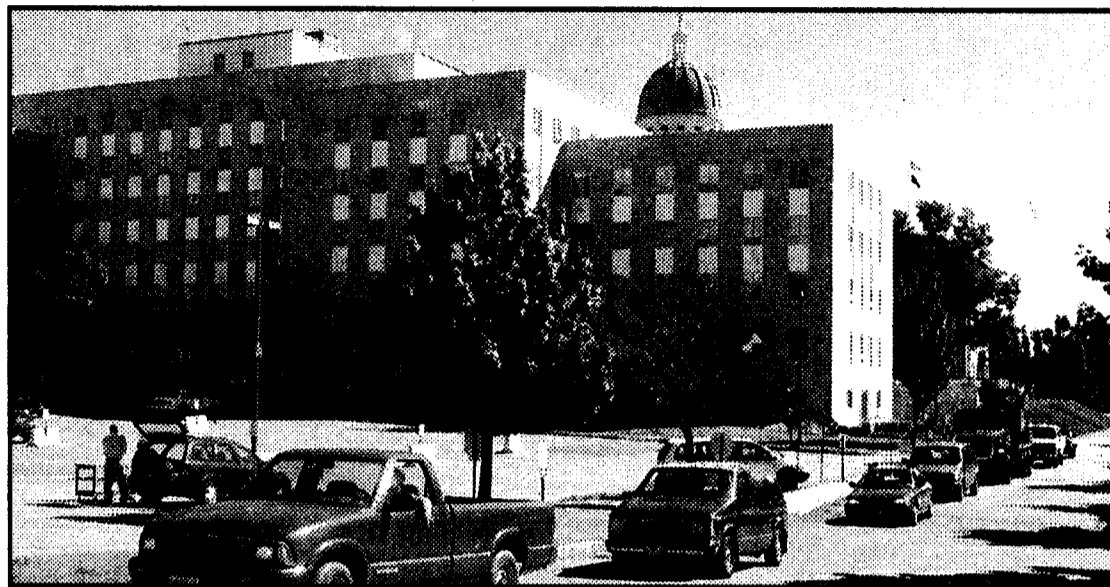
AUGUSTA — About 6,000 state workers in and around the city were sent home Tuesday morning at the order of Gov. Angus S. King, although the original intent was to evacuate only the State House and Burton M. Cross office building.

Capitol Security Director Donald J. Suttter said the order to close the Capitol and the office building were ordered closed about 10:30 a.m. Tuesday. He said other state offices were ordered closed only after news reports incorrectly indicated all state offices in the area were closing.

Suttter said the reports created so much confusion that top state officials decided they should actually close other state buildings, including those on the Augusta Mental Health Institute campus and the Stevens School complex in Hallowell. The state hospital itself remained open, he said.

"I think we're just being prudent," Suttter said. "We don't have anything that points to a threat to these buildings. We're just erring on the side of safety."

Suttter said the evacuations were to provide safety to state workers in large



Staff photo / JOE PHELAN

A line of vehicles leaves the parking lot near the Cross Building and State House, in Augusta, Tuesday, after the buildings were closed because of apparent terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington.

institutions that might have been targets in the wake of terrorists attacks elsewhere and to provide comfort to state employees who would have wanted to rejoin their families.

"I think it's both," he said.

A veteran of state service, Suttter said he could not recall a similar or-

der in his decades on the job.

"I can't think, right off the top of my head, that we have," Suttter said. "If we believed there was a specific threat to a building, we have closed them, but not all the buildings have been closed down except for storms."

— Gary Remal

Schools
and real estate

<http://capital.villagesoup.com/Government/story.cfm?storyID=159364> Retrieved on May 29, 2009 Capital Weekly 5/21/09 p.A3

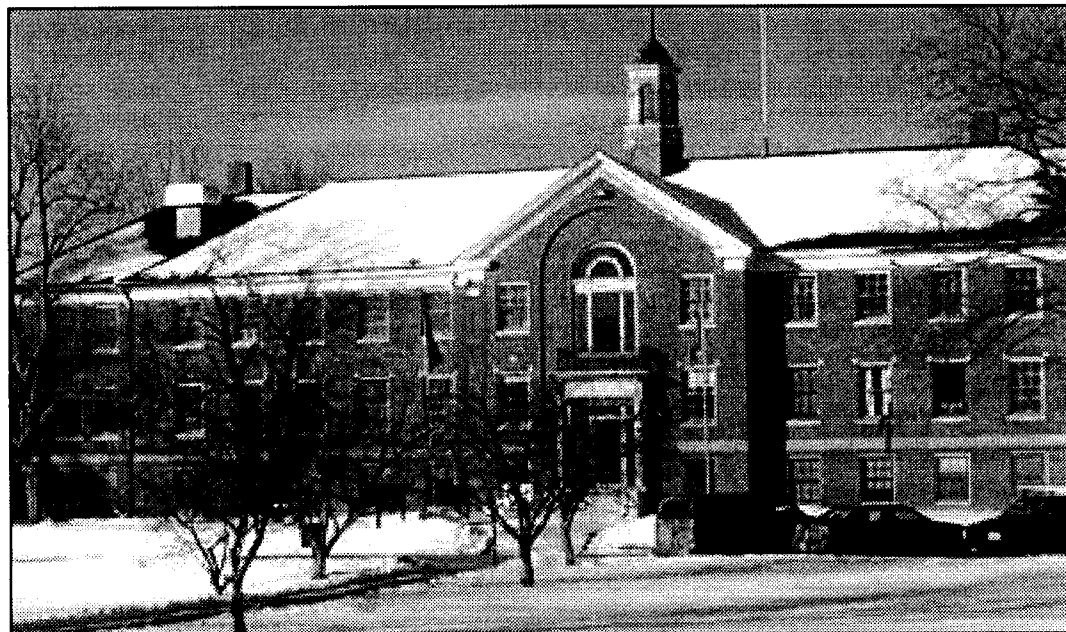


Amendment gives Hallowell, schools stakeholder status on Stevens School

By John Hale
Capital Weekly Reporter

HALLOWELL (May 19): The Legislature's State and Local Government Committee on May 13 voted unanimously in favor of an amendment sponsored by Rep. Sharon Treat, D-Hallowell, to legislation governing the possible sale of Stevens School complex, also known as the Hallowell Annex, in Hallowell.

Advertisement



The Stevens School complex on Winthrop Street in Hallowell as it looked this winter. (Photo by Joyce Grondin)

The amendment stipulates that if the state sells the property on Winthrop Street in Hallowell, it must convene a "stakeholder group" to guide reuse of the property and review qualifications of developers.

Among the stakeholders shall be: the city of Hallowell; any school administrative unit that includes the city of Hallowell; members of the Legislature whose districts include the parcel of land; the Maine Historic Preservation Commission; the Department of Administrative and Financial Services; and others determined by the commissioner of Administrative and Financial Services.

A sub-group of stakeholders may interview qualified developers and review plans for development at the complex.

Treat's amendment is attached to a 2003 bill authorizing the state to sell Stevens School by September 2011.

That law specifies that a portion of the parcel shall be set aside for municipal use by the city of Hallowell, and

another portion shall be set aside for the purpose of education by School Administrative District 16 or any successor school unit that includes Hallowell.

The unanimous recommendation of the State and Local Government Committee means Treat's bill is likely to be approved without debate by the full Legislature.

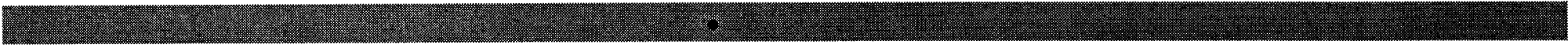
In January, the Hallowell City Council voted 4 to 3 to cease negotiations with the state to purchase the 63-acre complex because the state's asking price was too high.

In mid-December, the city offered the state \$600,000 for the property. At the time, however, the state indicated it wanted \$850,000 for the property in addition to free rent for state use of the buildings for 10 years, according to City Councilor Andrew McPherson.

In February, the City Council voted to reinstate the Hallowell Annex Advisory Committee with three additional members, including Treat, whose charge is to look into the future use of the property. The legislation put forth by Treat is a result of reinstating that committee.

"We have no plans to acquire any part of the property," Hallowell Mayor Anthony Masciadri said this week. "This amendment reinforces the 2003 document in that we will be consulted. We could raise concerns if we had some. The state has already said they will deal with the city."

Masciadri said of the possibility of the city acquiring the former girl's reformatory, "It was a beautiful opportunity, but it came at the wrong time, right when the economy dropped right out with the recession. Right now, we're concentrating on our annual budget."



State eyes site for KENNEBEC JOURNAL housing KENNEBEC JOURNAL

By SUSAN M COVER ✓ - X
Staff Writer

✓
AUGUSTA — The state wants a working group to examine whether the former Stevens School site in Hallowell could be used as housing for veterans

The State and Local Government Committee voted Wednesday in support of a bill to allow veterans housing at the Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center in Bangor

An amendment to the bill also approved by the committee calls for a working group to study the possibility that at least some of the buildings on the 64 acre parcel off Winthrop Street in Hallowell could be converted to veterans housing

Elaine Clark director of the Bureau of General Services said there are state offices and vacant buildings on the property now

There's such a need for veterans housing that is not hospital or nursing care she said That's a big piece of property that could support a lot of veterans

The school was founded in 1872 as the Maine Industrial School for Girls

PLEASE SEE HOUSING B5

✓ Housing

from B1

a name that was changed to the Stevens School for Girls in 1915 Several buildings were added to the campus in subsequent years, for a total of 14 buildings, according to information provided by Clark.

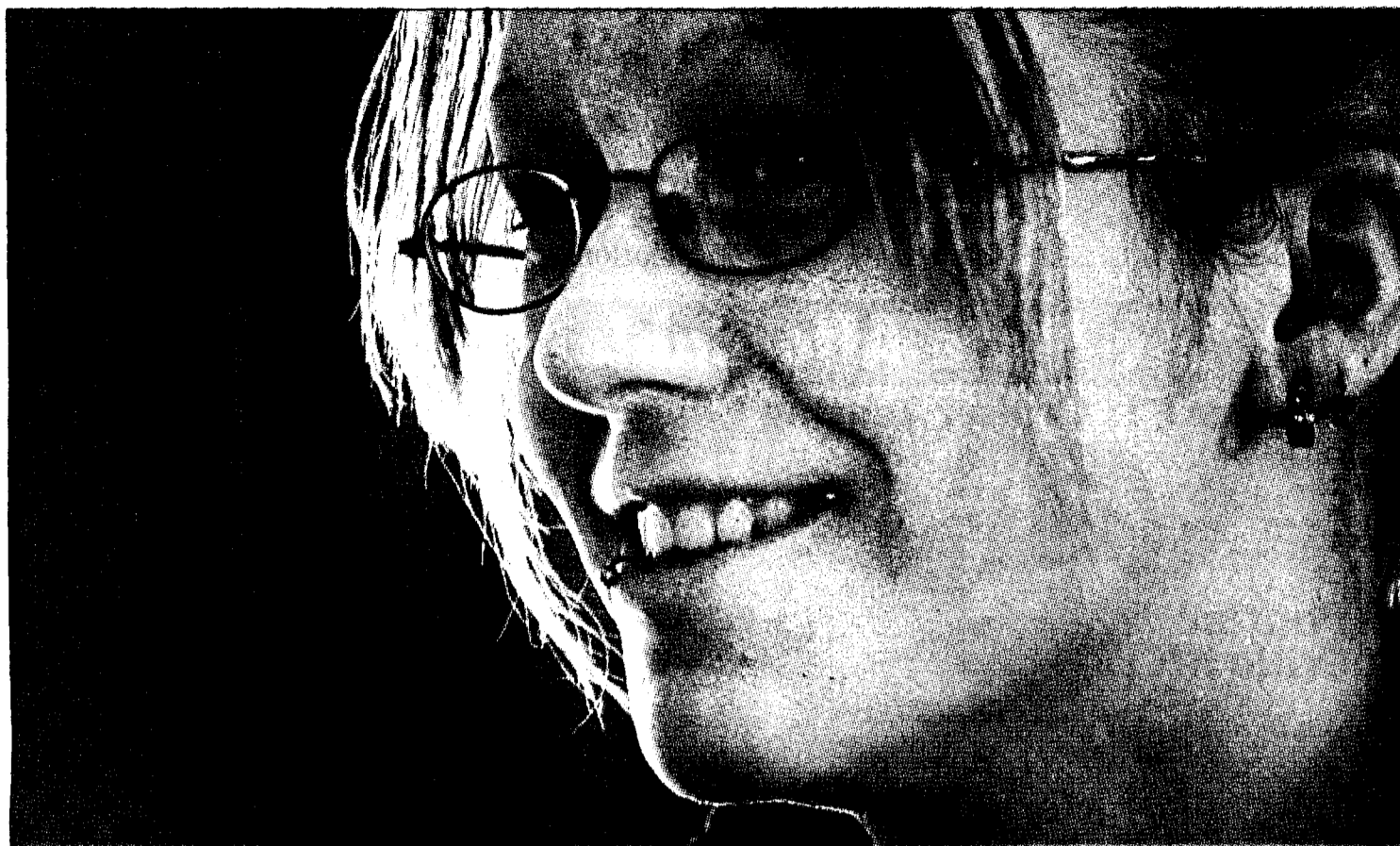
Hallowell Mayor Barry Timson said he's going to get a briefing on the proposal later in the week. He said the city is interested in using one building on the property and in getting the property back on the tax rolls

I'm open to suggestions he said

If the legislation is approved by the full Legislature, the working group would be required to report back to lawmakers with recommendations next year

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Maine's youth development centers use new collaboration method to curb rate of recidivism



BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY GABOR DEGRE

Ashley Provencal, 17, of Skowhegan spent time at the Mountain View Youth Development Center in Charleston three years ago. After she got out, she turned her life around and has been accepted at Southern Maine Community college, where she plans to study criminal justice.

'It's all about choices'

BY LEANNE M. ROBICHEAU
OF THE NEWS STAFF

Ashley Provencal, 17, of Skowhegan is staying clear of trouble.

She is part of a growing percentage of teens who are leaving the state's two detention facilities for young people after completing a new initiative designed to help them deal with their problems instead of causing more.

Provencal graduated June 11 from an alternative high school, walking away with a diploma and a college scholarship.

Since 2002, return rates at Mountain View

Youth Development Center in Charleston and Long Creek Youth Development Center in South Portland have been remarkably reduced, according to Department of Corrections officials.

Before 2002, the rate of return for young people committing crimes had been 50 percent in South Portland and 30 percent in Charleston. Now, those rates have dropped to 10-15 percent at both facilities. The rate of return is measured by the number of youths released from the center who do not return within a year.

What has changed?

"In a nutshell, we've changed everything," said Bartlett Stoodley, associate commissioner

See Youth, Page A6

Youth

Continued from Page A1

of juvenile services for the state Department of Corrections.

Rather than a reward-punishment system, the two Maine youth centers are using an innovative approach called "collaborative problem solving."

In the old system, "all we did was hold them for court," Mountain View Superintendent Eric Hansen said.

The latest tool is talking with these young people, he said, trying to get to the root of their problems.

Collaborative problem solving, or CPS, was developed by psychologist Ross Greene, who is affiliated with Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University and author of "The Explosive Child."

The CPS model is based on the assumption that challenging behavior should be understood and handled in the same manner as other recognized



"Most youths on average spend one year or less in the institution. The true barometer of how successful we are is how well they do back in the community."

Eric Hansen, superintendent, Mountain View Youth Development Center

Mountain View's 178,000-square-foot facility has a capacity to house and educate 140 residents, with a population that is predominantly male. One in every 10 residents is female. The facility has a fully accredited school, complete with culinary arts and woodworking shops.

Of the overall youth population, "85 percent have at least one legitimate mental health issue," Hansen said, "many multiple."

Also, 85 percent suffer from substance abuse, 65 percent are diagnosed for special education needs and more than 25 percent have significant learning disabilities. Only 18 percent of Mountain View's residents come from families with two biological parents, who are both living at home.

Approximately, 90 percent of female residents have been abused physically or sexually or subjected to trauma, compared with 25 percent of boys who were sexually abused and 50 percent who experienced some other form of abuse.

People ages 11 to 18 who commit crimes warranting incarceration are sent to either one of the state's youth centers. They can stay at the facility until they turn 21. Some youths are sent to youth centers while awaiting adjudication. Others are committed, following conviction.

"Most youths on average spend one year or less in the institution," he said. "The true barometer of how successful we are is how well they do back in the community."

Teens are committed to the youth centers for indefinite periods, Hansen said, and must show they are ready for community integration before they are released. It is important they have the right skills so "they don't fall backwards."

Besides regular school classes, the youths must par-

Continued on next page

didn't do anything criminal," she said explaining her probation violation was for reasons such as not attending school.

"It wasn't awesome," she said of her Mountain View stay. "It's like a boot camp."

Provencal isn't one to sit still. She likes to be on the go, getting something accomplished, she said, adding, "it was kind of pointless to be there. I didn't get anything done."

Just when things seemed to be going smoothly with school and work, Provencal got slowed down fast.

It was Sept. 30, 2005, when she was hit by a car in front of a fast food restaurant in Skowhegan after getting off work there. She was thrown 88 feet by the force. After three weeks at Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor, she left there with metal plates in her jaw, leg and shoulder.

She has recovered, and now her focus is back on school.

Provencal graduated a year ahead of time from Marti Stevens School, an alternative education program. She has been accepted at Southern Maine Community College in South Portland, where she plans to study criminal justice. She also wants to continue her studies at the University of Maine in Orono and to become a veterinary technician.

"I want to do both of them," she said. "I get bored with things really quick."

Provencal won a college scholarship from the local Elks Club for an essay she wrote on the problems she has overcome, her mother said.

When the state built two new youth development centers in 2002, replacing the old Maine Youth Center in South Portland and the Northern Maine Juvenile Detention Facility in Charleston, it made a major investment in its youths, Hansen said.

Today, Maine's youth centers have "no bars, no weapons, no chemical sprays," he said. "How we control kids behavior is by working with them, talking with them. Some of the things we're doing are cutting edge, leading the nation."

"[I] stole a bunch of vehicles and I broke into a lot of places. I just didn't care."

Ashley Provencal

learning disabilities, according to the Center for Collaborative Problem Solving.

"In other words, difficult children and adolescents lack important cognitive skills essential to handling frustration and mastering situations requiring flexibility and adaptability," according to the center's Web site. "The CPS model helps adults teach these skills and teaches caregivers and children to work toward mutually satisfactory solutions to the problems causing conflict."

Hansen, during an interview at the Charleston facility, said the process involves talking about consequences. "It's all about choices."

Four years ago, Provencal was on a losing streak. Now she's on the winning end.

In 2002, she spent time at Mountain View when she got into trouble with the law.

"[I] stole a bunch of vehicles and I broke into a lot of places," she said. "I just didn't care."

Provencal does not blame her troubles on the pack of teens she was with when she went on a tear.

"They were running with me pretty much," she said in a recent interview at her home.

"She went on a rampage for a week," her mother, Carlene Provencal, said, describing her daughter as uncontrollable at the time. "Nobody could handle her."

Initially, Ashley spent 30 days at Mountain View, but soon returned for seven months after breaking the terms of her probation. "I

Continued from previous page

ticipate in the collaborative problem solving program, which involves a "pathways checklist" for assessing thinking skills, language processing, social skills, emotion regulation and more.

"The school is really at the heart of our institution," Hansen said. "We have to turn that [learning] switch back on. We've had 140 kids get their GED since 2002. Some have gone directly to college."

The 180 staff and contracted service providers also must meet youths' food, medical, psychological, recreational and spiritual needs.

"Placing emphasis and resources on the juvenile system is an investment in kids so they don't migrate into the adult system," he said. "We're about lifting kids up, not putting them down. That is what our whole focus is about."

Offenders learn to "understand what the victim went through," Hansen said.

In shifting gears, the system has gone from restraint chairs to denying privileges, he said.

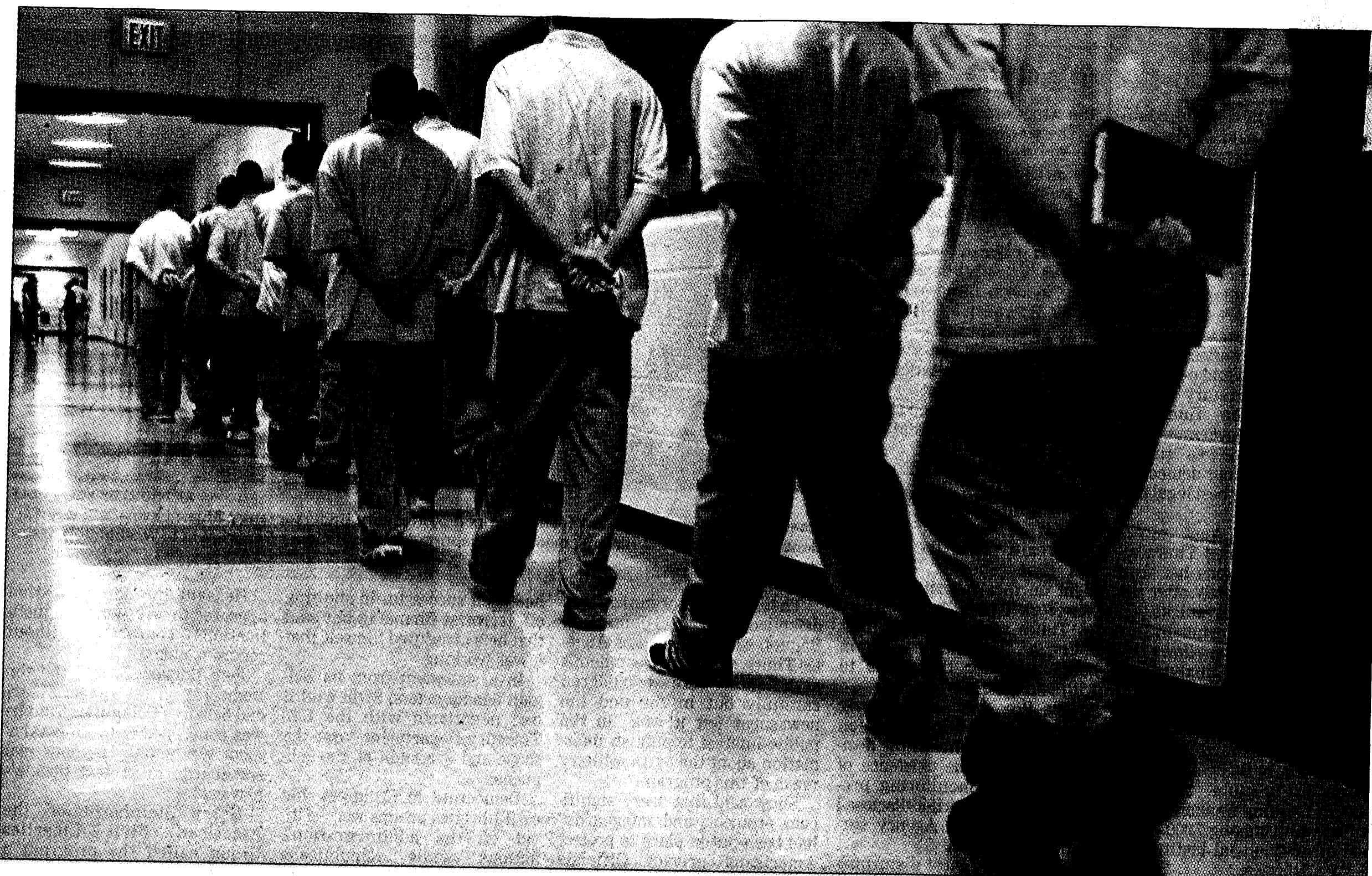
Responsive or restorative justice is the method of getting young people to think about why they did something wrong and realizing the harm they have done to others.

Mountain View has three full-time psychologists, a half-time psychiatrist, five full-time psychological-social workers and four full-time substance abuse counselors.

Provencal said her stay at Mountain View "made me realize there are a lot more better things to do than get in trouble and spend my life in jail."

"We're about lifting kids up, not putting them down. That is what our whole focus is about."

Eric Hansen, superintendent, Mountain View Youth Development Center



Residents of the Mountain View Youth Development Center in Charleston walk to lunch. Staying in a line with hands behind their backs is the rule when they are walking to and from the living area in a group. The residents have to take classes during the day according to their age, and have other activities after school time is over.

BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY GABOR DEGRE