

Cumberland County Community Development Program
2013 CDBG Planning Program Application
Community Cover Page

Project Title Gorham Main Street Master Plan - Update

Lead Community Town of Gorham

Additional Communities None

Contact Information Name David C.M. Galbraith, Zoning Administrator

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Email dgalbraith@gorham.me.us Tel 222-1621

Amount of CDBG Funds Requested \$21,000.00

Total Estimated Project Cost \$25,000.00

Name of Authorized Official David O. Cole, Town Manager

Signature of Authorized Official *David O. Cole*

**Cumberland County Community Development Program
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INTRODUCTION:

The Town of Gorham is seeking community planning funds to update our "Gorham Main Street Master Plan". The original plan was finalized in 1998 and focused on Gorham Village which is the Town's Center. The heart of Gorham Village is located at the intersection of Route 25 (Main Street / State Street) and Route 114 (School Street / South Street). Gorham Village has a diverse mix of commercial / office uses and is surrounded by a variety of residential uses, including multi-family homes / apartments, fraternity and sorority houses, senior housing, and single-family neighborhoods. The Village also incorporates the Municipal Center, an elementary school, a high school, and is also home to the University of Southern Maine Gorham campus.

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Much has changed in the 15 years since the original Gorham Main Street Master Plan was adopted. Since that time the Town has implemented a number of the recommendations of the Plan and has developed additional projects within the area. The goal of the update is to evaluate current needs and to create a revitalization plan to: improve the aesthetic appeal of the Village Center to enrich the livability and enhance the economic vitality of the community; develop a consistent, unified streetscape on Main Street within the Village commercial districts; improve pedestrian, bicyclist and vehicular circulation and safety; provide for efficient and adequate parking without compromising aesthetics; maintain and protect historic buildings; develop implementable, cost-conscious recommendations; and develop regulatory and zoning measures and policies that encourage the desired pattern, mix and quality of buildings and uses.

For the past fifty years the Town of Gorham has undertaken numerous planning studies concerning Gorham Village. Several of these studies have been highway relief route studies that would allow through-traffic to bypass the Village. One of the major challenges within the Village is the intersection of Route 25 and Route 114 and trying to strike a balance between moving a large volume of traffic through the area while providing a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. From January 2001 to December 2008 there were 14 pedestrian accidents and one bicycle accident with a vehicle. In 2008 the Route 112 / Bernard Rines Highway by-pass was opened and helped relieve traffic congestion in the Village. Despite the greatly reduced traffic congestion since the by-pass opened, there have been 8 pedestrian and 2 bicycle accidents at the intersection. In 2010 the Town was awarded CDBG funding for sidewalks and intersection improvements which included ADA compliant concrete crosswalks with bollards. Despite the intersection improvements pedestrian safety remains a concern.

In June of 2012 one residential and one mixed use property within Gorham Village came on the real-estate market. The Town Council seized upon the opportunity and purchased both properties with the vision that they could be utilized for a variety of uses such as public parking, commercial redevelopment, or community open space. It was also realized that if the lots were developed for public parking there was a good opportunity that existing public and private parking lots could be more efficiently designed and better interconnected. The

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purchasing of the properties sparked public debate surrounding the perceived lack of parking and pedestrian safety within the Village. As a result the Town Council tasked the Gorham Economic Development Corporation (GEDC) and Staff to solicit input from the residential and commercial communities about parking needs and issues within the Village. The Town solicited feedback utilizing a survey and at a number of public hearings. Despite the recent intersection improvements, over 65% of people surveyed (over 100 surveys returned) felt that the intersection was still dangerous. It was further concluded by the GEDC that "Gorham Village is not pedestrian friendly and that pedestrians are hindered by the inability to cross the major intersection in the Village".

Town Council and Staff have had a number of discussions with representatives at the University of Southern Maine on how we can better link the University to the Village. The University has also been discussing building a 500-seat multi-purpose facility to serve the needs of the music, fine and performing arts programs, as well as lectures (see attached article). A facility of this size will certainly increase vehicle and pedestrian traffic within the Village. The Town wants to build off the intersection improvements and continue to improve public parking, pedestrian access, walkability, and safety.

Parking within the Village, particularly at the Route 25 and Route 114 intersection (see attached aerial photo), remains a significant problem. The majority of the buildings in the area are multi-story structures having multiple commercial uses or a mix of commercial and residential uses. Most of the lots have little or no parking so businesses are forced to rely on on-street parking. A number of the buildings have vacancies and lack of parking is identified as a key factor. Unfortunately the majority of the private parking lots remain un-connected and utilized only by the property owners and their tenants. As a result, when frequenting the Village, the majority of patrons drive from one business to another despite the close proximity of the businesses. This not only discourages shoppers to walk, it increases traffic on the roadways. The 1998 plan identified interconnecting parking lots as a way to provide additional parking that functioned more efficiently. The updated plan would look to further investigate the ability for interconnected parking.

Another item that was identified as an issue in the 1998 plan was the need for beautification planning of the Village to make it more attractive to encourage usage and to help increase vibrancy. Some of the identified improvements included placing utilities underground, creating public open space, installing decorative pedestrian scale lighting and street furniture such as benches, waste receptacles, and bike racks. The need for additional landscaping and unifying the landscaping within the Village was also recognized as a needed amenity and traffic calming feature. Due to the greater concern for improving pedestrian safety and traffic congestion projects taking up a greater amount of local resources only minor beautification projects were completed since 1998. A primary focus of the updated plan would be beautification efforts.

One item that needs investigation in the new study is the residential zoning surrounding the Village. Many of these old homes are very large but are restricted, due to the lot sizes, to remain single-family homes, which is often not practical. Many of these homes could be converted to multi-family dwellings which would increase density where the Town can provide

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services most cost effectively. The University dormitories house 1,100 students, and many of the old larger homes, which could be converted to multi-family dwellings, are in very close proximity to the University. Providing additional student housing in the Village would help to tie the University and downtown together which would increase vibrancy in the Village.

The Village has an assorted mix of commercial uses; however, there are a number of properties that are currently vacant and / or in various states of disrepair. This has fostered a great deal of public debate on how to eliminate blight and encourage public and private investment and economic development. Since the adoption of the 1998 Gorham Main Street Master Plan the Town has implemented a number of ordinances to regulate design elements on new projects within the Village, but the Town is interested in advancing this goal to a higher level and improving the overall aesthetic appeal of the entire Village.

From the above discussions a realization developed that there were a number of projects and issues happening independently within the Village. It became apparent that a more organized "big picture" approach was necessary and that it was critical to evaluate and coordinate all issues / projects within the entire Village together. It was further realized that a key element of our success would be updating the Main Street Master Plan and implementing the recommendations that are developed. Critical to our success will be the already engaged business and residential communities, the University of Southern Maine, the Gorham Economic Development Corporation and our committed Town Council and Staff.

COMMUNITIES READYNESS TO PROCEED:

Due to the scope of the project the Town will need to work with a consultant to update the plan. Although committed to the project, like most municipalities, the Town has ever growing budgetary constraints. The Town recognizes the ever present goal to maintain a reasonable tax rate while providing basic services and prioritizing our expenditures. Obtaining CDBG funds is critical as this project has not been fully funded at the local level. The Town Council is committed to this project, and at their January 8, 2013 public hearing passed Order #8253 (see attached Council minutes and Town Clerk certification) which authorized a local match of \$4,000.

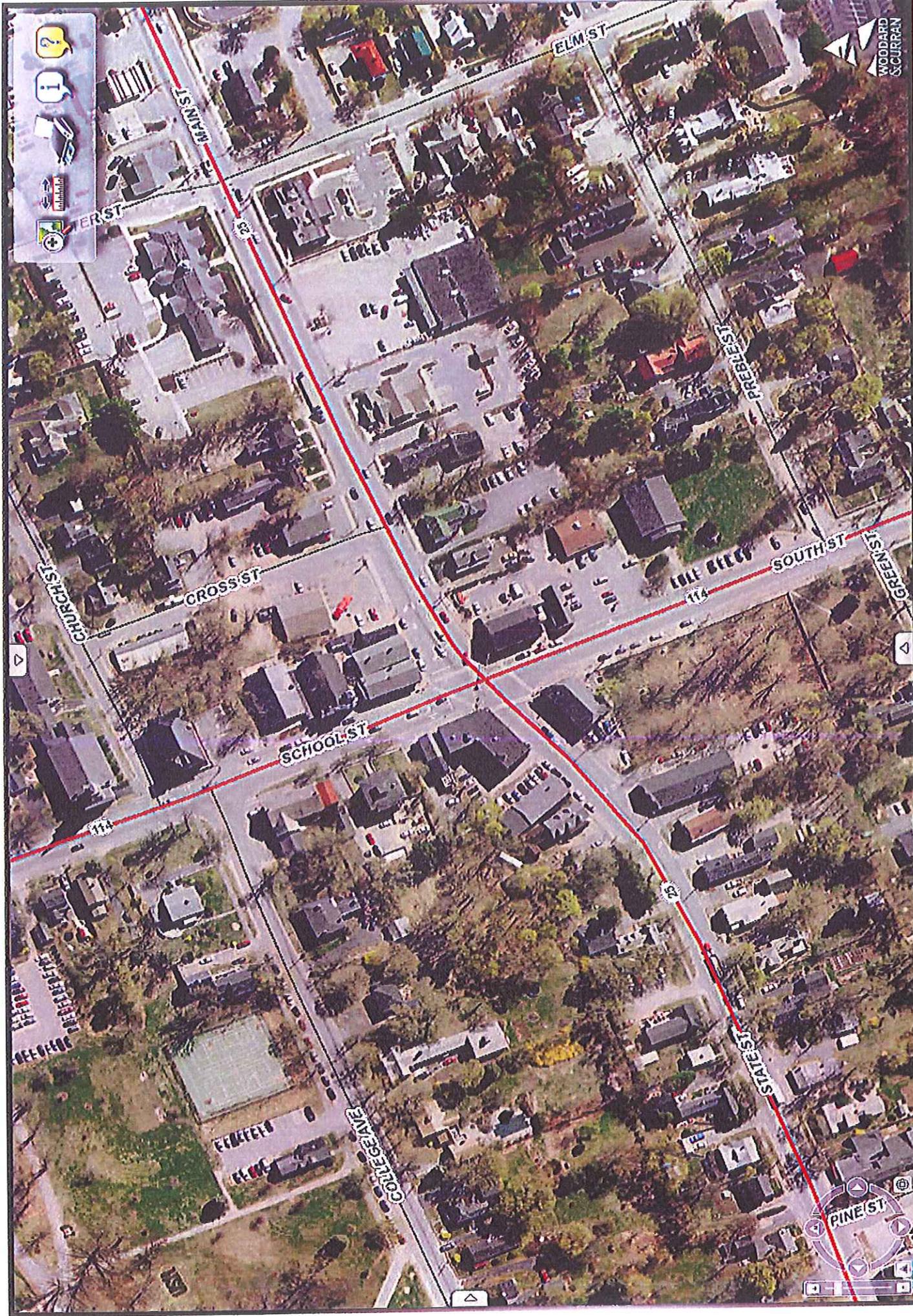
STRATEGY FOR PROJECT COMPLETION:

Once the Town obtains funding for the plan update we plan on hiring a consultant and establishing a committee with representatives of the public, business community, the University, Town Staff and Town Councilors. From this we will focus on reviewing the existing plan for items completed and items still pertinent. We will also evaluate existing conditions and identify areas of improvements. We will also ascertain all projects within the project area and evaluate how they can be linked together. We will develop recommendations and seek public feedback. Following plan adoption we will implement the plan. The Town is anxious to begin this exciting project and plans on hiring a consultant and beginning the process as soon as funds are available.

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Appendix II: Budget

Planning Grant – Program Budget				
Cost Category	CDBG Funds	Municipal Funds	Other Funds	Total
Consultant Services	\$21,000.00	\$2,500.00	-0-	\$23,500.00
Advertising	-0-	\$400.00	-0-	\$400.00
Public Meetings	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Printing	-0-	\$1,000.00	-0-	\$500.00
Mailings	-0-	\$100.00	-0-	\$100.00
Other	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
Total Costs	\$21,000.00	\$4,000.00	-0-	\$25,000.00
Provide the basis for determination of budget amounts: Staff based the above numbers on our discussions with a number of consultants and the costs associated with similar projects (advertising, mailings, printing etc.).				





Town Clerk's Office
75 South Street Suite 1
Gorham, Maine 04038-1382
Telephone (207) 222-1671
Fax (207) 839-5036

Cornelia C. Loughran
Town Clerk

January 31, 2013

To Whom it may concern:

This is to certify that the attached is a true copy of Record of Meeting of the Gorham Town Council for January 8, 2013.

Attest:


Cornelia C Loughran, Town Clerk

REPORT OF THE
GORHAM TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
January 8, 2013

Chairman Gagnon opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. There were nine (9) members of the public present at the start of the meeting.

Roll Call: Present: Chairman Gagnon, Councilors: Moulton, Benner, Phillips, Phinney, Pressey.
Absent: Councilor Robinson. Also present was Town Manager, David Cole and Town Clerk, Connie Loughran.

Moved by Councilor Phinney, seconded by Councilor Phillips and VOTED to Accept the minutes of the December 4, 2012 Town Council Regular Meeting. 6 yeas

There were no open public communications.

Councilor Communications

Councilor Moulton stated that he was happy that Gorham House of Pizza has reopened.

Councilor Phillips reported that the Finance Committee had met and reviewed the November financials and that there had been no major issues with the audit review.

Councilor Phinney reported that there had not been an Ordinance Committee meeting since the last Council meeting, however, tonight the Council would be reviewing the Committee's work schedule.

Councilor Pressey warned citizens to be careful of black ice.

Councilor Gagnon reported that on January 22nd he would be meeting with USM President, Theodora J. Kalikow and invited anyone interested to come and watch the women's game and enjoy refreshments.

Town Manager Report

David Cole reported that he had toured the old fraternity house on Preble Street and he congratulated the Wentworths on a terrific job in refurbishing the building.

School Committee Report

Chairman Currier reported that the School department expresses appreciation to Chiefs Shepard and Lefebvre during the recent threats at the high school. She reported that there would be a \$157,534 curtailment of State funds to education in Gorham and that school districts would be receiving even less in the future. A needs assessment has been completed and request for renovations and expansion of the High School is expected to go to referendum in November 2013.

Tom Ellsworth was not present to report for the Gorham Economic Development Corporation.

Old Business

Moved by Councilor Pressey, seconded by Councilor Phinney and Voted to take up Item #8225 after Item 8246. 6 years, for continuity it will be reported on in its proper order.

Item #8225 The Order as previously Moved and seconded at the October 2, 2012 Town Council meeting was voted and FAILED OF PASSAGE, to appoint (3 Council Members) and 2 community members to the Little Falls Building Committee, and that the Town Manager and Recreation Director shall serve as Ex Officio members of the Committee. 6 nays (Pressey, Phinney, Phillips, Gagnon, Benner, Moulton)

Item #8207 As previously Moved and seconded at the September 4, 2012 Town Council meeting it was ORDERED that the Town Council appropriate \$175,000 from the remaining Capital Part 2 funds for the purpose of conducting any environmental cleanup necessary and the subsequent demolition of the White Rock School. 6 yeas

New Business

Item #8246 Moved by Councilor Pressey, seconded by Councilor Phinney, MOVED by Councilor Phinney, seconded by Councilor Benner to AMEND the proposed order. 6 yeas The Order as amended was voted resulting in the following ORDERED, that the Town Council authorize a Referendum on June 11, 2013 asking the voters to approve a project and funding to develop a Public Safety Facility for Fire and Police in Little Falls, that would incorporate the reuse of the former Little Falls School (and listed as option 4 in the preliminary Report from the Public Safety Building Committee prepared from the December 18, 2012 Town Council Workshop) at a cost of \$6.3 million, and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Town Council schedule a public hearing on this Referendum for May 7, 2013, and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that the referendum question to appear on the ballot shall be as follows:

REFERENDUM QUESTION NO.1

Shall a capital expenditure not to exceed \$6,300,000 be approved to pay for costs of expansion renovation, improvement or replacement and equipping of the former Little Falls School for use as a Police Station and Fire Station, such amount to be raised by the issuance of general obligations bonds and/or notes of the Town, hereby authorized, with the bonds and notes to have such dates, maturities, denominations, interest rates(s) and other details (including provisions that the bonds may be subject to call for redemption with or without premiums) as said Municipal Officers shall determine; with the current building at 270 Main Street to be used for a community center and recreation?

(Total estimated debt service of \$8,284,500 of which the maximum principal amount is \$6,300,000 and estimated interest thereon at 3% over 20 years is \$ 1,984,500)

Notes: The Town Council recommends a "Yes" vote. and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Town Council asks the Public Safety Building Committee to develop plans to reuse space within the current building at 270 Main Street to be used for a community center

and recreation that that will be vacated if Police and Fire move to Little Falls. 4years, 2 nays (Gagnon, Phillips)

Item #8247 Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Phinney and ORDERED, that the Town Council rescind order #8223, previously approved by the Council on September 21, 2012, that authorized a referendum for \$4 million to make repairs to the Public Safety Building. 6 years

Item #8248 Moved by Councilor Phinney, seconded by Councilor Pressey and ORDERED, that the Town Council accept Timothy Drive, located in Winslow Road Subdivision, off Winslow Road, as a public road, and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Timothy Drive be classified as a Rural Access Road. 6 years

Item #8249 Moved by Councilor Moulton, seconded by Councilor Phinney and ORDERED, that the Town Council approve a Construction Over Limit Permit for a Maine Department of Transportation project (Project No. 019121.00) on New Portland Road. 6 years

Item #8250 Moved by Councilor Phinney, seconded by Councilor Benner and ORDERED, that the Town Council remove the following items from the Ordinance Committee's work schedule.

1. Develop a policy for use of snack shacks.
2. Develop an Ordinance to regulate medical marijuana.
3. Review of Recreation and Open Space Impact fee.
4. Develop an Ordinance to regulate dumping and littering.

Item #8251 Moved by Councilor Phinney, seconded by Councilor Benner and ORDERED, that the Town Council support and endorse the concept of having the Westbrook Gorham Chamber of Commerce organize and administer the annual Founders Festival, and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Town Manager is authorized to meet with the Chamber for the purpose of discussing, planning and developing an agreement for the Town Council to consider. 6 years

Item #8252 Moved by Councilor Phinney, seconded by Councilor Pressey and ORDERED, that the Town Council approve the Memorandum of Participation in the Minerva System for Baxter Memorial Library and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Library Director is authorized to sign the Memorandum on behalf of the Town. 6 years

Item #8253 Moved by Councilor Pressey, seconded by Councilor Phinney. Moved by Councilor Phinney, seconded by Councilor Phillips and VOTED to AMEND the proposed Order by adding "to come from the Planning Department Reserve Account" 6 years The order as amended was voted resulting in the following: ORDERED, that the Town Council authorize the Town to submit an application for a CDBG Planning Grant for amount not to exceed \$25,000 to update the Village Master Plan with a local match of \$4,000 to come from the Planning Department Reserve Account. 6 years

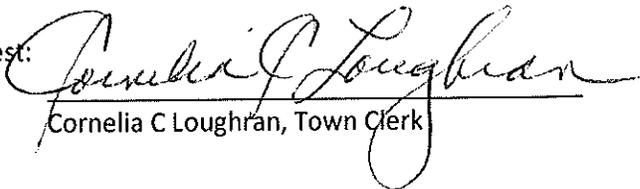
Item #8254 Moved by Councilor Phinney, seconded by Councilor Pressey and ORDERED, that the Town Council authorize the Finance Committee to meet with the School Boards' Finance Committee and discuss Capital needs and financial issues and report back to the Town Council. 6 years

Item #8255 Moved by Councilor Phinney, seconded by Councilor Phillips and ORDERED, that the Town Council go into Executive Session, pursuant to Title 1, M.R.S.A., Section 405 (6) (c) to discuss the acquisition of property. 6 years

Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Moulton and VOTED to come out of Executive Session. 6 years

Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Moulton and VOTED to ADJOURN. Time of adjournment 8:33 PM. 6 years

A TRUE COPY

Attest: 
Cornelia C Loughran, Town Clerk

USM eyes new Gorham auditorium

By Robert Lowell rlowell@keepmecurrent.com | Posted: Wednesday, January 30, 2013 5:56 pm

GORHAM – The new president of the University of Southern Maine is looking at a possible renewed effort to build an auditorium on the Gorham campus.

Theodora Kalikow told Gorham officials and business people Tuesday at a Gorham Business Exchange luncheon meeting about the need for a 500-seat facility on campus.

At the luncheon, hosted on campus, Kalikow also solicited input from the local leaders that would enhance the university's involvement in the community.

"We need to entice people not to schlep into Portland," Kalikow said.

Robert Caswell, university spokesman, on Wednesday described Kalikow's proposal as a multi-purpose facility on the Gorham campus to serve needs of the music, fine and performing arts programs, as well as lectures.

Her idea to build a new facility follows two previous efforts that did not materialize in the past decade for a university auditorium.

Phil Gagnon, chairman Gorham Town Council, said late Tuesday afternoon her idea would be a "very exciting addition" to the university. □

"The prospect and possibilities of how it would be used can only benefit USM and Gorham," Gagnon said. □□

Caswell said the proposed facility would make the university's Gorham campus more vibrant. Caswell said more internal discussions are needed about the project and its fiscal viability.

"It's a serious plan we're in the process of finalizing," Caswell said.

At the luncheon, Kalikow pointed to the need for more space at the Gorham campus as she is stepping up the focus on serving students. The aging Russell Hall, which has a small auditorium with less than 150 seats, houses the university's Theater Department. Caswell said Corthell Concert Hall has 180 seats.

Caswell said location of a new facility on campus and cost had yet to be nailed down. But in the luncheon, Kalikow asked, "Does anyone know someone with about \$5 million."

Kalikow's proposed facility met with enthusiastic support from Tom Ellsworth, Gorham Economic Development director, who attended the luncheon.

"An auditorium is a great idea and I feel would produce significant spin-off effect for businesses in the village, particularly restaurants," Ellsworth said following the luncheon.

"An auditorium of that size could very easily hold concerts and speakers that Gorham residents could attend and enjoy, as well as give a boost to our local businesses," Gagnon said. □

And Kalikow wants an auditorium sooner than later. "If we build anything, it needs to be fast," she said

Following the luncheon meeting, Kalikow later on in the day was scheduled to discuss the auditorium proposal as one topic in a brainstorming session with her team of university deans and administrators concerning the next 10 years at the university. The talks were to include a location on campus and developing a capital campaign for the project.

A similar auditorium proposal two years ago for a regional center for fine and performing arts would have been built with private fundraising. Selma Botman, the former university president, mentioned the proposal in a 2010 meeting with Gorham officials.

A proposal studied at that time identified the Gorham campus as a potential site for a regional arts center, but apparently didn't proceed past a feasibility study. After Botman's departure, Kalikow took over in July 2012.

In 2001, university officials studied building a 900-seat concert hall, but a proposed collaborative effort then with Maine State Music Theater didn't materialize.

The university has a significant presence in the town. Campus dormitories house 1,100 students and more live in off-campus apartments. The university has 511 employees working on its Gorham campus, and Kalikow said, 850 alumni live in Gorham.

"USM has been very generous to our community," said Gagnon. "It is host to everything from high school hockey games at its ice arena to the Gorham Business Exchange's annual Marketplace held at its field house." □

In Tuesday's luncheon, Kalikow outlined her goals for the university in the 21st century that included helping students succeed and keeping the university in business.

"We're going to try new things," Kalikow said.