



How housing project hit roadblock

COMING TOMORROW: City Councilors react to quashed multi-use development.

CONCORD: Two years after plans unfurled for nearly 1,000 units, city says it won't rezone industrial land

By **CATHERINE McLAUGHLIN**
Monitor staff

When addressing the lack of housing in Concord, city officials often cite 2,000 units in the construction pipeline. Yet nearly a

third of those come from a single project that the city manager and mayor now say they have no interest in seeing move forward.

"One of the key elements to business growth and also to ad-

ressing homelessness in the city is definitely creation of more housing," Mayor Byron Champlin said in his State of the City remarks in April. "If all 3,000 plus units that I talked about are completed, the city's

total housing supply will be expanded by nearly 16%."

Fast forward five months, and Champlin had a different attitude after the developer asked

SEE HOUSING A4

CONCORD: Historic document from 1785 delivered to state archives by NH GOP



New Hampshire State Archivist Ashley Miller points to the telltale signs that the 1785 "Oath of Allegiance" document is authentic at the State Archives on Wednesday.

Geoff Forester / Monitor staff

A mysterious package

By **JEREMY MARGOLIS**
Monitor staff

Less than two weeks before the presidential primary this year, New Hampshire Republican Party Chairman Chris Ager received a mysterious package.

Ager wondered if it was hate mail or a death threat, both of which he had received in the past. But his curiosity trumped any fear, and he decided to open it anyway.

Inside, Ager discovered a two-page letter from a man from New Orleans, along with a very old-

looking 16-x-19-inch document.

"Enclosed is a contribution of a 1785 'Oath of Allegiance,'" the letter writer wrote.

"At first, I thought, 'Is this for real?' I wasn't sure," Ager said. "The postmark was from New Orleans, Louisiana, and so I'm like, 'There's a lot of crazy people

down there.'"

Ager brought the document to State Archivist Ashley Miller, who quickly confirmed the document was in fact real. Moreover, it was historic.

The oath, penned by the first

SEE ARCHIVE A5

GOVERNOR'S RACE

Ayotte, Morse trade barbs

While they mostly agree, siding with Democrats was thrown as insult between GOP contenders

By **MICHAELA TOWFIGH**
Monitor staff

Sumana Anand didn't know much about Kelly Ayotte or Chuck Morse when she took her seat in the auditorium of New England College.

The 17-year-old student from Derry kicked off her freshman year by attending her first candidate debate just before she turns 18 later this month and can register to vote in the November general election.

Veronica Shore, a 20-year-old junior from Maine won't be able to cast a ballot for either candidate but admitted the contest was an interesting look into the politics of her neighboring state - something she hadn't paid attention to before attending the small liberal arts college in Henniker, that remains a consistent campaign stop come election time.

"I'm not exactly in on the more local things happening, politics-wise, in New Hampshire, and this campus is very good for stuff like this," said Shore. "Candidates are always coming through here, people are always coming to talk, so I like to come to these events."

For much of the night the two candidates - Ayotte, a former U.S. Senator and Morse, a former New Hampshire Senate President - read from the same script.

When asked if they agree with Trump's claims that the 2020 election was stolen, neither provided a yes-or-no answer.

Morse said voters he's talked to on the campaign trail are concerned about election security and the state should strengthen laws, requiring identification to vote. Ayotte said Joe Biden is the president but change is needed come November.

Each candidate emphasized their endorsement of former President Donald Trump. They both are opposed to sanctuary cities and legaliz-

SEE DEBATE A5

Candidates for Congress face off in Granite State debates

Goodlander, Van Ostern clash over backgrounds, tone

By **CHARLOTTE MATHERLY**
Monitor staff

Colin Van Ostern and Maggie Goodlander exchanged a blitz of accusations about their backgrounds, funding and past political work, all of which have been prominent themes in their tense race for New Hampshire's second congressional district.

During a debate at New England College on Wednes-

day, the candidates vying to clinch the Democratic nomination and replace Annie Kuster, who's not seeking reelection, focused most intensely on reproductive rights and took aim at each other's records.

Despite the heated exchanges at the debate, Goodlander and Van Ostern agree on many of the issues - they participated in a forum at

SEE DEMOCRATS A3



Democratic congressional candidates Maggie Goodlander (left) and Colin Van Ostern shake hands after the Live Free or Die Debates in Henniker on Wednesday evening.

Geoff Forester / Monitor staff

Trio of GOP frontrunners stand firm on gun rights

By **MICHAELA TOWFIGH**
Monitor staff

Bill Hamlen said he couldn't imagine the pain of parents whose kids were at that high school - he has two teenage daughters himself - but solutions to prevent these tragedies lie in school security.

Vikram Mansharamani agreed. The aftermath of a shooting is unthinkable, but the root cause is the mental health challenges of at-risk and be trained to use their weapons.

SEE GOP A3

SLOW DRAIN? WHOOSH IT AWAY!



\$99 MAIN DRAIN LINE OPENING

Residential City Sewer Only. Limit 1 Drain Line.

833-209-1603

ROWELL'S SERVICES

ESTABLISHED SINCE 1942

INSIDE



SPORTS

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL SEASON KICKS OFF

Page B1

Classifieds B5 Nation&World B3
Close-Up B8 Obituaries A4
Comics B7 Opinion A7
Crosswords B6,B7 Sports B1
KenKen B6 Sudoku B6
Local&State A2 Weather A8



6 15579 00001 8



Monitor Way development conceptual plan, October 2023

Courtesy of Community Power

How mixed-used project hit city roadblock

HOUSING FROM A1

the city to rezone a tract of land along the Merrimack River, which currently only allows industrial uses.

"The way his project is right now," Champlin said last month, "it's just not that attractive to us."

Plans for the Monitor Way project, a mixed-use development that got its name because it would be built on land owned by the Concord Monitor's parent company, include more than 900 housing units, most of them apartments.

This summer, two years after the project was announced, City Manager Tom Aspell's office told the developer that any attempt to rezone the land to allow housing was off the table for the next several years. City officials, and residents, have expressed concern about traffic and infrastructure related to the project, but the city has given no previous public indication of being against rezoning the land, or conversely, limiting it to industrial uses.

"We understand that the property is zoned industrial. That has been known since the beginning of the project," Kevin Lacasse, CEO of New England Family Housing and a lead developer on the project, wrote in a letter to the city last week. "As stated previously, re-zoning the property didn't appear to be a concern as our concept was said to be generally consistent with the community's goals and aspirations for the site." Only now has zoning been cited as a concern.

Based on what city staff and elected officials have said about this project publicly, Concord's administration has only recently raised concerns about a rezoning of the property. City staff even previously noted that the city was planning for a non-industrial development at that site.

The developers, in a letter to the city, said city staff is not dealing with their proposal openly and is "grossly" overestimating its costs.

"We have requested an audience with Mayor and Council to discuss our proposal only to be told that it is not allowed and that our proposal can only be presented by staff in non-public session," Kevin Lacasse, Deane Navaroli and Mike Dion, the Monitor Way development team, wrote in a letter to city administration last month. "In light of your most recent letter, we believe some aspects of our proposal may not have been accurately conveyed to Mayor and Council in our absence."

The cost of the road and other off-site improvements would cost about \$6.67 million, not \$38 million, as city officials

have claimed. "While we recognize this amount is not inconsequential, it would be offset by the projected tax revenue generated by the full buildout, which is anticipated to be more than \$6 million to \$8 million annually," the developers wrote.

In an interview recently, Champlin said the Monitor Way site is broadly not supported by the city because the current Master Plan favors the redevelopment of land over new construction on undeveloped land and visions the land as remaining industrially zoned. He also argued that a potential future industrial use of the property was key to expanding the city's tax base.

Monitor Way developers declined to comment for this story. The city manager's office has not responded to multiple interview requests, and a related request for public records has not yet been fulfilled.

Lacasse and his development team have an agreement to buy the land from the parent company that owns the Concord Monitor and five other newspapers in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The agreement does not include the Monitor's building and the newspaper has no role in the sale.

'I think it's fantastic'

The project's design team gave a presentation to Concord's Planning Board last year and at a neighborhood meeting in Penacook in May.

City officials and residents have voiced various concerns about the project mainly centered around traffic and infrastructure but changing the zoning was not one of them.

"As we advance, we understand that we would need a zoning change here to make this work. And we wanted to visit the planning board to see: Is this a project that you would embrace? Is this the type of development that you're looking for in moving forward?" Ed Roberge, an engineer for the project, said when Monitor Way was first pitched to the Concord Planning Board last fall. "We're just trying to get some better input."

Along with concerns about a traffic burden, board members shared thoughts on where self-storage units should go and accommodations for environmentally friendly transportation like bikes, buses and electric cars. Those comments echoed public feedback related to the developer at earlier meetings with the Penacook Village Association.

Board members also spoke favorably about the project putting housing on the

land along the river, complementing the development for what it could mean for addressing the region's housing crisis. They didn't raise concerns over the project's conflicts with the Master Plan, and then-City Planner Heather Shank noted that the city had planned for a non-industrial build-out on the property.

"I'm not saying Not In My Backyard," said Matthew Hicks, a planning board member who lives on Mountain Road. "I'm saying, build it, I think it's fantastic. But I'm saying that the people on Mountain Road that I've talked to, and I've talked to many of them, don't know what their neighborhood is going to become. ... This is a great spot for this development, it's just what it's attached to that presents a problem."

In a recent interview, Planning Board Chair Richard Woodfin said that preliminary review of a new project is to give non-binding feedback and impressions of plans, not to answer questions about a development concept.

"When the plans first came out, the board looks at it and goes 'this looks nice — let's dig into the details,'" Woodfin said. "Does it work for the future of the city? We didn't render opinions on that." Shank, responding to traffic questions at the meeting, noted that the city planned for dense, non-industrial development on the proposed site when it did traffic studies for the Market Basket project off Exit 17.

"This corridor was assumed to be built out. It wasn't assumed to be simply industrial use with minimal traffic," she told the planning board. "There's already a base of data that was assumed to be this type of density when that construction happened."

Flash forward to the State of the City event, put on by the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce in April, where Aspell outlined the infrastructure needs of Monitor Way, from culvert replacements to the expense of extending Whitney Road, which, together, he said could carry a more than \$20 million price tag. There was no discussion of wanting to preserve industrial land or opposition to rezoning at the project site then, or when the road came up again during spring budget talks.

'More interest than dissent'

From the planning board hearing to meetings between the developer and the Penacook Village Association, city residents have given the pro-

ject a mixed response: Many vocally objected to any large development happening on undeveloped land along the river, and rejected the idea that taxpayer dollars should be used to support it. Others have applauded the project, saying that working to increase housing of all types in the area makes the costs of the project — of infrastructure work and losing the undeveloped land — worth talking about.

There has been no vocal public advocacy for industrial use of the land: Those who most strongly opposed the project want the land to remain largely undeveloped, either because of environmental reasons or because they don't want any additional traffic.

"To see that part of Concord destroyed, it just breaks my heart," Elizabeth Szelo, a Sewalls Falls Road resident, said to the planning board. "I just can't support the project, and I feel awful saying that because I know that we need housing."

Those who support Monitor Way founded their support on the volume of housing it would bring.

"Even if you might miss a few stars, does it help have other people have somewhere to live, somewhere to work," Ahni Malachi, a Penacook resident, said in planning board testimony. Adding housing, she continued, is a big part of making the city more welcoming. "For the last decade, everyone has been saying 'diversity, inclusion, diversity, inclusion' — but if it's not in your backyard, how are you diverse? Who are you including?"

Malachi has since been named by Champlin to lead the city's new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Belonging committee.

City Councilor Brent Todd, whose ward includes the proposed site, recently summed up the thoughts residents see the project.

"That concern would exist regardless of the type of development that occurred," he said in reference to Mountain Road traffic backups. "What I didn't really hear was a majority of residents overwhelmingly rejecting the project. It seems to me that there has been overall more interest than dissent about it."

Lacasse's team, in response to city pushback on road infrastructure, have proposed a drastically scaled back version of their project. But Aspell's office has rejected a request to rezone that as well. Whether councilors are as staunchly opposed to a rezoning request will be explored in future coverage.

OBITUARIES

William Leber

ANDOVER, NH — William E. Leber, 91, of Salisbury Highway, died Sunday, September 1, 2024 at Presidential Oaks in Concord, NH.

He was born in Cockeysville, MD on Dec. 5, 1932 the son of Harry S. and Helen C. (Wineholt) Leber. He graduated from Clarksville, MD High School and then enlisted in the US Air Force and attended night school for 12 years. Bill earned his degree from the University of Omaha while in the Air Force. He spent 20 years in the military and retired with the rank of Major. He moved to Andover in 1972 and worked for the State of NH Aeronautics Commission as Deputy Director for 20 years retiring in 1994. Bill worked for the Veteran's Administration for a short time during those years. In 1996 he became a NH State Legislator and served four terms.

He has had very active in his community. Bill was a member of the Order of Daedalus from 1967-1988 and was a member of the Crosby-Gilbert Post #101 American Legion of Andover. He had been very active with the Andover Lions Club since 1974, served as Past District Governor for District 44N from 1987-1988 and had been President of the Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation. He was a member of the Kearsarge Lodge #81 F & AM of Andover. Bill was Past President of the Order of Balthazar and was instrumental in getting the cabooses which are maintained by the Society in Potter Place. In 1973 he was fire commissioner and during that time the building was finished and they acquired a fire truck. He had been active in the Boy Scouts, was a past Scout Master and had served as Treas-



urer since 1972.

He was predeceased by two brothers, Carson J. and Marlet E. "White" Leber and a sister, Dorothy Leber. Members of his family surviving include his wife of 64 years, Marjorie M. (Maxfield) Leber of Andover, NH; a daughter, Deborah J. Barton of Keene, NH; two sons, Douglas (Roger) E. Leber of Los Angeles, CA and Mark (Tammy) C. Leber of Gilford, NH; seven grandchildren, Jillian, Jason (Kelli), Katherine (Josh), Nathaniel (Paula), Alexander (Danielle) Barton and Corwin and Braden Leber; five great grandchildren; a brother, Ronald Leber of Baltimore, MD; nieces and nephews.

Friends may call at the Chadwick Funeral Home, 235 Main Street, New London, NH on Sunday, September 8, 2024 from 2:00-4:00 P.M. A graveside service with military honors will be held on Monday, September 9, 2024 at 10:30 A.M.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation of NH, P.O. Box 730, Concord, NH 03302 or to the Andover Emergency Services, P.O. Box 61, Andover, NH 03216.

Henry "Hank" Joseph Dougherty

CANTERBURY, NH — Henry "Hank" Joseph Dougherty, 92, of Canterbury, passed away on Saturday, August 31, 2024. Born on March 19, 1932 in Newark, NJ, he was the son of the late Maurice and Susan (Lillis) Dougherty.

Hank grew up in Newark, NJ and graduated from St. Michael's Catholic School. After high school, he enlisted in the United States Army where he was stationed in Germany and Austria until he was honorably discharged in 1955. Following the service, he attended and graduated from Seton Hall University and began his career with Blue Cross & Blue Shield for over 20 years until he became the executor director of the NH Dental Society before his retirement. Hank was a member of the Knights of Columbus and served as Chairman for the Canterbury Fair. He was a devoted family man and biggest supporter of his kids playing sports. He loved watching them play various sports throughout their lives and enjoyed going for long walks with his dog Barney.

He is survived by his sons Rich Dougherty and wife Kristin, Sean Dougherty and wife Michele, and Daniel Dougherty; daughter Mary Jo Sonia; grandchildren Keelin Andrus and husband David, Tegan Dougherty, Conor Dougherty, Joseph Dougherty, Margaret Parsons and husband Kevin, Erin Dougherty, Cullen Dougherty, Josephine Dougherty, and Hazel Dougherty; great-grand-



children Owen Andrus and Christen Andrus; and 3 sisters. In addition to his parents, he is predeceased by his wife of 57 years Sandra Dougherty; 3 brothers; and 4 sisters.

Calling hours will be held Sunday, September 8, 2024 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Bennett Funeral Home, 209 N. Main St., Concord, NH. A funeral mass will occur Monday, September 9, 2024 at 11:00 AM at Immaculate Conception Parish, 9 Bonney St., Penacook, NH. A burial will follow at 2:00 PM at New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery, 110 Daniel Webster Highway, Boscowan, NH.

The Dougherty family wishes to thank the wonderful staff at Golden View Health Care Center for their amazing and compassionate care of Hank during his time here.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Hank's memory may be made to Wounded Warrior Project, <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/donate>.

A Senior Living Community

Warmth | Friends | Laughter
Joint venture between Genesis & Capital Region Health Care

Active seniors can enjoy an exciting lifestyle with fun daily activities. Granite Ledges of Concord is a lovely community which supports our residents' independence, while offering the security of a 24-hour staff, as well as personalized care services when they are needed.

Call to arrange a tour today!

151 Langley Parkway | Concord, NH
603-224-0777 | genesis@cc.com

Mums are here!

Nicole's GREENHOUSE & FLORIST

91 Sheep Davis Road, Pembroke
603-228-8294

Hours: Mon-Sat 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Sun 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

nicolegreenhouseandflorist.com

603Cremations.com

Caring For Your 603 Family is Our Family Business

603.524.1425 Available 24/7

No Membership Fees

Accepting New and Transferred Pre-arrangements

CREMATIONS FROM \$1,350*

*Daily cremation with 2000 lbs. of ash. All services with option to upgrade. Prices based on complete services including transportation. Additional charges may apply.