



CREDERE ASSOCIATES, LLC

776 Main Street
Westbrook, Maine 04092
Phone: 207-828-1272
Fax: 207-887-1051

October 28, 2016

John Stoll, MCPD
Town Planner
Town of Berwick
11 Sullivan Street
Berwick, ME 03901

Subject: **Community Relations Plan
Prime Tanning Facility Lots 1, 2, 3, 7, and 133
Wilson and Sullivan Streets, Berwick, Maine**

Dear Mr. Stoll

Enclosed for your use is a copy of the Community Relations Plan for the above referenced property located in Berwick, Maine. This plan will be reviewed and approval by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Maine DEP) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prior to implementation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (207) 828-1272 Ext. 35 if I can provide clarification or any additional information regarding this Community Relations Plan.

Very truly,
Credere Associates, LLC

Rip Patten, PE
Vice President/Program Manager

cc: Frank Gardner, U.S. EPA
Benjamin Guidi, Maine DEP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN.....	1-1
2. SPOKESPERSON AND INFORMATION REPOSITORY.....	2-1
3. SITE DESCRIPTION.....	3-1
3.1 Site Description.....	3-1
3.2 Future Site Use.....	3-1
3.3 Surrounding Land Use	3-2
3.4 Summary of Environmental Conditions	3-2
4. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND.....	4-1
4.1 Community Involvement	4-1
4.2 Key Community Concerns.....	4-1
5. CONTINUED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.....	5-1
5.1 Community Involvement Plan	5-1
5.2 Proposed Schedule	5-1

APPENDIX A: PROJECT NEWS ARTICLES



1. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

The purpose of this Community Relations Plan is to describe the strategy that will be employed by the Town of Berwick to address the needs and concerns of the residents and/or business owners who will potentially be affected by the proposed remediation and redevelopment of Lots 1, 2, 3, 7, and 133 of the Prime Tanning facility located at Wilson and Sullivan Streets in Berwick, Maine (the Site).

This Community Relations Plan outlines how the Town of Berwick has involved and will continue to involve affected residents and business owners, local officials, and local organizations in the decision-making process regarding the cleanup at the Site.

Active residents involved in neighborhood issues are important resources for the success of the Community Relations Plan because they have an understanding of the Site and they hold positions of responsibility within the community. The Town of Berwick regards these citizens as key points of contact and communication. The long-term success of the redevelopment of the Site will be enhanced by informed citizen involvement in each step of the cleanup and redevelopment process.



2. SPOKESPERSON AND INFORMATION REPOSITORY

The Spokesperson for this project is John Stoll, Town Planner for the Town of Berwick, who may be contacted at:

Town of Berwick
John Stoll, Planning Department
11 Sullivan Street
Berwick, ME 03901
(207) 698-1101 Ext. 115
planning@berwickmaine.org

The information repository for this project, including the environmental assessments, remediation plans, and other environmental information is located at:

Town of Berwick
Planning Department
11 Sullivan Street
Berwick, ME 03901
(207) 698-1101 Ext. 115
planning@berwickmaine.org

Hours:
Tuesday & Thursday
8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
All other times by appointment only

The public meeting will be on Tuesday, November 16, 2016 at 6:30 pm at:

Town of Berwick
Selectman's Burgess Meeting Room
11 Sullivan Street
Berwick, ME 03901
(207) 698-1101 Ext. 115
planning@berwickmaine.org



3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The 7.7-acre main Prime Tanning facility and adjacent 2.8-acre parking lot are located at the intersections of School Street (Route 9), Sullivan Street, and Wilson Street in the center of downtown Berwick, Maine. It is located within a mixed residential and commercial area of Berwick. The Prime Tanning facility is currently owned by the Town of Berwick and is identified as tax map U-4, lots 133 and 146, but lot 146 was subdivided in 2014 into 7 contiguous lots. The subdivided Lot 146 is occupied by the main Prime Tanning facility buildings, which cover much the area of these parcels.

Lot 7 of the Site is almost completely covered by a section of the main Prime facility building. Lots 1, 2, and 3 are contiguous and are covered with portions of the main Prime facility building on the southern portions of these Lots, and covered with degraded asphalt paved parking areas on the northern portions of these Lots. Lot 133 is across Wilson Street from the main facility and is a paved parking area.

The Site building is currently unheated. Previous heat was provided via fuel oil fired steam boilers. Fuel oil was stored in aboveground storage tanks (ASTs), which were drained during closure of the facility. Water service is provided publicly by the municipal Berwick Water Department. Electrical service is provided by Central Maine Power.

Wastewater is not currently generated at the Site; however, the Site is connected to the Berwick Sewer District. Historically, process wastewater was discharged to Prime Tanning's pretreatment plant prior to being discharged to the municipal wastewater system. The pretreatment plant was located on a nearby parcel (Lot 147) owned by the Town of Berwick, but was demolished in October 2016. The former pretreatment plant discharged to the adjacent wastewater pump station (Lot 148) owned by the Berwick Sewer District. The pretreatment plant operated from the 1970s to the facility closure in 2008. Prior to the 1970s, discharges were likely directly to the channelized stream that runs adjacent to the Site building, which discharges to the Salmon Falls River.

3.2 FUTURE SITE USE

The current redevelopment plans for the Site involves the redevelopment of some portions of the buildings and demolition of others. The proposed redevelopment includes the following:

Lot 1 (69,041 total square feet [ft ²])	31,000 ft ² light industrial (reuse of existing building) 8,000 ft ² office (reuse of existing building)
Lot 2 (90,491 total ft ²)	42,500 ft ² light industrial (reuse of existing building)
Lot 3 (33,503 total ft ²)	79,000 ft ² 3-story mixed use retail and residential (new construction)
Lot 4 (69,630 total ft ²)	69,000 ft ² "Main Street" and parking area (new construction)
Lot 5 (18,708 total ft ²)	8,500 ft ² convenience retail (new construction)
Lot 6 (39,011 total ft ²)	39,000 ft ² greenspace and trail (new construction)
Lot 7 (21,654 total ft ²)	52,000 ft ² 3-story mixed retail and residential (reuse and new construction)



Lot 133 (121,968 total ft²)

20-000 ft² workforce and/or senior housing (new construction)

3.3 SURROUNDING LAND USE

The Site is located at the heart of the downtown of Berwick, and is located in the Town's Commercial/Industrial (C/I) zone and within the Village Overlay (VO). Properties surrounding the Site are a mix of industrial, light commercial, residential, and municipal uses.

3.4 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Based on the previous work conducted at the Site, the following environmental conditions and associated compounds of concern (COCs) were identified which require remediation prior to Site redevelopment:

- Surficial and accessible soil across the Site contains concentrations of lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) exceeding applicable residential and commercial Remedial Action Guidelines (RAGs). Specific PAHs include benzo(a)anthracene, benzo(b)fluoranthene, benzo(k)fluoranthene, benzo(a)pyrene, and/or indeno(1,2,3-cd)pyrene). PAHs and lead in surficial and accessible soil are COCs for the Site.
- Buried solid waste fill materials have been identified across the Site. These include leather tannery scraps, wood chips, urban fill, ash/coal ash, and railroad ties. Contaminants associated with the fill materials which are COCs for the Site may include petroleum, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-VOCs (SVOCs), PAHs, dioxin, and metals.
- MTBE, vinyl chloride, chromium, and naphthalene were identified in groundwater at the Site exceeding applicable Maine Center for Disease Control (CDC) Maximum Exposure Guidelines (MEGs). These contaminants in groundwater are COCs for the Site.
- Perchloroethene (PCE) and/or trichloroethene (TCE) were identified in soil vapor at the Site at concentrations exceeding applicable residential and/or commercial soil gas targets (SGTs) across the southern and central portion of the Site. These and/or other VOCs were detected in soil gas below applicable SGTs at all other locations sampled on the Site. Additional characterization of VOCs in soil gas is needed, and VOCs in soil gas are COCs for the Site.
- Asbestos-containing building materials are documented to be present at the Site, and lead paint and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB)-containing building materials may be present at the Site. Asbestos, lead and PCBs are thus considered COCs.
- Additionally, mercury containing fluorescent lighting, possible PCB-containing light ballasts, and other universal/hazardous or other regulated wastes are present at the Site. Certain components of these items that would also meet the definition of universal and/or hazardous waste once removed from use at the Site are considered COCs.



4. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The Site

Manufacturing operations began on the Site as early as 1877 and the Site has been occupied thereafter by a tannery, wool pulling works facility, a sash and door manufacturer, a reed manufacturer, a carriage manufacturer, an oil company, a laundry facility, a shoe factory, and a lumber company. Tannery operations occurred at the Site from approximately 1930 until 2008 when the mill closed and the Prime owners filed for bankruptcy protection. In 2014, the Town of Berwick acquired the Prime Tanning property due to owed back property taxes.

Surrounding Area

According to A Gazetteer of the State of Maine (1886), Berwick has been continuously settled since 1703. Early industry in the Town was based on timber harvesting. Mill development began along the Salmon Falls River near the Site in the early 1800s with the construction of saw mills and grist mills. Later in the 1800s textile and other manufacturing began in the area.

4.1 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Town of Berwick has involved the public in the planning of the cleanup and redevelopment of the Site at a number of occasions, including the following:

- August 9, 2015, Update to the Town at Berwick Board of Selectman meeting
- September 20, 2015, Update to the Town at Berwick Board of Selectman meeting
- October 4, 2015, Update to the Town at Berwick Board of Selectman meeting
- October 14, 15, & 16, 2015, Workforce Housing Charrette sessions
- November 3, 2015, Update to the Town at Berwick Board of Selectman meeting
- November 12, 2015, Brownfields Advisory Committee meeting
- December 15, 2015, Update to the Town at Berwick Board of Selectman meeting
- June 7, 2016, Update to the Town at Berwick Board of Selectman meeting
- July 6, 2016, Update to the Town at Berwick Board of Selectman meeting
- August 2, 2016, Update to the Town at Berwick Board of Selectman meeting
- August 16, 2016, Update to the Town at Berwick Board of Selectman meeting

Additionally, this project has been regularly covered in the local news media. A sampling of newspaper articles from August 2008 to August 2016 concerning this project are attached to this plan as **Appendix A**.

4.2 KEY COMMUNITY CONCERNS

To date, public opinion concerning the cleanup and redevelopment of the Site has been positive and supportive, and views the project as one of continued revitalization of a downtown that has



suffered since the closure of the Prime Tanning facility in 2008. Input on reuse of the Site has indicated a strong desire that the Site reuse include a mix of housing, green space, and commercial redevelopment.



5. CONTINUED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Town of Berwick will provide continued community involvement for the cleanup project.

5.1 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

A public notice will be placed in the Foster's Daily Democrat newspaper announcing the intended remediation and redevelopment activities at the Site, and notice of a thirty-day comment period on the draft Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives and Remedial Action Plan (ABCA/RAP). The public notice will also provide notice and details to the public of the public meeting to present the draft ABCA/RAP. The public notice will also announce the location and access times for the information repository for this project. This notice will also be posted on the Town of Berwick homepage (<http://www.berwickmaine.org/>) in the Community News & Announcements section. In addition, the public notice will be posted at various locations throughout town including the transfer station, library, schools, as well as Berwick Community TV.

The Town of Berwick, via Credere, will accept comments on the ABCA/RAP during the comment period and will provide written responses that will become part of the administrative record. The information repository will be updated with the inclusion of all meeting minutes, status reports, and other communications.

Comments can be submitted at the public meeting or in writing to the following address via mail or email:

Mr. Rip Patten
Credere Associates, LLC
776 Main Street
Westbrook, Maine 04092
(207) 828-1272 ext. 35
rpatten@crederellc.com

In addition, updates will be provided to the public during regularly scheduled Selectmen's meetings to update the public on current project status and solicit any input and/or concerns from the public.

5.2 PROPOSED SCHEDULE

The following schedule will be followed for the implementation of the project:

Date/Time Period	Scheduled Activity
November 1, 2016	Start 30-day public comment period for the draft ABCA/RAP
November 15, 2016	Public meeting at 6:30 PM at Town of Berwick Selectman's Burgess Meeting Room, 11 Sullivan Street, Berwick, ME 03901, regarding the draft ABCA/RAP
December 1, 2016	Public comment period ends and finalize ABCA/RAP



December 2016	Begin cleanup at the Site
Ongoing	Additional updates to the public during regularly scheduled Selectman meetings regarding the progress of the cleanup and redevelopment of the Site



APPENDIX A
PROJECT NEWS ARTICLES



By Shir Haberman

Print Page

August 30, 2008 2:00AM

150 jobs lost as Prime Tanning closes its Berwick, Maine facility

BERWICK, Maine — Prime Tanning Co. Inc. announced its intention Friday to close the leather-finishing operations at its Berwick, Maine facility and transfer all of Berwick's production to its Hartland, Maine plant.

BERWICK, Maine — Prime Tanning Co. Inc. announced its intention Friday to close the leather-finishing operations at its Berwick, Maine facility and transfer all of Berwick's production to its Hartland, Maine plant.

Approximately 150 jobs will be lost locally. The company has indicated it will work with local social service agencies in order to help the displaced workers make the transition to other jobs.

Robert Moore, Prime's chief executive officer, said Friday that there will be supervisory and production worker positions open at the Hartland facility for any Berwick workers who want to relocate. Hartland is approximately 30 miles north of Waterville Valley, he said.

"There's definitely interest on the part of some workers (in relocating), but we don't know how many yet," he said.

For those who chose not to relocate, Prime has involved state and local officials, as well as consultants, in order to help those workers get new jobs. Prime has also set up a job fair with local employers such as Pratt & Whitney, Moore said.

"We remain committed to the state of Maine," he said. "We are a large employer here and have the support of the governor and state officials."

Movement of leathers between the two facilities has already begun, and the company believes it will have the balance of the leathers transferred by October.

Prime Tanning merged with Cudahy Tanning in Milwaukee, Wis., and Irving Tanning in Hartland, Maine, in November 2007, and since that time has been engaged in a domestic reorganization to improve efficiencies and profitability. As part of the reorganization, the Cudahy facility was closed in May 2008, and its leather volumes successfully transferred into Prime's Hartland facility.

Employment levels at the Hartland facility will rise as a result of the increased production there. Prime will continue to use the Berwick offices as its temporary headquarters while it seeks a buyer for those offices.

"This was a very difficult but necessary decision for Prime as we work to streamline our domestic operations and improve profitability," wrote Moore in a prepared press release. "Like many manufacturing businesses in the U.S., we have been adversely and negatively affected by unprecedented increases in the cost of energy and chemicals and the general economic slowdown.

"These unforeseen developments have hastened our need to eliminate excess costs and overhead, and our success as a company depends upon our ability to act decisively to achieve that result," said Moore.

"We continue to believe the very best way to serve our loyal customers is as a stable, profitable and consistent supplier, and this reorganization will ensure that we continue to meet that objective."

On March 31, 2008, Prime announced its intention to merge with Shanghai Richina Leather Co. Ltd. ("SRL") to form Prime Leather International, which will form one of the leading suppliers of leather worldwide. This transaction is expected to close in the fourth quarter of this year.

Prime Tanning was started in 1910 by a Russian immigrant named Morris Kaplan. In 1921, Kaplan purchased a tannery in Woburn, Mass., and in 1935, citing a need for expansion, purchased a 125,000-square-foot facility at the current Berwick location.

Over the years the Berwick facility has grown to 200,000 square feet of production, research and development, and office space.

Prime is a third-generation family-owned business. Its board of directors is currently co-chaired by Michael W. Kaplan and Morris Stephen Kaplan, both grandsons of the founder.

Maine Gov. John Baldacci announced that the Maine Department of Labor will deploy its rapid response team to Berwick shortly as a result of Prime Tanning.

By [Casey Conley](#)
cconley@fosters.com

September 04, 2014 3:15AM

Prime Tanning plan emerges Housing, shops and open space planned for 7.7-acre property

BERWICK, Maine — The company that hopes to redevelop the Prime Tanning complex offered a first glimpse this week of its vision for the property.

Fund of Jupiter, which is a major creditor to bankrupt Prime Tanning, wants to build apartments, shops and commercial space where the tannery currently stands. It also envisions open space, additional parking and other amenities.

“Our vision is for it to be an attractive place for people to congregate in downtown Berwick,” said Roger Clement, a Portland attorney representing Fund of Jupiter.

But the company is looking for help to get the project started.

Town officials and a key Prime Tanning lender are exploring a partnership designed to spur redevelopment of the 7.7-acre parcel, which has sat vacant since the tannery closed in 2008.

There have been multiple studies confirming some environmental issues the property, but Venne said it’s unclear what if any other problems lurk under the tannery buildings themselves. That uncertainty is a major hurdle to redeveloping the property.

“We know it needs a little bit of cleanup, but we need to know what else needs to be cleaned up,” Venne said. “The benefit doing that is, it removes uncertainty and therefore the risk of investing in a property, which makes it more marketable.”

What type of local support is needed?

As proposed, the town would foreclose on the property based on more than \$200,000 in unpaid property taxes incurred by Prime Tanning, not Fund of Jupiter. Doing so would allow the town to seek federal grants unavailable to private companies that would help pay for the future cleanup.

Fund of Jupiter has asked the town to cover the 20 percent local match for the EPA grant program, which offers up to \$200,000 for each affected parcel, Berwick Town Manager Patrick Venne said.

But once any cleanup efforts are complete, the town would sell the property to Fund of Jupiter or another entity to pursue redevelopment. The sale price would likely be no more than the amount owed in back taxes. The property is valued for tax purposes at more than \$800,000.

The town’s involvement in the plan is by no means certain. Venne said the select board lacks authority to enter into such an agreement, which requires voter approval. However, the board has agreed to begin negotiations with the company.

Fund of Jupiter lent money to Prime Tanning before it filed for bankruptcy in 2010 and is a major stakeholder in the ongoing bankruptcy proceedings. It has been working with the town for months on a deal that advances the shared redevelopment goal. Currently, the property is still owned by Prime Tanning.

Clement, of the firm Verrill Dana, said it’s not possible to develop the property without municipal support.

“The economics are telling us that it’s not economically feasible for the owner of the property to spend large amounts of money up front to develop it,” he said Wednesday, adding that market conditions in the town make such a large-scale development difficult.

“The biggest challenge we face now is that it’s still a relatively difficult market,” Clement said. “We do not have a long list of businesses calling us or knocking on our doors to tell us they have to be in that space.

“But we think by doing the environmental remediation, which will probably involve some demolition, that maybe people will start to get a sense for what it can look like if it’s developed and that will attract interest,” he continued.

Once finished, developers believe the town will benefit from the higher property taxes generated from the property and the improved downtown.



PHOTO / JOHN HUFF / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The former Prime Tanning property in Berwick, Maine.

Selectboard Chair Bryan O'Connor said he has and many several unanswered questions about the proposal. But he's also optimistic about it.

"My sense is that Fund of Jupiter is really excited about the opportunity to try and move forward with the site," O'Connor said Wednesday. "I've been on the board three years now and this is the first real, concrete proposal that has come forward."

What happens if the deal falls apart after the town assumes ownership?

For one thing, Venne said the town has no liability for the environmental issues if it takes a property for back taxes. Secondly, he said any contract with Fund of Jupiter would have language protecting the town's investment should the deal collapse.

Although the project needs voter approval to advance, some initial pieces are already in the works. Fund of Jupiter is seeking Planning Board approval to subdivide the main parcel into a handful of smaller tracts that would mirror its future redevelopment vision. Splitting the property also increases eligibility for federal grants.

The board will hear an initial presentation on the subdivision plan tonight. Town Planning Director John Stoll said the meeting will offer an introduction into the proposal, but no votes will be taken.

Although there are big plans for the property, Venne said it's important to let the process run its course.

"That kind of development is tricky because the market is so poor for a potentially contaminated site," he said. "The key is to take this in small increments."

http://www.fosters.com/article/20140904/GJNEWS_01/140909701

Print Page

By [Casey Conley](#)
cconley@fosters.com

[Print Page](#)

September 16, 2014 3:15AM

Selectmen to consider Prime Tanning proposal

BERWICK, Maine — Selectmen tonight will consider asking voters to approve a partnership with Fund of Jupiter aimed at spurring redevelopment of the Prime Tanning complex.

The partnership calls for the town to take the roughly 11-acre tannery property in downtown Berwick for back taxes. Once that's complete, the town would apply for federal grants available to municipalities to offset cleanup costs. Those grants are not available to private developers.

Fund of Jupiter has asked the town to cover the 20 percent local match for the federal EPA grant program, which officers up to \$200,000 for each parcel.

If the grant process is successful, the town would sell the property back to Fund of Jupiter or another entity interested in redevelopment after the cleanup is finished. The sale price would not exceed the amount owed in back taxes.

Prime Tanning closed the Berwick facility in 2008, and the company filed for bankruptcy two years later. Fund of Jupiter was a major Prime Tanning creditor and it has a mortgage interest in the Berwick tannery property.

Fund of Jupiter also has begun the process of subdividing the tannery property into seven parcels, which would make the town eligible for additional federal funds. The subdivision proposal will come before the Planning Board again on Sept. 18 for a preliminary review.

What could be built at the tannery site?

Fund of Jupiter officials say there are several options, including light industrial, retail and loft-style housing, among others. The company envisions construction of a new street between School and Sullivan streets, green space and other amenities.

Selectmen are planning to discuss the issue tonight and could include a question on the Nov. 4 ballot seeking voter approval for the partnership with Fund of Jupiter. The partnership needs voter approval to take effect.



PHOTO/ JOHN HUFF/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The former Prime Tanning property in Berwick, Maine.

[Print Page](#)

By [Judi Currie](#)
jcurrie@fosters.com

[Print Page](#)

February 01, 2015 3:15AM

Berwick land use changes would aid tannery replacement

BERWICK, Maine — Changes are being proposed to Berwick's Land Use ordinances to guide the redevelopment of the former Prime Tanning Site and chart a new course for downtown.

Planning Board Chair Dave Andreesen said the recommendations are driven by the redevelopment of the former Prime Tanning site.

"This allows the town to say what could go in there," Andreesen said. "Building heights and setbacks, it was all updated for eventual development of the Prime Tanning property."

Andreesen said the board will hold a public hearing because the changes impact more than the tannery.

"We extended the downtown urban overlay zone and are now calling it the village overlay zone," Andreesen said. "It goes up to the old elementary school — which we weren't able to use for any town purposes because of the way the land use ordinance was written."

There are a number of residential buildings that now fall into this village overlay zone, and according to Andreesen, homeowners were able to opt out if they wanted to; but only one did.

The changes use "form-based" code, a method of looking at development with a desired outcome such as an attractive and walkable downtown, rather than usage zones.

"You can't build a 60-foot structure, you can't put a drive-through over here. So instead of necessarily excluding businesses it says what kind of businesses we want there," Andreesen said. "It includes updates and changes to lot size and setbacks, how big a lot can be and brings it into 2014."

The changes are in accordance with the Envision Berwick plan approved by voters in June; which updates the comprehensive land use plan.

"Basically we took everything inside of (Envision Berwick) and changed our form based code and zoning ordinances around that," Andreesen said. "We made minor changes to clean up the language and to define what they would allow once the Prime property gets redeveloped and built on, so we would know already what we want to do."

The public hearing is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 5, at 6:30 p.m. in the town hall meeting room.

After the hearing, Andreesen says the changes go to the select board and another public hearing will be scheduled.

The final recommendations will go before the voters at town meeting in May.

Prime Tanning shut down operations in 2008 and is in bankruptcy. The future development of the site depends on a plan by the primary lien holder, Fund of Jupiter, for the town to foreclose on the property and apply for federal environmental cleanup funds. Then the Fund with the town's OK will regain control of the property and develop it or sell it.

If all goes as planned, demolition and cleanup could begin this year.



PHOTO/ JOHN HUFF/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A 2014 file photo shows the former Prime Tanning property in Berwick, Maine.

By Judi Currie
jcurrie@fosters.com

May 30, 2015 7:14AM

Print Page

Berwick to get \$600K for Prime Tanning clean-up

A significant milestone in the revitalization of downtown Berwick was reached Thursday with the announcement by the EPA that the town has been awarded \$600,000 in grants to help clean up the former Prime Tanning site.

The large parcel in the center of downtown Berwick was home to a tannery that closed in 2008, then the company filed bankruptcy in 2010.

The plan to redevelop the property has required many steps already including subdividing the land into seven parcels and applying for the clean-up grants for three. The award means the clean-up can begin.

Planning Board Chair Dave Andreesen said this is a chance for a do-over on shaping the downtown.

"We're inching closer toward the day that a developer comes before the Planning Board with plans to develop that site, and I can't wait for that day," Andreesen said. "Businesses moving into the heart of Berwick village will be great for this town."

Rick Vandenberg, a Berwick resident, is a senior project manager at an engineering firm and lent his expertise two years ago when he helped the Envision Berwick Committee by writing the original Brownfields grant.

"Because I knew the process, it became easier for everyone to understand," Vandenberg said.

Vandenberg said developers would look at the site and say it would be a great location if not for the potential or even likely contamination.

"I'm really excited for the town," Vandenberg said "The EPA money will help remove the hurdles that have been keeping the property from being redeveloped."

According to the EPA, the grants, funded by EPA's Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup grant program, provide communities with funding necessary to assess, clean up and redevelop contaminated properties, boost local economies and leverage jobs while protecting public health and the environment.

"Somersworth is starting to do some things in their downtown and things are improving," Vandenberg said. "For Berwick to be the next domino to fall I think will be exciting to watch over the next couple of years."

Curt Spalding, regional administrator of EPA's New England office, said Brownfields investments typically leverage an average of approximately \$17 for every dollar spent.

"EPA's Brownfields program is a proven asset helping local communities to get abandoned or derelict properties assessed, cleaned up and returned to productive use," Spalding said. "This is a wise investment in cleaning and revitalizing contaminated sites, creating jobs and new economic opportunities, and overall making our communities stronger and our environment cleaner."



The EPA awarded the town of Berwick \$600,000 in grants to help clean up the former Prime Tanning site.

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Maine gets \$2.3M to redevelop industrial sites

6/1/2015

Six Maine communities and groups are receiving \$2.3 million in federal grants to assess, clean up and redevelop contaminated properties.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Thursday six recipients in Maine will receive funding as part of its brownfields program. To date, EPA said, the agency's funding through the brownfields program has helped New England communities leverage more than \$2.5 million in public and private cleanup and redevelopment investment.

The following Maine groups and communities are recipients:

- The Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, which is receiving \$400,000 for community-wide assessment grants.
- The town of Berwick, which is receiving \$600,000 for the cleanup of the former Prime Tanning facility at 20 Sullivan St.
- The town of Lubec, which is receiving \$400,000 for the cleanup of the former Columbian Factory site at 135 Main St.
- The Penobscot Indian Nation, which is receiving \$200,000 for a community-wide assessment grant.
- The Portland Harbor Commission, which is receiving \$350,000 for an assessment of Portland Harbor.
- The city of Rockland, which is receiving \$400,000 for community-wide assessment grants.

"EPA's Brownfields program is a proven asset helping local communities to get abandoned or derelict properties assessed, cleaned up and returned to productive use," Curt Spalding, regional administrator of EPA's New England office, said in a prepared statement. "This is just one way EPA works to make a difference in communities all across New England."

"Our Brownfield investments typically leverage an average of approximately \$17 for every dollar we spend," he continued. "This is a wise investment in cleaning and revitalizing contaminated sites, creating jobs and new economic opportunities, and overall making our communities stronger and our environment cleaner."

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EPA announces \$1.2 million in new funds to clean up contaminated sites in Maine

 www.pressherald.com/2015/09/23/epa-announces-4-3-million-in-new-funds-to-clean-up-contaminated-sites-in-maine/

By Gillian Graham Staff Writer | @GrahamGillian | 207-791-6315

BIDDEFORD — The Environmental Protection Agency on Wednesday announced grants totaling more than \$4 million to clean up contaminated industrial sites across New England.

The \$4.3 million in supplemental funds will go to a variety of so-called “brownfield” sites across the region, including \$1.2 million for cleanup and redevelopment projects in Maine.

“The EPA’s brownfields program here in New England has a long history of helping to boost local economies, creating well-paying local jobs, all while protecting people’s health and our communities,” said Curt Spalding, regional administrator of the EPA New England office.

The supplemental funds announced Wednesday are part of \$13.2 million nationally that the EPA made available under its brownfields revolving loan fund.

Also on Wednesday, Spaulding presented more than \$2.35 million in brownfields funding to six communities and groups in Maine for assessment and cleanup of contaminated sites. Those funds were part of a round of grants announced in May.

Spalding announced the new round of funding at a news conference at Biddeford City Hall, where federal, state and local officials also highlighted the role brownfield grants have played in cleaning up contaminated industrial mill properties and revitalizing Biddeford’s downtown.

“If you want to see what this program can do, come to Biddeford,” Spalding said.

Biddeford has received more than \$200,000 for assessments and \$2.6 million in loans and grants for cleanup in the downtown area, where former textile mills are being redeveloped for mixed use. Private developers have invested close to \$70 million in the area since the city bought and cleaned up the site of the former Maine Energy Recovery Co. trash incinerator.

Paul Schumacher, executive director of the southern Maine Planning and Development Commission, said most of the \$500,000 his group received Wednesday will go toward completing the cleanup of the former Lincoln Mill in Biddeford. Developer Tim Harrington is currently transforming that building into a \$50 million hotel, apartment and restaurant complex.

Schumacher said the money previously invested in cleanup in downtown Biddeford has brought new energy to the city.

“It changed the face of the community,” he said. “It’s an amazing transformation.”

The Maine Department of Economic and Community Development received \$700,000 from the supplemental funds announced Wednesday.

The EPA brownfields funding for 2015 will go to:

- Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments: \$400,000 for communitywide assessment grants.
- Town of Berwick: \$600,000 in clean up grants for the Prime Tanning property.
- Town of Lubec: \$400,000 in cleanup grants for the Columbian factory site.
- Penobscot Indian Nation: \$200,000 communitywide assessment grant.
- Portland Harbor Commission: \$350,000 assessment grant for Portland Harbor.
- City of Rockland: \$400,000 for communitywide assessment grants.

“We are pleased that the EPA has once again selected several sites in Maine to receive federal funding through the brownfields program,” U.S. Sens. Susan Collins and Angus King said in a joint statement. “These grants represent a continued and welcome investment in the economic revitalization of Maine communities that will also help protect the integrity of the environment for future generations.”

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By Judi Currie
jcurrie@fosters.com

Print Page

October 06, 2015 9:39PM

Berwick awards contract for cleanup for Prime Tanning site

BERWICK, Maine — Cleanup of the former Prime Tanning site could begin as early as February.

At their regular meeting Tuesday, the Berwick Board of Selectmen awarded a contract to the environmental engineering firms of Credere, of Westbrook, and Wesson and Sampson, of Peabody, Mass.

The firms joined together to submit the lone bid to oversee the cleanup of the 8-acre site which dominates downtown Berwick.

The possibility of contamination at the former tannery allowed the town to qualify for EPA Brownfields grants, these grants are awarded to help clean up potentially contaminated sites. Unlike a Superfund site the contamination has not been identified. The cleanup timeline includes an investigation to determine what is on the site.



The former Prime Tanning property in Berwick. File photo by John Huff/Fosters.com

Selectman Robert Crichton expressed concern about the lack of bids, suggesting that projects like this often require a minimum of three qualified bids before a contract can be awarded.

Town Planner John Stoll said the contract was negotiated by Maine DEP and he felt confident that the lack of bids was not an issue.

Stoll said he also looked into why they only received one qualification package (bid) and learned that it is because it is a low margin, large scale project.

"There is a lot of Brownfields work going on in Maine right now," Stoll said.

The engineering contract is for a maximum of \$150,000. The EPA grants are for \$200,000 each for three parcels bringing the total for the project to \$750,000.

There are additional parcels within the former tannery site that will not be part of this initial cleanup. But the town could apply for additional grants in the next round.

Selectman Mark Pendergast asked when they would start seeing activity on the site.

Stoll ran through some of the key items in the timeline and said cleanup could begin by February. Between now and then there will be many meetings with the EPA and some public comment sessions.

Stoll is making a presentation Wednesday to the EPA for the agency to approve the scope of the project.

The Envision Berwick Committee, created to form a vision for the downtown, has been instrumental in moving the redevelopment of the site along.

Chair Frank Underwood said there is a citizen advisory committee of nine residents that will meet quarterly and follow the process closely.

Underwood said they will use as many local contractors and local laborers as possible.

Dave Andreesen, planning board chair, said he is excited to think that in just a few years the site could look very different.

"This is just one of many steps to the final goal of redeveloping our downtown," Andreesen said. "We will have to go back and apply for more grants, but I am excited to see the timeline."

Town Manager Stephen Eldridge they are all very excited.

"We are all looking forward to tearing down buildings ... and to start moving forward with some ideas on economic development," Eldridge said.

Eldridge said they have formed an economic development committee that he and the town planner will work closely with to encourage developers to look at the site.

October 25, 2015 7:01PM

Print Page

Great Falls Roundup: Berwick looks to define new downtown

On October 14 a workforce housing design charrette was held at town hall in Berwick, Maine. The event was put together by the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast with Envision Berwick. The purpose was to hold an intensive planning session where designers, property owners, municipal representatives, and other stakeholders would collaborate on a conceptual vision for development in the downtown area, specifically the former Prime Tanning sites and the Estabrook School.

A team of volunteers gathered; equipped with maps, site plans, zoning regulations and other tools needed to explore the options. A public listening session was held from 6 to 8 p.m.

On October 16 the results were presented at a second gathering.

The session revealed support for one- or two-story senior citizen housing, small experimental units, housing for single parents, affordable housing for all income levels, combining age groups of people in units and housing for single adults approaching retirement.

What people did not want to see was pre-fab row housing or units with three or more bedrooms.

For restaurants there was support for a mix of options including a micro-brewery, but not a lot of bars or fast food chains; the same went for retail with the focus away from big box stores.

There was support for community gathering spaces both indoors and out, such as a community center, perhaps a bandstand or outdoor theatre; trails, playgrounds and parks.

Under transportation there was interest in public transit and walk-ability.

There were several suggestions to support sustainability like open spaces, community gardens and solar.

For culture there is a desire to grow artistic efforts in Berwick.

As town officials have said this is an important first step in what will be a long process that will benefit by community involvement.

Somersworth needs you

The City of Somersworth is looking for people to work at polling places during the November 3rd Municipal Election.

Election workers are required to be registered voters in the City of Somersworth.

According to the press release, working at the polls is a great opportunity to meet more members of your neighborhood and community. Training is provided and workers are paid "a reasonable stipend for your time."

Election workers are needed for all wards: Ward 1 at City Hall, One Government Way, Ward 2 at the Somersworth Historical Museum, 157 Main St., Ward 3 at the Flanagan Community Center, 25B Bartlett Ave., Ward 4 at Charpentier Apartments, 28 Franklin St. and Ward 5 at Romeo J. Messier Building, 218 Main St. To find out more call the City Clerk at 603-692-9511.

Events this week in the Great Falls Region

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday bagged leaves pick-up in Somersworth. Residents do not need to call ahead for pick-up. Bags must be curbside no sooner than evening before and no later than 7 a.m. on your trash day. Leaves and grass clippings must be in brown paper leaf bags, sold at many local stores.

Wednesday Idlehurst and Maple Wood schools are sponsoring the Somersworth Community Job Fair from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Idlehurst gymnasium.

Also on Wednesday the Rollinsford Budget Committee will meet at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall.

Thursday the Greater Somersworth Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Candidate at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers in Somersworth City Hall. Residents and business owners/managers are invited to participate in a forum for City Council and School Board candidates running in contested races in the November 3rd election.

Thursday Rollinsford Select Board meets for a public hearing at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.



Judi Currie

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Prime Tanning demolition starting soon

Wednesday Posted Aug 31, 2016 at 7:26 PM

Updated Aug 31, 2016 at 7:26 PM

By Judi Currie / jcurrie@seacoastonline.com

BERWICK, Maine — The walls will soon be coming down at the former Prime Tanning site.

While only subtle changes are visible from the outside, a lot of work has been going on inside to prepare for the demolition of portions of the complex.

The bulk of the former tannery takes up about 8 acres in the heart of downtown Berwick. While some buildings will remain, the first phase of the demolition will effectively cut an opening through the site from Sullivan Street to School Street.

Jon O'Donnell, project manager and hazardous building material specialist at Credere Associates, LLC said all of the demolition permits should be in place by Tuesday and heavy equipment is already on site.

“We have been working inside and have removed asbestos and universal waste such as cans of paint and fluorescent lighting,” O'Donnell said. “Once the demolition starts it should take about two to three weeks.”

Measures have also been put in place to prevent any potentially contaminated soil from spreading, including straw baffles and a tracking pad.

O'Donnell said the site is generally contaminated with low level PAH (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons) a byproduct of combustion that stays in the soil. There is also the presence of solvents and localized heavy metal soil contamination.

According to O'Donnell, the demolition is in some ways the easy phase. As the site is redeveloped any future buildings will have to take in the consideration potential contamination risk once a cap is put in place.

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The property is being cleaned up with the help of EPA Brownfields grants, funded by EPA's Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup grant program, which provide communities with the funding they need to assess, clean up and redevelop contaminated properties.

Berwick has received two rounds of funding totaling \$1.2 million, making it the largest single-site Brownfields grant in the history of the program.

The first phase includes lots 4, 5, and 6, which are covered mostly by one mill building that was constructed over many years with numerous additions.

According to the proposals prepared by Credere Associates, various manufacturing operations occurred at the site from 1877 to 1930. Tannery operations occurred at the site from approximately 1930 until 2008 when the mill closed and the Prime Tanning owners filed for bankruptcy protection.

In 2014, the Town of Berwick acquired the property for back property taxes.

The current redevelopment plans call for the redevelopment of some portions of the buildings and demolition of others. The iconic smokestack is expected to stay.

The redevelopment goals from charrettes and the Envision Berwick, visioning process include mixed use retail, residential, parking and green space.

While the market studies are not final, O'Donnell said the results are looking very positive for reuse of the property and the likelihood that it will be attractive to developers.