

July 10, 2023:

TOWN OF BERLIN. Heron Park.

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“I would rather implement an imperfect plan then never implement a perfect plan “

“Everyone loves progress, but no one likes change.”

Let us implement the Community vision.

July 10, 2023

How we got here. The process. Past and Present.

1. Was familiar with the plant due to previous construction projects.
2. Began to read that the town was starting a "listing" process to create ideas for the use and development ideas. What to do with it? Early 2021
3. Approached the Town, the Mayor, Town manager, P & Z to see what the situation was. We do this on almost all projects. Nothing "secret" or conspiratorial in this approach. Mid 2021
4. We created ideas and concepts. We have repurposed many buildings like the Tyson Plant. We used Achievement Park in Easton, a 200,000 sf repurposed building as our development model. Mid 2021
5. Did an onsite inspection. Mid 2021
6. Met with an Architect to create concept drawings. Fall 2021
7. Suggested to the Town our idea. Could they single source the sale of this? Fall 2021
8. Mayor met with town officials and the Town decided to put it out for public RFP. Again, this is a normal public process. Fall 2021.
9. Followed the RFP process and submitted it in early 2022.
10. Town met with us and the other responder.
11. Town selected our plan and entered a "negotiating period" with us as outlined in the RFP.
12. Mayor created a committee.
13. Met with committee 3 times.
14. Worked thru the concepts, negotiated price and other conditions and restrictions. All within the boundaries and framework of our response to the Towns RFP.
15. The Town extended the ENP.
16. The town created a draft contract to be presented to the public and the rest of the Town Council.
17. Here we are.

We have stopped meeting interested users. First question that they ask is "how much?" and "when?" We cannot advise any longer. Garden Center has material lead times. Open 2022?, 2023?, now 2024?

July 10, 2023

Studies by the Town.

Berlin Falls Park Interpretive Plan

Berlin Falls Park Building Condition Assessment

Berlin Falls Park Lagoons

Berlin Falls Park Concept Plans

Tyson Phase I Final Report

Tyson Phase II Final Report

Tyson Foods Environmental Summary Final.

Town of Berlin RFP #2021 – 02

July 10, 2023

Demolition. "The process".

The Town has been granted funds in the amount of \$500,000 to apply for the demolition of or partial demolition of the Tyson Plant. To walk thru the process, the Town must agree on a scope of demolition, create drawings, create specifications, advertise for bidding, receive proposals, evaluate the bids, and select a contractor.

Ask yourself, who will be making that decision, defining the scope of demolition? This is important. How will the process be followed.

As an example, when you compare the two responses to the Towns RFP, the Natelli proposal fully utilized the grant. Their response was demolition for the entire 3 parcels. That would include all of the lands and put the responsibility to the Town to remove *everything* on all sites to construct their proposed residential project. This demolition scope will absolutely cost more than the \$500,000 grant and the Town would be responsible for the difference. Please do not forget that this must include what is *below grade* to deliver the site to their development needs.

Think of cutting down a tree and one contractor is significantly more than the other. So, you take the low bid. The contractor cuts the tree down and leaves the stump. Stump removal can cost as much as tree removal. There are underground utilities and structural foundations that must be removed all over the site that must be considered for any demolition process.

Our proposal considers select demolition only, fully utilizing the grant BUT, we will take responsibility for any further demolition costs needed for our project. We are estimating an additional \$500,000 beyond the Towns grant *at a minimum* to achieve the needed demolition.

In our opinion , it will take the Town several weeks, if not months, to define the scope of demolition, prepare bidding documents, advertise for bidding and evaluation of the bid results. That of course is if the Town knows what they want demolished.

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TOWN OF BERLIN Heron Park- Community goals.

1. Solar field
2. EV charging stations.
3. Pollinator garden
4. Embrace the Arts. Visual, Performing, and culinary.
5. Skate Park
6. Entertainment venue. Simple at first, lawn chairs grass slopes. Can grow. 20 to 200 people??
7. Open spaces. Retain the north 44 acres.
8. Specialty shops, boutiques.
9. Incorporate pedestrian and bike trail.
10. Do not compromise downtown. Promote downtown from this location.
11. Agri tourism Educational
12. Eateries. Think destination. Old Town Alexandria, torpedo factory.
13. Central kitchen – catering.
14. Brewery. Think Evo or dogfish head.
15. Fitness center
16. Pet friendly, pet park.
17. Community garden.
18. Make income producing and job producing.
19. Fiora farms. Cabo. Farm to table.
20. Museum
21. Art Gallery
22. Childrens theater.
23. O. C. Art league (if desired).
24. Mini golf
25. Wedding venue, large event space.
26. Rock climbing wall, ropes course
27. Arcade.
28. Park and ride trolley to downtown.
29. Food trucks.
30. Innovator food hub, shared kitchen, commissary, test kitchen.
31. Bike pedestrian trail along railroad tracks.

Any and all ideas are welcome but must be practical!

June 10, 2023:

Town of Berlin Heron Park

The Garden Center Vision: Gardening is my passion. The Berlin Garden Center will offer a refreshing alternative to national chains. We will offer a personalized experience with locally grown unique items you won't find elsewhere. We are inspired by "How Sweet It Is", Lords Landscaping in DE and "Village Greens Garden Centers," (3 of my happy places, it broke my heart when Village Green closed) We want to offer a diverse selection of plants, flowers, shrubs, trees, and gardening essentials sourced from local growers who share our commitment to sustainability and quality.

We want to create a welcoming environment for guests with an interactive "Potting Station". Where you can not only purchase pots, seeds, or plants but you're also engaging in and immersive experience with knowledgeable staff who will guide you through the process & provide valuable insights into indigenous plants and their care.

We want to offer educational opportunities, agritourism, which will be good for the local economy, workshops & classes while nurturing a sense of community.

We want to create a community hub, with a sense of connection and sharing among gardening enthusiasts. We want to host events such as plant swaps, guest speaker sessions, and seasonal celebrations to bring together locals who share a passion for gardening and a love for nature.

We want to empower our guests through these educational opportunities and inspire them to cultivate their own green & happy spaces and a deeper appreciation for nature.

The Entertainment Center Vision: We share the same goals as the Berlin community to create a small, intimate entertainment venue. Through the RFP, our comity discussions and listening to public input, we began envisioning and refining our concept. We believe in taking a gradual and organic approach, starting with crawling, then walking, and eventually running as our community takes the project and runs with it.

To avoid any misconceptions, let's not use the term "amphitheater," it creates thoughts of larger venues like Merriweather Post Pavilion or Freeman Stage.

Our vision revolves around a smaller performing arts stage, or entertainment venue, similar size to the stages at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club or OC Sunset Park. These venues offer a casual atmosphere where guests can bring their own chairs and accommodate audiences ranging from 20 to 200 guests. By the way the OC Sunset Park is an alcohol-free property, and those performances are full of guests who enjoy listening to local acts.

We recently experienced the magic of a small, sold-out performance of Gilligan's Island the Musical at the OC Center for the Arts, which only accommodated 40 guests. It was a fabulous experience! We believe that if the town is interested, the OC Art League could be an experienced & valuable asset, attracting live theater productions, including children's theater. We would like to create a venue to share these types of experiences.

July 10, 2023

TOWN OF BERLIN. Heron Park.

Jump start community projects.

- 1. Salisbury Park bandstand leveraged into the pedestrian bridge.**
- 2. Regional Art Institute and Gallery donated 5,000 sf of shell space which leveraged into a permanent 5,000 square foot *finished* facility.**
- 3. Riverview commons. Riverwalk.**
- 4. Donated the gallery Building to SU now a community Arts Center and Entrepreneur Center *and* a \$5m renovation donation from the Rommel family. SU Downtown.**
- 5. Charles County Western Parkway lands**
- 6. Gateway building. Public way secure, lighted, elevator.**
- 7. Gallery building. Public way. Secure, lighted, elevator.**

July 10, 2023

Valuation of Heron Park.

- SVN listing agreement for a fully functioning poultry processing plant. \$1.9 million. 2010
- Burly Oak Brewing parcel 57, offer \$150,000 TOTAL. 2021, 9.35 acres.
- Shore Craft (?) offer \$100,000 TOTAL parcel 57. 2021 9.35 acres
- The Towns appraisal for the 3 parcels 2022 \$1.7 million
- Gillis \$1.5 million 3 parcels increased to \$1.7 million 2022. *We pay for demolition beyond the grant.* We are estimating an additional \$500,000 for our scope of demolition. Still less than Natelli scope.
- Natelli \$1.6 million Feb. 2022. *Town pays for demolition beyond the grant.*
- Plak That 3 acres transferred in January 2023, \$ 120,000/acre no restrictions except zoning, no demolition, no environmental issues.

Risks, restrictions. When you place development restrictions on a property you lower the value of that property. This makes appraisers lower the value of a property which in turn makes lenders lend less. We are seeing an investment of 12 to 15 million dollars here on a high risk development project.

"The value of a property is only what a buyer is willing to pay."

July 10, 2023

Town of Berlin Heron Park. Where do we go from here. The future.

Decide to accept or reject the draft contract. If accepted see below.

1. Create a plan for planning and zoning and set in for public hearing 2 to 4 months. Architectural, civil engineering, roof, electrical engineering, HVAC and Plumbing engineering
2. Determine entrances on Ocean City Road. State Highway.
3. Schedule a traffic study. *Must be completed when school is in session.* Work with State Highway
4. Update environmental audits.
5. Create a storm water management plan.
6. Create scope of demolition for bidding. Bid, review, and implement.
7. Verify utilities to serve the property.
8. Seek lender financing.
9. Seek a building permit with the Town of Berlin.
10. More public input along the way.
11. Incorporate Easton's rail spurs.
12. Understand RTU's 27 to 40 weeks delivery.
13. Invest a minimum of \$50,000 to \$100,000 for the process to get started after the contract.
14. Create jobs and Town revenue.
15. Dynamic process. This will change.
16. Prospects first question is "How much and when?"

Note:

- This is personal to Sandy and our family and myself.
- Please understand that Federal and State grants support and fund projects when the Town speaks as one voice. Granting agencies do not get behind split leadership. Referring to the new Town road, Amphitheater, Skate Park, Old Ocean City Road (main street to Rt.), etc.etc.



6/13/2023

Mary Bohlen, Town Administrator
Town of Berlin
10 William Street
Berlin, MD 21811

To the Honorable Mayor, Esteemed Members of the Town Council, and valued citizens of Berlin, Maryland,

Greetings from the Art League of Ocean City!

We write to express our support and encouragement for the acceptance of the redevelopment project proposed by the Gillis Family at Heron Park.

As a vital community asset in the Town of Ocean City, we recognize the tremendous potential of this proposal to expand the representation and embrace of the Arts Community in our broader region. By incorporating the proposed entertainment venue at Heron Park, we envision a further surge in growth and awareness of how the arts can enrich the quality of life for a community, while also enhancing tourism and fostering economic development opportunities.

The Gillis Family has long been dedicated supporters of the Arts Community, with their involvement dating back to their creation of a permanent home for the Art Institute and Gallery in downtown Salisbury during the mid-80's. Also worth mentioning is the Gillis Family efforts to construct the Ocean City Center for the Arts in 2013, in which they served as general contractor. Without their competitive bid and gracious support this project might have never come to fruition.

With their proposed redevelopment plan for Heron Park, we perceive an opportunity, should the town desire it, to extend some of our highly popular programs, shows and performances into the welcoming embrace of Berlin.

Should you have any inquiries or require further recommendations or comments from our organization, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rina Thaler", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Rina Thaler, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Sisson", with a stylized, cursive script.

John Sisson, President BOD