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| **From:** | Yvette Meunier |
| **To:** | Allison Tanner; Bill Stanton; Jan Marks; Jason Lamoreau; Mike Roland; Nina Mendall (njmendall@comcast.net); Peggy Christian; Robert "Buddy" Schott |
| **Subject:** | FW: Open Space Plan w Northstar |
| **Date:** | Monday, May 4, 2026 9:59:00 AM |

Reference check returned on Northstar from Gorham.

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**From:** Thomas Poirier <tpoirier@gorham.me.us>
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2026 7:31 AM
**To:** Yvette Meunier <planning@bowdoinham.com>
**Subject:** Re: Open Space Plan w Northstar

Good Morning Yvette,

See the responses below to your questions. Best of luck with your planning process and let me know if you have any further comments. Thanks.

**Did the consultant stay on schedule and within budget?**
Yes. The project generally stayed on schedule and within the agreed-upon budget. There were a few natural adjustments along the way (as is typical with a planning process involving public engagement), but those were communicated clearly and managed well.

**How responsive were they to staff and committee questions or concerns?**
North Star was very responsive throughout the process. They worked closely with staff and our steering committee, were accessible for questions, and incorporated feedback in a timely and thoughtful way.

**Were expectations clearly communicated at the start of the project?**
Yes. The scope, timeline, and deliverables were clearly outlined early on, and they did a good job of setting expectations for both the technical work and the level of staff/committee involvement needed.

**How did the consultant handle changes in scope or unexpected challenges?**
They handled adjustments professionally and collaboratively. As new ideas or needs emerged—particularly from public input—they were flexible and worked with us to refine the approach without losing momentum.

**Were public meetings, workshops, or surveys well-designed and successful?**
Yes—this was a strong part of their work. They used a mix of engagement methods including surveys (over 400 responses), open-house workshops, stakeholder interviews, and even self-service kiosks placed around town to broaden participation.

We saw solid participation and meaningful engagement, and the feedback clearly influenced the final plan.

**Is there anything you wish they had done differently?**
As with any project, there are always small refinements you might make in hindsight—perhaps additional time for certain stakeholder groups or more iteration on specific implementation details—but nothing major stands out.

**Were there any surprises—positive or negative—during the process?**
A positive surprise was the depth of community engagement and how effectively they translated that input into actionable strategies. The final plan is not just a vision document—it includes clear goals, metrics, and implementation strategies tied to community priorities.

**Would you hire this consultant again for a similar project?**
Yes, we would. They brought a good balance of technical expertise, facilitation skills, and practical implementation focus.

Thomas M Poirier
Director of Community Development
Town of Gorham

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**From:** Yvette Meunier <planning@bowdoinham.com>
**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2026 12:10 PM
**To:** Thomas Poirier <tpoirier@gorham.me.us>
**Subject:** Open Space Plan w Northstar

Hello Tom,

I staff the Comprehensive Planning Committee in Bowdoinham and we are currently interviewing firms to help us write our first Open Space Plan. I am checking references and Northstar had you listed as writing Gorham's Open Space Plan.

I have the following questions I would like to ask you either in writing or over the phone if you would prefer, I could set up a time next week to chat.

1. Did the consultant stay on schedule and within budget?
2. How responsive were they to staff and committee questions or concerns?
3. Were expectations clearly communicated at the start of the project?
4. How did the consultant handle changes in scope or unexpected challenges?
5. Were public meetings, workshops, or surveys well-designed, accessible, and successful (did people show up and engage)?
6. Is there anything you wish they had done differently?
7. Were there any surprises—positive or negative—during the process?
8. Would you hire this consultant again for a similar project?

Thanks for your time and consideration. Have a great weekend.

Sincerely,

Yvette Meunier (she/her)
Director of Planning & Development
Town of Bowdoinham
207-666-5531
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