

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

**CONGREGATE LIVING AND SOCIAL SERVICES LICENSING BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, January 24, 2023**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Andrew Oram, Chair  
Medard Kopczynski, Vice Chair  
Alison Welsh

**Staff Present:**

John Rogers, Building & Health  
Official/Zoning Administrator  
Corinne Marcou, Board Clerk

**Members Not Present:**

Thomas Savastano  
Jennifer Seher

**I. Call to Order – Roll Call**

Chair Oram called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**II. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – December 27, 2022**

A motion by Vice Chair Kopczynski to adopt the December 27, 2022, meeting minutes was duly seconded by Ms. Welsh and the motion carried unanimously.

**III. Unfinished Business:**

There was no unfinished business.

**IV. Applications:**

- A) **LB 23-01: Applicant, Hilary Seifer, Executive Director for American House, is requesting a Congregate Living & Social Services License for a Residential Care Facility, located at 197 Water St., and is in the Business Growth & Reuse District and as defined in Chapter 46, Article X of the Keene City Ordinances.**

Chair Oram requested Staff comments. Mr. Rogers reported that all the inspections occurred the same day of this meeting. The intention was to inspect the building some time ago, but it was locked down due to Covid-19. From Mr. Rogers' perspective on the building and housing aspects, he had no issues of concern to report. Mr. Rogers said that there were a few minor fire related issues due to extension cord and power strip uses. Otherwise, Staff recommended

approval of this license. Mr. Rogers recalled that this is an allowed use in the Business Growth and Reuse District.

Chair Oram welcomed the applicant, Hillary Seifer, Executive Director of American House. Ms. Seifer had no comments to add to or modify her application. The Board proceeded with questions.

Vice Chair Kopczynski asked for confirmation that the application fee had been paid. Mr. Rogers and Ms. Seifer both said yes. Vice Chair Kopczynski continued noting that he did not see a neighborhood relations plan in the applications materials. Ms. Seifer said that American House does not have anything specific other than what is in the evacuation plan, which includes Keene State College, the Applewood Center in Winchester, and the Keene Center on Court Street, as well as the American Red Cross and local hotels if needed. Vice Chair Kopczynski recalled this site being used previously for a lot of neighborhood activities and Ms. Seifer agreed. Vice Chair Kopczynski wondered whether it was possible for Ms. Seifer to produce a one-page document indicating how American House would interact with their neighbors. Ms. Seifer said she could do that and indicated that they are slowly resuming some of those activities in their building.

Vice Chair Kopczynski also asked the average length of stay with this being a nursing home. Ms. Seifer said it is actually assisted living and the current average stay is 18 months. Vice Chair Kopczynski recalled running facilities for the City for a few years, noting how important it was to have a facilities management plan; he said the application listed Direct Supply TELS System for regulatory inspections. Ms. Seifer said yes. Vice Chair Kopczynski said he looked that up and it seemed that this system keeps track of records and forms. He noted that there was a print-out in the application packet that listed what that system includes. Vice Chair Kopczynski said he assumed that on the TELS System website, was an actual list of requirements that the system alerts American House on what needs to be done and by whom. Ms. Seifer said yes, adding that it is a fairly newer system for regulatory purposes. Vice Chair Kopczynski said he looked at who American House uses for regular maintenance and fire, all of which he said were reputable. Ms. Seifer said there are good services through them all.

For next year, Ms. Welsh advised the applicant to not respond to application questions with “attached” or “n/a” and to take a few minutes to follow through on those. Aside from the neighborhood relations plan, Ms. Welsh said the rest of the application was very detailed. Chair Oram agreed.

Chair Oram stated his impression that many of the application answers were compiled from other documents and licensing processes. Ms. Seifer said that was correct. Chair Oram asked how the application process went, whether there was anything the Board could do to make it more efficient, and how this application varied from other certifications and licenses. Ms. Seifer said American House is surveyed annually, both clinically and for life safety, by the State of NH. She said she did compile this application from required documents that exist already, like the emergency management plan and the TELS regulatory standards. She said that was the easiest

way to show that to this Board. Ms. Seifer said she was unsure she fully understood exactly what was wanted in a neighborhood relations plan because it is not something the State looks at, but she did understand now with the Board's advice; she hopes the plan will be easier to establish in the next year with the expansion of the neighboring park and skate park. She said overall, this application was not hard to produce because she is required to address so many of the topics already. Ms. Seifer said she called the Community Development Department many times with questions on this application process and the Staff were very helpful.

Vice Chair Kopczynski explained that when this Ordinance was written, they knew some groups of licensees would have a lot of the application materials already from their State and Federal licensures. He said the City did a lot of research for this process. Ms. Seifer said she thought it was great to be licensed by the City because it only enhances the relationship, noting that there are documents from the City she uses for her State licensures, like the City's emergency plan, her loss versus gains report, and more. Chair Oram said that in a sense, the City's application was a part of that comparative process. Ms. Seifer said yes, she always works with the City's website and, for example, works with the Wastewater Treatment Plant for water testing that is a State requirement.

A motion by Vice Chair Kopczynski to find American House in compliance with the submitted operations and management plan, including but not limited to compliance with all applicable building, fire, and life safety codes as testified to by Staff, with the following condition: 1) submission of a neighborhood relations plan. Ms. Welsh seconded the motion. The Board proceeded reviewing the criteria for granting the license.

*The licensing board shall consider the following criteria when evaluating whether to approve, renew, or deny a congregate living and social services license application:*

Criteria 1: *The use is found to be in compliance with the submitted operations and management plan, including but not limited to compliance with all applicable building, fire, and life safety codes.*

Chair Oram and Vice Chair Kopczynski agreed that the applicant met this criterion.

Criteria 2: *The use is of a character that does not produce noise, odors, glare, and/or vibration that adversely affects the surrounding area.*

Vice Chair Kopczynski said the applicant met this criterion.

Criteria 3: *The use does not produce public safety or health concerns in connection with traffic, pedestrians, public infrastructure, and police or fire department actions.*

Vice Chair Kopczynski said the applicant met this criterion.

On a vote of 3–0, the Congregate Living and Social Services Licensing Board unanimously approved application LB 23-01 with the following condition: 1) submission of a neighborhood relations plan.

**V. New Business:**

Ms. Welsh questioned the three floor plans the Board received in their packet as well as if there was any response from the Hampshire House at 86 Winter St. as they needed to supply their Neighborhood Relations Plan. She also questioned if there was any communication from the Serenity Center and their potential relocation. Mr. Rogers replied that Staff received more information from the applicant for 57 Winchester Street; they implemented floor plans that will be posted inside the building that indicate the directions of egress. This was not a condition for their license. This floorplan was included in this meeting's agenda packet. Mr. Rogers said that Staff also received the conditional materials required for the Hampshire House at 86 Winter Street; he recalled that this license was approved conditionally pending submission of a neighborhood relations plan. Ms. Marcou provided printed copied of that neighborhood relations plan to the Board. Vice Chair Kopczynski thought the floorplan for 57 Winchester Street was a good addition to the file. The Vice Chair thought the Board should review the neighborhood relations plan submitted for 86 Winter Street before commenting on it.

Mr. Rogers reported that the day before this meeting, he received an email from Sam Lake, the applicant for the Serenity Center. Mr. Lake indicated that the Serenity Center operations are moving from their current location and will be renting space from Monadnock Peer Support (MPS) on Vernon Street. MPS had already obtained a license from this Board. Mr. Rogers said that Chapter 46 of the City Ordinances, covers these licenses and does allow a license to be transferrable at the Board's discretion. MPS has an accessory resource center area where the Serenity Center would be operating. Since this would be a new location and use, Mr. Rogers said it was up to the Board whether they wanted to require a new application from MPS. Ms. Welsh said she raised this issue because she learned that Serenity Center was moving. She recalled the Serenity Center application being delay for a variety of reasons and that Mr. Savastano had expressed concern about the MPS location. Ms. Welsh favored MPS submitting a new application because there was a new use in the building that is different than the licensure this Board approved. Mr. Rogers said he should communicate with the Community Development Director about this new use in a new location, which could possibly trigger the need for a new Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Board. Mr. Rogers would report that information to this Board at their next meeting.

Vice Chair Kopczynski recalled that some of the items the Board considers are site specific, like life safety plans and inspections. He said that with an abundance of caution, it made sense for MPS to present the new situation to this Board. Chair Oram wondered whether the Board should give Staff time until the next meeting to review the situation before making a decision, noting that a lot would be redundant. Vice Chair Kopczynski said that some of the operations materials

might not refer to the site, but there are some very specific things requested that are site specific that he did not think could be ignored.

Mr. Rogers advised the Board to table a decision on requiring a new application from MPS until the next meeting when he can bring more information from the Community Development Director. If MPS does have to go back through the Planning Board process, it would be some time before they present to this Board again. Ms. Welsh agreed with tabling the matter until Mr. Savastano could also be present if he has more comments on MPS. Chair Oram agreed, noting that the original MPS application did not fully meet the Board's requirements. Without being onerous to MPS, Chair Oram did believe another discussion was needed.

- VI. Non-Public Session: (if required)**
- VII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Oram adjourned the meeting at 6:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katriona Kibler, Minute Taker  
January 30, 2022

Reviewed and edited by,  
Corinne Marcou, Board Clerk