

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 11, 2017

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

Jan Manwaring, Chair
Steve Hooper
Gary M. Lamoureux

Staff Present:

Medard Kopczynski, City Manager
Thomas Mullins, City Attorney
John Wozmak, Airport Manager
Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director

Robert O'Connor

Members Not Present:

Randy L. Filiault, Vice-Chair

Chair Manwaring called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and explained the procedures of the meeting.

1) **Airport Forestry Management Plan-Airport Manager**

Airport Manager Jack Wozmak introduced himself and presented a map to show the location of the area that would be discussed in the meeting. Mr. Wozmak said the Airport consists of approximately 900 acres. When accepting the position of Airport Manager nine months ago, he recommended the City move in the direction of having a forest management plan so there would be an organized approach to land management. Mr. Wozmak noted of the 900 acres there are 235 acres that were forested. He said the forest management plan was conducted and that the plan would be implemented this month.

Mr. Wozmak continued there were some trees at Runway 20 that were obstructions to aviation and in prior administrations there was the threat of clear cutting in order to remove those obstacles. He said it was fair to state the neighborhood rejected the concept of clear cutting. Mr. Wozmak noted he also rejected the idea of clear cutting and that was the primary reason he was interested in the sustainable forest management plan. He indicated the neighborhood area on the map where the cutting would occur. Mr.

Wozmak said that area should be treated with respect and everything possible would be done to mitigate the impact that the Airport has on the neighborhood.

Mr. Wozmak said the forest management plan was constructed to identify the areas and specific activities that were intended to take place and to remove the obstructions to aviation. He said the plan was to remove the white pines in that area, which were the tallest trees that created the obstruction to aviation. He continued there was a plan to leave the understory trees so the forest could regenerate. Mr. Wozmak explained they have gone to a great extent to find the best balance between the needs of aviation and the interest of the neighborhood to preserve the forest for generations.

Mr. Wozmak continued explaining the area off the end of the runway, which was known as the Edgewood neighborhood, was the area where the white pines would be removed. He said the white pines along the boundary of the City owned property would be removed and that selective cutting would occur in the bog areas. Mr. Wozmak said all of the trees along Airport Drive would remain as is and that the trees in the wetland area would be cut down by hand and with no use of heavy equipment.

He explained the goal of the forest management plan was to create a scenario where the forest was strong and balanced as much as possible. Mr. Wozmak said one of his purposes as the Airport Manager was to develop the Airport. He continued there were areas next to the terminal building that would be a clear cut because it was the prime location to build a hangar. He indicated other areas on the map within the Airport that could be cleared for development purposes.

Mr. Wozmak introduced Forester Jeremy Turner, who created the forest management plan. He said Mr. Turner would explain how he marked the trees, his approach to cutting and the sensitivity of efforts to mitigate the impact. Mr. Wozmak said he understood the neighbors would rather not have any trees cut down, but that was not where the best interest of the Airport stood. He said he believed the City was moving toward as much compromise as possible.

Jeremy Turner, Managing Forester of Meadowsend Timberlands, 420 Main Street, New London said several months were spent reviewing the obstacle area for aviation and that his efforts continued to be on the area of the Edgewood neighborhood. Mr. Turner said that the format of his proposal on the ground followed the forestry plan that was to be put in place. He continued within the aviation zone there would be an area where the machinery would cut and remove the trees. He noted the operation center would be located along the town road. Mr. Turner explained they would be working west of the lowland shrub wetland system and working westerly around young vegetation. He noted there was a helpful component to the forest stand, which was 25-30 year old hardwoods and mixed wood that interrupted the clearing path from the Edgewood neighborhood to the flight fields. Mr. Turner said they were also working around the natural obstacle in favor of younger growth in order to reduce the visual impacts. He explained that approach celebrated younger age classes of trees that were already in that area.

Mr. Turner said the white pines were a 70 year old stand system of trees that stood 70-90 feet in height. Mr. Turner explained what they were doing long term was an important correction for the decades ahead. The goal is adjusting the forest community from a pine system that consisted of a tall growing tree, which he noted was the problem, to a northern red oak hardwood system. He noted the northern red oak trees usually topped at around 70 feet or under.

Mr. Turner said he spent time with the County Forester and the New Hampshire Cooperative Wildlife Extension to look over the site and try to highlight the strengths that could be built upon. He noted there was a lot of attention to detail conducted toward the site and progressive thinking for ecology.

The Airport Manager asked Mr. Turner to discuss the plantation area. Mr. Turner explained the plantation to the west was arguably the highest recreational use area with the most linear trail mileage. He said that he identified the point of focus by gathering data by reviewing field data, measurements, tabulations, site suitability and the type of species located in the area.

Mr. Turner continued he had focused several man hours on the other high priority areas outside the Memorial Forest area. He noted both were ten acre areas that were located on both sides of the road. Mr. Turner explained those areas were noted high priority due to the level of risk of there being very large trees that were failing through health and vigor.

Chair Manwaring asked if any members of the public had questions.

James T. Dunn, 1 Riverton Street, Keene said that he lived at that residence for 22 years. Mr. Dunn indicated on the map where the tree cuttings would occur. He continued it was explained that everything would be great again because in 30 years it would not look like it did after the area was cut. Mr. Dunn said he was 75 years old and asked if he would be around to see what the area looked like in 30 years. He continued as far as he knew all of the land in discussion was at one time under water. He said it seemed the area was not able to sustain a lot of high growth hardwood trees. Mr. Dunn continued that the land was white pine territory and if the white pines were cut down, how would oak trees come up that were 14 feet high with a lack of food.

He continued he was concerned about what the Airport was about. Mr. Dunn said the FAA had spent millions to make the Airport what is was today and that the airport would not be any more than what it would be in 30 years. He said there would not be any more people who are going to come into the area with airplanes. Mr. Dunn explained there will probably not be a lot of industries that are interested in bringing in their jets to Keene. He explained it was not because of the pine trees.

Mr. Dunn stated he had lived in the community since the 1960's and he had not seen any change in the Airport. He asked what the purpose was for all of the cutting because it would not amount to much. Mr. Dunn explained there would still be the same number of jets and airplanes. He continued he did not care how many trees or houses were taken

because it was not going to change. Mr. Dunn said he loves Keene the way it is and did not like the ideas that some people have about what Keene could become. He concluded by asking when would it be realized that Keene was a beautiful New England community, committed to what it is and not to what it might become.

John Dunnell, 30 Lynwood Avenue, Keene, he said he has lived at his residence for 62 years. Mr. Dunnell asked Mr. Turner to provide the number of trees to be cut in the Edgewood area. Mr. Turner replied there was no record. Mr. Dunnell asked Mr. Turner to provide an estimate. Mr. Turner replied there were standing estimates of trees per acre in the forest management plan, that involved trees that were two inches and up. He continued that was one level of recording of trees per acre and the other was a count of seedling stock below the two inch stem which was the understory stalk. Mr. Dunnell said he thought the understory stalk would not be cut. Mr. Turner explained it was a matter of going through the stand data, looking at the overstory trees and then tabulating the numbers.

Mr. Wozmak explained this number has yet to be determined. He continued when a reporter asked the same question the response was that no one had gone out and actually counted all of the trees to determine how many thousands of white pines there would be. Mr. Dunnell explained on the Internet other airports clearly identified the number of trees that would be cut as well as the number of trees to be replanted.

Mr. Dunnell asked Mr. Turner that when considering that we are dealing with a pine forest, how oak trees would survive in an acid soil environment as compared to pine trees. Mr. Turner replied there was an assumption the lowland system around the drainage in the Keene area was pine. He continued that was somewhat accurate and that the pine natural communities were a natural component of the out washed sandy plain. Mr. Turner said pine trees were shade intolerant and were pioneers. He noted pine trees came up very quickly with high heat levels at acidic soils and in Southwestern New Hampshire northern red oak, white oak, hickory, and black oak are a component of that out wash system. Mr. Turner explained when walking the Airport forest land he saw a lot of pine overstay and there were systems that were abandoned for agriculture reasons 70-100 years ago. Mr. Turner explained that pine trees would rise and fall together making an even aged community. He continued it was common where there was pine understory that regenerated underneath pine overstory and that pine would come back up. Mr. Turner continued within that there was an oak variant that was very common and grew in and amongst the Edgewood Neighborhood as well as the Airport lands. He noted the area was also transitioned toward a red oak system and red oak preferred an acidic substrate.

Mr. Dunnell asked what kind of cutting would be intended in the plantation area. He explained in his mind he viewed this as a clear cut allowing some trees to remain. Mr. Turner replied everything on the ground was done through written prescribing, engaging highly skilled reputable people that understood excellent forestry. He continued the forestry done on the ground was planned and implemented through a high directive. Mr. Turner explained the directive on the ground was panning trees for cutting, flagging trees

for retention, flagging sensitive sites to prohibit machinery, boundaries, etc. He noted all of these details were laid out in a high level architecture on the ground so things were not just done right, but done very well.

Mr. Turner said the Memorial Forest in the forest management plan talked about enhancement of site suited species. He continued the plan talked about the removal of the genetically poor quality trees that were not site suited. Mr. Dunnell asked if to the west of the power line road would there be selective cutting. Mr. Turner replied the cutting would be very selective and that he was highly sensitive to the sense of place.

Dwight Anderson, 103 Greenwood Avenue, Keene, said Mr. Turner did a 20% cruise of the area and that Mr. Turner came up with approximately 180,000 board to foot of timber out of the area. He asked if that number was the total or just in one area. Mr. Turner replied he thought that number was for that one particular area of priority. He pointed out to Mr. Anderson that the 20% was actually a 20 factor prism.

Mr. Anderson said that it was stated in the forestry management plan cost was \$3,000 and noted that seemed unreasonable. He continued in discussions with Mr. Turner it was explained Mr. Turner would also be paid an amount per thousand per board foot. Mr. Anderson asked what the amount was per thousand board foot. Mr. Turner replied it was a percent of stumpage and was between 15% and 25%.

The Airport Manager explained the intention was to pay \$3,000 to have Mr. Turner's company create the forestry management plan. He continued the percentage that Mr. Turner received from the trees that were cut was also reflective of the days and weeks he would spend marking, plotting and verifying loggers were cutting the appropriate trees. Mr. Wozmak said he was happy to pay that fee and that it transitioned from having a plan created to paying Mr. Turner to oversee the implementation.

Mr. Anderson asked if it was Mr. Turner's company or his associates that would be doing the logging. Mr. Turner replied no and that the name of the logging company was D H Hardwick & Sons.

Mr. Anderson said at a previous meeting the Airport Manager said he would commit the money from the logging of the project of the twelve plus acres to the mitigation. He asked the Airport Manager if that was still the case. Mr. Wozmak replied yes.

Dr. Ann Shedd, 59 Greenwood Avenue, Keene said she came from the home of the forester that founded and operated the Keene Forestry Association. She noted her family also planted most of the trees in the neighborhood. Dr. Shedd said she wanted to acknowledge the involvement Councilor Manwaring and Councilor Hooper had with the Airport and Edgewood neighborhood. She also wanted to recognize the professionalism of Mr. Wozmak and the foresters.

Dr. Shedd said in the forest management plan there was a statement that the Edgewood forest was not recognized or maintained by the City as a park or recreation area. She

continued the last time she checked, the Parks and Recreation Department Master Plan did list the Keene Forestry Park as one of the properties in its domain. Dr. Shedd said the Keene Forestry Park as a City entity did exist and approximately 22 acres were donated by the Keene Forestry Association, 12 acres were donated by the Edgewood Civic Association which was in existence since 1942.

She continued she was appreciative of a response from the Airport Manager to an email she had sent. She said the email was about whether the boundaries that conveyed the 12 acres had been established in the recent course. Dr. Shedd addressed the Airport Manager stating from her understanding his reply the boundary between the forest and the abutting properties was established. She asked what boundaries of the 12 acre parcel had not been established. Mr. Wozmak replied he was not quite sure how to answer the question and would need to reference the Airport Master Plan that was done 10 years ago. Ms. Shedd explained it would be helpful to have that information because the number of acres impacted had varied from 8 acres to 18 acres. She noted the numbers seemed to be in flux. She asked the Airport Manager to prepare an overlay of the area impacted. Dr. Shedd explained having the overlay available might help the neighborhood to see exactly what areas were impacted.

Dr. Shedd said the characterization of soil types in that area were characterized as Type C Soil, washed out sand and gravel, droughty and less fertile. She noted the area was known to support trees that were shade tolerant and soft woods. She continued there were oak trees creeping in on the edges. Dr. Shedd said she was confused by the discrepancies of the characterizations of what soils would support and what was foreseen to support. She said she was concerned about the longevity of the trees that were foreseen to be moved into the area.

Dr. Shedd suggested there needed to be a specific plan to address the issue as well as the issue of the invasive species. She continued that issue should fall within the purview of the Committee not to lose that sight in the shuffle of things.

She continued she had a personal attachment to the trees that were about to be cut down because some of the trees were planted by her family. Dr. Shedd said she wanted to encourage a systems thinking approach and not to consider the trees just as obstructions.

Mr. Dunnell said there was some recent discussions about mitigation and what concerned him were the finances. He continued using an example found on the Internet about the replanting of trees in Beaufort County, North Carolina. He noted the cost of replanting the shrubs and trees in that area was \$450,000. Mr. Dunnell asked how far the cost would go for replanting. The Airport Manager replied that it was important to wait until the work was completed to begin replanting. He continued the mitigation effort would focus particularly on the property lines that were affected.

Mr. Dunnell said his concern was that talk was cheap and that once the work was over it would be difficult to reach City staff. He said he felt that there should be a commitment that every effort would be made with follow through. Mr. Wozmak said he would be

filled with shock and awe if any of the City Councilor's would abandon those conversations. Chair Manwaring said that she and Councilor Hooper were very committed to ensure the barriers and reforests were addressed.

Mark Meess, 59 Greenwood Avenue, Keene, said he noticed walking through the forest the trees with the pink flags looked almost as tall as the pines that were coming up. He asked how long it would be before some of the hardwoods would need to be removed. Mr. Turner replied the trees with the pink flags were designated as retention trees for screening, aesthetics and visual. He noted those trees were phototropic and grow as long as they have sun whereas pine were geotropic and kept growing as tall as they could.

Mr. Dunn asked what the end result would be when all the trees were whacked. He said he spoke with pilots every day and no one had a problem coming into and exiting the Airport. Mr. Dunn said he spoke with the pilots at C&S and they said they did not have a problem. He noted the FAA said there was a problem and that someone needed to look at the FAA and say most of the people who come to the Airport do not have a problem.

Gerry Frederickson, 675 Main Street, Keene, said that the Airport Manager said something about when the trees came down the airport would be able to do night landings. She continued that it was explained there would be a school where the helicopters could do night landings. Ms. Frederickson said that is very concerning and that there would be more pollution and noise. She said that would be the answer to Mr. Dunn's question.

Jennifer Meyers, 77 Greenwood Avenue asked for a rough estimate on the percentage of retention of trees. Mr. Turner replied he would not sugar coat the answer and said it was a small percentage. He continued the majority of overstory trees were getting cut and the understory stock trees were going to be retained as much as possible.

Ms. Meyers asked Mr. Turner what he would consider as a clear cut and what was not considered a clear cut. Mr. Turner replied a clear cut was considered an all stem sever on a given piece of acreage. The Airport Manager indicated on the map the location of the small terminal building that was considered to be a clear cut and said that area would be mowed in the spring. He noted that area was a development site for a hangar.

The Airport Manager explained a clear cut was where every tree goes, every stump goes and the land was smoothed out afterwards. Ms. Meyers asked if one tree left would still be considered a clear cut and felt the definition of clear cut had been misleading up until this meeting. She continued she did not understand how one tree left would not be considered a clear cut and said that it was a misrepresentation.

Mr. Turner read the definition of a clear cut from the forestry management plan. He continued a clear cut was a spaciouly large area and all stems were severed. Mr. Turner said in the forestry management plan the silver culture prescription was far from a clear cut and was called a modified overstory removal.

Chair Manwaring said unfortunately the term clear cut was used three years ago and had left a bad feeling with everyone. She thanked Mr. Turner for his clarification.

Mr. Anderson asked if there was a different definition of a clear cut on the West coast verses the East coast. He continued on the West coast forestry did clear cuts that were 30-40 acre blocks and all they would take down was the soft wood. Mr. Anderson said that was defined as a clear cut even though there were trees left behind. Mr. Turner replied that to be technical a clear cut was usually at least 20-30 acres in size.

Mr. Anderson said it would be 20-30 years before some people in the Edgewood neighborhood had any kind of block to the Airport. He continued he had researched sound barriers to airports and that one row of trees would not make a difference with sound. Mr. Anderson explained it would take three rows of trees and then some brush to even have a tiny bit of mitigation to the sound. He said the City would need to do a substantial amount of planting.

Chair Manwaring asked from a cost perspective would it be cheaper to do a clear cut verses selective cutting. Mr. Turner replied it would be cheaper by letting an operator cut whatever. Chair Manwaring asked Mr. Turner to explain how these trees would be taken.

Mr. Turner replied the directives were a high level from a systems approach. He continued the machine cutting the trees was a feller-buncher that had a cutting mechanism that held the tree and then laid the tree down. Mr. Turner said the gentleman running the machines was known as the best operator in the Northeast. The Airport Manager asked if trails would be established so the equipment knew where they were going. Mr. Turner replied yes and stating this was clearly determined.

Leanne Anderson, 103 Greenwood Avenue, Keene, said she wanted to reiterate that she noticed when the Edgewood neighborhood was talked about, that the concerns discussed were always visual. She noted visual was important but the barrier those trees provided for noise, vegetation, animals, birds and air quality was extremely important to the whole area. She said she did not want people to think all they cared about was the visual. Ms. Anderson said there was more to the story about the changes with the Airport than just the one area of discussion.

Linda Piekarski, 15 Edgewood Avenue, Keene, said Ms. Anderson was the first one to mention air quality at the meeting. Ms. Piekarski said what she wanted to understand was how planting hardwood deciduous trees that had stems rather than tree branches would help during the winter. Mr. Wozmak replied if the air quality was about carbon sequestration. Ms. Piekarski replied no that it was about the dirt in the air. She continued if all the trees were taken down this would only get worse. Mr. Wozmak said the air would clearly be different but that he was not qualified to explain how the air would travel through differently. Ms. Piekarski noted these were deciduous trees and would not do anything in the winter. Mr. Turner replied there were still soft wood pines that would be left.

Dr. Shedd explained that the sources of air pollutants and greenhouse gases had a huge overlap in terms of fossil fuel sources. She continued greenhouse gas emissions and the EPA criteria air pollutants were two different lists. Dr. Shedd noted airports were a significant source of air pollutants. She shared two articles from the US Forest Northeast Division, a Federal agency. Dr. Shedd said one article was on the air pollution removal and she explained how based on the article tree canopies did remove air pollutants.

Dr. Shedd asked the Airport Manager when the Environmental Assessment Phase II public comment began. The Airport Manager replied he believed it started as of today's date since this was posted and online. Dr. Shedd noted that the Environmental Assessment Phase I public comment was extended because some of the City Committee's that may have had an interest in commenting would not have enough time to put on their agenda before the next meeting. She asked for consideration in extending the public comment of Phase II.

Chair Manwaring asked if Committee members had any further questions.

Councilor Hooper said this discussion was an education on forestry and he had asked a lot of questions. He continued he appreciated the response from the Airport Manager and had spoken to a majority of the neighbors. Councilor Hooper said he was trying to take look at everything with a balanced approach. He said aviation safety was a concern due to the height of the trees. Councilor Hooper noted the trees were getting to high 10-15 years ago. He said there was truly some neighborhood safety due to the height of the trees should a pilot ever have to come down. Councilor Hooper said that he came to the conclusion the trees would need to be cut for safety purposes.

He recommended the City and neighborhood groups come together in civil discourse to work on ways to best mitigate the situation. He continued the trees were going to come down and perhaps they should have been better managed in the past. Councilor Hooper explained the past was the past it was time to move forward and work together. He suggested coming up with good solutions on noise mitigation as well as visual mitigation.

The Councilor suggested a plan going forward to ensure the community there would be a consistent way the forest would grow as healthy as possible.

Councilor O'Connor asked if there could be a spreadsheet that showed the calculations of board to foot. Mr. Turner replied absolutely.

Councilor Lamoureux commented there was a lot time and effort put into the project not only by City staff but also members of the community. He said he could ensure the community that the City Councilor's would make sure the neighborhood was taken care of in the future. Councilor Lamoureux said he understood the cutting of trees was difficult and was hopeful everyone could work together on the process.

Councilor Manwaring said she was committed to making sure the neighborhood was taken care of and their concerns were heard. She noted the mention from Dr. Shedd about

the invasive species and hoped that the Conservation Commission would be involved in the project.

Chair Manwaring asked if there were any further comments from the public.

Mr. Dunn said what he would like to see before the cutting was a plan for mitigation. He wanted to see what the City had in mind to mitigate what they wanted to do and not give the promise that some little twig would grow up to be a massive tree that would protect his property. Mr. Dunn said he would like to see what the City had in mind to protect from pollution, air pollution, noise and the whole aggravation at the Airport.

Councilor O'Connor made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Hooper.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee accepted the Airport Forest Management Plan as informational.

2) Taryn Fisher-Creation of an Arts Policy

Taryn Fisher, 302 Court Street, Keene, said she recently moved to Keene and that she was an Assistant Professor at Antioch University. She continued since working at Antioch she had been approached on several occasions by local artists in the community who expressed an interest for a vibrant arts community in Keene. Ms. Fisher said she enjoyed living in Keene and thought the community was vibrant.

Ms. Fisher continued she attended a meeting at Hannah Grimes and there was a conversation around the topic of public art. She said one of the outcomes of the conversation was that it would be beneficial to the City of Keene to develop a complete arts policy that worked similar to how the Complete Streets policy worked. Ms. Fisher said she was thinking she could work with a number of interested parties that included Arts Alive, Hannah Grimes, Chamber of Commerce and other interested stakeholders in the community. She continued they would work through a systemized process to determine what an ideal arts policy would look like.

Ms. Fisher said her letter to the City Council was simply to state there was interest in the community to create an arts policy. She noted she attended a Planning Board meeting on the development of Emerald Street and used the example as a great case study to see how the arts policy could work. Ms. Fisher said she brought up the idea of the arts policy at the Planning Board meeting and the response that an arts policy was a good idea.

She continued what she was proposing was to gather a number of like minded folks together to have a cross functional conversation that involved perspectives from multiple stakeholders.

Councilor Lamoureux thanked Ms. Fisher for bringing the idea forward and noted this was something that had been discussed in the past. He asked if Ms. Fisher had heard of Arts Alive. She replied yes and that they had agreed to collaborate. Ms. Fisher said that

she would rely on organizations that existed and did not want to create something out of nothing.

The City Manager said he would like to see artists recognize that there were public places that displayed art. He continued there should be more arts and culture within the Central Business District. The City Manager said he would love to see sculpture gardens and more plays in Keene. He continued the arts policy conversation was something that needed to take place and that there would need to be a discussion of what role the City would have. The City Manager said the role of the City would be either from making property available or from an ordinance standpoint.

He continued it was time the City started connecting with other groups and organizations to begin pushing an arts policy as much as possible.

Ms. Fisher said her first step would be to take an inventory of what organizations existed, available space and what City streets would be available. She said she wanted an approach that was not limited to visual but also performing art. Ms. Fisher continued the idea was to do the research and then to make a proposal.

Councilor Manwaring said that this evening the Committee would likely accept Ms. Fisher's report as informational and then have Ms. Fisher return with a product for the Committee. Ms. Fisher said there was already a discussion of putting together a project plan and the information gathering process could take a few months. She asked if the next step would be to come back to the Committee when they were ready to put something forth for discussion. Councilor Manwaring replied yes.

Councilor Jacobs said he was the former Chair of the Board for Arts Alive. He continued Ms. Fisher's idea was great and that the more art the better. Councilor Jacobs said that art was not only good for the soul, but also for the economy. He said that he was proud the community had an awareness of the importance of art.

Councilor Jacobs said there was a group called the Friends of Public Art that was under the wing of Arts Alive. He noted this group had done some wonderful projects such as the black and white murals in downtown Keene. Councilor Jacobs said they were also hoping to get involved in creating a policy. He said a statement of overall support would be a good thing from the City's point of view.

Councilor Jacobs noted Filtrine Manufacturing was going to be putting a piece of public art in Central Square and was a water bottle filling station. He offered to be a liaison in terms of his knowledge of how the City worked and experience from Arts Alive.

Councilor Hansel thanked Ms. Fisher for bringing in the idea and noted this was a conversation that was needed. He said he wanted to bring this conversation into the conversations with the Comprehensive Economic Development Committee by finding niches in the area to market them. Councilor Jacobs said there were a lot of unknown artists in the area as well as the quality of art that was in Keene.

He continued using the example of the community in Burlington, Vermont. Councilor Hansel said they encouraged public art along their rail trails around Lake Champlain. He said that attracted more art and tourism to the area which contributed to their economy.

Councilor Hansel suggested the City embrace public art because it could lead to economic development. He also made the recommendation Ms. Fisher's idea was brought before the Land Use Code Update to see if any other ideas existed.

Councilor O'Connor made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lamoureux.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee accepted the letter from Ms. Fisher as informational and recommended that the letter be forwarded to the Land Use Code Update Committee.

3) United Church of Christ-Request to Remove Trees-Public Works Department

Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director, said they were back from additional time for the request of United Church of Christ (UCC)'s for removing trees from their facility.

Linda Mangones, UCC member, said the UCC was providing a complete renovation of the steeple and painting of the building and the steeple's façade. The project will require months of scaffolding, starting in early spring. Ms. Mangones noted there were two trees in front of the UCC that needed to be cut down. She said during a meeting last December they spoke with Mr. Blomquist and came up with a plan that UCC be allowed to remove the trees at the expense of UCC.

Mr. Blomquist said that in discussion with UCC that while the trees would need to come down, the City would need to ensure the safest work environment for both the contractors and for the traveling public. Mr. Blomquist said from his perspective he recommends healthy trees only be removed for very few reasons. He noted the request of UCC was one of those reasons. He continued UCC had agreed to replace the two trees and that an estimate of the two trees was \$1900. Mr. Blomquist said the replacement of trees would consist of trees that would be 10-15 feet tall and the trees would be more urban oriented. He noted the cost estimate was based on the fact that each tree would take a half of work day to plant. Mr. Blomquist said that he was not stating trees would be go back in that area but it was appropriate UCC did provide that funding.

He continued there were some questions asked such as if the contractors working on the project would hold insurance. Mr. Blomquist said the City of Keene had an encumbrance and excavation permitting process that said anyone who did work within a right away within the City would need a permit. He continued the permit requirement was to ensure the appropriate levels occurred such as providing a traffic control plan to show how traffic would move throughout and how the applicant would provide accommodations for pedestrians. He also noted a bond would be required for any damage that might occur.

Mr. Blomquist said there was a process in place that dealt with answers to these types of questions. He noted these permits would be pulled from the UCC's contractor. He said what the Committee would be approving at the meeting would be the removal of the two trees.

Councilor Lamoureux asked if that work included removal of the stumps. Mr. Blomquist replied yes and that the stumps would be ground down to below grade.

Councilor Jacobs said he recalled there was a discussion about whether the trees would be replaced as well as the visual impact. He asked when and how the decision would be made when the trees would be replaced. Mr. Blomquist said that was a good question and there would be a discussion with the Mayor about downtown. He noted that was in effect if there was no other discussion the trees would be replaced in that approximate location. He continued he had a sense a larger discussion would take place. Mr. Blomquist said that was the reason they asked UCC to provide the funding for the tree replacement or other landscaping in the immediate area of the church. He continued there was no expectation from UCC if the trees were not planted they would not be refunded. Chair Manwaring asked Ms. Mangones if that was true. Ms. Mangones replied that was true and that everyone at UCC felt that arrangement was fair. She continued no one at UCC wanted trees of that size to be replanted and the entire purpose of the project was beautiful architecture and to enhance the landscape.

The City Manager explained a lot of the planting of the trees were not suitable for where they were located and part of discussion was planting the right tree at the right place. He said if people wanted downtown to be open and inviting that allowed public art and sidewalk cafes a balancing discussion would need to take place. He said he did not see these trees being replaced immediately but they would be replaced in accordingly to a plan from a Committee the Mayor was currently putting in place.

Chair Manwaring asked if there were any comments from the public.

Kathy Blair, 175 West Surry Road Keene, member of the UCC wanted to thank Ms. Mangones for her work on the project. She continued the UCC had worked really hard to get the point of the request where there was a contractor ready to do the work. Ms. Blair said the project would add value to downtown. She said by the end of summer the steeple would be bright white instead of gray. Ms. Blair said UCC hoped to move forward with all of the permits and procedures so they are on schedule for the work to be conducted in April.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor O'Connor.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends the United Church of Christ be granted permission to remove the two trees at the head of the square at their expense and further that the Church reimburse the City \$1900 for the cost of replacing the two trees.

4) Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Manwaring adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jennifer Clark, Minute-taker