

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held Thursday, February 16, 2017. The Honorable Mayor Kendall W. Lane called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Roll called: Janis O. Manwaring, Terry M. Clark, Bartolmiej K. Sapeta, Randy L. Filiault, Robert B. Sutherland, George S. Hansel, Gary P. Lamoureux, Stephen L. Hooper, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Philip M. Jones, David C. Richards and Mitchell H. Greenwald were present. Councilors Carl B. Jacobs, Robert J. O'Connor, and Thomas F. Powers were absent. Councilor Filiault led the Pledge of Allegiance. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to accept the minutes from the February 2, 2017 meeting was duly seconded. The motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor. The Mayor commented that on Thursday, February 23, 2017 the FOP Committee will conclude its review of the CIP, and reminded Councilors that the meeting will start at 5:30 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING – ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – WEST SURRY ROAD AND ZONING ORDINANCE HIGH DENSITY I

Mayor Lane called the public hearing to order at 7:03 PM. The Notice of Hearing and Certificate of Publication were read. The Mayor recognized City Planner Michelle Chalice to address the Council relative to the proposal. Ms. Chalice noted she was present to provide a brief description of the petition. She noted that applicant Avanru Development Group, LTD is requesting that a 12.9 acre parcel located between West Surry Road and Old Walpole Road be rezoned from an existing Low Density zone to High Density I. The petition was heard by the Joint Planning Board and Planning, Licenses and Development Committee at their meeting in December. The parcel is within the service area for City water and sewer. Ms. Chalice noted the only other HD-1 zone in the City is an apartment complex that is located at the intersection of Maple Avenue and Park Avenue. It consists of multiple three story buildings in a “campus” type setting. In the process of reviewing the petition, staff became aware that the parcel includes forested wetlands. Ms. Chalice went on to state that at the December 12, 2016 meeting of the Joint Committee, the Planning Board found the request was not consistent with the City’s 2010 Comprehensive Master Plan. At that meeting, the PLD Committee recommended this public hearing be set. She further noted the Staff report and all exhibits related to it are available for review in the City Clerk’s Office. Ms. Chalice ended by stating that on January 31, 2017 a letter was received from the applicant which she read into the record:

Dear Mr. Mayor and Keene City Council,

My intent at this time is to not move forward regarding 32 West Surry Road in Keene, New Hampshire. I understand that the zoning process has commenced and must continue. At the appropriate time I expect to ask the Council to defeat the Ordinance as drawn. Thank you for your time and consideration, it is genuinely appreciated.

*Regards,
Jack D. Franks
President and CEO of Avanru Development Group*

Mayor Lane thanked Ms. Chalice and went on to open the hearing to public comment noting there is no longer an applicant.

Richard Hamilton of 14 South View Drive stated this change is not consistent with the Comprehensive Master Plan, which he values. He opposes the change to the Zoning Ordinance.

Connie Joyce of 81 Grant Street stated that she too opposed this change and is concerned with Keene's future. She has worked and lived in Keene and been a full time realtor in Keene for over 34 years. She wants the Council to do what is right. There are major traffic and pedestrian safety issues, air quality concerns, and drainage issues when removing large trees. This will ruin the established wildlife corridor and negatively impact the neighborhood. This will also negate the Master Plan. She urged the Council to make the right decision and defeat the Ordinances.

Robert Nichols of 1 Glen Road stated he has traffic concerns with this proposal and the insufficient roundabout that would serve the location at the bottom of Old Walpole Road. The traffic here has intensified over the years. He provided an example of traffic congestion related to busses in the area. He stated there are wetlands on the parcel and it is one of few wooded areas left in Keene. In urbanizing these neighborhoods for the sake of revenue, the City needs to consider that this urbanization drives down the price of homes and people are moving away. He is against the Ordinance because of the traffic issues it will cause and because he does not want the City to lose places like this in Keene. He asked the Councilors to consider how they would feel if this was proposed in their neighborhood.

Carey Bluhm of West Surry Road stated he pulled a handout off the City website explaining what zoning can do. He proceeded to read the following: *Keeps things that are noisy, smelly, loud or dangerous away; ideally, zoning balances your property rights; and protects most loved parts of the neighborhood.* Mr. Bluhm stated that was the main point he wanted to make: this is a neighborhood on West Surry Road and Old Walpole Road. It is a neighborhood in the true sense of the word and because it is a residential area, it is zoned Low Density for a reason. It is cohesive as it is. He stated if you look at the map of this area, lower Court Street has a lot of Commercial and High Density development, but then you look at that small pie shaped slice of land at 32 West Surry Road, and it does not really belong there. The Zoning Ordinance indicates High Density I should be considered on certain streets and it does not include Old Walpole or West Surry and to throw those into it because it seems to fit where activity centers are located would be is a limited way of thinking. It does not make sense in this case. Low Density is a more reasonable designation to maintain wildlife corridors, etc.

As there were no further comments, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing at 7:16 PM. He noted this will be before the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee at their meeting of February 22, 2017. Public testimony will not be permitted at that meeting, and they will be making a recommendation to the full City Council that will be considered at the next City Council meeting. The Mayor noted that written comments would continue to be accepted up until 4:00 PM on Tuesday, February 21st.

A true record, attest:



Deputy City Clerk

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mayor recognized Assistant City Manager/IT Director, Rebecca Landry. Ms. Landry stated that she was here this evening to present the Economic Development Action Plan that was just published. She noted it is available on the City website as well as in paper form. She thanked the Mayor for creating the Ad Hoc Comprehensive Economic Development Committee. In addition, Ms. Landry thanked the members of the Committee for their efforts in developing this plan. She stated that the Committee put forth a lot of hard work and they were pleased to present the Economic Development Action Plan to the City Council.

Ms. Landry began by stating the goal of the Committee was consistent with the Comprehensive Master Plan, which was focused on providing for a vibrant economy. The goals include supporting the growth of existing businesses, incubating new businesses and attracting businesses to locate and develop in Keene. Ms. Landry stated that although attracting new businesses and large employers is important, just as important is supporting the 60% of Keene businesses that have four or fewer employees. The committee felt it was very important to continue to support our existing businesses and not just focus on bringing in new business.

Ms. Landry continued that all of the recommendations in the plan are focused on these important goals. The aim is to streamline the development process, draw investment in projects that expand the property tax base, provide living wage job opportunities and develop the local workforce to meet demand and retain our young professionals. Ms. Landry noted there is some excellent momentum in our community. There is currently \$100 million dollars in “permit value” from development projects taking place in this community and it is important to note this represents a broad diversity of business and industry development, which is a testament to this community that the Committee wanted to highlight.

Ms. Landry continued that the plan is broken down into three sections. First, it highlights the importance of identifying priorities as we develop programs, partnerships and policies to support sustainable economic growth throughout the region. Then we dig into what our community looks like for those who may be looking at our plan, but not particularly familiar with Keene. Ms. Landry commented she would not go into great detail on that here tonight, but it’s in the plan for the public’s consumption. Finally, we will get into the economic development action items the Committee recommends this Council take. Ms. Landry stated there are several organizations talking about and planning around Economic Development in Keene, such as Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce, the Southwest Region Planning Commission, Hannah Grimes, Keene State College, and River Valley Community College, among others. She noted these partnerships will be key as we look into furthering economic development in the community.

Ms. Landry stated that in the plan they discuss workforce development. There is a trend that labor supply is insufficient to meet labor demand not just in Keene or the Monadnock Region, but across the state, across New England and even nationwide. We also have an aging population in New Hampshire more so than in some other states. We need to synchronize our workforce demand with incentivized training and certification programs. We have talked about the Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare which is run by the Chamber.

We need to foster more internships and apprenticeships like this around the community. She noted a member of the Economic Development Committee actually had to step down after just a couple of meetings to fill in at his business because they had not been able to fill a vacant position. They are feeling this shortage of qualified applicants. Ms. Landry continued if we are going to grow and attract businesses then we need resources, and the number one resource is qualified employees. She continued the Committee worked with the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development to do a Keene industry cluster analysis. The analysis showed that production technology and heavy equipment are the highest ranked industries in Keene, following by business services, local education and training, textile manufacturing, plastics, printing services and financial services. The top ranked industries on the list are growing and are bigger here than in other parts of the nation, so these are important for us to focus on. It makes sense to focus our education, training and certification programs on these industries to begin attacking that gap between workforce demand and supply. She added that because Keene is a county hub, local and county government would be on this list as well, but it was excluded for the purpose of this discussion. For a rather large region it is not unusual for there to be a lot of employees in the public sector.

Ms. Landry stated the next priority identified by the Committee is affordability. This priority is mirrored in the Comprehensive Master Plan. She continued the master plan highlights the importance of high quality jobs that pay a living wage.

The next priority identified is youth retention. Ms. Landry said there are two truths to share: retirements are on the rise and the younger generation is moving away. This leaves us in quite a predicament and to remain sustainable, we have to do something about it. We are recommending that we create a brand that will appeal to young professionals; that we publish a digital matchmaking program to match employers with prospective employees; incentivize local employment; maintain an online job portal; and run consistent social media campaigns on a regional basis. Young professionals expect easy access to broadband, social and recreational activities, transportation alternatives, affordable living solutions, and programs such as the Keene Young Professionals Network. These resources are available elsewhere – or at least that is the perception driving their decision to move.

Ms. Landry continued the fifth priority is transportation. Are we thinking about a multimodal transportation center at the Airport? This is incredibly important as we could otherwise be at a disadvantage to communities on the I-93 corridor, for example. We may not see a return of the railroad here, but we, at a bare minimum, should have convenient bus to rail services.

The final priority identified in the plan is legislative advocacy. It has come to the Committee's attention that our regional economic development potential is being overlooked in Concord. We would like to see a regional task force created to get some overdue attention for State and Federal incentives, grants and other economic development opportunities. We look forward to partnering with other area businesses to do that.

Ms. Landry commented that we have an economic profile, and the plan itself is intended to be a City Council tool, but it is likely to be viewed by the community and beyond. Although it is not a development packet (which is something that should follow this plan), it does include some

basic community profile data such as population information, a basic feel for Keene's quality of life, top employers, educational resources, etc. This final section of the plan is the "meat and potatoes" action items the Committee recommends the City Council consider taking in the near future to advance economic development. The action items identified include: business support, incubation and development; tax base incentives; development incentives; downtown economic vitality; broadband; outreach; and economic development planning.

In the business support category, the Committee is suggesting they start a Business Advocacy and Response Team (BART) to meet with businesses (new, existing and prospective). Ms. Landry noted this team is expected to be a proactive business resource and focus particularly on helping simplify the development experience. The team's objective will be to create positive, proactive working relationships and cultivate active working relationships with local and State agencies. The Committee is recommending the Business Advocacy and Response Team report back at least quarterly to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee.

Also along the line of business support they have recommended the creation of a Community Development Department. This would be to implement modern outreach and educational programs beyond what we are already doing; and to simplify enforcement and permitting. This would call for relocating all processes to a single location, and would rebrand the Code Enforcement Department as the Community Development Department. The idea is to send the message to the public that the City acknowledges that customer service from project start to project finish is essential to a successful development experience; and to send a more positive message to the public that we are committed to supporting and assisting development projects throughout the process.

Ms. Landry continued relative to business support, we are looking to simplify the permitting process by developing a single application process and implementing a contractor pre-certification program to reduce the number of inspections required for construction projects. We would like to see a reduction in the time from application to permit because time to market is a key consideration of businesses in their site selection process. In addition, we are looking at authorizing a staff development review committee to conduct administrative approvals and reduce the number of applications that must go through the Planning Board process.

Ms. Landry continued the land use code update is currently underway. She noted that decades ago the focus was on controlling growth, while today the focus is on creating opportunities, and the land use code will be essential to that. She noted the Committee also talked about tax base expansion to alleviate the residential property tax burden. The question then became, how much? She went on to provide some statistics as to how much development would need to occur to balance increases in the city, county and school tax rates, noting it would require upwards of \$40 million dollars in new development. For added perspective, Ms. Landry noted the Target Store and the Kohl's Plaza represent about \$20 million dollars in value. They are significantly sized businesses and to see something like that happen on a yearly basis is not necessarily realistic but something to shoot for.

Ms. Landry went on to review development incentives, indicating these are possible tools in the toolbox, some of which we have used successfully in the past for projects like TIF districts for

Black Brook, and the current Library Expansion. She continued that some of these possible incentives require City Council action such as the adoption of RSA 79-E which requires the Council to adopt a Resolution just to make it possible here in Keene.

Ms. Landry continued that downtown economic vitality is certainly important and is included in the plan. She continued we may not have an official brand, but people recognize and cherish our wonderful downtown to the extent that it has evolved into at least a piece of our natural brand. Its continued vitality is extremely important, and it will take a team effort to continue to nurture that. We hope to partner with downtown businesses to inventory and promote downtown Keene amenities and minimize those vacancies.

Ms. Landry stated they have included broadband actions in the plan. It involves supporting legislation that allows for private-public partnerships in building out the broadband infrastructure. New Hampshire communities have received zero State support when it comes to things like matching funds for federal grants and legislative support to consider broadband essential infrastructure. This has left us with an economic development disadvantage relative to our neighboring states.

Ms. Landry noted there is so much more we can do to put Keene on the map. An outreach plan is probably the most fundamental resource that we lack. So we have included the need for this plan, which involves branding; creating an economic development website unique and independent from the City web; using social media more effectively; doing more lead cultivation; creating a Development Opportunities Packet to market Keene; and getting on the State database by inventorying all of our available properties and making sure the State is advertising those.

Economic development planning is something that is one of our last actions. This plan is just one step in a series of planning practices that continue to prepare Keene for a sustainable future. We see that being a mechanism to identify projects in the Capital Plan that will have an impact on economic development, and look into grants such as those available from places like the National Realtors Association, and the US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development.

In conclusion, Ms. Landry provided a summarized to-do list of items the Committee is recommending. She also took a moment to thank the committee members, the guest speakers that came before the Committee and the staff who pulled this together. She went on to thank Mayor Lane for creating the Committee. The time and effort invested in this process is noted and very much appreciated. We are excited to move into the next phase and see things start coming together – like the opportunities packet, the website, the BART, etc. – and we are very optimistic about the future outcome of this process.

Mayor Lane invited Economic Development Committee Chair Councilor Greenwald to comment on the work of the Committee.

Councilor Greenwald applauded Ms. Landry in her efforts as the liaison to this Committee. He thanked the other members as well. He noted there were many staff present during the process as we listened to the various guest speakers and took in their comments, both positive and

negative. He continued there are many facets to this process that we need to put together to move us forward: its housing, education, youth retention, attracting new industries, rebranding, etc. It is a whole sphere of challenges and opportunities. Councilor Greenwald stated a lot of good work went into this report and he hopes it will become a guide and usable reference for the Council, not a document that gets filed away. Now we move on to the next step: implementation.

Councilor Chadbourne stated this was a very ambitious Committee and commended their efforts. She went on to ask if during all these conversations was there any discussion relative to a need to increase staffing in order to meet these goals, such as having an Economic Development Director, etc. Ms. Landry stated that it was brought up as a question. There is no clear answer yet. This will be forwarded to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee and this will most certainly be a topic of conversation as this plan moves forward.

Councilor Manwaring asked how much discussion the Committee had regarding our aging population and what to do about it. Ms. Landry stated it was a recurring topic of discussion, and it was one of the top goals to address the labor shortage that is exacerbated by the fact that we have both an aging population and an out flux of the young professionals. We talked about trying to combat this issue by providing more local training, certification and education opportunities that align employer needs with what young professionals are capable of providing.

As there were no further questions or comments, the Mayor thanked Ms. Landry for her presentation and went on to thank the members for their efforts.

NOMINATIONS – AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE – LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES – CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The following nominations were received from the Mayor: Frederick Haap, III to serve as a regular member on the Airport Advisory Committee with a term to expire December 31, 2017; Kathleen Kennedy Burke to serve as a regular member on the Library Board of Trustees with a term to expire June 30, 2017; and Alexander Von Plinsky to serve as an alternate member on the Conservation Commission with a term to expire December 31, 2018. The nominations were tabled until the next regular meeting.

NOMINATIONS – COLLEGE/CITY COMMISSION

The following nominations were received from the Mayor to the College/City Commission: Daryl Masterson to serve as Co-Chair with a term to expire December 31, 2021; Paula Jessup to serve as a regular member with a term to expire December 31, 2020; Phil Jones to serve as a regular member with a term to expire December 31, 2019; Bettina Chadbourne to serve as a regular member with a term to expire December 31, 2018; Dick Berry to serve as a regular member with a term to expire December 31, 2018; Dean Eaton to serve as a regular member with a term to expire December 31, 2019; Marcia Kayser to serve as a regular member with a term to expire December 31, 2020. The nominations were tabled until the next regular meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AD HOC COMMITTEE

The following were appointed by the Mayor to the Special Committee on Downtown Revitalization Committee: Mayor Kendall W. Lane as chair; City Councilors: Mitchell H, Greenwald, Gary P. Lamoureux, and Carl B. Jacobs; Shane Gormley, C&S; Jack Dugan, MEDC; Cheryl A. Belair, The Insurance Source; Kevin Dremel, Keene Music Festival; Katie Sutherland, Architect; Shannon Hundley, Hannah Grimes; and Luca Paris, Luca's Mediterranean Café. The charge of the Committee was to explore all issues related to downtown revitalization to create both short-term and long-term plans which may include modifications, alterations and improvements. A motion by Councilor Greenwald was duly seconded to accept the Mayor's appointments. The motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

COMMUNICATION – ATTORNEY THOMAS R. HANNA – REQUEST FOR LICENSES – PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF “HILLSIDE VILLAGE” ON WYMAN ROAD

A communication was received from Attorney Thomas R. Hanna submitting a request for various licenses for installation of utilities and an underground walkway associated with the proposed development of “Hillside Village” on Wyman Road. The communication was referred by the Chair to the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee.

COMMUNICATION – COUNCILORS JACOBS AND CHADBOURNE – GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION AS A PROTECTED CLASSIFICATION

A communication was received from Councilors Jacobs and Chadbourne submitting a request that the City Council consider adopting a resolution adding gender identity or expression to the list of protected classifications in the City's Employment Non-Discrimination Policy. The Councilors requested the City support State legislation that would include gender identity or expression as a protected classification under State Law. The communication was referred by the Chair to the City Attorney to draft a Resolution.

MSFI REPORT – PRESENTATION – PARKS BUILD “COMMUNITY” – PARKS, RECREATION AND FACILITIES DEPARTMENT

An informational report was received from the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommending the report from Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department be accepted as informational. The report was filed into the record as informational.

PLD REPORT – REQUEST FOR LODGING HOUSE LICENSE – UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Planning Licenses and Development Committee report read recommending a lodging house license be issued to United Church of Christ at 23 Central Square in Keene subject to the following conditions: said lodging house license may only be used as an overflow for the Hundred Nights Shelter; and managed by the Hundred Nights Shelter; no more than 16 persons may reside at any one time on the premises; compliance with all applicable sections of the City Code; and compliance with any requirements or recommendations of City staff. Said license will expire on the 17th day of February, 2018 and may be revoked by the City Council in

accordance with Section 26-590 “Suspension or Revocation.” A motion by Councilor Richards to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded. The motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

The City Manager commented on various postings that are occurring on City property, such as light poles. He noted they were damaging to the poles because they were glued on and when people removed the postings, the paint is being damaged. He urged people not to post these items and urged people not to try to remove these postings, but to allow for Public Works Department to remove them in the spring with the proper techniques. The City Manager went on to say that HB413, which will reinstate 15% retirement contributions, passed the House. It now needs to pass the Senate and go through the Finance Committee to be included in the State budget. He urges the City Council to support the bill. The City Manager continued with the “disposable wipes” problem article gaining momentum and thanked the Public Works Department for their efforts. The City Manager encouraged residents to continue to shovel out the fire hydrants along with water and sewer department and the Fire Department. The City Manager congratulated TJ O’Brien on passing the ICC Residential Mechanical Inspection Certification

MORE TIME

More time was granted for the following issue within committee: Request for Lodging House License – 57 Winchester Street.

MEMORANDUM AND RESOLUTION R-2017-07: RELATING TO THE REALLOCATION OF BOND PROCEEDS FROM THE CASTLE STREET REHABILITATION PROJECT

A memorandum was received from Donald Lussier, City Engineer along with Resolution R-2017-07: Relating to the Reallocation of Bond Proceeds from the Castle Street Rehabilitation Project. Resolution R-2017-07 was read for the first time. The communication and Resolution were referred to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee.

MEMORANDUM AND RESOLUTIONS R-2017-01: RELATING TO THE ABSOLUTE DISCONTINUANCE OF A PORTION OF CASTLE STREET; R-2017-02: RELATING TO A DEED FOR THE DISCONTINUED PORTION OF CASTLE STREET; AND R-2017-03: RELATING TO THE RELEASE OF DRAINAGE EASEMENTS AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF A DEED FOR A RELOCATED DRAINAGE EASEMENT

A memorandum was received from Kurt Blomquist, Public Works Director/Emergency Management Director along with Resolutions R-2017-01: Relating to the Absolute Discontinuance of a Portion of Castle Street; R-2017-02: Relating to the Deed for the Discontinued Portion of Castle Street; and R-2017-03: Relating to the Release of Drainage Easements and the Acceptance of a Deed for a Relocated Drainage Easement. Resolutions R-2017-01, R-2017-02 and R-2017-03 were read for the first time. The communication and Resolutions were referred to the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee.

02/16/2017

The Mayor scheduled a site visit for Thursday, March 16, 2017 at 5:45 PM with a Public Hearing at 7:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING STRATEGY AND LEGAL ADVICE

At 7:55 PM, Councilor Greenwald moved to go into adjournment for collective bargaining strategy and legal advice. On showing of hands, 12 Councilors were present and voting in favor. Assistant City Manager/Human Resources Director Elizabeth Fox and outside legal counsel, Thomas Closson were invited to remain. Discussion was limited to the subject matters. The session concluded at 8:17 PM. On motion by Councilor Greenwald, voted unanimously to authorize the City Manager to do all things necessary to execute negotiated contracts with the Professional Firefighters of Keene and the Keene Fire Supervisors to be effective July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

At 8:20 PM, a motion by Councilor Greenwald to go into non-public session for the purposes of discussion of land matters under RSA 91-A:3 II(d) was duly seconded. On a roll call vote, 12 Councilors were present and voted in favor. Councilors Jacobs, O'Connor and Powers were absent. Discussion was limited to the subject matter. The session concluded at 8:37 PM. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to keep the minutes in non-public session was duly seconded. On a roll call vote, 12 Councilors were present and voting in favor. Councilors Jacobs, O'Connor and Powers were absent.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:37 PM, there being no further business, the Mayor adjourned the meeting.

A true record, attest:



Deputy City Clerk