

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PLANNING, LICENSES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 9, 2016

7:00 PM

Council Chambers B

Members Present:

David C. Richards, Chair
Philip M. Jones, Vice-Chair
George S. Hansel
Bettina A. Chadbourne

Staff Present:

Michele Chalice, Planner
Tara Kessler, Planner
Rhett Lamb, ACM/Planning Director
Medard Kopczynski, City Manager
Beth Fox, ACM/Human Resource Director
Jack Wozmak, Airport Manager

Members Not Present:

Robert B. Sutherland

Other Councilors Present

Chair Richards called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1) Discussion – Periodic Report- Airport Advisory Commission

Clark Dexter, Chair of the Airport Advisory Commission, and Jack Wozmak, Airport Manager addressed the Committee. Mr. Dexter reported the Master Plan will be completed soon. The last time Mr. Dexter reported to the Committee seven of the hangars were empty; and added only two hangars are empty at this time. He continued the large hangar was in disrepair and not leased; it is now leased by Monadnock Aviation.

Mr. Dexter reported a TIF District was proposed by Jack Wozmak to improve the sewer and water infrastructure. Talks have commenced with Thomas Transportation to develop a transportation center. The design contract for Runway 14-32 had been announced along with a forestry management plan. Mr. Dexter reported there had been a tenfold increase in people traffic at the airport, much of it was due to the restaurant opening. Monadnock Aviation was also thriving with an increase in students being reported. Mr. Dexter also reported an increase in aviation traffic which he attributed in part to the political scene. Mr. Dexter also outlined the improvements made inside the terminal. Concluding his presentation Mr. Dexter advised there will soon be two vacancies on the Commission.

Chair Richards asked when the TIF District will be brought forward. Mr. Wozmak reported he just completed the document and has provided it to the City Manager and the Town of Swanzey. Mr. Wozmak outlined the process to be followed before it comes to Committee; he also noted

the statutory timeline to start the process. Chair Richards commented it sounds like a lot of good things were going on there at the Airport, and he was happy to hear the news.

Councilor Jones commented this was the best Airport presentation the Committee has had. Councilor Jones also noted the amount of potential development needed for a TIF District to come about; he asked if that development was there. Mr. Wozmak replied in the affirmative. Referring to the two hangar vacancies (source of revenue) Councilor Jones asked if those filled had planes registered in Keene. Mr. Wozmak replied in the affirmative noting the statutory requirement to register a plane in New Hampshire if you are hangaring a plane in New Hampshire. Mr. Wozmak reported the planes that filled the hangars came from Nashua and Laconia; mostly because Keene was more cost competitive. Councilor Jones asked if the installation of cameras would help us increase the landing fees if we know who was coming in at night. Mr. Wozmak replied in the negative noting it would help us determine more accurate numbers for the level of operations. Mr. Wozmak noted he had not been able to determine the formula used to determine the previous numbers reported. Mr. Wozmak had worked with the Airport consultant to make the numbers a little more believable with a formula attached to it. Mr. Wozmak also noted the landing fees were relatively small as they were at other airports.

Chair Richards asked if the FBO gets the landing fees. Mr. Wozmak explained the City receives the landing fees and Monadnock Aviation receives a stipend to collect those fees. He continued Monadnock Aviation receives revenue for the services they provide and the City gets a percentage of gross revenue from the business.

Councilor Chadbourne commented positively on the renovated area and asked if there were plans to renovate the bathrooms. Mr. Wozmak replied in the affirmative noting this was part of a CIP he submitted to the City Manager. Mr. Wozmak also noted the bathrooms were not ADA compliant. Councilor Chadbourne also asked how the restaurant was doing. Mr. Wozmak commented he thinks the Flight Deck was doing very well.

Chair Richards asked for additional Committee questions or comments.

Councilor Hansel asked if the potential development was within the Airport footprint or on outlying properties the City owns. Mr. Wozmak noted the transportation center being discussed would abut the terminal parking on one side or the other. Mr. Wozmak also reported three people have approached him about a boutique hotel; he noted this could be done in the southern area closer to the property. Continuing he also noted someone was interested in building a million dollar hangar. Many of these sites have been previously identified in the Airport Master Plan but nothing had been done with the properties. In response to Councilor Hansel, Mr. Wozmak indicated these would be land leases as they provide the most value.

Councilor Chadbourne asked a two part question; were there plans to build more hangars and were some of the hangars rented or owned. Mr. Wozmak reported there were no plans to build additional t-hangars. The City owns a couple of the leased t-hangars and Monadnock Aviation owns one of the hangars paying a land lease to the City. Councilor Chadbourne also asked if the number of employees had increased with the increased activity at the Airport. Mr. Wozmak noted one part-time position was increased to full-time. They borrow from other departments when it snows, and they had outsourced some of the mowing.

He would have to look at the numbers to see if hiring a seasonal employee is warranted.

Chair Richards asked for comments/questions from the public.

Ann Shedd, of 59 Greenwood Avenue, and a member of the Airport Master Plan Update Committee noted she had raised this question a number of times over the past two years without response. She continued the State Aviation Master Plan of 2014 made a recommendation that Keene change its status from a regional to a national airport. Ms. Shedd asked if this has never been discussed by the City. Chair Richards commented he did not think so. Ms. Shedd suggested this was something Council should take under consideration. Ms. Shedd commented she had provided the documents to two Airport Directors in a row and she would be happy to provide them to City Council. Mr. Wozmak noted the question did come up sometime before his time in office. Mr. Wozmak agreed the question should be asked and answered; he was not sure it should be addressed in this Airport Master Plan because in 10 years things could change again. Mr. Wozmak also noted he did not know the difference between regional and national airports. He also noted there had not been any discussion on this topic.

There being no questions or comments from the Committee or public, Chair Richards asked for a motion.

Councilor Hansel made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Jones.

On a vote of 4-0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends the Periodic Report from the Airport Advisory Commission be accepted as informational.

2) **Discussion** - Letter of Advocacy request for Community Supported Solar Systems

Ann Shedd, Chair of the Cities for Climate Protection Committee reported the Committee voted to bring this to Council because it was consistent with the goals of the 2010 Comprehensive Master Plan, the 2004 Climate Action Plan, and the 2007 Climate Adaptation Plans. For brevity Ms. Shedd read a statement from the Comprehensive Master Plan that pulled this all together. She continued expanding the availability of renewable energy in the community would require diverse funding alternatives and there was a potential for much of that funding to come from local, private investors. There were only a finite number of accredited investors locally. Ms. Shedd commented models such as that utilized with the Monadnock Food Coop would allow more local investors and smaller scale investors from within the community to participate. Ms. Shedd introduced John Kondos, of the Monadnock Sustainability Network who was heavily involved in the installation of the solar system at the Monadnock Food Coop. Mr. Kondos will be sharing information regarding the constraints on having local investors involved.

Mr. Kondos, of Chesterfield noted the Monadnock Sustainability Network is a 501c3 intended to promote sustainable initiatives throughout the region. He provided the website greenmonadnock.org for those wishing to learn more about it. Mr. Kondos indicated the problem encountered when developing the Coop project was that there were a finite numbers of investors that can participate. Small investors such as him were not allowed to participate. Mr. Kondos referred to the restrictions at the federal level that prohibit participation along with the New Hampshire limit of 25 accredited investors. Continuing he noted these restrictions create a very small pool of investors which would be able to fund these types of projects. Referring to the video on his website Mr. Kondos noted there were many rooftops available for these projects including churches. Mr. Kondos addressed the solutions to the

problem noting they had begun working State Representatives to remove the accredited recommendation. Mr. Kondos noted they were also working with Senator Shaheen's office to learn how to understand the passive income law. Mr. Kondos also mentioned putting a fee on carbon. Mr. Kondos concluded by noting the Committee's support would really help to encourage changes.

Ms. Shedd shared another project that would had been completed faster with easier regulation around financing a solar project; the Unitarian Universalist Church. After additional comments Ms. Shedd commented she realized this request was challenging as you were not being asked to support a particular piece of legislation as was typical. Ms. Shedd indicated she would come back if further support was needed for amending any specific regulations. She made note of the large chains (Target and Walmart) making investments in solar energy.

Chair Richards noted the Committee did not have a letter. Rhett Lamb, ACM/Planning Director advised that Ms. Chalice had a handout for the Committee that includes the motion that was originally provided by the CCP Committee report and was introduced to City Council. The item went on more time to accommodate schedules. The motion can be used if the Committee was inclined to support the motion.

Chair Richards asked for Committee questions/comments.

Councilor Hansel referred to the three recommendations 1) change the passive income rule, 2) limit to the number of investors, and 3) change the accreditation rule. Councilor Hansel asked if these rules were independent things that would just be helpful or were they reliant on other changes. Mr. Kondos replied the passive income was being addressed at the Federal level and the other two issues were State issues. Mr. Kondos also agreed any one of these changes could be helpful. Councilor Hansel asked if Mr. Kondos had an idea of what was behind the limit on investors and the accreditation. Mr. Kondos noted these rules go back to the 1920's and were designed to protect investors.

Chair read the original recommended motion made by the Cities for Climate Protection Committee. "Mr. Dick Cornelius made a motion for the Cities for Climate Protection Committee to ask City Council to write a letter to the New Hampshire legislature, Governor, and the Public Utilities Commission, asking for changes to the Federal and State securities rules that preclude local citizens from owning, profiting from and controlling community supported solar projects." Chair Richards commented this was narrower than the grander discussion and was in support of the request.

Councilor Jones asked staff which would be better a letter or a resolution. Ms. Chalice replied in this case they specifically used the tool, a letter to advocate for specific aspects. She also noted this was the mechanism that had been used by the Committee recently. Ms. Fox also concurred a letter provides the opportunity to articulate the interests of the community. Ms. Fox also suggested a benefit may be that the Council does not have to do all the wordsmithing and it can be in more straightforward English.

Referring to the recommendation Councilor Hansel said it was pretty broad and stipulates the intent of the community. Councilor Hansel was also in support of the recommendation.

Carl Jacobs, Councilor Ward 2 commented he thinks this was a great thing to do. Noting he did not want to see this go around a few cycles, Councilor Jacobs asked if there was a way to have the letter ready when it comes to Council. Ms. Chalice reported in the past staff had written drafts for signature by the Mayor. Chair Richards asked if we could have this letter for the Council noting this would not be a draft. Ms. Fox said we can work towards that.

Chair Richards asked for further questions from the Committee and/or the public.

Peter Hansel, of 61 Bradford Road noted he worked with the Steering Committee to get this initial project started. Mr. Hansel said he wanted to emphasize two things 1) we are setting new ground here in the Monadnock Region for an organization for a type of process that has not been followed in many other parts of New Hampshire so this is an attempt to involve the community in a community supported solar project. For this reason Mr. Hansel suggests it was important to have a letter come from Keene. Mr. Hansel shared he was involved in recruiting the initial investors for that project. He also agreed with Mr. Kondos comments regarding limited investors. He further explained they wanted to include as many different people and all different tax appetites as we could. Another thing they found out as they moved along in the Food Coop project was that there was sort of a precedent that had been set, almost an exception that Food Coops for instance were allowed to qualify to allow a broad range of investors. Mr. Hansel concluded there had been other ways of doing this type of investments if enough people see the value of it.

Marge Shepardson, State Representative from Marlboro commented that besides being interested in this because it had come to us in Concord she had an interest because a church in Marlboro was thinking about something similar. Ms. Shepardson indicated this would be something very useful to different groups. She also noted she appreciates the Committee's support.

Both Chair Richards and Councilor Chadbourne noted their support for the request.

There being no questions from the Committee Chair Richards asked for a motion.

Councilor Jones made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Hansel.

On a vote of 4-0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends that the City Council draft a letter to the Federal Delegation, New Hampshire legislature, Governor, and the Public Utilities Commission, asking for changes to the Federal and state securities rules that preclude local citizens from owning, profiting from and controlling community supported solar projects.

3) College City Commission Final Report and Recommendations

Tara Kessler, Planner noted she was joined by Dr. Chris Cusack and Dr. Bart Sapeta both members of the College City Commission, and both who were employees of Keene State College. The Commission was formed in 2015 by Mayor Lane and President Huot. The Commission began to address issues of mutual concern including housing, communication and relationships, behavioral norms and expectations, alcohol and substance misuse, parking and infrastructure, property and the preservation of the tax base.

Ms. Kessler continued the Commission hopes this report, which outlines short-, medium-, and longer-term recommendations for how to address the issue areas described above, will provide food for thought, incentive for policies and programs, and most importantly, a model for collaboration between the College and the City into the future. In fact, the benefits of improved communication and collaboration between the College and City are evident today. Since the Commission began work in early 2015, many of the recommendations identified had been acted on or are in the early stages of implementation.

Ms. Kessler shared the College's involvement in the community and the initiation of the mandatory off-campus orientation program. She also noted the part-time Student Coordinator position is now a full-time position held by Robin Picard. Ms. Kessler shared additional efforts by the City and College with activities that have caused noticeable changes in the community. She noted the statistics were included in the report.

Ms. Kessler concluded by noting into the future, the Commission will continue to address issues and opportunities of shared interest past the release of this report, and will routinely evaluate the community's progress at implementing its many recommendations. Ms. Kessler also commended the work of the Commission members noting both Councilor Jones and Councilor Chadbourne serve on the Commission.

Dr. Cusack commended Ms. Kessler for her tremendous efforts in support of this Commission.

Chair Richards asked for questions from the Committee.

Councilor Hansel commented he appreciates the level of detail and the breakdown of the report. Councilor Hansel also plans to use this document as a reference moving forward.

Councilor Jones welcomed Dr. Sapeta back from sabbatical and thanked Dr. Cusack for stepping in.

There being no public comments or additional Committee questions Chair Richards asked for a motion.

Chair Richards asked for additional Committee comments.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Hansel.

On a vote of 4-0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends to the full Council that the College City Commission Report and Recommendations be accepted as informational.

4) Adjournment - There being no further business before the Committee Chair Richards adjourned the meeting at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Mary Lou Sheats Hall
November 11, 2016