

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**COLLEGE/CITY COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, November 23, 2015**

**4:00 PM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room**

**Members Present:**

Bart Sapeta, Co-Chair  
Margaret Rice  
Chris Hrynowski  
Kelly Ricaurte  
Marcia Kayser  
Dottie Morris  
Philip Jones, Councilor  
Chris Cusack

**Staff Present:**

Andy Robinson, KSC Liaison  
Tara Kessler, Planner

**Others Present:**

**Members Not Present:**

Dick Berry  
Caitlin Licence  
Ted McGreer  
Paula Jessup  
Emily Hague, Councilor/Co-Chair

**1) Call to order -**

Co-Chair Sapeta called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM. Roll call was conducted.

**2) Review Minutes - November 9, 2015**

Councilor Jones made a motion to adopt the minutes of November 9, 2015 with the following corrections/changes: on Page 2 of 5, third paragraph sixth sentence change “City” to “College”, add “Police” before initial references to Chief Costa and “Fire” to initial references to Chief Howard. Ms. Kayser seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Co-Chair Sapeta addressed the topic of future Commission leadership, reiterating that Co-Chair Hague will be resigning from the Commission at the end of the calendar year and that he will be away on sabbatical starting the first week of January 2016. They agreed that the January meeting would take place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of that month. The reasons discussed for meeting later in January were the College break and the time needed to nominate and swear in new City Councilors and Commission members.

**3) Continued Discussion on Tax Base**

**a. Municipal Service Agreement Update – (Slide presentation by Ms. Kessler)**

In response to questions that were addressed at the previous meeting, Ms. Kessler provided information regarding Municipal Service Agreement (MSA) between other colleges/universities and municipalities in New Hampshire. Ms. Kessler reported that Dartmouth College does not have an MSA with Hanover. In her conversation with the Town of Hanover, it was noted that the College is the community’s largest taxpayer (as a private institution the College pays taxes on its residential and dining facilities). The College does have an agreement with the Town that requires them to pay for any unpaid ambulance service provided to the College. Ms. Kessler displayed information on the different services included in the MSAs between Plymouth State University (PSU) and the Town of Plymouth, and the Town of Durham and the University of New Hampshire (UNH).

Other information requested at the last meeting was the size of the community population in comparison to the student population, and whether or not college students are counted in the Census. Ms. Kessler explained that students living on campus at a college/university can be counted in the census’ total population count for the town or city hosting that college/university. She displayed the population comparisons between PSU and Plymouth, Keene State College (KSC) and Keene, Hanover and Dartmouth College and UNH and Durham. The population count provided did not include group quarters population, which includes individuals living on college campuses. These population comparisons are included in the table below. Ms. Kessler indicated that it is difficult to draw comparisons between the MSA of other institutions and host communities and the MSA between the City of Keene and KSC.

|                                      | <b>Municipal Population*</b><br><b>(not including group quarters)</b> | <b>Total Student Enrollment**</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Keene / Keene State College          | 20,442  | 5,500                             |
| Hanover / Dartmouth College          | 7,399   | 6,298                             |
| Durham / University of NH            | 7,372   | 15,340                            |
| Plymouth / Plymouth State University | 4,708   | 6,235                             |

\*Source: US Decennial Census 2010, Summary File 1; \*\*Source: College/University websites

Discussion ensued regarding the difficulty of making comparisons between what Keene is receiving for compensation of services compared to the student population and local population. Councilor Jones suggested the other two agreements have been in place much longer than Keene’s has, and noted that the other two campuses (PSU and UNH) have city streets that pass through them and KSC does not.

Co-Chair Sapeta asked if there was something here worth mentioning in the Commission’s recommendations. Ms. Kessler suggested the Commission could look at the various services that are included in the agreement aside from the numerical values of the MSAs. She noted that PSU covers the position of a Code Enforcement Officer. However, she suggested that if the Commission were to recommend that the College and City consider including additional services in future MSAs, it would be important to have more data on why these services should be included. Ms. Kessler noted the length of time it took to develop the current agreement and questioned whether or not this might be a matter for the administration and leadership of the College and the City to focus on when it comes to specific services and amounts to be included.

Discussion continued regarding the differences in the police services provided on each campus. Ms. Kessler noted she would make the Life Safety Services Agreement between PSU and UNH available through email for Commission members to review. Co-Chair Sapeta recommended keeping safety and equity in mind when the Commission makes its recommendations.

Discussion continued with respect to the \$10,000 KSC pays to the City for court cases. There was a question of whether or not there is a way KSC can reduce this amount, and is the funding for this included as a part of tuition or fees. Mr. Robinson indicated the Commission could find out how the amount of \$10,000 was determined.

There being no further questions or comments Ms. Kessler moved on with her presentation.

#### **b. Review of Themes/Topics Discussed**

Ms. Kessler's next two slides depicted a summary of the high level themes discussed by the Commission thus far relating to Parking/Infrastructure and Property/Tax Base. Ms. Kessler asked the Commission to discuss whether or not there is a need for continued discussion or presentations/information on these topic areas to help the group arrive at recommendations or next steps. The themes presented by Ms. Kessler on Property / Tax Base are detailed below.

##### Property/Tax Base Themes

- Coordination of master planning efforts between KSC and City
- Increased communication between KSC and City regarding future plans for property acquisition (if any)
- Address opportunities for economic revitalization of neighborhoods surrounding the campus to include attracting new business/industry.
- Support the renewal of a Municipal Services Agreement between KSC and the City in 2019
- Update economic impact study for KSC 2012

##### Commission recommendations/Comments

1. Expand the last bullet to distinguish between the importance of both qualitative and quantitative economic and cultural impacts of the College on the City and region. Future studies could include information on the impacts of public events hosted and organized by KSC as well as the value of faculty involvement and student volunteerism in the community. Ms. Ricaurte noted that she would contact the Office of Institutional Research to learn more about their efforts to track this information.

2. Ms. Kessler addressed the third bullet referring to both the College and the City's interest in ensuring that the acquisition of property in certain areas surrounding the College be focused on economic revitalization. For example, the transition of privately-owned apartment buildings from student rental housing to housing for families or young professionals in the Southeast Keene neighborhood could be an opportunity for increasing community and economic vibrancy in this area. She suggested this theme should be better defined. Co-Chair Sapeta suggested this

bullet aligns with the first bullet, and perhaps a reference can be made between the two. Ms. Kessler will rework them.

3. Referring to the second bullet, Co-Chair Sapeta suggested including employers in these discussions about property acquisition in the areas surrounding the College. Ms. Kayser asked if this was also an area where the College and City could discuss opportunities for economic development and attracting businesses. Commission members agreed to expand the third bullet to include attracting new businesses. Other questions raised regarding this bullet item included:

- a. Did the Returning Home Program ever get off the ground? Ms. Kessler will research this question.
- b. Can the City give incentives like other cities have done to encourage the conversion of student rental housing to single family or nonstudent housing?
- c. Is there opportunity for the College to encourage or incentivize new faculty to purchase these houses and/or can the College purchase these houses around the college and rent them to faculty? It was noted that C&S does this. Ms. Kessler will research whether or not the hospital also does this.
- d. Chair Sapeta noted that some college campuses have outposts throughout their host city/town, which help to encourage College/Community relations and partnerships. He noted that this might be something for further consideration.

The themes presented by Ms. Kessler on Parking / Infrastructure are detailed below.

Parking/Infrastructure Themes (slide 4)

- Streetscape improvements and enhanced pedestrian/bicyclist connectivity
  - Neighborhoods between Gilbo Ave and KSC
  - Winchester Street
  - Main Street south of Winchester/Marlborough Roundabout
  - Increased connectivity between KSC Winchester Street Lot and campus.
- Coordination between City and KSC for addressing stormwater management and drainage/ flooding challenges
- Further study of impact of proposed Gilbo Ave Wellness Complex on KSC and City
- Address issue of on-street parking in off-campus neighborhoods
- Explore opportunities for travel demand management for students/staff commuting to KSC (other options besides driving)

Commission recommendations/Comments (slide 4)

1. Co-Chair Sapeta noted the importance of improvements to the streetscapes surrounding the College and suggested this idea be expanded in the first bullet.

2. Regarding the second bullet, Co-Chair Sapeta suggested adding more context, perhaps with respect to federal, state, and local regulations regarding stormwater management and floodplains. Ms. Kessler noted previous discussions and the need for a voluntary review process between the City and College to ensure drainage issues outside the campus are taken into consideration when new development is proposed for the campus. There also may be a need for enhanced coordination between the College and City with respect to stormwater infrastructure. Mr. Robinson suggested the coordination is a good piece for this Commission to recommend. Ms.

Kessler clarified that if this theme is developed into a recommendation it might be worded to encourage continued communication between the College and the City when new development is proposed on campus.

3. Discussion returned to the first bullet, specifically on the topic of pedestrian safety improvements on the segment of Main Street south of Winchester/Marlborough roundabout. The following issues were raised.

- a. There is no safe place to cross Main Street south of Westwood nursing home. Safety is a concern especially at night for both pedestrians and motor vehicles as the area is very dark. Co-Chair Sapeta asked if Ms. Kessler could locate any traffic studies completed on for both Main and Winchester Streets for the Commission to refer to when making a recommendation. Co-Chair Sapeta also suggested taking a look at both the Campus and City Master Plans and references to safety.
- b. Councilor Jones referred to street crossings, specifically the section of Winchester Street between the NH Route 101 roundabout and Island Street. He noted that this is the time to make recommendations for this area as this project is in the design phase. Discussion ensued regarding other components of this project and the potential of a roundabout at Island Street. Ms. Rice asked if this roundabout would allow for changing directions. It was noted that no decisions have been made yet as to whether there will be a roundabout in this area. Councilor Jones suggested this could be a discussion point for this Commission.
- c. Co-Chair Sapeta suggested having a map of the projects taking place in the next few years with respect to pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity and safety. Specifically, he suggested including on this map the areas of Main Street, Gilbo Avenue, Winchester Street, Route 101, and the trail system.
- d. When asked if the Southeast Keene Neighborhood group had any goals/plans about the tie-in with any of these issue areas, Chris Cusack suggested the topic could be raised at their next meeting.

4. Co-Chair Sapeta asked if Commission members had anything to add to the last bullet. Mr. Robinson indicated that travel demand management and parking would be under the purview of the Campus Safety Director and the new Sustainability Director. The following comments/suggestions were provided by Commission members.

- a. Examine opportunities for staggering the scheduling of classes to help mitigate the demand for parking.
- b. The group questions how to encourage students to walk/ride bikes to campus and what could be used as incentives.
- c. A suggestion was made to redefine who would qualify as a 'commuter' eligible for a commuter parking pass. For example, it was suggested that, perhaps, students who live on Elliot Street should not be considered eligible to receive a commuter parking pass.
- d. Ms. Rice suggested it would be nice to have the public transit that goes to places other than the shopping centers. She cited the students who live in the neighborhoods near Mechanic Street and suggested having the KSC shuttle connect to these neighborhoods; especially, in the winter time. Ms. Kessler noted that HCS runs the KSC shuttle and the City Express. She suggested offering them feedback from this Commission versus having a representative come here.

Chair Sapeta suspended the discussion due to the hour and continued with the next agenda item.

**4) Other or New Business -**

**a. Recap of Meeting with City and College Leadership – November 17, 2015**

Co-Chair Sapeta reported out on the meeting that was held between KSC President Dr. Anne Huot, Mayor Kendall Lane, Acting City Manager Med Kopczynski, Co-Chairs Hague and Sapeta, and staff Andy Robinson and Tara Germond. He noted that both President Huot and the Mayor Lane offered their ideas on the future of this Commission. Co-Chair Sapeta reported that the Mayor would like to greater and more structured opportunities for student internships with the City. Co-Chair Sapeta suggested this might be a future topic of discussion for this Commission. Another issue discussed was diversity, which was identified by both President Huot and Mayor Lane as important. Co-Chair Sapeta noted that he has discussed with Dr. Huot the idea of having a longer-term collaboration between the College and City. For example, one year would be dedicated to exploring a topic/issue area such as diversity.

Ms. Morris suggested a presentation from Healthy Monadnock 2020 on how diversity is being addressed through their initiative. In addition, she thinks it would be helpful to have more information shared on demographic trends and changes identified in the 2010 Census. Ms. Morris also mentioned having a better network between KSC and other employers with respect to employment for spouses of potential new hires. Ms. Kayser suggested diversity be moved to the top of the list. Councilor Jones reported that the Mayor formed a Fall Festival Committee, which has decided on the theme of diversity for this event.

Co-Chair Sapeta continued his update on the meeting with the Mayor and President Huot, noting that the Mayor is examining the options for establishing a Commission structure to accommodate the unique nature of this Commission. Mr. Robinson pointed out that the Mayor and President Huot are still enthusiastic about the Commission and its value. Co-Chair Sapeta noted any recommendations for new members should be submitted to the Mayor and President Huot. Councilor Jones noted that Cynthia Georgina has resigned and a resignation letter is expected from Ted McGreer.

Mr. Cusack returned to the topic of the Fall Festival referring to a recent letter in the Keene Sentinel. Mr. Cusack noted his feelings that this Commission should have been included in these discussions. Discussion continued after which Co-Chair Sapeta noted that the Commission has a Charge to follow, and if the feeling exists that there are more pressing or urgent issues they should be referred back to the Mayor and President Huot. Co-Chair Sapeta also suggested perhaps diversity is a bigger issue than this Commission can deal with alone. Noting the hour, Co-Chair Sapeta recommended the topic of diversity be discussed again at the next meeting. Ms. Kessler recommended that Commission members share any additional comments or suggestions regarding the themes presented directly with her in preparation for the next meeting.

**5) Next Steps -** Not discussed at this time.

**6) Public Comment -** None at this time.

7) **Adjourn** - There being no further business Co-Chair Sapeta adjourned the meeting at 6:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Lou Sheats-Hall, Minute-taker  
November 24, 2015

Edited by,  
Tara Germond, Planner  
November 25, 2015