

**ADOPTED**

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

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

**Monday, July 23, 2018**

**4:00 PM**

**City Hall, Second Floor Conference  
Room**

**Members Present:**

Bart Sapeta, Co-Chair, City Councilor  
Phil Jones, City Councilor  
Bettina Chadbourne, City Councilor  
Marcia Kayser  
Dr. Chris Cusack  
Victoria Bergstrom  
Kelly Ricaurte  
Kim Schmidl-Gagne  
Dottie Morris  
Steve Fortier

**Staff Present:**

Rhett Lamb, ACM/Community Development  
Director  
Kim Schmidl-Gagne, KSC Liaison  
Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager

**Others Present:**

Kendall W. Lane, Mayor  
Dr. Melinda Treadwell, KSC Interim President

**Members Not Present:**

Robin Picard  
Davis Bernstein  
Dick Berry

**1.) Call to Order**

Chair Sapeta called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM and roll call was conducted. Tim Zinn, Keene, attended as a guest. Co-Chair Sapeta announced that Steve Fortier has joined the CCC, representing KSC.

**2.) Approval of Minutes – April 23, 2018**

Councilor Jones made a motion to approve the minutes of April 23, 2018. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne and carried unanimously.

**3.) Discussion with Keene State College President Dr. Treadwell, Mayor Lane, City Manager Elizabeth Dragon**

- a.) Acceptance of College City Commission Draft Report on Inclusiveness & Diversity and Neighborhood Revitalization

Co-Chair Sapeta asked the Committee to review the draft report on Inclusiveness & Diversity and Neighborhood Revitalization for any last minute changes or corrections. The Committee briefly reviewed the draft.

Councilor Jones commented on how the report is based on suggestions and that some members of the subcommittee are aware some of these recommendations may never happen. He wanted President Treadwell, Mayor Lane and the City Manager to be aware of this thought process. President Treadwell reported that she reviewed the drafts of these reports with Mayor Lane and wanted to extend her sincere appreciation for the breath of conversation and fact finding. In addition, she stated the depth of the work of the CCC has been very helpful. President Treadwell stated from the perspective of KSC when thinking about capital planning and strategic visioning this is something that she takes very seriously. Her goal for KSC is to continuously work as close partners with the community. She explained this type of report is helpful in her role and she feels a responsibility to review the report along with the Mayor. Once the final report is complete President Treadwell and Mayor Lane would like to come back to a future CCC meeting to discuss what they believe is possible and what is not possible at this time. She reiterated the work of the CCC is important work that will directly affect the strategic visioning of KSC and how they hope to demonstrate their partnership with the City.

Mayor Lane echoed President Treadwell's comments in thanking the CCC for their work in putting the report together. He stated he had the opportunity to review the draft and the next step was to talk about from a strategic point of view on how move to forward. The Mayor noted the strategic process has already begun for several things listed in the report. He noted that some of the items in the report may not be possible to do but would provide points of discussion for KSC and the City. Mayor Lane reiterated how helpful the report was from the CCC. He referred to the example on the issue of diversity within the City and reported the City is moving forward with creating a Human Rights Commission for the City. The Mayor stated the work the CCC has done will bear fruit as they move forward and that this report is not something that will sit on shelf. The recommendations in the report are something they are looking at in how they will implement and further engage in discussions. In closing, he explained the CCC is really a long term analysis of the relationships between KSC and the City.

Chair Sapeta noted the work put into the report has been a long process for the CCC. In addition, he wanted to recognize and thank the prior members of the CCC for their contribution to the report.

The City Manager also echoed the comments of Mayor Lane and President Treadwell. She stated that it was obvious the CCC did a great deal of work and thanked them for their efforts. The work that has been done is very helpful to her and the progress report provided demonstrates the accomplishments of the CCC. She stated the report will also help to put things in perspective. The City Manager stated that even though every recommendation cannot be accomplished it is helpful to know what people are thinking. She explained that sometimes opportunities come up where they can integrate some of the types of recommendations in the report.

President Treadwell added that the CCC is an important part of the dialogue in understanding the issues citizens and student face in this community.

President Treadwell asked the CCC if the structure of the committee is working. She explained she was interested to learn about the challenge points and sticking points for this type of organization. In addition, she asked what they could do to effectively help the CCC feel a greater sense of empowerment and engagement. President Treadwell noted that she was grateful for the progress reports and thinks the scope of the City and KSC has moved a lot in such a short amount of time. She stated this is a testament to the Commission, KSC, the City and the people in them. President Treadwell noted there is still more work to be done.

Mayor Lane added there was no model for the CCC to follow and is very unique. He explained that he along with the former KSC President created the CCC and there may need to be adjustments from time to time. The Mayor explained that KSC is in an unusual position being university very close to the downtown area and playing a role within the community. He noted that most colleges do not play in this type of role. He stated the feedback from Commission in the future is vital to making this successful moving forward.

With no further comment a motion was made. Councilor Chadbourne made a motion to accept the CCC report on Inclusiveness & Diversity and Neighborhood Revitalization. The motion was seconded by Councilor Jones, which carried unanimously.

Chair Sapeta stated that he has seen a change in the structure over the last four years. He explained the CCC was not formally structured until about 18 months. He stated this was quite a change for the members because the members were faced with having to learn about things such as the Right-to-Know laws. He noted this concerned some of the members. Chair Sapeta explained this was a necessary change and having the structure is helpful going forward. In addition, he stated that having a co-chair back on the Committee will also help.

Ms. Morris mentioned that it would be helpful to know the role of the CCC once a recommendation by the CCC has been made. Ms. Kayser noted the partnerships that have been developed with the Colonial Theatre, Historical Society and the Horatio Colony House. In addition, she shared that she discovered the importance of the use of the City seal. She explained that the use of the seal not only brings the City onboard but also demonstrates the importance of an event.

Mayor Lane stated that he would need to discuss with Ms. Kayser the role of the CCC and the new Human Rights Commission. Ms. Morris noted that the MLK/JD Committee should also be considered before the Human Rights Commission is developed. Mayor Lane stated that he and President Treadwell have discussed the charge of the Commission going forward. He stated that he believed part of the role in going forward is to look back. The Mayor said one of the original charges was citizenship and the relationship in the neighborhoods. In addition, he noted that this is something the CCC needs to continuously review in order to see if the goals set out are in fact being accomplished.

Ms. Kayser commented on the enormous need for collaboration with the other groups within the City. She noted that it does not make sense to have back to back events that are similar in nature.

Dr. Cusack stated that he feels the CCC is a bit of an ocean liner and the destination is very far in the horizon. He stated there is a lot of energy and enthusiasm with the CCC. In addition, he noted this project has been a long drawn out process and that the CCC has struggled with a lack of quorum. He explained that throughout this process there was no sense of joy and was part of the reason why people dropped off. He stated when exchanging ideas and coordinating with other groups that there is a lot of talent and resources in the CCC that should be utilized. In closing, Dr. Cusack stated there needs to be some reward in the terms of short term accomplishments.

Ms. Kayser informed the CCC of a group that she had never heard on until recently, called Team Keene. She explained that Team Keene is a collaboration of people in the community that are advertising information about what is happening in the area in addition to planning events to bring people together. The group has a website called teamkeene.com. Councilor Jones noted this was an area that would improve once the Downtown Coordinator position is filled.

The City Manager stated that she had previously identified there are many people working on the same thing but in different ways without a lot of coordination and collaboration. She explained that at times were there groups competing for the same resources whether this was financial or human resources. The City Manager explained this was frustrating and as part of the budget process this year they created a Downtown Coordinator position. She explained this position is in cooperation with the Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and will be funded in three ways. There will \$25,000 from the City, \$25,000 from MEDC and \$25,000 from the businesses. She explained this position was created to work with all the groups such as Team Keene, Machina Arts and everyone who is doing downtown events. The Downtown Coordinator position will help to find more opportunities for collaboration. In addition, she reported that Mayor Lane is getting ready to appointment another Economic Development Committee. She noted this goes back to the Downtown Revitalization Committee work that was initially started. She reported the Downtown Revitalization was currently on pause at this time. However, she did report the City did apply for now the Build America Grant for some planning money to look at a downtown project. The City Manager stated she was hopeful the Downtown Coordinator will be successful in coordinating these events and bringing everyone together.

Chair Sapeta stated that the CCC could be a good check-in point for the Downtown Coordinator position. The City Manager recommended inviting the new Downtown Coordinator to a CCC meeting. She then explained the role of the position will be working under MEDC and will be supervised by Jack Dugan. The City and MEDC are working on joint job description where she will have some oversight to help define the role.

Chair Sapeta asked if there will be a point person at KSC to help with ideas or questions. The City Manager replied that she will incorporate along with President Treadwell, whatever is needed in the position. Mr. Fortier reported that he was recently part of a strategic planning process that was based on a charge given by President Treadwell. He said the main theme that came out of the session is the amount of events that are similar in nature and overlapping. He followed up after the session and pulled together a task force. Mr. Fortier explained they had a follow-up meeting that may lead to a College Events Coordinator position. He stated the position will be created by repositioning a few people and clarifying those roles.

Ms. Ricaurte recommended the CCC have more concrete goals for the charges rather than a general topic area. She suggested having an actual number such as a percentage will have more of an impact in addition to tracking goals.

Chair Sapeta stated that events are the best avenue to promote diversity and inclusiveness. President Treadwell stated the first thing to do is to look at the common calendar and to determine how to celebrate more broadly as a community. She reported one of the main things the KSC Cabinet will discuss at the next meeting is the Presidential Election and KSC's role as a liberal arts college. She stated one of the things the cabinet at KSC will be discussing at their upcoming meeting is the issue of free speech and how be open to engage the community. President Treadwell stated this was an important conversation and would be looking for support from the City on the issue of free speech. She stated that it was important to proclaim KSC's institutional values in a world of unsettled political discourse. President Treadwell was adamant that any hate speech will not be tolerated. In addition, she stated that she understood that we are all a part of the community where people have different views that need to be respected. She stated this is going to be very challenging in the era of social media. President Treadwell thought the subject of free speech would be an area for the Inclusiveness Subcommittee. She suggested the committee help determine if the spirit of KSC is being upheld.

Mayor Lane stated there has been a lot of discussion about being a “welcoming community” but the discussion is really about what does that mean and how is this achieved. He asked how the community and KSC can help people feel comfortable enough to want to live here. The Committee then discussed how event coordination is important for the City, KSC and local businesses. Co-Chair Sapeta suggested the City ask how events that is required to go through the City to discuss how they cover the diversity and inclusiveness in their events. President Treadwell stated when she discusses the charge of the CCC with the Mayor is for the charge to be specific, measurable and to establish goals within the charges. She stated that she recognized the goals will help the CCC have a deep sense of accomplishment and pride was achieved.

Co-Chair Sapeta asked for further comment from the CCC. With no comment from the CCC, he introduced Tim Zinn, Keene. He stated that everything that he has heard at the meeting is great. He said he was present to keep his eyes and ears open to see what the CCC was all about. Mr. Zinn stated as a member of Let It Shine, that is all that he wants is for everyone to shine and get to a better place. He stated that he loves this City and wants to see Keene prosper.

Ms. Kayser referred to freedom of speech and asked if President Treadwell anticipated any issues. President Treadwell replied it is necessary and incumbent that KSC to make very clear what free speech is, what free speech is not and how as a college to encourage students to raise their voices and how to safely raise their voice when differences of opinion.

President Treadwell reported this will be a center point at KSC because mid-term elections are coming. She stated KSC welcomed and will continue to welcome the Cheshire County Party and will do the same for the Cheshire County Democrat Party. She said they must provide space and expectation but if the mission or values are breached at KSC, it the right of KSC to shut that down. President Treadwell reiterated that KSC will demand that there is no hate speech.

Mayor Lane had to leave the meeting early.

Councilor Jones stated that he heard about the transformation of River Valley Community College (RVCC) and asked if they are a part of the complete KSC body. President Treadwell replied that KSC is developing plans to share labs, classrooms and administrative space to help deliver programs more efficiently. She stated they are trying to think of ways to collaborate across systems. President Treadwell stated RVCC operates on a different class schedule than KSC, with more afternoon and evening classes. She stated the goal is to offer better pathways for students moving from two-year degrees to four-year programs. The closer collaboration would bring a host of other benefits; including resource sharing that could allow the colleges involved to expand their offerings in cost-effective ways. President Treadwell noted the colleges would maintain their own identities but hopes to see student populations mingle.

The CCC thanked President Treadwell for her time.

Co-Chair Sapeta asked if there was any further comment from the CCC. With no comment, the CCC moved to New and Other Business.

##### **5) New and Other Business**

Ms. Bergstrom stated that in regards to student diversity and welcoming people to the community. In the fall, she reported there will be a presentation on transitioning into KSC. Ms. Bergstrom

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will provide more details about the event at the next CCC meeting. She added that it would be helpful if there was someone there representing the City.

**6) Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Co-Chair Sapeta adjourned the meeting at 5:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Jennifer Clark, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Tara Kessler, Planner