

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

**PLANNING, LICENSES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

7:00 PM

Council Chambers A

**Members Present:**

David C. Richards, Chair  
Philip M. Jones, Vice-Chair  
George S. Hansel  
Bart K. Sapeta  
Robert B. Sutherland

**Staff Present:**

Tara Kessler, Planner  
Mark Howard, Keene Fire Chief  
Tom Mullins, City Attorney  
Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager  
Kurt Blomquist, Public Works Director  
Rhett Lamb, Planning Director

**Members Not Present:**

**Other Councilors Present**

Jan Manwaring

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

**1) Kiwanis Club of Keene – Request to Use City Property – Tree Lighting Event**

Mark Howard, Keene Fire Chief reported the protocol meetings were held and no issues were noted. There is a change to the traffic patterns and detours from past years; Central Square will be closed to through traffic.

Peg Bruce, of 15L Windsor Court reported the event will be the same as last year except for the traffic change reported by Chief Howard. The proposed date and time of the event is November 24, 2017, 5 pm to 8:30 pm. This is the fifth year they are managing this event. They plan to do the decorating on a Saturday early in the month of November and to take the decorations down by the beginning of February 2018. Traps will be put out for the squirrels.

There being no 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 5-0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee moves to recommend the Keene Kiwanis Club be granted permission to use downtown rights-of-way on November 24, 2017 for the Tree Lighting Festival from 5 pm to 8 pm conditional upon the customary licensing requirements of the City Council, and that the Petitioner complies with any recommendations of City staff. In addition, the Petitioner is granted permission to erect a holiday tree on the Main/Marlborough/Winchester Street roundabout. The Petitioner agrees to absorb the cost of any City services over and above any amount of City funding allocated in the FY 18 Community Events Budget for the Tree Lighting. Said payments shall be made within 30-days of the date of invoicing.

## **2) Establishment of Marlboro Street Corridor Economic Revitalization Zone – Planning Department**

Tara Kessler, Planner distributed copies of the “Proposed Marlboro Street Corridor Economic Revitalization Zone” dated October 27, 2017 as requested at the July 27, 2017 meeting. Staff did work with Bridgett Beckwith from the Department of Business and Economic Affairs to develop the criteria. There are currently two Economic Revitalization Zones (ERZ) in the Black Brook Corporate Park. This proposal addresses the third ERZ for Keene. Ms. Kessler introduced Bridgett Beckwith who oversees the program.

Ms. Beckwith distributed copies of her informational brochure to Committee members and provided an overview of the program. There is \$825,000 in the budget annually which is prorated.

She noted the program is working with approximately 30 applicants per year. Ms. Beckwith reported she was turned down when she went to legislation for more funds. The program is beneficial to the towns and it requires no upkeep. Ms. Beckwith recommends towns promote the program which is used to recruit and retain businesses. Addressing the application process, Ms. Beckwith commented it is very easy as applicants are referred to her. She did advise the applicant obtains a Letter of Approval from the City/town. There are currently 67 towns with 208 zones in the state.

Chair asked for Committee questions.

Councilor Sapeta asked if there was an expiration date. Ms. Beckwith advised it expires every five years and is then renewed.

Councilor Hansel noted he is excited about this for a couple of reasons; one being engaging the state in a positive way. Councilor Hansel asked about the marketing. Ms. Beckwith agreed getting the word out to businesses in surrounding towns was a good idea and suggested the City look for cost effective ways to get the word out. She also noted the calendar year requirement in the RSA for businesses to keep in mind. Noting Ms. Beckwith’s attempts at legislation, Councilor Hansel suggested this be added to the City’s legislative agenda to watch and support.

The City Manager asked Ms. Beckwith to explain the application and qualification process for businesses interested in applying. Ms. Beckwith said the process is very simple; the business needs to provide their business name, an overview of the project, a copy of the Letter of Approval from the City/town, a project timeline (phases), and employees hired. The City Manager agreed the biggest challenge is getting the word out and asked for suggestions. The City Manager also asked Ms. Beckwith to advise her the next time she goes to the legislature.

Councilor Jones provided an example noting Londonderry is using this tool to try and attract Amazon. He referred to the prepared motion and asked Ms. Kessler if an ordinance was needed. Ms. Kessler replied in the negative noting her understanding from Ms. Beckwith is that it just has to be zoned properly (Commercial or Industrial), be contiguous, and approved by City Council.

Referring to the map, Councilor Sapeta asked about adding the property directly north of property #29. Ms. Kessler noted this property is zoned medium-density so it would not currently qualify to be included in the ERZ; a zoning change for the property would be required.

Ms. Kessler provided an overview of the proposed ERZ. She noted the addition of 92 Water Street along with 88 and 96 Dunbar Street both of which are zoned CBD. Ms. Kessler noted conversations with Jack Dugan to obtain his input. Ms. Kessler noted the map would need to be amended to reflect these additions. The City Manager thanked Ms. Kessler for following-up with Jack Dugan to identify properties. Ms. Kessler noted the opportunity to adopt other zones in the future that are not attached to this zone.

Councilor Jones mentioned attempts to get Swanzey to extend their ERZ into our Airport property and asked if there was any incentive they could be offered. Ms. Beckwith indicated she would be happy to approach them.

Councilor Sapeta clarified there would be no problem applying 79-E to this same area. Ms. Beckwith confirmed noting one has nothing to do with the other for her office.

Based on the discussion, the City Attorney clarified the map referenced in the prepared motion will be re-drawn. Ms. Kessler replied in the affirmative. The City Attorney recommended amending the motion to reflect a change in the date of the map (26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup>). Ms. Kessler confirmed the updated map would be presented at City Council. Ms. Beckwith confirmed this would not present any problems. Rhett Lamb, Planning Director clarified the three parcels discussed earlier would be added to the map.

Councilor Sutherland mentioned the vacant properties across the Heritage Trail, adjacent to those three properties. Mr. Lamb said these are former Finding's properties; he saw no reason they could not be added and noted there have been no discussions with the property owners. Chair Richards clarified these properties are vacant lots zoned CBD. By consensus, the Committee agreed to add "Central Business Zone" to the prepared motion as recommended by Councilor Hansel. In total five pieces are being added to the map.

There being no further comments 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 5-0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends that the Marlboro Street Corridor Economic Revitalization Zone be established in the area of the Business Growth and Reuse Zoning District and the Neighborhood Business Zoning District, and Central Business District as displayed on the map entitled, "Proposed Marlboro Street Corridor Economic Revitalization Zone" dated October 27, 2017, and that the City prepare an application to the State of NH Division of Economic Development to formally establish this ERZ.

3) **Adjournment** - There being no further business before the Committee Chair Richards adjourned the meeting at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Mary Lou Sheats Hall  
October 26, 2017