

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AD-HOC COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 19, 2019

1:00 PM

Conference Room 2nd Floor

Members Present:

Mitchell Greenwald, Chair
Timothy Murphy, SWRPC
George Foskett, BHG Masiello Real Estate
Joseph Walier, Walier Chevrolet
Keith Thibault, SCS
Jordan Benik, People's Linen
Jack Dugan, MEDC
Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager
George Hansel, Councilor
Bill Hutwelker, Swanzey Selectman
Kendall Lane, Mayor
Melinda Treadwell, President KSC
Phil Suter, Chamber of Commerce

Staff Present:

Med Kopczynski, Economic Development,
Initiatives, and Special Projects Director

Members Not Present:

Dominic Perkins, Savings Bank of Walpole
Gary Lamoureux, Councilor
Rebecca Hamilton, Machina Arts
Chris McIntosh, Clark-Mortenson

Others:

Steve Fortier, KSC

1. Call to Order- Roll Call

Chair Greenwald called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM and read the Committee Charge.

2. Introduction of Guest(s) and New Members

Chair Greenwald introduce Steve Fortier, Director of External Relations at Keene State College. He also confirmed Dr. Melinda Treadwell, President of Keene State College is now a member of the Committee.

3. Approval of Minutes- January 15,2019

Councilor Hansel motioned to approve the minutes of January 15, 2019 as submitted. Mr. Foskett seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

4. Specific Topic(s)- Workforce Development

a. Dr. Melinda Treadwell, President Keene State College (KSC)

Dr. Treadwell said she would talk about providing a foundation of where KSC is headed right now with regards to workforce development and some of the broader trends they have been tracking. Her belief is KSC will only be successful if they work with the employers and non-profits of this region, in addition to the City. Addressing enrollment Dr. Treadwell reported KSC is emerging from the past few challenging years.

Moving on Dr. Treadwell said she would talk about some of the things she has put before the Governor that are part of KSC's budget appropriation requests or are part of the work they are trying to do at the College. First and foremost are our strategic planning efforts that will have a three-year specific plan. We are looking at what is our population for the future. It is important for KSC and the Economic Development Commission to be thinking about what the trends are for the upcoming population we would hope to seek as a workforce or population base for Keene. Dr. Treadwell noted one of the things she has been looking at most aggressively is demographic changes. She shared we are beginning to see some in-migration in New Hampshire. KSC has been doing focus groups around expectations for a future workforce; what we hear from students and employers about attracting and retaining our students specifically. Continuing Dr. Treadwell said we know there are expectations for cultural outlets for future millennials we would hope to retain in this area; things more vibrant than we have invested in as a region or College in the past. She shared the College's commitment to become an All Steinway College. KSC is trying to double down on its visual and performing Arts.

Dr. Treadwell noted conversations with the Mayor and City Manager regarding how to extend the Main Street welcome down to the College so we can draw people from the region and the City to the cultural outlets at the College. She continued this is not only a trend we are tracking, KSC is also trying to put specific commitments and performance measures in place.

Dr. Treadwell said we are also seeing the future workforce certainly our graduates are looking for access to urban centers. They want culture in their backyard, they want a vibrant space to live and work, and they also want ease of access to places like Boston and New York. Dr. Treadwell noted the importance of regional transportation hubs as something for this Committee to think about. She added KSC is trying to work on this more specifically and it will be part of their future discussions with the City.

Dr. Treadwell addressed housing stock distribution and quality that the future workforce will demand noting there has been good movement here. She said she thinks the College needs to be more forceful with what they do with some of the properties they own. She asked are there ways to use them more effectively to support the needs of the City.

Dr. Treadwell addressed the investment in Wi-Fi and broadband for the students. She shared information from a forum recently held in Boston. Dr. Treadwell talked about the first digital natives (those 22 years of age and younger) who think differently, collaborate differently, engage in social situations and problem solving differently than anyone 23 years of age and older. Dr. Treadwell said this means a dramatic support change for us and how we try to communicate with them. Wi-Fi, broadband, and access to information/social media, access to connecting points

that are different than what we are familiar with is absolutely essential. It becomes a defining factor for college students if they do not see that ecosystem. Dr. Treadwell commented this will be absolutely imperative for employers in the future also. We will have to help them bridge what is now to what they expect. Dr. Treadwell indicated she would try to get the talking slide deck “Focus on the Future” for the Committee to view.

From an employment perspective for the College, Dr. Treadwell said the last thing they are focusing on is what are the progressive benefits? What we are finding is employees are looking for progressive benefits that maybe are not important in our history, but become increasingly important for the workforce of the future (leave programs, standards of professionalism). Unsure if we need to adapt fully, Dr. Treadwell said the College is looking carefully at how to create a more flexible workforce with a more progressive push. Dr. Treadwell noted her commitment to all KSC making a living wage pointing out there is only one employee right not that does not. She discussed the spreading economic population in the Monadnock Region. Dr. Treadwell said we have the wealthy with an average income over \$50,000 and a median closer to \$100,000. We also have a population with an annual income of less than \$18,000. Referring to bringing back the middle class she asked how we think about employment opportunities, education opportunities, and the things that can bring those curves closer together.

Ending with what is happening at KSC; Dr. Treadwell said one of their strategic goals is to increase recruitment, retention, and achievement of faculty, staff, and students. Part of this is becoming a progressive employer of the future; which ties into the topic of inclusion. Dr. Treadwell said the one demographic group that will grow in the next eight years is the non-white members of our population. The projected growth is eight percent over the next eight years. She noted some bias incidents happening on and off campus that she, the Mayor, and City Manager have discussed that needs to be confronted. She added we need to be ready to welcome these people so they do not feel unsafe, unwanted, or unappreciated for the gifts they bring.

Dr. Treadwell said we will be doubling down on our Liberal Arts core; these are the soft skills that employers claim they need and are not getting from colleges. She expressed the focus on writing, communication, and teamwork; the skills that help KSC graduates be more ready for work. Dr. Treadwell said KSC graduates are #1 in hireability, in the state, in their fields.

Continuing Dr. Treadwell said we are really focusing on areas of regional need. She has made a request to the Governor for one-time capital dollars for KSC to create a business partnership hub as an entry point to campus. The focus there will be on healthcare, specifically substance abuse and mental health counseling. We are in detailed discussion to support our non-profit sectors and to attend to the poverty gap issues in this region. The second thing that will be delivered in that business hub is precision manufacturing with a focus on optics. She pointed out there is no college in the state that offers this program. Outlining KSC’s efforts in this endeavor Dr. Treadwell also noted these would be certificate programs. She also noted this hinges on the Governor.

Noting the KSC focus on the Community College system Dr. Treadwell said River Valley will be moving its Washington Street location to KSC. The Community College system will be

partnering with us; the purpose is to reduce capital and overhead costs for them. We will sign an MOU within the next two weeks.

Lastly Dr. Treadwell said we have had some great roundtables talking with employers about their experiences with KSC. Dr. Treadwell shared the willingness and desire KSC has to be a partner. She added KSC is unique with its Main Street location compared to other campuses in the state. Dr. Treadwell also noted the work with the SAU on behavior health.

Mayor Lane asked Dr. Treadwell to explain the program integration River Valley will have with KSC. Dr. Treadwell replied their President is trying to pull back into Claremont (better facility) some of the programs that require that infrastructure. The Nursing Program will stay here because they will use our Lab. There will be shared faculty with River Valley delivering the RN and KSC delivering the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing. We are hearing that more LPN's, LNA's, and ARN's so Dr. Treadwell is pushing the Community College to deliver those through the relationship with KSC. Dr. Treadwell also explained the precision manufacturing boot camp at Nashua Community College with British Aerospace Engineering for assemblers. She noted the intent to make this an Associate program or higher and KSC collaborating in this. Dr. Treadwell also noted their intent to keep their Massage Therapy program in Keene. Dr. Treadwell also reported working with New Hampshire Tech around their Associates Degree in Architecture, and the Lake Region around Fire Science.

Chair Greenwald commended Dr. Treadwell for everything that is going on and noted her other challenge is how to communicate this to the public. Dr. Treadwell noted the intent to take the Strategic Plan and the Capital Plan back to the College-City Commission for feedback. Dr. Treadwell said her major appeal to this Committee is help us be a better partner. Chair Greenwald referred to an article in the Sentinel today regarding funds granted to KSC. Dr. Treadwell advised she had not seen the article yet and suggested it might be the Governor's appropriation for KSC. Mr. Fortier added this Legislative Appropriation is the key to all of what Dr. Treadwell shared; without the nine million dollars we will have to get very creative or scale back. With that in mind he asked everyone to please let their Legislators that this is important. Dr. Treadwell further explained the request to the Governor and the breakdown of the funds. She also explained the business hub will be in what is now Monadnock Hall on Winchester Street.

Councilor Hansel asked if Dr. Treadwell saw any changes in where KSC students are coming from. Dr. Treadwell commented the past two years have been banner years for New Hampshire applicants. She shared information regarding where students want their SAT scores to be sent along with some statistical data. Dr. Treadwell also noted conversations with Superintendents of local High Schools to start talking about the opportunities available because she does not think people realize what is in their backyard. Dr. Treadwell briefly discussed enrollment of students from other states and tuition costs. Dr. Treadwell reported KSC will have Master's credentials that are fully online. Following up Councilor Hansel asked if having the Graduate programs online will help with Undergrad enrollment coming to Keene. Dr. Treadwell replied in the affirmative and shared some of the challenges and expectations. Dr. Treadwell explained KSC will not be going fully online (Undergrad) as Southern New Hampshire University has command

of that line. She noted the Presidents are discussing the question - what is our online service provider and she thinks it is Granite State.

Chair Greenwald asked about the student population. Dr. Treadwell reported KSC is just under 3,600 right now (low point), we project in the next five years we will be at 3,999, and our trajectory within eight years is to be at 4,200. Chair Greenwald asked for the numbers on/off campus. Indicating she did not have the numbers now Dr. Treadwell said we will try to hold the first two year classes with our goal being about 60 percent on campus. Usually they move off campus in their third and fourth years.

Mr. Murphy echoed the commendations regarding the three year strategic plan Dr. Treadwell outlined. Mr. Murphy commented the strategic plan mirrors public policy that a lot of us are focused on. He continued Dr. Treadwell mentioned responding to demographic trends, cultural opportunities, transportation options, housing, diversity, and broadband all things this region depends on. Mr. Murphy highlighted the fact this is rural New Hampshire and addressed Dr. Treadwell's point of wanting to be a part of this effort saying that effort cannot be underscored. Dr. Treadwell noted conversations with the Mayor and City Manager reporting one of KSC's next big efforts will be renovating Elliott Hall. Dr. Treadwell said she wants this to be the first time we are able to demonstrate a partnership with the City to think about extending Main Street. Mr. Murphy noted we will have the NHDOT's front office in the community this evening in Delegation Hall, at 5:00 PM to talk about transportation infrastructure revenue.

Mr. Thibault wanted to echo one of the points made by Mr. Murphy and the three things he heard about precision machining, Nursing, Healthcare, and preparing opioid professionals. Mr. Thibault commented he thinks Dr. Treadwell's plan is right on in terms of workforce development and what we need. To underscore that will a sincere willingness to deliver is very important. Mr. Thibault asked, on a macro level what does Keene need to do for you to be successful. Dr. Treadwell replied part of it is helping to create the textural feel of a welcoming community. She noted the difficulty in retaining students and faculty of color/diverse cultural backgrounds. She continued we need help to make them feel welcome. Finding a way to tactfully, purposefully show solidarity would go a long way to help us. Dr. Treadwell reported the last baseline was done right after Pumpkin Fest and there was a tremendous drop in students feeling welcome which has now risen. Dr. Treadwell noted her intent to walk the streets and thank the City merchants. She commented we are only successful if the City is.

Mayor Lane said Dr. Treadwell is absolutely right when she talks about diversity and the need to define what you mean by a welcoming community. Mayor Lane said the establishment of a Human Rights Committee that will be going in front of City Council on Thursday. This Committee was established to put some substance behind what a welcoming community really means. It is a means to support the efforts of KSC and Antioch moving in that direction. Dr. Treadwell commented we can be the community that adapts, responds, and creates that workforce pipeline for the future; creates that living and engagement experience that people want to have. The scale of the City is just right to be prepared and very successful.

Mr. Murphy asked if when Dr. Treadwell said the City/community, she meant it could go beyond. Dr. Treadwell replied in the affirmative adding it is implicit; adding she thinks it is the

broader Monadnock region.

b. Draft Report Goal – Workforce Development

- i. Training and Education
- ii. Housing
- iii. Culture
- iv. Compensation

Mr. Kopczynski noted conversations with the Mayor, City Manager, and Committee Chair regarding where this Committee needs to go. Mr. Kopczynski said he took the time to begin writing a draft report for this Committee with the idea the Committee would begin finalizing the report in July and then submit it to City Council. To create the report Mr. Kopczynski looked in the adopted Master Plan, the prior Committee's report and the 1993 report to see what was consistent in them. Mr. Kopczynski suggested at the end of this report we need to be able to focus on achievable goals and to begin doing that we need to focus on the work of the Committee and begin to devolve the future discussions. He said based on that we created sort of a draft report goal of four parts (listed above). Mr. Kopczynski suggested the quality of housing not the cost is something we need to pay attention to; affordable housing is really a different subject. Mr. Kopczynski noted we have talked a lot about culture in various aspects. He addressed the subject of compensation raised by Chair Greenwald and discussed in Dr. Treadwell's comments. Mr. Kopczynski said we want a region where people can not only afford to live but are able to progress in their lives. Mr. Kopczynski addressed the expected outcomes under each item in the list and noted it was submitted to the Committee for review.

Chair Greenwald reported Childcare was added and removed from the list several times. He continued although he does not know what the solution is; it is a problem to be solved. Mr. Murphy suggested combining compensation and benefits as a category. He noted housing is on the list and said he did not know whether to add more ideas here or rebrand it to include housing, transportation, and broadband.

Councilor Hansel said one of the things we did with the last report was to come up with other organizations or people that were working on some of these issues and kind of adopt what they were working on; or at least called it out in our report to give it some more weight. Referring to Childcare he noted the work done by Impact Monadnock. Councilor Hansel suggested taking advantage of the work people there have done.

Mr. Kopczynski commented what he tried to do was narrow the focus rather than expand it. Chair Greenwald agreed with Councilor Hansel; if the work is already done let's bring in the person who already did it. Referring to Culture Mayor Lane noted the work done by Danya Landis and suggested bringing her in.

Mr. Kopczynski asked for Committee consensus as to whether or not this was a good place to start. Mayor Lane replied in the affirmative and no opposition was posed from other Committee members. Mr. Benik noted he was in favor of hearing what other people/groups have already done so as not to reinvent the wheel. Mayor Lane said it really becomes a question of what we can do to support ongoing efforts. Mr. Kopczynski asked Committee members who are aware

of these efforts to forward him that information. Mr. Benik noted he was unaware of the groups working on the transportation issue pointing out the importance of this issue especially for college students. Mayor Lane suggested the SWRPC has done a fair amount of work; at least to look at what exists right now. The City Manager noted conversations with them about a once a day bus to make the connection to Boston through Nashua; they have already put out an RFP. Ms. Dragon pointed out the other thing we are doing is the Airport. Mr. Murphy explained SWRPC works really hard to get the attention from the State and having KSC's voice to represent the student body will be very helpful. He also noted they are working on an Intermodal Modal Transportation Center from a feasibility standpoint. After additional comments Mr. Murphy said without transportation options we are playing with fire when it comes to trying to retain and attract. He added we have the same issue for seniors with that population increasing. Councilor Hansel commented there is a big difference between having more transportation and having the right transportation. He reported on a recent meeting of Young Professionals in Keene where no one said they would take a bus or train to Boston if the options were available. Mr. Benik noted the importance of transportation to neighboring towns with more than one stop. Ms. Dragon noted how affordable some of the taxi services in Keene are.

Chair Greenwald asked Mr. Dugan if MEDC was making any progress with the Arts Corridor. Mr. Dugan provided an update to the Committee.

j. Future Topics-

March 19, 2019- Financial Resources- Available for existing or potential businesses Opportunity Zone, 79E, NMTC, CDBG

April 16, 2019- Communications, Coordination between organizations, towns, etc.

k. Topics Discussed and Parked

- a. Arts and Culture**
- b. Energy, Use and Supply**
- c. County Economic Development Efforts**
- d. Current and Future Airport Economic Development Efforts – Jack Wozmak, Airport Manager**
- e. Current and Future MEDC Economic Development Efforts – Jack Dugan, President**

l. Next Meeting Date – March 19, 2019

- m. Adjournment** - There being no further business Chair Greenwald adjourned the meeting at 2:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Mary Lou Sheats- Hall
February 22, 2019
Edited MK Kopczynski
February 27, 2019