

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 10, 2019

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

Randy L. Filiault, Vice Chair
 Stephen L. Hooper
 Gary P. Lamoureux
 Robert B. Sutherland

Members Not Present:

Janis O. Manwaring, Chair

Staff Present:

Elizabeth Fox, HR Director/Assistant City
 Manager
 Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney
 Kürt Blomquist, Public Works
 Director/Emergency Management Director
 Duncan Watson, Assistant Public Works
 Director/Solid Waste Manager

Vice Chair Filiault called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, welcomed the public, and explained the rules of procedure.

1) Katie Schwerin – Public Art Proposal – Peace Pole

Vice Chair Filiault recognized Katie Schwerin (of Gilsum) and Aylene Wozmak (of Walpole). The peace pole has been stored at Keene Monument on Winchester Street in Keene since 2010. Ms. Wozmak recalled speaking before this Committee in 2007 to request placing the pole in Central Square, though the location was denied so as to not set a precedent of approving new things in Central Square. Other locations considered include: the Monadnock Co-op, the Recreation Center, and the Railroad Square area. The pole was not accepted at any of these properties. Ms. Wozmak explained that she was the Chairperson of the Monadnock Mindfulness Practice Center on Roxbury Street. From 2008-2011, Mayor Lane made a proclamation of peace from the City. For this reason, the City seems the ideal recipient of this gift of art. The pole (9'x7'x7') is paid for entirely and only needs a final placement, which is ideal adjacent to the Mount Monadnock labyrinth at the airport, where there is space for contemplation without distracting traffic. Keene Monument is happy to install the pole at any location for free; they added that the airport location would be easy access for them to install. Ms. Wozmak shared what the four sides of the pole read, which she does not think offends anyone: *May all beings be happy, may all beings be healthy, may all beings be free of harm, and may all beings be at peace.* Ms. Schwerin added that the pole would be placed adjacent to the labyrinth, 100' from the road and 30' toward the ridge. Vice Chair Filiault said he could not imagine many objections to this installation.

Councilor Hooper said the labyrinth is a wonderful addition to the City and the peace pole will accompany it well. It will be a great addition to an area that people have been enjoying already. There are no negative distractions he can identify and he said art is welcome in Keene, like this peace pole, the labyrinth, and new murals.

Councilor Sutherland mentioned one drawback he considered: the land near the labyrinth is very sandy and might not accommodate the pole well. Ms. Schwerin agreed and said a foundation might be required, which Keene Monument will handle. Councilor Sutherland added that people visiting the labyrinth/pole should expect planes flying over actively during their contemplation.

The Assistant City Manager said the applicants submitted a very complete proposal, which staff appreciated. She recalled that Council adopted a policy on the acceptance and placement of public art. Part of the acceptance process is a presentation before this Committee, who will refer the matter to staff to ensure all documents are complete to finalize this gift to the City. As a gift, the City reserves the right to do what it wants with the art in the future.

Vice Chair Filiault recognized Councilor Terry Clark, who questioned who from the City thought previously that Central Square is an inappropriate place for the peace pole. He said Central Square already depicts warlike items and this peace pole could provide reflection on getting through war. Staff will research who made those decisions and report back to Council; the City Attorney added that staff will review how other monuments were approved at Central Square. Vice Chair Filiault said he thinks the airport location is appropriate and Councilor Sutherland said he thinks the installment at Central Square is more about defense than war. Ms. Wozmak said the pole was previously denied at Central Square more so to discourage many other groups from wanting similar installations.

Vice Chair Filiault recognized Councilor Carl Jacobs, who said the fountain at Central Square was approved in his lifetime as an “artistic installation” and he views it as such. He thinks there is some precedence for things in Central Square and questioned how much time staff should spend researching this. He thinks staff can handle this moving forward. Vice Chair Filiault agreed that if staff encounter any challenges, they will notify Council; he added that Councilor Clark’s comment does not relate to the matter before the Committee.

Vice Chair Filiault recognized Jeff Scott (of Chesterfield), who said representation today on Central Square is cannons and military images. He wants something in the square that represents peace to counter the war images. He said it is a balance that should not prompt other groups requesting items in the Square.

Councilor Sutherland made the following motion, which Councilor Lamoureux seconded.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee recommends the proposed public art display by the Monadnock Mindfulness Center, be

accepted by the City and placed at the Keene City Airport, and that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the project.

2) Water Monitoring at Closed Landfill – Public Works Department

Vice Chair Filiault welcomed Duncan Watson, Assistant Public Works Director/Solid Waste Manager. Mr. Watson explained this an informational memo before Council, which requires no Council action. In 1999, the municipal landfill on Route-12 was capped and as a condition of the Solid Waste Permit, must be monitored for 30 years post closure. Monitoring to date has shown naturally occurring discoloration from natural compounds like iron and manganese. This capped landfill is also in the groundwater management zone that is technically east of the landfill where waters that ultimately flow into Black Brook are tested annually. Headlines from Merrimack, NH in recent years prompted the state to take action on PFAS substances, which occur naturally in most industrial cleaning products as well as everyday household things like the coating on Teflon pans. These substances were detected in private water wells in Merrimack. Now, the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) has created a state-wide testing protocol for PFAS levels greater than 8-12 parts per trillion, which would exceed ambient surface water standards; still, adverse human impacts are unknown. The state wants to determine the degree of PFAS spread from landfills. The City is required to test before August and will continue testing annually; the City is required by state law to inform any homeowners impacted. However, there is no known remedy if PFAS excess is found. Staff have no concern right now and are doing all things necessary to comply with DES and will keep Council and residents informed.

Councilor Lamoureux recalled there is no PFAS mitigation process yet and he questioned the City's liability if PFASs are found and what action the City would be responsible for. Mr. Watson said it is indeterminate because remediation actions are unknown at this time but he imagines the City would have some responsibility for containment or control. Currently, DES has proposed drinking water standards that are under review for PFAS and its derivatives. The Public Works Director said the City has no financial obligation to this effort at this point and will hear more about this from staff over the next year. The current focus is at the legislature creating standards and ways to address excess PFAS. He said this is a nationwide concern because the chemical is so pervasive in products.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which Councilor Lamoureux seconded.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee accepted the presentation as informational.

3) Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Vice Chair Filiault adjourned the meeting at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker