

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

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

**Monday, September 9, 2019**

**4:00 PM**

**KSC Student Center, Room 309**

**Members Present:**

Steve Fortier, Chair  
Dave Richards, Co-Chair  
Dr. Dottie Morris  
Ely Thayer  
Richard Berry  
Robin Picard  
Danya Landis - 4:17pm arrival  
Jeff Murphy  
Kaya Roumimper  
Kelly Ricaurte - 4:28pm arrival

**Staff Present:**

Rhett Lamb, ACM/Community Development Director  
Kim Schmidl-Gagne

**Members Not Present:**

Peter Starkey  
Dr. Chris Cusack  
Phillip Jones  
Victoria Bergstrom  
Davis Bernstein

**1) Roll Call**

Chair Steve Fortier called the meeting to order 4:06pm. Roll call was completed.

**2) Review of Minutes from May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Chair Fortier stated he had some recommended edits for the minutes from the last meeting. Dr. Dottie Morris and Dr. Melinda Treadwell were both missing their title as Doctor throughout the minutes. On page 1 number 1, under roll call Robin Picard's official title should be documented as Student and Community Relations Coordinator. Two paragraphs after number 1, Peter Starkey is introduced as previously working at the School for International Training and did not work at Keene State College. On the second page of the previous minutes, guest Beth Wood is documented as stating she had been working alongside with Ms. Morris but she works with the Monadnock Economic Development Corporation and the City of Keene as Downtown Coordinator. On number 7 page 5, correction that the Chair Fortier stated the Human Rights Committee needs a chairperson, not Robin Picard, and Kaya Roumimper has moved into that role.

Chair Fortier asked the members for any other edits to the previous minutes.

Seeing none, Chair Fortier motioned to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Richard Berry seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Chair Fortier stated that the presentation on the commission's history will be at the next meeting. Chair Fortier said Mayor Lane and Dr. Melinda Treadwell will be at the next meeting.

### **3) Co-Chair Updates**

Dave Richards stated the Main Street crosswalk is finished on time and on budget. We will work on making sure it is properly maintained and fix any issues that come up such as some of the lights being partially obscured by signs. The flashing signals are overall very visible and should improve safety. Mr. Richards stated he looks forward to working together in the future on other projects.

Richard Berry asked what Mayor Lane and Dr. Treadwell would want to discuss at the next meeting.

Chair Fortier stated we want to have a check in with Mayor Lane and Dr. Treadwell regarding the Neighborhood Revitalization Committee. Chair Fortier reminded the committee that the Main Street crosswalk project was split 50/50 with the City of Keene and Keene State College. Chair Fortier said he looks forward to reporting fewer incidents and accidents.

Mr. Berry asked what the cost of the project was. Mr. Richards stated it was approved at \$350,000 dollars.

Chair Fortier thanked Beth Wood for her coordination, vision and execution as well as the Savings Bank of Walpole for providing the funding and design of the banner in front of the post office as Keene States new students and families arrive and move back to campus. Chair Fortier ask Robin Picard to explain the move in kits provided to off-campus students.

Ms. Picard said this is the third year we have used the move in kits. We asked the community and the City of Keene to provide resources and services in the effort for new off campus students. We went out to off campus housing and let them know we care and want to check in with them and ask them how it's going and give them a message on how to be a good neighbor and it's finished. We did about 275 bags. Five years ago we did over 500.

Chair Fortier said it was fun for him to participate and thanked Ms. Picard for securing window clings to replace the posters, thanked the rotary club for signs on Main Street. All combined it was very welcoming for all students and families. We did move the clap-in inside due to the weather. Chair Fortier acknowledged we owe a thank you to Beth Wood for organizing that because it is a very special ritual at Keene State.

### **4) Proposed Amendments to City Code Chapter 2 – Establishing the College-City Commission**

Rhett Lamb stated there were some changes to the City Code, Chapter 2. It is part of the legislative process of the Keene City Council. This committee is established by City Council and has special rules due to being a collaboration. There were some changes needed and in working with the college, we made some modifications to the section of city code that establishes this

commission. Changes were made to membership and configuration, timing of membership and when they renew with both the City and the college. Changes were also made with quorum requirements, a minimum of 7, 3 from City 4 from college or visa versa. Mr. Lamb stated these changes should make it easier to make quorum. Kim Schmidl-Gagne stated the student membership was also redefined so that two students could serve as one member. Mr. Lamb said we are where we need to be with underpinnings of this commission at this point. A link was attached in a prior email at the bottom. Mr. Lamb said that if anyone needs to attachment he would be happy to send it.

Chair Fortier said the changes made for committee enrollment on the college side would be July 1 through June 30. For the City, it will be on the full calendar year. We will welcome new members at two different times a year. Chair Fortier said we will have an orientation process with each enrollment. In regards to quorum, Chair Fortier stated he approves of the 4 and 3 requirements because it reflects the spirit of the cooperation between the City and Keene State. Overall, one student can vote, turnover times are different now and quorum requirements are different now.

Rules discussion - Mr. Lamb said not everyone recognizes why this procedure is so important and only comes into play when some conflict or issue arises. We also recognize this melding of cultures and appreciate the patience during this collaboration. Mr. Lamb stated rules and procedure are different from quorum. The rules and procedure define what the committee can and cannot do. We will have another month to look over the rules and procedure due to changes being made to the rules and procedures draft. They will be adopted next month at the next meeting. Chair Fortier asked is number 4 from the rules and procedures would be reviewed for revision. Mr. Lamb said it is on the radar and a correction will be made. Mr. Berry said we have the crosswalks taken care of, but it would be helpful to know how we can get stuff done, what can we accomplish, based off of the rules and procedures. Dr. Morris asked what happens with recommendations it would be good to have clarity around that to prevent confusion. Chair Fortier said these questions would be good for the meeting with Mayor Lane and Dr. Treadwell on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Berry said we put together a list of recommendations, I don't know what are the statuses of those are. Dr. Morris said the other sub-committee came up with a list of recommendations as well and submitted them and it wasn't clear what would happen with those recommendations and who would execute them. Chair Fortier said he gave the most recent report to the new members and acknowledges we have not had an official meeting in a considerable amount of time due to not being able to make quorum. We can reset and revisit, get the subcommittees back together and we know what we need to do. It was planned for discussion in June of this year but there has not been a quorum. Ms. Picard said if we are revisiting past recommendations, there is a color-coded document of all the recommendations that Ms. Kessler completed. Chair Fortier said the report Ms. Kessler completed was what he was referencing. He will send the spreadsheet to everyone. Kim Schmidl-Gagne recommended that the spreadsheet be sent to everyone but also send the two reports as well. The line items may not make sense without the description. Mr. Lamb said the commission has a website and we could put it there and it would be easier.

##### **5) Discussion: Sub-Committees – Changes and Membership**

Chair Fortier asked the chairs of the sub-committees to say a little but about their committees as we have new members present who might be interested in joining.

Ms. Picard as Co-Chair of the Neighborhood Revitalization Committee stated we look at challenges in the neighborhood as well as trends and suggestions. We are not an action body but provide recommendations on how to improve the livability. We are talking about the neighborhoods where there are large concentrations of students.

Danya Landis asked where those recommendations are made.

Mr. Lamb said the sub-committee reports to this the full College/City Commission, which makes the recommendations to Mayor Lane and Dr. Treadwell.

Chair Fortier said the subcommittees are encouraged to meet in between meetings to move agenda items.

Kaya Roumimper as Co-Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee stated the purpose of the sub-committee is to assess diversity on this campus and in the community so we can be more equitable and just. As an update, this committee met on July 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM. Ms. Roumimper stated she was the only member at the meeting along with other members of the community. We discussed projects for the year with recommendation from the committee and the most pressing issue was the potential draft and adoption of Indigenous People's Day. She said she invited Jedidiah Crook to talk a little more about that today.

Jedidiah Crook, Senior of Keene State College spoke next. She brought the benefits and negatives of celebrating Indigenous People's in the form of a document which each committee member received. Mr. Crook said he personally was working on bringing this to Mayor Lane as well as the school. He said it is important for Native people and Native American's across the country but also for all community members. In the document he presented questions are presented such as what do we lose as community members by continuing to celebrate Columbus Day and what that means to everyone. We are going to different committees and speaking to different committee members. Mr. Crook asked the group if they had any questions.

Chair Fortier asked if any groups have taken this up yet. Mr. Crook said the Human Rights Committee is in support and is bringing it to the city council and Mayor Lane. Chair Fortier asked Mr. Crook the date he is hoping to roll this out. Mr. Crook said October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, also known as Columbus Day.

Mr. Berry asked Mr. Crook what he hopes to accomplish with this.

Mr. Crook said our holidays and memorials are activating part of the past within the present. With Columbus Day, we are celebrating Christopher Columbus and the discovery of this country. However, the discovery of this country is a myth that not only silences indigenous voices but also dehumanizes them. The statistics on the document presented, in terms of what Native Americans are experiencing today, is a proliferation of that history that we celebrate when we celebrate Columbus Day. Mr. Crook said what he hopes to get out of this and the point of this is to correct history but also end a culture that celebrates colonial violence.

Ms. Schmidl-Gagne asked Mr. Crook if there was ever a resolution of this. Mr. Crook stated it was brought up to the college senate. Ms. Schmidl-Gagne stated it was brought up but there was no resolution. Ms. Schmidl-Gagne said to Mr. Crook we will work more together in the future. Ely Thayer asked a procedural question regarding what is the goal for us to ask to recommend

ideas. Ms. Landis said she agreed with Mr. Thayers. Dr. Morris continued off Mr. Thayers comment asking for clarification if this is part of public comment section. Mr. Crook said he is looking for the College City Commission's support. Ms. Roumimper said we would write the recommendation. Dr. Morris stated it seems like the decision was to support and testify. Mahammad Saleh, Vice Chair of the Human Rights Committee, said his committee will support it and when he presents it to the City Council it will come to a close. Mr. Thayer said he wants to support Mr. Crook and believes it's something to look into more and hear more about. He said he wants to hear about the new language and how it will be presented. Ms. Landis what is the implementation plan to spread the word and move it forward. Dr. Morris said a proclamation is different from a resolution. With 5 weeks, Mayor Lane can do things if requested and it might help with the progression of it. Ms. Landis said it is a lot of work to change language and the way people think. How do we get there? Dr. Morris said it starts with a conversation first. Co-Chair David Richards said a resolution has to be voted on. Mr. Richards asked if this has been presented to the Human Rights Committee. Mr. Saleh said it was presented to the Human Rights Committee just recently and the committee agreed they would be in support of it. Mr. Richards asked if the intent is that this goes through the Human Rights Committee to the City. Mr. Saleh said the timing is short we decided to bring it directly and be in support on the side. Dr. Morris stated we did not know the timeline and if we do not have enough time to ask for proclamation than it might not be feasible with 5-6 weeks. Ms. Landis said it does take a while to go through the city council Mr. Richards said we have a tight window. City government doesn't move fast. The Human Rights Committee will need to be in support and a letter would be the best way. Mr. Crook said we would write a letter and get their support before the discussion with city council. Mr. Thayer asked if the main thing Mr. Crook is looking for is support. Mr. Crook said yes. Mr. Lamb said for the commission to speak as an opinion of the College City Commission we have to take a vote and it is hard to do just having read it once in a meeting. Ms. Schmidl-Gagne said most times committees want to see the resolution before making a decision. Mr. Lamb said to come to a resolution and vote it would be hard for us to do that before the October meeting. Mr. Thayer asked Mr. Crook the date of when he plans on taking this to city council. Mr. Crook responded saying there is no date yet. Ms. Schmidl-Gagne said it is possible for the committee to come to a vote if Mr. Crook gives us a resolution before the next meeting and then we can discuss and form an opinion and beat city councils meeting. Ms. Landis said to Mr. Crook if he is waiting for us to make a decision it will cause a delay. Ms. Schmidl-Gagne said this committee meets next before the city does. In theory when the Human Rights Commission reviews the resolution there could be an attached endorsement from us if we vote on the 30<sup>th</sup> to go to the city Council. Ms. Landis said is there enough time for this to go through? Mr. Saleh said the Human Rights Committee understands there is not enough time to go back and forth but to try to determine the quickest option. Jeff Murphy asked if there a pathway from a proclamation to a resolution. Mr. Selah said there is a pathway. Ms. Roumimper asked if it would be worth it for us to move forward with this proclamation and simultaneously with a resolution. The end goal is a resolution. Chair Fortier said he is sensitive to Mr. Crook's introduction stating he is a senior and wants to honor him with this legacy at Keene State. Chair Fortier said he wants to keep this moving and see it through. Mr. Thayer asked if the proclamation is more of an immediate action and the Human Rights Committee will work on more long-term resolution. Mr. Saleh said the Human Rights Committee will write a proclamation and are happy to receive feedback. Dr. Morris said we have written several proclamations. Mr. Fortier asked if the goal would be that Mayor Lane would publicly say something. Dr. Morris said yes. Mr. Thayer said it seems like this committee could come to an opinion on the September 30<sup>th</sup> meeting, get all the information on what the changes will look like.

Mr. Berry said this is revisionist history. Mr. Berry said he is very cautious about revising history particularly about things said in the document such as we bring the myth of discovery. Mr. Berry asked Mr. Crook what that means. Mr. Crook responded saying the myth of discovery is that we celebrate that Columbus discovered America. Dr. Morris explained that there were already people here however. Mr. Berry said he understands that and eurocentrism. Mr. Crook asked Mr. Berry to explain what he does not understand regarding the myth of discovery. Mr. Berry said he understands eurocentrism and does not understand why it is a bad thing. Mr. Berry said he would like to have further discussion on what exactly Mr. Crook means in more detail before supporting it. Mr. Thayer said maybe by next week Mr. Crook could send over what the changes would look like so the committee could review it before September 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Thayer asked if that was a fair request. Mr. Crook responded saying that is fair. Mr. Berry asked if the committee would also have some discussion as well before supporting. Chair Fortier said we would discuss and vote. We can also show up as individuals in response to it.

Mr. Crook stated he is curious about Mr. Brooks's concerns and wants to address them and have a discussion later. Mr. Brooks agreed to have a discussion with Mr. Crook later regarding revisionist history. Dr. Morris said this issue is being discussed other places not just here. It is very complicated to have the discussion and we will discuss it further. Mr. Richards said the Mayor won't put a proclamation out that he does not indorse and Mr. Crook might want to reach out to the mayor directly. Mr. Brooks said a certain number of people in this community will support this and some will not. Pushing an agenda that is not supported not a good idea. Chair Fortier said this is part of community and this committee will work through these challenging topics. Chair Fortier asked for clarifications who Mr. Crook's allies are. Mr. Crook said through the Environmental Studies Department. Ms. Roumimper clarified that when she said we earlier she was talking about the Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee. This is a recommendation that they have twice made. Mr. Saleh said on behalf of the Human Rights Committee they are always looking for citizens' concerns like this.

Mr. Fortier asked Ms. Roumimper if there was anything else to add from the sub-committee. Ms. Roumimper said there is nothing upcoming but they are looking to call a September meeting but has yet to do so. Mr. Lamb reminded everyone that sub-committees need to be officially posted and to correspond with Mr. Lamb when they are taking place. Sub-committees take their own minutes and those are posted. Ms. Landis asked what the requirements are for being on sub-committees. Mr. Lamb said you could be on one or both or none.

## **6) New and Other Business**

Chair Fortier reminded everyone about the Radically Rural event on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. The International Festival taking place at the Rec Center in Keene September 21<sup>st</sup> from 11:00am to 2:00pm. The Chambers will host their first post summer regional issue series focusing on the future of the Monadnock region. There will be a panel of experts as well as a famous researcher. That will be held September 25<sup>th</sup> at 8am. Mr. Saleh said the Human Rights Committee is actively organizing the International Festival and is looking forward to hearing feedback on it. Dr. Morris said we would do a Martin Luther King Jr. brunch instead of breakfast this year. Mr. Saleh said we will have a group come and talk about diversity and more announcements on that will be upcoming. Dr. Morris said we are working with a group from Jaffrey and are looking forward to cost sharing with them. Mr. Saleh said there will be food trucks at the International Festival and

we have lots of participation. The Human Rights Committee meets at library the first Monday at 5:00pm.

Meeting adjourned at 5:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Claire Kunzler, Minute Taker

Edits: Katie Kibler, Clerk's Office