

City of Keene
New Hampshire

COLLEGE CITY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 28, 2019

4:00 PM

KSC Student Center, Room 309

Members Present:

Dave Richards, Co-Chair
Dr. Dottie Morris
Ely Thayer - left meeting at 4:25 PM
Robin Picard
Kaya Roumimper
Phillip Jones, Councilor
Jeff Murphy
Richard Berry
Victoria Bergstrom
Danya Landis (via phone)

Staff Present:

Rhett Lamb, ACM/Community
Development Director

Members Not Present:

Peter Starkey
Dr. Chris Cusack
Kelly Ricaurte
Steve Fortier, Chair

1) Roll Call/Call to Order

Co-Chair Dave Richards called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

2) Review Minutes from September 9, 2019

Councilor Phillip Jones moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Jeff Murphy seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

3) Presentation on Commission History: Phil Jones

Councilor Jones presented a brief history of the College City Commission and discussed the purpose of the commission. Councilor Jones stated relations that lead to the creation of the commission where when there was a lot of confrontation between the City and the college community. Both the City and the college were more reactive in response to situations instead of being proactive. The City was receiving complaints that the college was being given special services but not paying any taxes. The college provides the City with half a million dollars a year, which is standard and surrounding colleges and communities are also doing. The City manager and the college president are negotiating another contract. In 2014 this commission was created, which was before the Pumpkin Fest riots happened. We got a lot of information from these first meetings and it helped us create what we wanted to do which was build relations and communications. From there it became more specific and in the meantime, the riot happened. Unfortunately, Keene State College is blamed for the riots and it was another group of people, not us. Since than there has been new zoning changes with special incentives for the college

students with off campus housing, we are trying to keep the college students in one area and we redesigned our voting district so that the college students could vote to one place. Where we are going from here is up to us. We have accomplished so much. The City and college can work together on many levels.

4) Revisiting the Charge: Continuing Discussion

Rhett Lamb stated we had an informal meeting with the Mayor and President Treadwell. To summarize, they are going to draft a new charge for us. They recognized several changes as well, one was the citizens group outside the college and City working on the social host ordinance and we would take out the social host ordinance reference, that phrase would be removed. We will continue to review and look at trends in behavior and code of conduct in regards to neighborhood related issues and President Treadwell wanted it to be about working together. Another reference President Treadwell made was in regards to the arts and Culture corridor and collaboration with the City and college on that. The Mayor talked about integrating the college and campus more closely into downtown but I think it has been said within the committee there is a separation, or at least a perception. President Treadwell also brought up energy and sustainability as well as broadband internet being part of the discussion. There was a general understanding that the charge, its relation to human rights, and diversity would be integrated within every aspect of the work this committee does. The draft should be available soon. Councilor Richards stated everything is open to any suggestions. If we know these are the baseline ideas we can at least discuss them. Jeff Murphy stated there were four charges, and being new to the commission, it appears that there was not a lot of participation in the subcommittees. We can divide this up and create some action so we can get things done. Councilor Richards stated we can keep this within the group or invite other folks from the college or City to collaborate. Robin Picard stated the topics are all great, than would be explore more ideas within them and make recommendations? There are a couple different City groups already taking action on sustainability for example and if we take that on, we are acting as middle people. There are many connections already being made on that issue, we could be interjecting where it is not needed. Mr. Lamb stated Ms. Picard made a good observation and we would want to take it on only if we are adding value. To get anything done you need someone to work on it for a long time. Maybe it is something we can get reports on but would not expect to set up a subcommittee. Dr. Dottie Morris stated it would make sense for them to bring stuff to us and vice versa to parallel. Councilor Jones stated the Energy and Climate Committee starting in early 2000s, as far as broadband the college is far ahead of the City. Richard Berry stated we had a broadband commission, it was an idea to get businesses to sign up and be subscribers, is the capacity there? Mr. Lamb stated he believes the capacity is still there. There are issues for people who live on the outskirts of the town and issues taking on the business scale broadband options. However, could there be a reasonable service to create competition among providers? Councilor Richards said the college is clearly way ahead of us on this, we have no experts in the room, can we get a presentation on this so we can understand? Mr. Berry asked what is the goal with broadband. Mr. Lamb said President Treadwell knows and the details will be in the charge. Mr. Berry said maybe get some data first. Councilor Richards said do you run it wireless, do we run cables, there are a million questions but until we know how these things functions we won't know the next steps to take. Victoria Bergstrom stated that with the broadband we can attract more young people and businesses. Councilor Richards stated broadband is like the railroad of the 1800s, without it people are going to go elsewhere. We need to be educated more on how it works before moving forward. Ms. Picard asked if there are other groups working on these issues, such as sustainability or the arts corridor. What is the role of this commission on this in the end? Mr. Berry said this is what it is about it; these are the things we

need to figure out. Councilor Richards said we are looking into creating a hub and we need to learn more about it. Ms. Picard said maybe we would be the conduit to bring all these groups together, so we would be an action group or a recommendation group. Dr. Morris said are we an action or facilitation group or a recommendation group that has always been in question. Mr. Murphy stated we are essentially the liaison with college and City, for instance, this is what we know and found out and here are the resources and here is how you connect and not necessarily taking action but getting all these folks to the table. Can we connect and use each other's resources? Councilor Richards stated this group is meant for that, connecting the neighborhoods, the City and the college. Councilor Jones said communication can help and we can have a meeting and join everyone together. Councilor Jones suggested maybe splitting up into subcommittees wouldn't help. Councilor Richards said he agrees with Councilor Jones after discussing it, suggested getting some information first, and see where we want to take it. Mr. Lamb said in item number five it gives us an idea of how to structure ourselves with all these ideas for the next meeting. Dr. Morris said we can ask how we can be helpful. Councilor Richards said cheerleading can be helpful, supporting other groups and their ideas and get people excited about it than see how we can approve stuff. Mr. Berry asked are we looking for recommendations to collaborate more to understand enough to do certain things to move in one general direction? Councilor Richards said the City has been discussing some of these ideas for years, for instance broadband. The college will be able to tell us how to connect, what are the costs, and finally to get the ball rolling we need more details. Mr. Berry said we need to identify areas missing and what is needed. Councilor Richards said until we understand how things work we cannot move forward. Ms. Picard stated let us talk to community members who have already worked on these issues, there was already a committee on broadband let's talk to them. Ms. Picard continued asking if this committee would work on one topic at a time or take on all charges at once. Councilor Richards said let us get IT people here first. Mr. Lamb said maybe we have a discussion on item number 5 to develop a concept of the next meeting and reacting to the written charge is something we should discuss entirely. Councilor Richards said we should bring IT in and talk about it, which would be one agenda item. Councilor Jones suggested that each month we can address each charge. Mr. Murphy said if we have a bit more direction we can create committees. Mr. Berry asked if we are due an updated charge from Mayor Lane and President Treadwell. Mr. Lamb said the outline he provided in the beginning of the meeting is a summary of the charges. Councilor Richards said this will be a tentative agenda item for next meeting, working with both staff liaisons. Ms. Picard asked if there is a vacant seat. Mr. Lamb said we might have a seat open but will double check. Ms. Picard said on the college side we have a vacant seat. Mr. Lamb said going into the charge and new charges there would be an updated sense of where we are and by we it's the City, not just the college. We can discuss certain trends on both sides so we have a common basis. Some of those trends are present in the presentation from President Treadwell to the Board of Trustees. We will send those slides out to the group and see what her take is on the connection of the City and college and trends. Our thought was getting these to the group so we have a common foundation to make these meetings more productive. The commission discussed changing the date of the next meeting but decided to keep the meeting date for November 25th for the time being.

Meeting adjourned at 5:53 PM by Councilor Richards.

Respectfully submitted by,
Claire Kunzler, Minute Taker