



City of Keene
New Hampshire

**MUNICIPAL SERVICES,
FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMITTEE
AGENDA
Council Chambers B
February 26, 2020
6:00 PM**

Janis O. Manwaring, Chair
Michael Giacomo, Vice Chair
Randy L. Filiault
Bettina A. Chadbourne
Robert C. Williams

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1. Continued Discussion: Encouraging the City to Become a “Bee City”
 2. Referred Back: Harris Center for Conservation Education – Temporary Road Closures – Jordan Road

MORE TIME ITEMS:

- A. James Phippard/Brickstone Land Use Consultants, LLC – Request to Discontinue Easement for Possible Future Road Extension at Black Brook Road
- B. Katie Schwerin – Proposal for Permanent Public Art Installation – Airport Property
- C. Councilor Williams – Accessibility Access at City Facilities

Non Public Session
Adjournment



City of Keene, N.H.
Transmittal Form

February 12, 2020

TO: Mayor and Keene City Council

FROM: Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee

ITEM: 2.

SUBJECT: Referred Back: Harris Center for Conservation Education – Temporary Road Closures – Jordan Road

COUNCIL ACTION:

In City Council February 20, 2020.

Voted unanimously to amend the first recommendation to recommend the matter be referred back to Committee for further discussion. Voted unanimously to carry out the intent of the amended recommendation.

Voted unanimously to carry out the intent of the second recommendation in the Committee report.

RECOMMENDATION:

With a vote of 3-1, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee recommended that the communication from the Harris Center for Conservation Education be accepted as informational.

Further, that future requests for the closure of North Lincoln Street be handled administratively by the City Manager. Chair Manwaring was opposed.

BACKGROUND:

Chair Manwaring welcomed the Assistant Public Works Director, Duncan Watson, who said that the staff's position after talking at length with the Harris Center is to pull back on the potential closure of Jordan Road this year and to proceed with sufficient research to be able to assist them moving forward. He said there needed to be more conversations with residents who would be impacted on Jordan Road and how they can support future closures. While there has been success on North Lincoln Street, he said jumping ahead and building on that with something similar on Jordan Road is ill advised at this point. He advised a larger conversation next year to propose a possible detour on Jordan Road.

Chair Manwaring asked how staff arrived at this conclusion. Mr. Watson said there has been great public willingness to assist amphibians in their migratory crossing on North Lincoln Street, but he thought public education was important before making a unilateral decision to close Jordan Road, to ensure there is no inconvenience. The goal is to have a solid proposal for next year. Chair Manwaring asked how staff would develop that proposal. Mr. Watson said that staff would continue working with the Harris Center as they have for many years on successful closures of North Lincoln Street, which he said is a successful foundation to build on and identify opportunities for the next logical step on Jordan Road.

Councilor Filiault said he had no problem with the recommendation and understood. Still, he advised staff to proceed with caution next time something like this is brought before the Committee to ensure everyone is on the

same page. He did not think it reflected well on the Council or City to depict something as moving forward in the City process for staff to then come back saying they are not on the same page.

Councilor Williams clarified that people will still be participating in amphibian crossing on Jordan Road this year without closure. Mr. Watson said that Harris Center volunteers have been counting amphibians at that location for over a decade and he anticipated continuance.

Chair Manwaring said she thought there were ways to have made this closure on Jordan Road work. Just having done the Main Street Mile, with volunteers placing and removing barriers, she thought something similar should have been possible on Jordan Road, especially as it is only an approximately two-hour event. She talked with the petitioner, Brett Amy Thelen, about sending letters to residents who would be impacted explaining the importance and asking for their understanding. To Chair Manwaring, it was only two nights for roughly two hours at a time. She would not support staff's recommendation.

Mr. Watson said that closing the road for a few hours while volunteers are there is great, but the amphibians are traversing the road all night, which is why North Lincoln Street is closed all night until migration stops at sunrise. He wants to find a way to close the road all night for effective migration after volunteers leave.

Councilor Giacomo asked the total number of residents that would be impacted on Jordan Road. Mr. Watson did not know exactly but said ultimately a couple of residents, but added that many people use Jordan Road as a thoroughfare. This season he hopes to get a more accurate traffic count. Councilor Giacomo asked if all these studies were conducted before implementing closure on North Lincoln Street. Mr. Watson said that there were no homes impacted on North Lincoln Street so staff had better data in advance. Councilor Giacomo noted that he wanted an idea of the scope of an outreach program for residents impacted on Jordan Road.

Chair Manwaring said she understood that ideally the road would be closed all night, but she thought that even a two-hour closure to protect volunteers was better than nothing.

Councilor Giacomo made the following motion, which Councilor Filiault seconded.

With a vote of 3-1, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee recommended that the communication from the Harris Center for Conservation Education be accepted as informational and that future requests for the closure of North Lincoln Street be handled administratively by the City Manager. Chair Manwaring was opposed.