

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**JOINT PUBLIC WORKSHOP**  
**PLANNING BOARD/**  
**PLANNING, LICENSES, AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, June 8, 2020**

**6:30 PM**

**Council Chambers**

**Planning Board Members Present:**

Douglas Barrett, Chairman  
Chris Cusack, Vice-Chair  
Andrew Weglinski  
Mayor George Hansel  
Pamela Russell Slack  
Gail Sommers  
David Orgaz  
Councilor Michael Remy  
Michael Burke

**Planning, Licenses and Development  
Committee Members Present:**

Councilor Kate Bosley  
Councilor Phil Jones  
Councilor Mitch Greenwald  
Councilor Catherine Workman  
Councilor Gladys Johnsen

**Planning, Licenses and Development  
Committee Members Not Present:**

**Planning Board Members Not Present:**

**Staff Present:**

Rhett Lamb, Community Development Director  
Mari Bruner, Planner  
Tara Kessler, Senior Planner

**1. Statement of Authority to Hold Remote Meeting**

Chair Bosley read the statement for the record.

**2. Roll Call**

Chair Bosley called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and a roll call was taken.

**3. Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2020**

A motion was made by Councilor Phil Jones that the Joint Committee accept the May 11, 2020 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Mitch Greenwald and was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

**4. Building Better Together – Staff presentation on proposed schedule for review of draft Land Development Code, including public engagement opportunities and submission for adoption.**

Senior Planner, Tara Kessler reminded the committee that the next step in this process is to release a draft of the land development code (also known as unified development code) for review of the public and Joint Committee. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic the schedule has changed slightly. Ms.

Kessler noted that she would be sharing a proposed schedule for the release of the draft and the introduction of an ordinance for adoption.

Ms. Kessler referred to a draft table of contents for the land development code to display the multiple components of the document. She explained that there is substantially more to this land development code in addition to social service and congregate living, which the committee has been discussing a lot lately.

Ms. Kessler explained the goal of the land development code is to take all regulations related to land use and put them into one ordinance. These regulations include driveway standards, sign regulation, earth excavation regulations, conditional use permits, subdivision regulations, site development standards, historic district regulations, flood plain regulations, street standards etc.

Staff in the past few months have been conducting a final review and edits of all these sections to include into a preliminary draft code plan for release July 13.

Ms. Kessler then went over a proposed schedule to release of draft for committee and public review. Staff will also meet with various committees in the weeks following the release of the draft to review the document and proposed changes. There will be a virtual info session with the development community and the general public during the last week of July (dates to be determined). The Joint Committee will review the draft in more detail in August and September, and the proposed date for submission to City Council as an ordinance is September 25. Staff's hope is that in-person meetings can start happening again in the fall but in the meantime they plan to complete as much work as possible prior to final adoption.

Councilor Jones felt with reference to the social service and congregate living, the item should go before the Council for adoption rather than before the Planning Board – he felt these are “NIMBY” issues, which are often ones the public take to their City Councilors not to the Planning Board.

Ms. Kessler stated in March it was left that the draft code would propose that all licenses related to social service and congregate living uses would go before the City Council for approval.

The Councilor went on to say he had asked for review of zoning for the neighborhood nodes in the Comprehensive Master Plan. Ms. Kessler responded by saying the Master Plan identifies a few areas which are neighborhood nodes (along Court Street, near intersection of Maple Avenue, and close to Park Avenue). The zoning districts that underlay these nodes may not be encouraging the types of uses or form of development that the Master Plan desired. However, the scope of the land development code in this phase does not consider rezoning changes to these areas. Council directed staff to focus on updates to zoning in the downtown, and this effort will be an example to learn from in future rezoning initiatives.

Ms. Kessler reviewed a few options for the proposed schedule for adoption of the ordinance. She noted that the schedules vary depending on the willing of the Joint Committee to meet off-schedule during the fall. She also noted that the Committee might find they need more time with the ordinance before sending it to Council for a public hearing, than what is estimated on the proposed schedules.

Committee members discussed the schedule options and provided agreement that the accelerated schedule, which involves additional meetings of the Joint Committee in the fall, is what they would like to pursue. This schedule will be posted to the website for the project: [www.keenebuildingbetter.com](http://www.keenebuildingbetter.com). This schedule anticipates a City Council public hearing on the draft ordinance before the end of the calendar year. Mr. Lamb noted the accelerated schedule has one less

public workshop, other than that the rest is similar but the Joint Committee will need to make a commitment to meet twice in October and November.

Councilor Jones clarified that if this process is completed, some overlay zoning districts will remain and some will be eliminated. Ms. Kessler agreed and noted the Gilbo Ave Overlay District Downtown and the Railroad Overlay District are proposed to be eliminated.

Ms. Kessler noted in July the committee will be presented with a change form, which outlines the proposed changes to the current regulations, and explains how these changes meet the project goals. Ms. Kessler emphasized that staff are very willing to meet with committee members or the public one-one to explain the changes proposed. Mr. Kopczynski added staff is always available to assist with any questions from the committee.

Councilor Workman stated that she too agrees with the accelerated schedule especially because this is an item that has been going on for a while. She suggested because public input is important, public workshops be advertised early and as often as possible. Ms. Kessler agreed and staff will be doing public outreach however, with a caveat that the adoption process cannot be controlled completely.

Councilor Jones and Councilor Bosley agreed with Councilor Workman. Mr. Lamb stated because staff is not hearing any opposition to the accelerated schedule staff will move ahead with that.

Ms. Mindy Cambiar of 447 Park Avenue Keene addressed the committee and stated she is grateful the committee is working on this. Ms. Cambiar represented 100 Nights Shelter and stated they would like to apply for the CDBG grant in January 2021 and tax credits in March 2021 and noted any delay would delay their work by another year.

With no further comment, Chair Bosley closed the public hearing.

**5. Continued Public Workshop**  
**Ordinances – O-2019-13 and O-2019-14 – Relating to Social Service and Congregate Living Uses. Petitioner, City of Keene, proposes changes to Chapter 102 – Zoning, Chapter 46 – Licenses and Permits, Chapter 18 – Building Regulations, and Appendix B – Fee Schedule of the City Code of Ordinances. The amendments proposed include the introduction of land uses categorized broadly as Social Service and Congregate Living uses as well as a conditional use permit and City operating license for some of these uses.**

Ms. Kessler reminded the committee that at the March meeting there was consensus reached regarding the integration of the draft social service and congregate living ordinance into the draft land development code. The item was continued to maintain the notice requirement for the public workshop on this ordinance, and the date it was continued to was June 8. She indicated in July, social service and congregate living items would be discussed as part of the larger land development code project. She went on to explain under the city code there is no path to table this draft ordinance and the process needs to be kept moving through the public hearing process. Staff suggested continuing the public workshop on this ordinance to October 12.

Chair Bosley noted there are some open questions with this item and asked when those items will be addressed. Mr. Lamb noted social service and congregate living is now included in the land development code and the committee will see a draft in July which would include this ordinance and the changes made since the last time this item was discussed. He added there is no reason

why other comments cannot be made during the upcoming information sessions. Chair Bosley clarified this portion will come up in the greater discussion of the land development code.

Mr. Lamb answered in the affirmative

Tom Savastano of 7 Winter Street addressed the Committee and clarified the July 13 draft will integrate the public comment already received. Ms. Kessler agreed the edits put forward at the March meeting would be carried forward as well as public comment that has been provided and those will be included on a change form, which will be provided to the committee.

With no further comment, Chair Bosley closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Mayor Hansel that the Joint Committee this public workshop O-2019-13 and O-2019-14 to the October 12, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Phil Jones and was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

**6. Next Meeting – Monday, July 13, 2020**

**7. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by Tara Kessler, Senior Planner