

City of Keene
New Hampshire

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

Monday, April 10, 2023

6:30 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Planning Board

Members Present:

David Orgaz, Vice-Chair
Mayor George S. Hansel
Councilor Michael Remy
Emily Lavigne-Bernier
Ryan Clancey
Armando Rangel
Randyn Markelon, Alternate
(voting member)
Kenneth Kost, Alternate

Planning Board

Members Not Present:

Gail Somers, Alternate
Tammy Adams, Alternate
Harold Farrington
Roberta Mastrogiovanni

**Planning, Licenses &
Development Committee**

Members Present:

Kate M. Bosley, Chair
Michael Giacomo
Raleigh C. Ormerod
Gladys Johnsen
Philip M. Jones

**Planning, Licenses &
Development Committee**

Members Not Present:

All Present

Staff Present:

Jesse Rounds, Community
Development Director
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner
Evan J. Clements, Planner

I) Roll Call

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

II) Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 13, 2023

A motion was made by Mayor George Hansel that the Joint Committee approve the March 13, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Raleigh Ormerod and was unanimously approved.

III) Public Workshops

- A) **Ordinance O-2022-19-A – Relating to amendments to the City of Keene Land Development Code - Zoning Regulations & Application Procedures.** Petitioner, City of Keene Community Development Department, proposes to amend sections of Chapter 100 Land Development Code (LDC) of the City

Code of Ordinances to clarify language within the zoning regulations in Articles 9, 11, and 13 of the LDC; Amend Article 15 “Congregate Living & Social Service Conditional Use Permit” to add a new section entitled “Conditional Use Permit Waiver,” and; Amend Section 25.4.3 of Article 25 “Application Procedures” to modify the process for amending the sections of the LDC that are outside the zoning regulations.

Senior Planner Mari Brunner addressed the Committee and stated this ordinance has been before the Committee before – it first came to the Joint Committee in January for the first public workshop. At that time the Committee amended the ordinance and created an A version to include a section regarding parking reduction. There was some discussion at that first public workshop, specifically about the proposal to include a waiver provision within Article 15, the Congregate Living, and Social Services section of the Land Development Code. The proposal was to provide the ability for the Planning Board on a case-by-case basis to grant a waiver from specific standards in Article 15. Currently, an applicant would have to go before the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a variance. The City Council did not support this. The Council sent the ordinance back to this body with a suggestion to remove that piece from the ordinance. If the Joint Committee was to act on that, this would create a B version and get sent back to Council for a public hearing.

This concluded staff’s presentation.

Mayor Hansel stated if there are members of the Council that are not comfortable with the ordinance changes as a whole, then the Committee should separate them out and go along with that line of thinking.

Councilor Giacomo felt the housekeeping items need to be allowed to move forward and it is not likely to move forward unless a B version is created that removes the Article 15 waiver provision.

Councilor Remy stated NH Office of Planning and Development.
Ms. Brunner stated this can be treated as a scrivener’s error.

The Chair asked for public comment. With no public comment the Chair closed the public hearing

A motion was made by Mayor George Hansel that the Joint Committee approve Ordinance O-2022-19-B to remove amendments made to Article 15. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michael Giacomo.

A motion was made by Mayor George Hansel that the Planning Board approve that amended Ordinance O-2022-19-B is consistent with the City’s 2010 Master Plan. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michael Remy and was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Michael Giacomo that the Mayor be requested to set a public hearing on Ordinance O-2022-19-B. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gladys Johnsen and was unanimously approved.

B) Ordinance O-2023-06 – Relating to amendments to the Land Development Code, Accessory Dwelling Units. Petitioner, City of Keene Community Development Department, proposes to amend Sec. 1.3.3 of Article 1 and Section 8.4.2 of Article 8 of Chapter 100 “Land Development Code” (LDC) of the City Code of Ordinances to amend the definition of detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs); modify the dimensional standards for ADUs; and expand the areas of the city where they are permitted.

Evan Clements Planner addressed the Committee regarding this ordinance. Mr. Clements stated he will be addressing topic of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and will first begin with a List of Terms, History of ADU in the City, Proposal, and how this relates to the Master Plan.

Mr. Clements stated Dwelling, Single Family and Nonconforming Use are two important terms that need to be reviewed.

He referred to Dwelling, Single Family as it is outlined in the Land Development Code (LDC Article 28) – *A free-standing building containing only 1 dwelling unit on a single lot, which is designed, occupied, or intended for occupancy by 1 family*

• Nonconforming Use (LDC Article 28) – *The use of any building, structure or land existing at the time of the enactment of the LDC, or any amendments thereto, which does not conform in whole or in part to this LDC or its amendments.*

Mr. Clements referred to additional terms as follows:

ADU - *Accessory Dwelling Unit*

Attached ADU – *An ADU that is physically connected to or incorporated into the principal single-family dwelling*

Detached ADU – *An ADU that is physically separate from the principal single-family dwelling, either in an existing or new accessory structure*

The ADU was incorporated into Law in RSA 674:41-43 in 2017. However, Keene adopted an ADU Ordinance as early as 2003 and was updated to reflect RSA 674:41-43 in 2017. Mr. Clements noted approximately 10 permitted ADUs have been constructed in Keene since 2017.

The first proposal is to Section 1 of the LDC, which is outside the Zoning Ordinance but does provide some guidance and exceptions. Item iv. is being added to the existing list as provided below.

e. The following structures may encroach up to 10-ft from the rear lot line of lots in residential zoning districts.

- i. Pools, either above- or in-ground
- ii. Decks, either detached or attached
- iii. Garages, either detached or attached
- iv. *Accessory Dwelling Units, either detached or attached*

The second proposal is also some housekeeping changes – deleting the word “unit” allows the definition in the LDC for single-family dwelling to be clearly used in this definition for ADU. Adding the phrase “or as” clarifies that a detached ADU can be its own structure and is not confined to be located in an already existing detached structure.

a. Defined. An independent living ~~unit~~ ancillary to a single-family dwelling unit and under the same ownership as the principal dwelling unit. The unit may be an attached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), located within or attached to the principal dwelling unit, or a detached ADU, located in or as a detached accessory building on the property.

Mr. Clements stated the third proposal is the most significant. The language below is being deleted:

c. Attached ADUs i. Attached ADUs shall only be permitted in the Agriculture, Rural, Low Density, Low Density-1, Medium Density, High Density, High Density-1, Neighborhood Business, Office, Residential Preservation, and Downtown-Transition Districts.

ii. Attached ADUs shall have a minimum gross floor area of 400-sf. In no case shall the gross floor area exceed 800-sf

This language is being replace by the language listed below:

ADUs shall be permitted in any district and on any lot that contains a single-family dwelling. This shall include any legal non-conforming single-family dwelling.

This proposal intends to de-couple ADU’s from zoning districts. It will be permitted anywhere in the City where single family dwellings exist including those non-conforming single family dwellings. Mr. Clements stated there are a few neighborhoods in the commerce district that have a mix of two family, multi and single-family dwellings that are not permitted to have ADU’s. Those would be captured in this change.

Fourth change would be that ADUs shall not exceed a maximum gross floor area of 1000-sf.

Fifth Change would be the reduction of parking for ADU’s - Only 1 parking space shall be required for an ADU.

Mayor Hansel clarified for it to be an ADU it has to be an accessory to a single-family home not to a multi-family home. Mr. Clements agreed the definition is clear – it has to be with a single-family dwelling. The regulations also indicate only one ADU is permitted on a lot and only two bedrooms are permitted in an ADU. Mr. Clements noted while the City is trying to provide

greater flexibility and opportunity for property owners within the City, it still should be accessory to the principal use of the property which is a free-standing single-family dwelling.

Councilor Giacomo stated that it looks like the language used to indicate that an ADU should have less floor space than the primary unit and asked whether this does not circumvent some of the “it has to be accessory” issue. He added he is all in favor of having as many accessory dwellings in the City as possible. From a tax perspective, questioned if ADU’s are taxed as sheds or as primary buildings. Mr. Clements stated he could not answer tax related questions. He noted this proposal leans heavily into site dimensions, parking, and height requirements to limit the size of the ADU and let it remain accessory.

Chair Bosley noted the minimum floor area has been removed which allows the opportunity for tiny homes and felt this is something the Committee should be aware of. Mr. Clements agreed and added the building code will dictate the minimum building size.

Councilor Giacomo asked what dictates something to be an accessory dwelling unit. Mr. Clements stated it has to be a complete dwelling unit, will have to meet all safety standards, heated space. Anyone who wants to construct one will have to apply for a building permit and the City inspect the plan and a new certificate of occupancy will be provided for that living space as well.

Councilor Remy asked how legal non-conforming unit fit into this. Mr. Clements explained for example the City has single-family dwellings that currently exist within the commerce district. Single family residential is not allowed currently in the commerce district but was allowed previously before the Zoning Ordinance was changed. The owner is still allowed to use their property as a single-family dwelling, but this is known as legal, non-conforming. It is legally allowed but does not conform to the current zoning regulations of that district. He added the Community Development Department ran a GIS analysis and there are 32 properties within the City that currently have single-family dwellings in the districts that are non-conforming; they are not currently able to have an ADU but will be able to after this ordinance. Mr. Clements referred to RSA674:72, which says that you cannot put on any additional dimensional requirements on an ADU that you don't already have for a regular single-family dwelling. For those districts that don't allow single family dwellings, those districts dimensions, height requirements etc shall apply.

Councilor Remy referred to downtown core and noted an ADU could be built up to the street. Ms. Brunner explained the overall building would have could be built to the street – but if it is an attached ADU it could be attached elsewhere on the building.

Mr. Clements went on with his proposal and stated the sixth change is to codify that the rear yard setback may encroach up to ten feet from the rear lot line. Staff feels encroachment onto the side setback would be more invasive to a neighbor compared into the rear yard.

Councilor Giacomo asked what happens if an existing building such as a garage is re-purposed to an ADU – which was grandfathered or received a variance in the past (less than ten feet from the rear lot line) can that unit not be able to be turned into an ADU or would this new use also be

grandfathered. Mr. Clements felt this might be a question for the zoning administrator. Mr. Clements went on to say the land development code does contemplate expansions of non-conforming uses. Chair Bosley asked if there should be language that should be included that would affect the interpretation for zoning. Ms. Brunner stated to be safe, staff does not want to commit to an answer and be incorrect and indicated staff can get that information or have the zoning administrator attend a future meeting. Ms. Brunner added the Committee could continue this meeting to another public workshop or staff could bring that answer to the public hearing. If the Committee then wanted to make some changes as a result of it, it would have to come back.

Mr. Clements went on with his presentation he stated he did want to tie this all back into the master plan and referred to the housing section in the Master Plan and referred to the following language he felt was appropriate for this discussion "*change in density not in intensity*" this phrase is used right in the same paragraph that the master plan talks about encouraging this kind of in-law suite, carriage house development as a way to increase the number of dwelling units without changing the neighborhood feel. He then noted to a picture which is a stock footage not a house in Keene but something like what is being contemplated - a detached cottage house, small, maybe 500-600 square feet and in somebody's backyard. It is not something that would be seen off the street. The City is hoping this ordinance is going to generate this type of housing proposal. Mr. Clements stated there was interest in this type of housing in the community.

Mr. Ryan Clancey asked whether ADU's were subject to being single floor or could they be two floors. Mr. Clements stated there is nothing that specifically says it has to be one floor but the building code will dictate stair dimensions and if there is going to be a second floor as well as the height requirements for a particular district. Mr. Clancey further questioned if he wanted to build a garage 10 feet away from the primary dwelling whether there was a height limit for a garage. Mr. Clements stated this again would depend on the district and height of an ADU would also be subject to the height limit in a particular district.

Community Development Director Jesse Rounded stated he wanted to update the Committee on the question about non-conformity for non-conforming structures. He indicated the code does allow in Article 18 3:II, Alteration or Expansion of a Structure - as long as the change use is permitted. In this case the change use to ADU is permitted.

Councilor Remy noted the City has a lot of rules in its system, around single family, two-family, and then everything above that is in a different category where there is a need for different licenses etc. He asked how many two families exist within the City of Keene and if the City was to allow ADU's on two family not just single family – he asked how many additional properties that would open up. He clarified this would then create a three dwelling unit structure which would then require other building codes. Staff agreed. Chair Bosley added moreover the other requirement for ADU's is that they are owner occupied so either the principal dwelling or the ADU has to be occupied by the property owner which is not always the case when you have a two-family house.

Councilor Remy referred to his own home which is two family and attached barn and noted there are many similar properties in Keene which perhaps could be converted. Chair Bosley stated

staff does have some ideas brewing related to densification in certain districts but didn't think this ordinance could accommodate such a change.

Mr. Kost clarified parking must be on the property. Mr. Clements answered in the affirmative but the limits to parking would be based on lot coverage. He added the single family that already exists needs two spots, the ADU would need a third parking spot on the property. To go beyond that, the property would need to meet impervious surface setback and the overall lot coverage is going to control the amount of impervious surface one can put down.

The Chair asked for public comment, with no comment from the public the Chair closed the public hearing.

Vice-Chair Orgaz stated he was in favor of this ordinance, while it might not be a solution right now, it certainly will be a relief for some of the housing situations that we are seeing.

Councilor Ormerod commended staff for moving this item forward.

A motion was made Mayor George Hansel that the Planning Board find Ordinance O-2023-06 consistent with the City's 2010 Master Plan. The motion was seconded by Councilor Remy and was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Giacomo that the Mayor be requested to set a public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilor Johnsen and was unanimously approved.

IV) Presentation & Workshop: City of Keene Housing Needs Assessment – The City's consultant, Camoin Associates, will present a draft final report and housing strategy. The Committee will discuss in small groups and provide feedback on the proposed strategies. More information about the Housing Needs Assessment project, including the draft report and draft housing strategies, is available online at keeneh.gov/community-development/housing.

Dan Stevens Director, of Real Estate Development Services of Camoin Associates addressed the Committee next and began by introducing Alexandra Trammer Director of Strategic Planning with Camoin Associates.

Mr. Stevens stated they will be talking about goals and strategies which are still in draft form and then break into small groups to discuss those items further.

Mr. Stevens began by discussing the four goals they have identified.

Goal 1: Expand the City's Capacity to Implement Housing Programs, Policies, Projects and Initiatives.

Goal 2: Improve the Condition, Resiliency and Utilization of the City's Housing Stock

Goal 3: Promote the Development of a Mix of Housing Types at a Variety of Price Points

Goal 4: Support Residents and Special Population Groups in Meeting their Housing Needs.

Mr. Stevens stated strategies around building capacity is the foundational step for implementing a lot of the issues that will be discussed tonight.

1a. Establishing a City Housing Trust Fund - This would be a dedicated fund the City would manage. Mr. Stevens agreed this can be a complicated issue but it is an important piece to have that funding to be able to create new platforms, create new programs, to affect the housing solution the City needs.

1b. Collaborate Regionally to Address Critical Housing Needs - Maintaining those communications with surrounding communities. Identifying shared objectives.

1c. Engage employers in Implementing Housing Solutions - Major employers, but also smaller employers; there are different roles the community's employers, businesses, nonprofits, public sector employers can play in terms of housing solutions, including different resources, capacity, that employers can bring to the table.

1d. Raise Awareness and Educate Residents on the Community's Housing Needs – Understanding what the housing needs are.

1e. Help to Organize a Community Land Trust – Mr. Stevens explained the most common method that is employed is a nonprofit 501 C-3 – typically this is an organization that will own the land. They will build housing on that land, that home is then sold to somebody that is pre-screened; income eligible. The Land Trust holds the land in perpetuity. Only the building is bought and there are covenants that keep the homes affordable over the long term. It is an alternative model to home ownership and helps to increase housing affordability. It is also an entity that would be more flexible for acquiring properties. They are often involved with rehabilitation and development and hence is a more flexible entity. Mr. Stevens paused his presentation for questions from the Committee.

Councilor Ormerod with reference to the Community Land Trust asked whether this would enable someone to just purchase the house and not have to buy the land. Hence, it is more affordable and not have the tax burden. Mr. Stevens stated that would be mostly correct but the homeowner would typically pay the property taxes on the building portion of the assessed value but not on the land.

Chair Bosley referred to the City Housing Trust Fund and noted Keene currently has the Keene Housing and Cheshire House Trust and asked if the consultants looked at their organization and whether they would be a fit for this model. Mr. Stevens stated they have, but Housing Trust Fund would be a little bit different it would be a formal City fund. There are ways to fund these for instance Nashua has seeded it with ARPA funds or straight budget allocation appropriation every year. It is not necessarily something that partners would operate.

For a City Housing Trust Fund the first step would be to establish committee and start to explore different options; exploring what type of model would be best suited for the City.

Mr. Kost stated he likes the idea of the Housing Trust Fund and likes the idea of collaborating regionally perhaps the idea of a Regional Trust Funds; housing built in Keene or in the region is going to solve the housing problem. Mr. Kost asked whether this is something that should be looked at as a broader idea. Mr. Stevens stated this would be something to look at but there is certainly a trade-off such as giving up some control. However, with a City specific or community specific trust fund the City can dictate where the money goes.

Mr. Stevens went on with this presentation:

Goal 2: Improve the Condition, Resiliency and Utilization of the City's Housing Stock. He indicated from research and analysis there are a lot of issues with the existing housing stock in need of repair, maintenance etc. but also density. When you think about one individual living in a 4 or 5 bedroom home - is there an opportunity to better utilize that housing stock?

2a. Create a Citywide Housing, Rehabilitation, and Resiliency Program – This is something that would be much tied to the Housing Trust Fund when you have your fund you have an opportunity to build programs under that fund to utilize those funds for specific funding priorities. With the Housing, Rehabilitation, and Resiliency Program there would be an opportunity to provide grants, forgivable loans, low interest loans to residential property owners in the City which can be structured in different ways.

2b. Supporting the Creation of a Home Sharing Program – Mr. Stevens stated this is similar to a roommate matching program but it is more than that and something that would be nonprofit run. It would not be something the City would typically manage or operate. It is a formal system operated by a certain entity. An example would be a senior citizen living in a home and has three or four extra bedrooms and would like to be matched with a responsible tenant maybe someone who can help around the house with chores, maintenance etc. It is a program to better utilize the housing stock the City has.

2c. Target Infrastructure and Other Interventions in Neighborhoods Vulnerable to Flooding – Mr. Stevens stated as part of their work they have completed GIS mapping and analysis to identify some of those most vulnerable areas within the City where residential properties are vulnerable to flooding. This is an opportunity to think about addressing housing, resiliency at the neighborhood level, whether it is infrastructure or green infrastructure approaches such as rain gardens, bio swales, things that are going to better protect the City's housing in event of flooding.

2d. Assess the Feasibility of a Locally Controlled Buyout Program – Mr. Stevens stated this is something that is probably more of a long term effort to examine. However, there are non FEMA models where the City would establish its own buyout program to look at long term climate change and flooding issues in the City

2e. Creating a Rental Registration Program - For both short term and long term rental property. These programs have several benefits; it gives the City information on where rental properties are located. It gives you a database that the City can potentially use for things like code enforcement – monitoring the quality of rentals. It provides a database that can be used for emergency management. For short term rentals to monitor if this is a growing percentage of the housing stock. Typically, it is a nominal registration fee where the fees cover the administrative staff cost to implement the program. If you are a landlord you would be required to register your property with the City.

2f. Focus on Neighborhood and Community Approaches to Address Disinvestment – This refers to not taking a heavy-handed, top-down approach to code enforcement but to promote more grass roots, neighborhood level and more community approaches towards problematic areas, and disinvestment. Things such as neighborhood associations, neighborhood beautification projects. Mr. Stevens opened up the session for questions on what he had just covered.

Councilor Remy referred to 2e and asked whether this would discourage people from creating rentals if there is an incremental process to that and whether there has been any research. Mr. Stevens stated he has not seen any research but the rental registration programs is typically a very easy form and some communities don't require a fee. However, hasn't seen research one way or the other.

Councilor Ormerod also referred to 2e and stated he has heard a lot of interest, skepticism, and hope, about short term rentals and people who are not living in town having these rentals. He indicated from the data he has seen, he did not feel short-term rentals were the problem they may even provide more income, which is an opportunity for some of our residents.

Mr. Kost referred to 2c and 2d getting people out of these flood plains and maybe dangerous houses in the future but this could reduce the number of dwelling units. He felt the City should look at how to mitigate that and find a place to build proper houses that replace the ones that are taken out. Mr. Stevens agreed the City would want to develop a buyout program that accounts for that and not having a net loss of housing. Chair Bosley suggested also perhaps invest in our infrastructure so that we don't have flooding issues.

Councilor Giacomo referred to the rental registration program and sees what both Councilors Ormerod and Remy are saying but felt the short term rental boom that has happened, especially with the recent housing prices in Keene many of the single family homes are being purchased by out of state buyers and turned into Air BNBs. He added the issue he sees with that is this that people in town are not getting that money. It is actually hurting our housing problems because the hotels are not fully booked every night – these short term rentals are a substitute for a hotel room.

The Councilor added there is certainly a use for these for vacations etc. but it is certainly not helping housing in Keene.

Chair Bosley stated she understands the Councilor's perspective – she indicated she has a friend who rents primarily to visiting nurses. Keene is not an area that is touristy unless there is a festival or a graduation, unlike perhaps an area like Portsmouth and felt like some of these short

term rentals in our community are housing visiting nurses right now which speaks to a whole different problem in our community where we can't find healthcare workers maybe because they can't find housing.

Councilor Ormerod stated registering short term rentals so the City could find out how many are in the City. He added when he said he didn't feel these short term rental were hurting the housing problem or solving the housing problem he was looking at comparing the percentage of short term rentals for Keene versus the entire State; Keene is very much under-represented in that type of housing for bringing people in for events etc. Creating a rental registration program for short terms would give the City the opportunity to collect the data and make better decisions.

Chair Bosley stated unfortunately the City doesn't have any regulations around short term rentals at this point. Mayor Hansel noted the data on short term rentals are already available; the resource the consultants used to find out how many Air BnBs are available and similar sites reveals that. He stated he was against the rental registration program idea because he just doesn't see it as being necessary or the City's role in getting involved in that. He stated funds are going to be extracted from landlords which in turn will be passed down to the tenants for the City to micro-manage the rental market in Keene.

Councilor Jones referred to 2b. noted the City's lodging house license says any more than four unrelated people have to apply for a lodging house license to be able to meet this.

Councilor Bosley stated she recently watched a documentary series on Netflix referred to as Bad Room-mates and stated it can end up being a not very pretty issue if you end up with some sort of a squatting situation. She questioned how the liability would be handled in that instance if you are dealing with seniors or a vulnerable population and you are placing someone in their home; who would be responsible if something went wrong. She stated there might be programs that are functioning and working but would like to review that much closely.

Mayor Hansel stated having looked at housing in the City for a long time, the biggest problem is the age and condition of our existing housing stock, and the fact that we don't have property values that are high enough to really drive people to invest a lot of money into fixing up their homes like what has happened in other parts of the State. Anything the City can do to help facilitate and allow people to make it a worthwhile investment for them to fix up some of the older housing stock make it more desirable to open up more opportunities. However, the issue is renovation is expensive. To really make any kind of meaningful impact on a housing development or housing renovation project could cost tens of thousands of dollars per project.

The Mayor stated if he was to look at this, prioritizing the rehabilitation opportunities first because that will have a huge impact for not only the people that are living in these houses who are paying a lot in utilities and living in unsafe conditions which is not helping the City's sustainability goals. Rehabilitating a home in a neighborhood incentivizes others to do the same.

Chair Bosley stated another aspect with the housing assessment was a conversation that no one is having is the aging population in our community and the fact that they are staying in single family homes. She felt this might be an opportunity for City staff to look at how we might

aggressively incentivize some development that is built specifically for active seniors (those who are not ready for nursing homes).

Mr. Stevens continued with his presentation:

Goal 3: Promote the Development of a Mix of Housing Types at a Variety of Price Points.

3a. Identify Housing Development and Redevelopment Opportunity Sites – Mr. Stevens noted the City is mostly built out and by doing this kind of assessment and looking for sites is a first step towards moving forward strategically. This again depends on private public ownership.

3b. Review and Align City Land Use Regulations to Support Housing Development – Mr. Stevens stated the City has made great strides and added it was great to listen to the accessory dwelling unit conversation and felt reviewing the City’s current regulations at this point would be in order.

3c. Exploring the Adoption of Incentive Zoning potentially with an In-Lieu Option - Most common example would be providing a density bonus to a developer who is doing a project if they are either providing affordable or workforce housing as part of their project or as an alternative, contribute a fee potentially to the housing trust fund in lieu of providing the actual affordable housing onsite.

3d. Establish a Developer Assistance Program to Provide Gap Funding for Affordable and Workforce Housing Projects – Mr. Stevens stated this would be a potential second program under that housing trust fund in addition to the resiliency and rehabilitation program. This is something that would incentivize developers and would cover that gap seen with workforce housing as it is not financially feasible to build. This is an opportunity to provide developers with grant loan funds, low interest loan funds to be able to build housing in an economical manner.

3e. Explore Opportunities and Mechanisms to Support the Acquisition and Development or Rehabilitation of Vacant Underutilized, and Tax Foreclosed Properties for Housing - Looking at moving properties that have suffered from disinvestment, abandoned, or condemned. How to bring those back into productive use while meeting housing needs.

3f. Support the Implementation of the Housing Cooperative Model in the City - This is not something the City would lead it is another nonprofit led effort. Typically the housing cooperative model is an alternative form of home ownership. They can come in all shapes and sizes; it can be a tiny home village, it could resemble an apartment building, it could be a mix of housing types. The idea is, it is shared ownership of the entire project; you don't necessarily own your unit, you own a share of the overall property.

Goal 4: Support Residents and Special Population Groups in Meeting their Housing Needs

4a. Support Transitional Housing in Keene to Reduce Homelessness – This is a need in the City.

4b. Identify Opportunities to Create Assisted-Living Senior Housing Facilities

4c. Encourage Creation of Options for Downsizing Empty Nesters and Active Seniors

Mr. Stevens stated 4b and 4c get to the question of where seniors should go who are currently living in single family homes – are there places for them to down-size.

4d. Educate Residents and Property Owners on Available Local and State Housing Resources

Accessing those programs and understanding what is out there can be difficult. Help connect residents with resources that exist and potential new resources that may be created in the future.

Mr. Stevens opened up for questions.

Counselor Johnsen referred to Special Population Groups and asked for added clarification.

Mr. Stevens stated it is what the City's role versus roles of partners and supporting those groups. Trying to locate places where transitional housing should go. The Councilor asked Mr. Stevens to explain what he would categorize as special population groups. Mr. Stevens stated they looked at the homeless population and seniors as special population groups and added if there are other groups the City feels they need to pay closer attention to that could also be looked at.

Councilor Johnsen stated the City has neighborhoods that don't want special needs people in their area – Mr. Stevens wasn't sure what the Councilor was asking about. Chair Bosley explained the Councilor is referring to some nimbyism that Keene has experienced when it created ordinances that allowed for different types of uses to go in different neighborhoods, and how we might address some of these concerns.

The Councilor agreed and went on to say there have been concerns for instance about where students should live. She indicated the college is downsizing and trying to make arrangements for that group. She stated she was concerned about people with special needs; physically or emotionally challenged and where they might fit in.

Councilor Ormerod stated the reference to Special Groups is for Keene to keep it open – the consultants are not defining it for us - it should be part of the plan.

The session paused at 8 pm so that the Committee could break into small groups for discussion. Members of the public were encouraged to participate.

The session started back at 8:25 pm.

The first group reported out:

Mayor Hansel spoke on behalf of the first group. For the first goal they talked about the regional approach and discussed finding funding opportunities. He stated it was the consensus among the group to explore different ways to bring funding to bear and helping developers or people looking to rehabilitate homes.

For the second goal the group discussed the housing rehab program 2a. they felt was important. They also talked about the need for the City to continue to look at zoning and take a “let's not obstruct new housing development” sort of approach.

For the third goal the group identified development and opportunity sites. For the City to maybe understand where these opportunities are. As a group they felt there is a perception out there that Keene doesn't have a lot of land that is developable and maybe like to see that proven or disproven. Taking a look at land regulations was mentioned during that part of the discussion, and some sort of developer assistance.

For Goal 4 the group felt transitional housing was important. 4c. encouraging downsizing options for people; this holds a lot of promise potentially. There are a lot of older folks that are living in more space than they need and if they had opportunities to downsize some of them would take advantage of that.

Randyn Markelon presented on behalf of the second group:

Goal 1 - Engaging Employers and Collaborating Regionally - employers building incentives and then getting employees to be able to look closer.

Goal 2 - They discussed 2f - Just because a home or a building is older does not necessarily mean that it is not in good condition. Look at any blight issues, enforce absentee landlords that are not taking care of their properties.

Goal 3 – They discussed 3d. Incentivizing zoning – Councilor Remy mentioned 79 E for single lot or single-family homes to incentivize them. They also discussed developer assistance or gap funding but perhaps not through the City but through a collaborative or nonprofit.

Goal 4 – 4b and 4c – The group liked the idea of creating a transitional or assisted living for seniors. Single floor living cluster communities.

Councilor Giacomo presented on behalf of the next group:

Goal 1 – The group picked the one central goal of collaboration, specifically relating to impact versus effort and effort in this case - time and City money that would be involved in accomplishing these things. Different towns have different developability options and needs. However, the entire region is impacted by this. There is also a lot of traffic from the outside towns in and out of Keene. Hence, anything that benefits the region benefits Keene. Also between businesses and the City especially places like the hospital where there has been well documented need for housing with doctors, nurses, and especially with the new programs they are trying to create with the old Peerless Building. Between the colleges and the City – what other ways can we work together on this? If the college has downsize what housing is there available?

Goal 2 – The group talked a lot about programming what is already out there and how do we not reinvent the wheel on this. Specifically, what home repair programs are available – specific to seniors, lead mitigation etc.

With reference to home sharing, the group talked about the reluctance on the part of seniors to share their homes. How do we engage seniors? How do we overcome that kind of reluctance? How does that engagement occur? Can this be done through one of the regional churches? Arranging for specific workshops regarding homes.

Goal 3 – The group felt most of these are in the works already.

Goal 4 – This is mostly about resource sharing. How do we get the word out about the programs that are available? How do we get the resources that are available in front of the people that need them?

Councilor Giacomo stated something specific they brought up was seniors, but also those seniors' kids. The State of New Hampshire used the term "Boomerang kids". This is growing population and we are unaware to what extent some of these individuals are moving back in with their parents. Some of them moved back into the region and want their own house. How do we identify who that population is? Because we know it is a growing population.
Multi-generational housing options - whether this is actual shared house or constructing extra stories on an existing house to create housing for multi generations.

The next to report out from the group was Armando Rangel (I think)

Goal 1 – 1a and 1c - Establishing a City Housing Trust fund – the group liked this suggestion, but how is this administered? Where would the funds come from.

Goal 2 – 2a was identified as a priority - There was a comment that this is something that was started previously. Again, where do funds come from and who will administer.

2c identified as another priority - target infrastructure and other interventions in neighborhoods vulnerable to flooding since flooding is a big topic of conversation in this area but there was a comment that this should be addressed by Public Works.

Goal 3 – 3b. Review and align City land use regulations to support housing development.

3d. There was a comment that this program for developer assistance should be self-sustainable.

The gap funding should be a loan rather than a gift and then that money can be recycled back into the program.

Goal 4. 4b and 4c were grouped together - There was a comment on the language rather than talking about assisted living senior facilities – felt it should be referred to as 55 Plus Active Communities, which sounds more positive.

4a. Partnering more with community stakeholders to accomplish this, such as Southwestern Community Services or Keene Housing.

4d. Was another priority the group talked about again working with community partners, possibly service link as some type of trusted organization that could really recommend vendors and products for customers.

Ms. Trammer addressed the Committee and thanked the Committee for their feedback. She indicated the consultants are open to additional feedback before Wednesday of next before the Housing Open House on April 20 at 3:30 pm at Hannah Grimes Center. The consultant will make their final presentation to City Council on the same at 7 pm.

Ms. Brunner asked the Committee to promote the Open House.

V) **New Business**

None

VI) Next Meeting – Monday, May 8, 2023

VII) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Bosley adjourned the meeting at 8:54 pm

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Evan J. Clements, AICP – Planner