

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CONGREGATE LIVING AND SOCIAL SERVICES LICENSING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

6:00 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Andrew Oram, Chair
Alison Welsh
Thomas Savastano

Staff Present:

John Rogers, Building & Health
Official/Zoning Administrator
Corinne Marcou, Board Clerk

Members Not Present:

Medard Kopczynski, Vice Chair
Jennifer Seher

I. Call to Order: Roll Call

Chair Oram called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and roll call ensued.

II. Minutes of Previous Meeting: March 28, 2023

A motion by Mr. Savastano to approve the March 28, 2023, meeting minutes was duly seconded by Chair Oram and the motion carried unanimously.

III. Unfinished Business:

No unfinished business was presented.

IV. Applications:

- A) **LB 23-05: Applicant, Phyllis Phelps, Executive Director for House of Hope New Hampshire, Inc, is requesting a Congregate Living & Social Services License for a Large Group Home, located at 31 Wyman Rd., and is in the Corporate Park District and as defined in Chapter 46, Article X of the Keene City Ordinances.**

Chair Oram requested Staff comments. Mr. Rogers said this property is a legal non-conforming use in the Corporate Park District. Prior to being occupied by House of Hope, this building was a single-family home that was also a non-conforming use. Thus, House of Hope applied to the Keene Zoning Board of Adjustment to have one non-conforming use changed to another, which was approved. Mr. Rogers said the applicant had done well converting the house, which sits up

on a hill on Wyman Road. He said it is one of the older homes in the Rural District. Mr. Rogers said the inspections occurred on April 24 and Board members had copies of the housing and fire reports on their desks. He said the Fire Department did have several things listed but nothing was dealing with immediate life/safety issues; the applicant had 45 days to correct these issues. The Housing Inspector did not have any concerns.

Ms. Welsh noted that the sprinkler system was listed as overdue for service, and she wanted to see that service report before moving the application forward. Mr. Rogers said the applicant could speak to whether that work was completed yet and it was the Board's purview to make the application approval conditional upon that work.

Chair Oram welcomed the applicant Phyllis Phelps, Executive Director of House of Hope, NH, at 31 Wyman Road. She shared the fire alarm inspection report and said that life/safety would be inspecting the whole sprinkler system within the 45 days allowed. Ms. Phelps said that the program at House of Hope had been very successful during its last 6 years in Keene. She said that graduates of the program are very successful in the area.

Ms. Welsh noted that this was a non-medical residential home and asked how they deal with clients who are detoxing. Ms. Phelps said that clients go to Antrim House to detox for 30 days before coming to House of Hope. Ms. Welsh asked if any residents take medications. Ms. Phelps replied that clients take their maintenance medications for conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure, for example. Ms. Phelps works with Monadnock Family Services to get clients their regular medications. Clients are not accepted to House of Hope if they are actively taking suboxone or methadone.

Ms. Welsh asked about the staff training plan, noting that it was not very detailed beyond indicating that staff shadow Ms. Phelps for a few weeks. Ms. Welsh said those staff are working with a complex population and she asked Ms. Phelps to elaborate more. Ms. Phelps said that the staff's jobs are not that complex. Ms. Phelps said she had been away for a year helping to open another home in Manchester, NH. She said she trains the staff, they have meetings, and the staff also get certificates for use of Narcan. She said the NH Food Bank trains House of Hope staff in food handling and someone else trained them in CPR. Ms. Phelps said it is her and one other staff member on site at night. Ms. Welsh asked Ms. Phelps to elaborate more on these details in next year's application.

Ms. Welsh asked about the neighborhood relations plan, noting that it seemed more reactive than proactive. Ms. Welsh did note that this plan is harder for the Board to define and many applicants had struggled with this section. She asked if the neighbors had been invited to see the facility. Ms. Phelps said there had been no invite to see the facility, but she was open to that. She said the House of Hope has a good relationship with its neighbors including the nursing home down the road. Additionally, some neighbors invited the residents to a line dancing lesson as well as a talent show. Ms. Phelps said there is an immediate neighbor she has talked to, but the rest of the neighbors are more industrial. Ms. Welsh agreed that the Board was not accustomed to

seeing applications with an approved non-conforming use. Mr. Rogers agreed that House of Hope is not located in a residential district; it was once zoned as Rural but is now zoned as a Corporate Park. Most uses in this area are manufacturing, though there is also Covenant Living of Keene about 1-mile up Wyman Road.

Mr. Savastano said he felt it was a complete application. Although he had to search within it for a few items, he felt all the necessary things were included. For example, on page 17, the application mentioned a security plan in operation. Additionally, on page 22, some more security issues were detailed, like the escalation framework. Next year, Mr. Savastano advised Ms. Phelps to have a dedicated section for a security plan versus the components spread throughout the application.

Chair Oram said he had the same concern as Mr. Savastano. The Chair asked Ms. Phelps the question that the Board had asked all applicants in the last year, which was whether this process was challenging or whether the applicant needed more help/direction from the Board. Ms. Phelps said she was somewhat overwhelmed with the application at the beginning but said that Ms. Marcou was very helpful. She said that the application clearly outlined what the Board wanted.

Ms. Welsh listed some requirements for homeless shelters and asked whether those were required for this facility. Mr. Rogers replied that this is a large group home, so those additional criteria did not apply for this applicant.

With no comments from the public in favor or opposition, Chair Oram closed the public hearing and the Board proceeded discussing the criteria for approval.

The licensing board shall consider the following criteria when evaluating whether to approve, renew, or deny a congregate living and social services license application:

Criteria 1: *The use is found to be in compliance with the submitted operations and management plan, including but not limited to compliance with all applicable building, fire, and life safety codes.*

Chair Oram said he did not hear anything to indicate that the application was not compliant, pending the sprinkler inspection within 45 days. Ms. Welsh said her only concern was waiting 45 days to ensure all the repairs occur. Mr. Rogers suggested that the Board make submission of the sprinkler report as a condition of the overall approval.

Mr. Savastano made the following motion, which Ms. Welsh duly seconded. On a vote of 3–0, the Board found application LB 23-05 in compliance with the first criterion.

Criteria 2: *The use is of a character that does not produce noise, odors, glare, and/or vibration that adversely affects the surrounding area.*

Chair Oram did not see any information indicating problems with this criterion. Mr. Savastano made the following motion, which Ms. Welsh duly seconded. On a vote of 3–0, the Board found application LB 23-05 in compliance with the second criterion.

Criteria 3: The use does not produce public safety or health concerns in connection with traffic, pedestrians, public infrastructure, and police or fire department actions.

Chair Oram did not see any information indicating problems with this criterion. Mr. Savastano made the following motion, which Ms. Welsh duly seconded. On a vote of 3–0, the Board found application LB 23-05 in compliance with the third criterion.

Mr. Savastano made the following motion, which Ms. Welsh duly seconded. On a vote of 3–0, the Congregate Living and Social Services Licensing Board approved application LB 23-05, conditional upon: 1) a submission indicating that all issues identified by the Fire Department are resolved.

V. New Business:

No new business was presented.

VI. Non-Public Session (if required):

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Oram adjourned the meeting at 6:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katrnya Kibler, Minute Takers
April 27, 2023

Reviewed and edited by,
Corinne Marcou, Board Clerk