



Master Plan Steering Committee

AGENDA

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

6:00 PM

City Hall, 2nd Floor Council Chambers

- I. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
- II. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** – February 6, 2024
- III. **Presentation from Master Plan Consultant** – David Beurle, one of the City's consultants from Future IQ, will provide additional information about the process for the Master Plan update project.
 - a. Team Introductions
 - b. Project Overview, timeline, and methodology
 - c. Steering Committee role in outreach
- IV. **Discuss Potential Names for Project**
- V. **New Business**
- VI. **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, April 2nd, 6:00 PM

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

3
4
5 MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

6:00 PM

Council Chamber,
City Hall

Members Present:

Harold Farrington, Chair
Alex Henkel, Vice Chair
Mayor Jay Kahn, Alternate
Councilor Philip Jones, Alternate
Councilor Catherine Workman, Alternate
(Voting)
Joe Walier
Cody Morrison
Leatrice Oram
Josh Meehan (Zoom)
Elizabeth Wood
Emily Lavigne-Bernier
Joe Perras
Sparky Von Plinsky, IV
Juliana Bergeron
Kenneth Kost, Alternate (Voting)

Staff Present:

Amanda Palmeira, Assistant City Attorney
Jesse Rounds, Community Development
Director
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner
Evan Clements, Planner

Members Not Present:

Armando Rangel
Councilor Michael Remy

8
9 **1) Call to Order & Roll Call**

10
11 Ms. Brunner called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM and conducted roll call.
12

13 **2) Election of Chair & Vice Chair**

14
15 A motion by Ms. Bergeron to elect Mr. Farrington as Chair was duly seconded by Mr. Henkel.
16 The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote. Chair Farrington began leading the meeting.
17 He appreciated the vote of confidence and was honored to be working with all of these community
18 leaders.
19

20 A motion by Chair Farrington to elect Mr. Henkel as Vice Chair was duly seconded by Ms.
21 Bergeron. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.
22

23 **3) Presentation from City Attorney’s Office on Public Bodies & NH Right-to-Know Law**
24

25 Chair Farrington welcomed the Assistant City Attorney, Amanda Palmeira, to discuss NH’s Right-
26 to-Know Law: RSA 91-A. This law exists to guarantee public transparency through open meetings
27 and open records. Questions can be directed to her, or the City Attorney, Tom Mullins. Ms.
28 Palmeira discussed four critical points about public meetings from the RSA for the Committee to
29 be aware of:

- 30 1. Public notice
31 a. City Staff handle this requirement to notify the public of meetings 24-hours in
32 advance.
33 b. It is important for the public’s business to be conducted in a noticed, appropriate
34 setting.
35 2. Quorum
36 a. For this Committee, the quorum is 7 members.
37 b. A quorum is required to discuss or vote on any official business during a public
38 meeting.
39 3. Communicating contemporaneously within jurisdiction
40 a. This means more than just the quorum of members being in the same room. It
41 could also mean communication via phone or email.
42 b. Communication between a quorum of members—whether in person or via
43 technology (e.g., phone or email) —without proper public notice forms a public
44 meeting and violates RSA 91-A.
45 i. A meeting is *not* formed, for example, if a quorum of members is gathered
46 socially and not discussing official business.
47 c. It is important for Committee members to email any questions or materials via
48 City Staff members (do not send to whole Committee directly) and to *not* use
49 “reply-all” when emailing, which constitutes an un-noticed quorum.
50 4. Charge
51 a. This Committee has a very limited charge (listed in the meeting packet) to create
52 a specific output, the Master Plan.
53 b. The Committee should remain focused on this specific charge, and not delve into
54 other issues, like zoning, planning, or community development.
55

56 Ms. Palmeira continued, explaining that there are provisions in the RSA for the Committee to
57 receive legal advice, for example, in a non-public session. The reasons for these sessions are very
58 specifically to deal with highly confidential matters, and Ms. Palmeira did not envision the need
59 for this Committee to have a non-public session. Committee members should alert City Staff of
60 any potentially confidential matters.
61

62 Public records and disclosure are also an important component of RSA 91-A. Any documents used
63 by this Committee would presumably be a part of the governmental record and therefore subject
64 to public disclosure. An exemption from public disclosure could be personal notes written during
65 a meeting (including digital notes) or the circulation of drafts.

66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107
108

Most of the details Ms. Palmeira discussed were listed in the Committee’s Rules of Procedure, included in the meeting agenda packet. Committee members should review these rules.

Councilor Jones questioned quorum and remote participation. Ms. Palmeira explained that remote participation is allowed, but for remote members to participate and vote, a quorum must be present at the physical, advertised meeting location.

4) Adoption of Rules of Procedure

A motion by Mr. Perras to adopt the Rules of Procedure as presented was duly seconded by Mr. Von Plinsky. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

5) Adoption of 2024 Meeting Schedule

Meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM in the Council Chamber. The March meeting was changed to March 12 to accommodate the consultants.

A motion by Ms. Oram to adopt the 2024 meeting schedule was duly seconded by Councilor Workman. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

6) Mayor’s Remarks

Chair Farrington welcomed remarks from Mayor Kahn.

The Mayor began by thanking the Committee members for agreeing to participate. Anyone who had been a part of a master planning process would know how important the documents are as a guide for the future. By Statute, the Master Plan should be updated every 10 years, but the Mayor said it should have a vision beyond those 10 years. Mayor Kahn commented on why he thought Chair Farrington and Vice Chair Henkel were ideally suited for these roles. He recalled that Chair Farrington is also the Chair of the Keene Planning Board, and as such, will communicate about the Master Plan (MP) to City Council. Thus, it was appropriate for Chair Farrington to lead this Committee as well. Mayor Kahn said that he had known Vice Chair Henkel since he was in high school with the Mayor’s son. The Mayor felt that Vice Chair Henkel’s presence on this Committee was apt because he is the President of a multi-generational business in Keene, Electronic Imaging Materials.

The Mayor’s role in this process is to be a leader and spokesperson, while the City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon, would be responsible for implementing the MP. Mayor Kahn asked the Committee members to speak about their goals for this process. The lead consultant from Future IQ, David Beurle, also asked the Committee to comment on what expertise they bring to this process.

109 Chair Farrington began, reiterating that his role was as Chair of the Planning Board. Personally,
110 he grew up in Spofford and attended Keene High School. After college, he followed jobs outside
111 of Keene because they were more attractive. His family returned to Keene in 2017. His goal for
112 this Committee is to deliver the legally required sections of the MP, which is a vision for the
113 community, as well as a plan for future land use. While this was his focus, he hoped for many
114 other deliverables. He hoped the Committee would be as creative and strategic as possible, while
115 keeping with the aggressive timeline, without spreading the Committee too thin.

116

117 Councilor Jones noted that he was a part of the search Committee that chose Future IQ as the MP
118 consultants. He is a long-term City Councilor and was the Chair of the City's Planning, Licenses,
119 and Development Committee during the last MP process. Thus, he feels that he knows what
120 mistakes to avoid this time.

121

122 Ms. Bergeron's educational background was in housing and design. Her family has owned a
123 construction business in Keene since 1909. When interest rates were high and few were spending
124 on housing in the 1970s, she became a financial planner with Northwestern Mutual on Washington
125 Street. Ms. Bergeron lives on Main Street. She thinks Keene is a very vibrant and wonderful
126 community and she would do anything to help keep it that way.

127

128 Vice Chair Henkel grew up in Keene. His first experience with the City Council at age 8 or 9 was
129 when his Cub Scout group developed and presented a concept for converting the railroads into the
130 Rail Trail, which he was excited to see move forward into the great trail system Keene now has 40
131 years later. He has a long-term connection with the valuable long-term planning in Keene.

132

133 Mr. Von Plinsky has a degree in landscape architecture. He has lived in Keene for 10 years and is
134 the Chair of the Keene Conservation Commission. His goal is to ensure that the environment and
135 wildlife surrounding Keene are represented in the MP. He said Keene is a great place to live, and
136 one reason his family settled here was because of the special environment, which he wants to
137 protect.

138

139 Mr. Kost is also a landscape architect. For most of his career, he worked with large engineering
140 firms on government planning projects. He also serves on the Planning Board. Mr. Kost is involved
141 with the Monadnock Interfaith Project, which is currently focused on affordable housing. He
142 understood the value of the MP process. He added that he moved to Keene to be closer to his
143 children in Amherst, MA, and said Keene is an attractive place to live.

144

145 Mr. Walier has lived in Keene since 1977. He was privileged to participate in Keene's Economic
146 Development Committee and help to resolve challenges. He hopes to be of help on this Committee
147 too.

148

149 Ms. Oram is the Chief of Staff at Keene State College (KSC). She is also the parent of a child who
150 attends Keene Public Schools. She is a homeowner on Main Street and has lived in Keene since
151 2011 (worked in Keene for 22 years). She is experienced in strategic planning in the institutional

152 and private sectors. Ms. Oram participated in the strategic planning for both KSC and the Keene
153 Public Library. She hopes the MP will be realistic, grounded, and representative of the community.

154
155 Mr. Perras is newer to Keene has served as the new CEO of Cheshire Medical Center for the last
156 6 months. Since moving, he had been blown away by how incredible Keene is. He thought that a
157 growing and vibrant healthcare system would be critical to the community's overall health and
158 wellbeing. He was thrilled to be serving on this Committee, especially as he was seeking housing
159 in Keene for his family to move from VT.

160
161 Councilor Workman came to Keene 15 years ago when her parents moved to Troy. She grew up
162 in Boston. She fell in love with Keene because it has the best of both city and country life, with a
163 lot of recreational activities. When she ran for City Council in 2019, she acknowledged that Keene
164 needs to grow as a city and community. Still, she thought this Committee would need to be
165 conscientious about the pace at which the City grows. In that growth, it is important not to lose
166 what makes the City unique. Councilor Workman also mentioned her professional background in
167 social services, with a significant focus on affordable housing, and a fair and equitable community
168 for all.

169
170 Ms. Wood is a life-long resident of Keene. When her parents moved to GA in 2004, she chose to
171 stay in Keene and attended KSC. She owns a home in Keene, and she is the owner of 21 Bar &
172 Grill, just off Main Street. She is also raising kids in this community, and is particularly happy to
173 serve on this Committee because the results will be a part of her children's future. She also hoped
174 to help represent the downtown business community.

175
176 Mr. Morrison moved to Keene two years ago after growing up in NH. He studied finance and
177 public management, and he is currently the leader of the Monadnock Economic Development
178 Corporation (MEDC). Approximately 10% of Keene's property tax base and 12% of the regional
179 workforce is represented by MEDC. He has participated in strategic planning throughout his career
180 in various capacities—both non-profit and municipal. Mr. Morrison was particularly excited to be
181 a part of this Committee, given that he is a relative newcomer to Keene. He understands that the
182 decisions made by this Committee will set the course for his family and others for many years to
183 come.

184
185 Ms. Lavigne-Bernier has long-term roots in Keene, with her grandparents still living in the City.
186 Her parents also grew up in NH, with her father's farmhouse at Surry Dam and her mother's
187 farmhouse at Otter Brook. She and all of her siblings chose to settle in this area with their families.
188 Ms. Lavigne-Bernier helps to run Prime Roast on Main Street. Her focus on this Committee is
189 partly as a parent in Keene seeking childcare and education. She looks forward to adding to this
190 group and learning from her fellow Committee members as Keene moves into the future.

191
192 Mr. Meehan is the Executive Director of Keene Housing and has lived in Keene for approximately
193 12 years. He is really looking forward to the MP process. He felt that a part of his role on the
194 Committee would be as a voice for those we do not always hear from as this has been his

195 professional focus for 25 years. He explained that Keene Housing houses some of Keene’s lowest
196 income people. Despite serving approximately 1,000 people per year, there are still 1,500 people
197 on the waiting list who are tied to Keene or an adjacent community, in addition to 3,000 people on
198 the waiting list overall. He noted that he wants to advocate for those on the wait list through the
199 MP. He is also a parent raising his children in Keene.

200
201 Mayor Kahn appreciated the talent and diversity within this Committee. He encouraged the
202 Committee members to represent the interests that might seem on the edge of everyone’s thoughts,
203 but which should be considered and carried into the future. For background, the Mayor said he
204 came to Keene when appointed as Vice President of Finance and Planning at KSC. At the time,
205 KSC did not have a MP, so one was enacted, and it took several years to be grounded. Without an
206 active MP, it was necessary to start from scratch. KSC considered the capacity of the campus, how
207 much it could grow, and the programs and services that should be offered. They also considered
208 how much money to invest to meet capacity goals and sustain the programs. One goal was to
209 resemble and support the best of what Keene had already planned in its downtown. He thought
210 this Committee was working toward something emblematic and reflective of the community.

211
212 Next, Mayor Kahn shared some ways he thought the City could benefit from this process. The City
213 is beginning its review of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Every two years, the City
214 Council reviews the CIP, which outlines the program for between \$30 million–\$60 million on
215 capital improvements in the City. The City competes for federal funds to support its infrastructure
216 and development. The City also depends on the State of NH for funding to facilitate waterway,
217 dam, and roadway improvements. This all results in an average of \$45 million in capital
218 expenditures per year over the course of 10 years.

219
220 Mayor Kahn added that this Committee also needs to consider the tax base. A key component of
221 the consulting team is a focus on economic development. Keene’s population has not grown in the
222 previous 20 years and even might have decreased. Further, NH and Keene have an aging
223 population, and there are concerns about maintaining a sufficient local workforce. He also touched
224 on the issue of childcare, which many Committee members listed as a priority.

225
226 Mayor Kahn said another challenge is keeping people in the community. He thought internships
227 and apprenticeship programs (e.g., at Cheshire Medical) are important and should be encouraged.
228 It is essential to continue attracting people to Keene, but available housing is required. The City’s
229 tax base at this time is \$2.2 billion, with 60% coming from residential properties, 20% commercial
230 developments, 10% utilities, and 10% retail. So, it is clear that housing is a critical component.
231 The City needs to know whether it has the infrastructure to support additional housing for an
232 increased workforce.

233
234 During the MP process, the Mayor thinks it will be important to understand the City’s employment
235 demographics and the sectors with the most aging employees. Keene has several businesses that
236 employ 50–500 people, like Cheshire Medical, KSC, and C&S. It is important to understand how
237 the City can support these growing businesses. He has spoken with some business owners about a

238 survey of the downtown businesses to understand what would most complement their local
239 business success. He added that virtual work has been brought to Keene by some younger
240 professionals and the infrastructure for that work will be important over the next 10 years.

241

242 Lastly, Mayor Kahn said the MP needs to have an assessment built into it. How will the City know
243 if it is successful? He hoped the Committee would consider not only recommendations, but also
244 identify what the milestones of success will be and how to adjust if conditions/needs evolve. The
245 Mayor looks forward to working on this process.

246

247 **7) Introduction to the Future IQ Consultant Team & Discussion About the Master Plan**
248 **Update Project**

249

250 The Committee welcomed the consultants from Future IQ, David Beurle and Heather Branigin,
251 who have worked with City Staff over the previous few weeks to start this process. Mr. Beurle is
252 originally from Australia. He founded Future IQ 20 years ago; it is a research and consulting
253 company interested in future trends and helping clients. He said Keene would need to think about
254 the intersection of future trends with the City's aspirations, and how to design a pathway forward
255 to achieve the City's preferred future, which accounts for the rapidly changing world. Mr. Beurle
256 appreciated Mayor Kahn's comments about how a comprehensive MP can be an enabling tool for
257 a community to make the right decisions for the future. Future IQ has many technical experts on
258 staff, with specialties in economic development, sustainability, and more. During the March
259 meeting, Mr. Beurle will be present in Keene to talk about the methodology and timeline for this
260 effort.

261

262 Mr. Beurle continued by discussing the context for this MP process. He said it could certainly be
263 a mundane effort, given that it can be very technical. However, he hopes for this process to garner
264 a community conversation that activates the community in thinking about strategic positioning,
265 values, and the kind of community Keene wants to be in the future. While it is essential to have a
266 strong technical foundation on Future IQ's team, Mr. Beurle said he is delighted by the diverse
267 expertise and experiences represented on this Committee. He believes that progressing through the
268 planning process correctly can be incredibly transformational, unleashing a lot of creativity and
269 potential. He believes that this consulting team has the ability to help lead this process with
270 enthusiasm and excitement, helping to uncover the community's deeper aspirations for the future.
271 He commented about leading a similar process in OH that led to great success.

272

273 Mr. Beurle asked the Committee members to speak about—from their individual perspectives—
274 how they would measure the success of this process for the community.

275

276 Ms. Lavigne-Bernier began. After serving for three years on the Planning Board, she felt she had
277 learned a lot about Keene. When considering a healthy and successful community, she thought
278 about housing. As a young homeowner, she knows how challenging it is to find money to renovate
279 an old home in a community surrounded by others who want to do the same. She struggled seeing
280 old, beautiful buildings in Keene dilapidated and feels that some support is needed to bring those

281 homes back to life, in addition to supporting new infrastructure. She thought both housing and
282 childcare were essential to keep young families in Keene and attract more professionals.

283
284 Mr. Morrison thought a measure of success would be an overall more accessible community. He
285 agreed about focusing on housing, childcare, and the workforce. He also recommended changes
286 that could allow others to engage with the community from an ownership/stakeholder perspective,
287 with consideration of things like accessory dwelling units and childcare. MEDC is working on
288 family-based healthcare, which can lower the burden and lessen the cost of entry for entrepreneurs
289 looking to start a childcare business. This program helps to engage underserved populations and
290 demographics that do not have the wealth or status to initiate these opportunities on their own.

291
292 Ms. Wood hoped for a more approachable MP. Master Planning does not sound fun or exciting,
293 which can make it hard to get the community's attention. She agreed that it would be necessary to
294 involve many sectors like childcare, housing, workforce, homelessness, and more. She hoped this
295 Committee would be open and listen to all varying perspectives and consider everything brought
296 to the table. Like others on the Committee, she was also focused on childcare. Her hope was for
297 KSC graduates to choose to stay living in Keene, but noted that the City must be captivating
298 enough to make graduates want to stay and contribute to the economy and workforce. She wants
299 the City and this process to be more approachable and inviting.

300
301 Councilor Workman is the Chair of the Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
302 (MDEIB) Coalition. When talking about diversity, she wanted to consider diversity of population,
303 but also diversity of housing stock. She was also focused on community engagement, noting that
304 in her experience, the City tries to get the message out and hear from a diversity of voices in the
305 community. Still, it tends to be an echo chamber, and she hoped to hear more diversified opinions
306 from the community. Councilor Workman had also been reviewing the 2010 MP, and she noted
307 that there was a lot of disconnect amongst community members due to intersectionality of themes
308 that can at times feel like they are competing. She hoped to clarify these issues in the MP update.

309
310 Mr. Perras echoed the others. He added that for him, success would be population growth in Keene
311 and Cheshire County. In NH, demographics outside of the seacoast and southern NH
312 (Concord/Manchester/Nashua) are daunting from a workforce perspective. He shared that there
313 are 14,000 healthcare jobs within 100 miles of Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon,
314 with 4,000 of them being nursing positions. At Cheshire Medical Center, there were just under 200
315 open positions at this time; he imagined that if half of those were from four-person families, it
316 could bring close to 1,000 new people to Cheshire County. However, there is not enough housing
317 in Keene for that increased workforce (there is free childcare on site for staff at Cheshire Medical).
318 Mr. Perras thought that any outcome of this Committee should be focused on in-migration of
319 people to Keene. He echoed Councilor Workman's sentiment about the need for a diverse,
320 welcoming workforce. He had been blown away by the sense of community in Keene (e.g., its
321 many popular events and festivals), and he could envision the great potential for the community.

322

323 Ms. Oram said that from a practical standpoint, strategic planning can be a very staid process. She
324 thought that 10 years was a really long-range strategic plan, so she wanted to see built-in points of
325 reflection, reassessment, and pivoting if needed (e.g., at 3, 5 and 7 years). Additionally, she did
326 not hear many on the Committee representing the arts and creator community in Keene. She said
327 there is a huge creative economy in this area, and she hoped to see that reflected.

328
329 Mr. Walier agreed with other comments that planning ahead can be like the chicken and the egg.
330 He thinks that Keene needs housing, industry, and jobs. He thought it was strange that there was
331 not more emphasis or forward thinking on retaining new medical residents at Cheshire Medical.
332 He agreed that Keene needs to grow. When Mr. Walier came to Keene, the population was
333 approximately 23,000 people, and it has grown little since. While surrounding communities have
334 grown, Keene is still the hub, which needs to be planned for.

335
336 Mayor Kahn echoed Mr. Walier's sentiment that while Keene is less than 20% of the total Cheshire
337 County population, it remains the dominant employer. He hopes the consultants will dig into the
338 employment data, which he thought could be revealing. He said Keene grows during the day, but
339 shrinks during the night. He also called for making transportation cheaper and easier, despite little
340 money coming from the State for transportation and road upgrades. The Mayor noted that many
341 entities in the City (e.g., School District and KSC) were engaged in master planning. He thought
342 it would be important to collaborate so all of those MPs link and work toward shared goals for the
343 City. He also thought it was important to consider the thousands of people who visit Keene during
344 its many festivals and celebrations, supporting the downtown merchants. Mayor Kahn also
345 prioritized determining what type of housing would best support the goals for downtown; perhaps,
346 for example, downtown might not be the best place to concentrate affordable housing. Because he
347 believes that foot traffic will best sustain the downtown businesses, he also thought it would be
348 important to match-up the people, housing, educational opportunities, and economic vitality of the
349 City.

350
351 Mr. Kost talked about the NH population aging downward, with statistics showing that by 2050,
352 there will be a much smaller and older population. He thought that was a scary prospect when
353 considering the future viability of Keene. He does not want to see Keene in decline like many other
354 cities across the nation. He agreed with the need to attract young families to Keene. He recalled
355 another statistic that 1,400 housing units are needed in Keene alone, just for the people who live
356 in Keene today, which Mr. Kost called daunting. He thought it will be important to spend a lot of
357 time considering land use and where to build. Serving on the Planning Board, he knows that many
358 value the more rural districts of Keene and do not want to see those parts of the City developed. If
359 possible, he suggested spending time trying to understand what parts of the City could be
360 developed, while balancing the protection of what exists in the City already. Mr. Kost added that
361 many people learn well visually, so he encouraged more graphics and images in the MP than dense
362 paragraphs of text. Mr. Beurle agreed about including more visual material.

363
364 Mr. Von Plinsky stated that he has always found growth to be a silly measure of success for a
365 community, because there is only so much room to grow. He said Keene can keep growing, but it

366 will not change the number of acres available in the City. He cited examples from around the
367 nation of smaller towns being swallowed by miles of strip malls and apartment complexes. He did
368 not contest that Keene needs to attract younger workers, but he wants to ensure this process does
369 not lead to growth for growth's sake. He hopes growth will be proposed in the right places for
370 Keene. In this process, he also hopes for engagement with those who know the environment around
371 Keene, as there are many working to protect that environment who should have a voice in this
372 effort.

373
374 Vice Chair Henkel wanted to think about providing a voice to everyone by including physical and
375 virtual engagement. While the Committee is comprised of an impressive range of different
376 perspectives, he thought there were even more viewpoints to engage in this effort. At the end of
377 this process, he would measure success by the number of new conversations across the City that
378 help to create a shared vision for the future.

379
380 Ms. Bergeron noted that her husband is from Europe, and when visiting for long durations, they
381 have never had to rent a car because there is transportation available at every level—trams, trains,
382 busses, etc. Many people walk and spaces are being expanded for bicycles and scooters, reducing
383 the lanes for vehicle traffic. She agreed that Keene only has so many acres to build on, and that
384 Keene needs to be friendly to its surrounding towns, which at a certain point would become
385 bedroom communities. She added that all types of housing should be considered, including
386 apartments and small homes that might not require as much debt to obtain. Ms. Bergeron thought
387 that a component of this should be educating the community on the various different possibilities
388 for the future of Keene. She also represents this region on the NH Council on the Arts and the
389 National Endowment for the Arts. She recalled working on Keene's arts corridor with MEDC, as
390 the arts bring a lot of money to NH. She also recalled the Governor pointing out that an
391 artist/creator could spend \$12,000/month on a loft in Boston, or much less for a much bigger one
392 in Keene. She agreed that Keene needs growth, but not just for growth's sake.

393
394 Councilor Jones talked about how the demographics in Keene are changing. Regarding economic
395 development, since the last MP was adopted, Keene lost the world headquarters for Kingsbury,
396 Markem Imaje, Timken Precision, Peerless Insurance, and the Grange. Keene's economy is
397 changing, and Councilor Jones thinks it should become a small business economy. He thought the
398 City's mixed-use zoning was helping some in this regard. Councilor Jones added that he looks
399 forward to the ascertainment process and public engagement, which was critical during the last
400 MP process. Lastly, he said one of the most important parts of this whole process is
401 implementation, because otherwise the MP is just a piece of paper.

402
403 Mr. Meehan advocated for this being a very inclusive process—thinking about people who work
404 long hours, are stretched thin already, and live a life of scarcity. He did not think affordable housing
405 alone would be enough, as there are community members with other stressors in their lives who
406 are therefore hard to engage in a process like this. So, Mr. Meehan hopes the consultants and
407 Committee will be thoughtful about these challenges, while recognizing that there is little chance
408 of capturing *everyone's* voice. Still, he hopes there will be an earnest effort. He also encouraged

409 the Committee to be comfortable working with difficult data and looking at negative trends that
410 exist today. Being comfortable with that discomfort will help lead the Committee in the right
411 directions. Mr. Meehan recalled earlier comments about needing housing that that is affordable to
412 people with very high salaries (like doctors); he said it was important to understand these leverage
413 points in the community that might not be clear right now—connecting problems with solutions,
414 which he hopes this MP process will foster. Lastly, regarding development and growth, Mr.
415 Meehan agreed with points about mindful density—a balance between needing people to move to
416 Keene while wanting to preserve the outdoor spaces they value.

417
418 Chair Farrington said that to him, success would be very deep and broad engagement within the
419 City of Keene and working hard to ensure all of those ideas are represented. He added that Keene
420 does not need to reinvent the wheel, and there are best practices from other communities that he
421 hoped the consultants would contribute. Chair Farrington also thought it would be important for
422 the Committee to be very clear on its assumptions about future trends, particularly population
423 demographics. The State of NH published projections for the population of Keene and Cheshire
424 County by 2050; Keene would peak in 2030 and decline through 2050. He wondered how to break
425 out of that cycle and have a bigger City.

426
427 During community engagement, the Committee will need to understand that Keene has changed
428 very little over time. Chair Farrington also commented on the role of City government in the
429 community and what people want from the municipal government. He thought it would be
430 important to clearly articulate that—like the comment on bedroom communities—it is important
431 to expand Keene’s horizon to the neighboring communities and develop win-win scenarios. He
432 had heard from community members in Swanzey that they do not want more Keene workers living
433 there, so he thought it would be important to incentivize Swanzey welcoming Keene workers. He
434 agreed with the Mayor that it will be important to mesh the various community master plans that
435 are in progress.

436
437 Mr. Beurle appreciated all the comments and would use them to prepare for the March meeting.
438

439 Mayor Kahn asked about the timeline for data collection so the Committee can be helpful and
440 guide the consultants to important sources. This should be process-oriented and data driven. Mr.
441 Beurle replied that data collection had begun by reviewing historical City documents. By March,
442 they should have a plan to incorporate the data into this process, which the Committee will weigh-
443 in on. He agreed with the Chair about being clear on assumptions.

444
445 Mr. Walier asked if there was merit in reviewing the 2010 MP to glean any insights or
446 comparisons. The Community Development Director, Jesse Rounds, thought it was an excellent
447 point. He was happy to prepare a presentation on the 2010 MP, which was very well received by
448 the community, but some areas fell short and it will be important to review those in an effort to
449 improve.

450
451 **8) New Business**

452

453 This is left on the agenda so that if something arises during or after a meeting that the Committee
454 wants to discuss at a future meeting, this would be the proper time to raise those points so they can
455 be added to the next agenda.

456

457 The Community Development Department Staff would prepare a presentation on the 2010 MP for
458 the next meeting: what worked, what did not, and where implementation stands now.

459

460 **9) Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 12, 2024, at 6:00 PM**

461

462 Mr. Beurle will be physically present in Keene at the next meeting.

463

464 **10) Adjournment**

465

466 There being no further business, Chair Farrington adjourned the meeting at 7:42 PM.

467

468 Respectfully submitted by,
469 Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker
470 February 13, 2024

471

472 Reviewed and edited by,
473 Megan Fortson,
474 Planning Technician