

City of Keene
New Hampshire

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

Monday, April 14, 2025

6:30 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Planning Board

Members Present:

Harold Farrington, Chair
Roberta Mastrogiovanni, Vice
Chair
Mayor Jay V. Kahn
Councilor Michael Remy (Remote)
Ryan Clancy
Kenneth Kost
Michael Hoefer, Alternate

**Planning, Licenses &
Development**

Committee Members

Present:

Kate M. Bosley, Chair
Philip M. Jones, Vice
Chair
Robert C. Williams
Edward J. Haas
Andrew M. Madison

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner
Evan Clements, Planner
Paul Andrus, Community
Development Director (attended
for 30 minutes)

Planning Board

Members Not Present:

Armando Rangel
Sarah Vezzani
Tammy Adams, Alternate
Stephon Mehu, Alternate
Randyn Markelon, Alternate

**Planning, Licenses &
Development**

Committee Members

Not Present:

All Present

I) Roll Call

Chair Bosley called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and a roll call was taken. Michael Hoefer was invited to join as a voting member. Councilor Remy was travelling for work and joined remotely.

II) Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 9, 2024

Councilor Jones offered the following correction: Page 4, Line 115 – there is no mention of the four parcels referred to on this page. Staff agreed to add the parcels into the minutes.

A motion was made by Councilor Jones to approve the December 9, 2024 meeting minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilor Madison and was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

III) Public Workshops:

- a. Ordinance – O-2025-07 – Relating to Zone Change. Petitioner, Keene Marlboro Group, LLC, proposes to amend the Zoning Map of the City of Keene by changing the zoning designation of the property located at 425 Marlboro St (TMP #596-017-000) from Neighborhood Business to Low Density. The area of land that would be affected by this request is 0.92 acres.**

Jeb Thurmond of 112 South Lincoln Street addressed the committee. Mr. Thurmond stated he was before the Committee regarding property located at 425 Marlboro Street, which has a single home and a barn at the present time. He stated he has met with staff who explained the Cottage Court idea. He stated he would like to build affordable homes for his six kids. Mr. Thurmond stated he has owned this property with his partner, since around 2014. He felt this type of development would be an asset to the neighborhood.

Chair Bosley pointed out to the Committee that they cannot consider this project when they are considering the zoning change. The Committee has to contemplate the area, the neighborhood, and make sure that it is a realistic zoning change. She stated this is the Low-Density District, which is a definite positive.

Councilor Haas referred to the applicant and stated the property just to the east of his property is owned by Eversource, which is an undeveloped property, and asked whether the applicant has any interest in that property. Dr. Thurmond stated they have been in touch with Eversource, but their stance has always been foggy and there has not been any actions steps from Eversource. The Councilor encouraged the City to facilitate this.

Councilor Williams stated his preference would be to make this area Medium Density. Mr. Thurmond stated he would not be opposed to Medium Density.

Staff comments were next. Planner, Evan Clements, stated the committee is looking at a potential zoning change for 425 Marlborough Street from Neighborhood Business to Low Density. The parcel contains an existing single-family residence, detached garage and associated site improvements. It is located adjacent to a single-family residence to the west, utility infrastructure to the east, Precision Manufacturing to the south and governmental (Police Station) to the north.

He stated the proposed ordinance as written would create an area of Low Density, which would be bordered by Neighborhood Business to the east, Low Density and Neighborhood Business to the west, Business Growth and Reuse to the north.

The future land use map has this parcel located in the Winchester/Marlborough Street strategic planning area. The area is described to be located to the east of Main Street along Marlboro Street. There are similar opportunities to balance higher density housing with existing single- and two-family residential neighborhoods. The proposed zoning change would allow for multiple attached and detached housing types in the Cottage Court Overlay District, as well as single-family residential, and a few non-housing uses outside of Cottage Court.

Mr. Clements stated the neighborhood is also located within the business industrial live work area of the future land use map, and this area is identified to be best suited as a mix of low impact industrial and business uses in conjunction with live work and artist space, where employees and business owners live in close proximity to their places of employment and business.

He stated, based on the Master Plan description of this neighborhood and based on the future land use map, opportunities to create higher density housing is desired.

With reference to community vision – this would be Focus Area 1: Quality Built Environment. This focus area strives to promote quality housing stock, maintain neighborhoods and balance growth and the provision of infrastructure. This could include housing developments in areas of the city that are supported by municipal infrastructure of a capacity to handle new higher density development. Neighborhood context is also important when contemplating housing development to ensure compatibility and promote reinvestment in surrounding properties.

Mr. Clements noted the proposed zoning change would expand a residential zoning district, providing opportunities to invest in quality housing stock that may encourage further redevelopment in an area that is well served by existing city infrastructure. Furthermore, the Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Master Plan recognizes that the community's ability to improve upon its existing housing stock, create new housing opportunities across all incomes and lifestyles, and balance the mix of rental and owner-occupied units will continue to be a determining factor in Keene. The Housing Chapter discusses strategies that encourage a diverse housing stock that promotes good design and quality construction. The applicant's proposal would increase the opportunity for the creation of new diverse housing options at an affordable price point in a location that is convenient for jobs, services and downtown amenities.

In reference to the intent of the two zoning districts, the current zoning Neighborhood Business district is intended to serve as an additional downtown zoning district that promotes smaller size business and professional uses, which support adjacent neighborhoods and workplaces with an orientation towards pedestrian and bicycle access. Some uses are restricted in size to limit adverse impacts on nearby residences and to maintain a pedestrian scale of development.

Mr. Clements stated the Low-Density District in contrast is intended to provide for low intensity, single-family residential development with all uses having water and sewer service. He noted the Cottage Court ordinance in the low-density district has allowed some measured modification of that initial intent, while still driven by the reduced lot coverage allowances in Low Density versus Neighborhood Business.

Mr. Clements called the committee's attention to the use tables for Neighborhood Business and Low Density. He explained Neighborhood Business does allow for a variety of uses, including duplex, multifamily etc. Those uses are limited by the build-to zone with frontage of those buildings needing to reside in the build-to zone. The Low Density District has traditional yard setbacks, so that development would be encouraged to be located more central into the lot and not right onto the street.

Mr. Clements stated impervious coverage between Neighborhood Business and Low Density will be the driving factor of overall development of the site. He pointed out that 425 Marlboro Street is a rather large lot, especially for Low Density, which normally only requires 10,000 square feet to be a legal buildable lot.

Councilor Remy asked whether there is anything that would restrict Cottage Court in Medium Density. Mr. Clements responded by saying Medium Density is not being contemplated, only because there is no contiguity between the subject parcel and that zoning district.

Mr. Kost referred to the chart that references the different setbacks and requirements for Neighborhood Business and Low Density. He felt Neighborhood Business was less restrictive for housing; you can build on smaller lots, less setbacks, cover more of the land, less green space and he asked for clarification. Chair Bosley stated that was accurate. The big difference is that it does not allow for Cottage Court development. Mr. Clements added that any building proposed to be constructed in Neighborhood Business currently would require the facade of that building to be located between five and ten feet from the front lot line along Marlboro Street, which is the build-to zone. He added the build-to zone is attempting to encourage a development pattern very similar to what we have along Main Street; for example, the qualities would include buildings right up on the sidewalk, pedestrian scale, place to interact with people walking up and down the street.

Councilor Haas thanked Mr. Thurmond for bringing this proposal forward. He noted the build-to zone serves the idea of a pedestrian corridor, where it pushes parking off the street and locates it behind buildings. He stated it needs to be decided whether the City wants to keep frontage right on the street for Marlboro Street and locate parking behind buildings or somewhere across the street, or find a way to modify the Neighborhood Business where Cottage Court could fit in perfectly. He stated he would like to move forward with this project for a zoning change to facilitate the development at this time.

Ms. Brunner stated the build-to zone seems to be the limiting factor in this case. If this was a traditional front yard setback, the applicant could put in place the type of development he wants to, under the current zoning. In the Neighborhood Business District, you can have all the different types of residential uses and you can have more than one primary use on a lot. She stressed that the build-to zone is the limiting factor. She stated the larger question that this body could consider in the future is whether or not it wants to allow more than one structure on a lot, and if so, could you create some flexibility for the second or third structures not having to meet the build-to zone.

Chair Bosley asked if the build-to zone was retained, but the requirement that at least one structure had to be built to the build-to zone was used, would a property owner be allowed to have an internal road that would service Cottage Court development. Ms. Brunner stated multiple structures on a lot with a shared driveway or a shared parking area could be utilized, but what would potentially be an issue is the water and sewer utility connections and how the development would be taxed. The tax question would be something that would need to be handled by the Assessing Department.

Chair Bosley asked if this area was left as Neighborhood Business, how many lots can be added. Mr. Clements stated, Cottage Court, unlike with a multi-family definition (specific to one building on a lot), allows multiple multi-family units on a lot. He added Neighborhood Business also has higher lot coverage allowances compared to Low Density.

Ms. Brunner added, with Cottage Court, an underlying impervious coverage limit applies. For Low Density it is 35% for the building coverage and 45% for impervious, which means you need to keep 55% of the lot as green space. Whereas in Neighborhood Business, you only have to keep 35% of the lot in green space. Ms. Brunner went on to say the reason why Cottage Court in the residential districts was a big change, is because in residential districts, the zoning code only allows one principal use per lot, which essentially means one single family home. You can have an accessory dwelling unit, but there is an ownership requirement. If it allows duplexes, you can only have one duplex on a lot. Outside the residential zoning districts, that limitation does not apply; if residential is permitted in a non-residential district, there could be multiple residential uses.

Councilor Remy asked whether there was any difference in what is allowed in Cottage Court in Medium Density versus Cottage Court in Low Density. Mr. Clements stated there are additional building types that are allowed in Medium Density for Cottage Court that are not allowed in Low Density. There is a requirement for building coverage of 45% and impervious coverage of 60%. Councilor Remy asked about coverage permitted in High Density. Ms. Brunner stated it is a building coverage of 55% and impervious of 75%. High Density also allows all of the building types which are permitted under Cottage Court.

Mr. Hoefer felt the committee should take the quickest and easiest path forward. He stated there seems to be an alignment around wanting something like this to happen, and, in the longer term, there needs to be a discussion as to how to address this more systematically across the city. He questioned why Marlboro Street is Neighborhood Business and not Low Density based on the high residential uses in a large section of Marlboro Street. Chair Bosley stated her understanding is when the Public Works building was being built at that end of Marlboro Street, there was an incentive to create a future plan for Marlboro Street; that being a Main Street extension and an opportunity to create a zoning district that would support the residential properties and look to the future of what the City would envision for this area. Councilor Jones agreed and added the intent was to create a gateway street to downtown.

With that, the Chair asked the petitioner to address any other comments he might have. Mr. Thurmond stated he does not have a desire to change anything, he just likes the idea of Cottage Court but he is not tied to that idea either. He wants to be able to construct housing, which would be amenable to the City and would work for the people who need housing. He stated if the City can figure out a way to make this happen without changing the zoning – that would work for him as well. He stated he appreciates the City looking forward as well as trying to accommodate his needs.

Councilor Haas asked whether Mr. Thurmond had a timeframe for this project. Mr. Thurmond stated he does not have a timeframe, but once the committee approves the plan, he would move forward with a plan. Councilor Jones stated if the committee moved forward with the request

before them, the process could take about a month and a half. However, if there are changes to uses in other zones, it could be another two or three more months. Mr. Thurmond was in agreement with that timeframe.

Mayor Kahn stated what this discussion is showing him is that the City has converging uses in its zoning. In this case, a business zone is converging with residential purposes and felt this could be beneficial for this area.

Chair Bosley posed a question to Staff, if the Committee was to leave the petitioner's request as is and consider it, then the PLD committee would recommend that it move forward for a public hearing and the Planning Board would decide if it was consistent with the 2010 Master Plan. However, if the committee wanted to change what the petitioner placed in front of the committee to amend the underlying zoning district to a Medium Density zoning district or a High Density zoning district to capture the Eversource lot, and consider changing the underlying zoning of both those districts to Low Density or to some other district, what would that path would be?

Ms. Brunner stated this would involve creating an A version of the ordinance and the committee would vote on that version. The Chair clarified if the Committee was to go in an alternate direction and change the language for the build-to zone requirement in the Neighborhood Business zone, whether it could be done within this application. Ms. Brunner answered in the negative and stated that would have to be a different type of application. She added the request before the Committee tonight is a map amendment request and what the Chair is referring to is a zoning text amendment, which are two different application types.

The Chair asked if the committee wanted to propose the zoning text amendment, would it still be sent forward for a public hearing and be up to the Council to vote it up or down. Ms. Brunner stated if the applicant submits a request to withdraw the application in writing, then it wouldn't need to move forward.

With no public to address this application, the Chair closed the public comment portion of the workshop and opened the item up for Committee deliberation.

Chair Farrington stated he believes the path of least resistance is to proceed on the text that the committee has from the petitioner, which is to move it to Low Density zoning. This would move the item to a site plan involving a Cottage Court development. This would also bring the petitioner's existing structure into conformity.

Chair Bosley stated she was not opposed to this suggestion but would consider changing it to a higher density and potentially capturing the Eversource lot. This would give the petitioner additional land to create additional units.

Mr. Kost stated changing the zoning would expedite the opportunity to build houses. However, he felt Neighborhood Business would provide more flexibility and provide for the city's vision for Marlboro Street. Changing the area to Low or Medium Density limits the area to just residential. He added he would like the build-to zone to remain and also provide for buildings not attached to the original building.

Chair Bosley asked staff if the build-to zone is five to ten feet and this property is at 15 feet, it would be non-conforming lot. Then, would there need to be variances granted to be able to build additionally on that lot. Mr. Clements stated, if the existing single-family residence is not in the build-to zone, it is legal nonconforming due to dimensional requirements. If the Neighborhood Business was changed to allow unattached structures, the lot wouldn't be nonconforming, it would be just that structure that would be non-conforming. He added, the City's Zoning Ordinance is flexible when it comes to nonconforming structures and uses in general.

Chair Bosley asked whether it would be reasonable to let two things move forward in Neighborhood Business; specifically, to allow for detached structures and to allow Cottage Court. Ms. Brunner stated, at the present time, detached structures are allowed, but they all have to be in that build-to zone, which is creating issues. She stated the language could perhaps be modified to say that one structure has to be in the build-to zone and each subsequent structure could be behind it – and added staff could work on language for the Committee's consideration.

Councilor Jones felt, as stated by Chair Farrington, the Committee should work with the application before them today by changing it to Low Density and added this still allows for grocery, light retail, and office. He stated, in conjunction, the Committee could also ask staff to work on changes to Neighborhood Business. Ms. Brunner stated, with the Cottage Court overlay, there are some limiting restrictions on those commercial uses, one of which is that they have to be on the corner of a public right of way. Hence, this lot would not be able to locate a commercial use unless they built an internal road and then were able to fit it on the corner. Also, the uses themselves are limited in size, because this was envisioned as being in the middle of a neighborhood not along a major street, such as Marlboro Street.

Councilor Jones added, by acting on what the petitioner asked for from the Committee is not being project specific. Councilor Jones stated, because Cottage Court is a new process for the city, this is what the Committee has. By acting on what the petitioner is requesting, it is not being project specific.

Chair Bosley stated she likes the idea of a specific project being left out of this but wondered if this area tends to lean more towards Neighborhood Business. She stated, if you look at the map, Marlboro Street would not be conducive to achieve the underlying theme of what the city is trying to create on that street if a Low Density lot was placed in this location. This would seriously limit (without a Cottage Court) what could be built. The Chair noted the only option if it was changed to Low Density moving forward would be a Cottage Court.

The Mayor noted every one of those properties, at least on the south side of the street, abuts a Low Density district and questioned what kind of precedent is being set for Marlboro Street for future development. The Mayor felt there was logic to staying with the Neighborhood Business designation. The Chair felt if the city was to stay with Neighborhood Business, the issue with detached structures would need to be resolved.

Mr. Hoefer noted most of the properties in the three-block area are residential and felt the idea that the City foresees a Main Street type street seems to be out of step.

The Committee looked at the Residential Preservation District on the map. Chair Bosley questioned the uses for this district. Ms. Brunner explained this zoning district was created to help encourage historic neighborhoods to go back to being more residential in nature, rather than being multifamily rentals for students. It is similar to Low Density in many ways, and only allows single family with setback requirements.

Mr. Kost stated Neighborhood Business allows for residences and businesses. When there is ultimately infill, it could become that street face, which is interesting to look at and felt it made sense to keep this lot as Neighborhood Business and then change some of the rules of Neighborhood Business and that will allow future flexibility and development.

Councilor Williams agreed Neighborhood Business would be the best zone for this section of Marlboro Street. He stated he was concerned about changing to Low Density and how that would impact future development. The Councilor also felt Neighborhood Business gives the City more options.

Councilor Madison felt changing it to a different district would be inconsistent. Leaving it as Neighborhood Business and making some changes to the Neighborhood Business district is probably the best way to go forward in terms of consistency and looking ahead towards the long-term future of Marlboro Street.

Ms. Mastrogiovanni agreed with keeping the site designated as Neighborhood Business as well. She indicated Marlboro Street has varied uses, and making an overall change would be difficult and premature. She felt we should wait to see how Marlboro Street develops.

Councilor Haas stated, if he were a property owner on Marlboro Street, he would value the flexibility the existing zoning provides.

The Chair stated the consensus she is hearing from the committee is to suggest that Staff move forward with creating an ordinance, which would address what is being discussed tonight. The Committee would consider either adding Cottage Court to Neighborhood Business directly or allowing detached structures to not be in the build-to zone. She stated she was open to staff doing an in-depth review of what the use for this underlying zoning district would be. The Chair asked whether the Committee wanted to keep this item on more time at the Joint Committee level until the Committee sees the changes Staff bring forward. She asked whether the petitioner was in agreement to this. Mr. Thurmond answered in the affirmative and stated he also had no issue withdrawing his petition and stated he, too, felt constricted with Low Density.

Staff suggested the Committee continue this application, and the City would need a written request from the petitioner to withdraw the application.

A motion was made by Mayor Kahn that the Joint Committee continue this workshop to a future date. The motion was seconded by Harold Farrington.

Ms. Brunner stated they will be back before the Committee with a draft. She asked whether the Committee would be interested in having Staff look at this a little bit more holistically and look at other districts that have similar requirements or just keep it to Neighborhood Business. The Chair felt if the Committee did not consider all districts, it would be disingenuous if that rule is hampering other projects.

The Chair extended her appreciation to the petitioner for his flexibility.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote. Councilor Remy had left the session due to technical issues and hence a roll call vote was not necessary.

b. Ordinance – O-2025-08 – Relating to amendments to the Sign Code.
Petitioner, City of Keene Community Development Department, proposes to amend Table 10-2 of the Land Development Code to create an exception under the category of Animated Signs to allow temporary Feather Signs in the Industrial and Industrial Park Districts.

Chair Bosley stated this issue has come forward based on a letter from the Mayor who recognized a gap in the Sign Code. The PLD Committee reviewed this item and requested Staff draft language, which would permit commercial businesses in the Industrial Zones to use feather signs on a temporary basis.

Ms. Brunner stated this Ordinance is proposing to amend the Sign Code to allow for a type of animated sign called a feather sign, which is also referred to as a blade sail sign. Because it catches the wind and moves with it, it is considered animated, which is like a flag. Hence, this is the reason it falls under this Ordinance. This Ordinance would be specifically for properties in the Industrial and Industrial Park Districts as a temporary sign. The reason is to help strike that balance between orderly, safe, aesthetically pleasing development and allowing businesses to do what they need to do to be successful.

Ms. Brunner next reviewed the background on the Sign Code.

The City of Keene Sign Code is in Article 10, which is part of the Zoning regulations. The purpose of the Sign Code is to establish a legal framework for a comprehensive and balanced system of signs to achieve the following objectives:

1. To allow the free flow of traffic and protect the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists, which may be impacted by cluttered, distracting, or illegible signage.
2. Avoid excessive levels of visual clutter or distraction that are potentially harmful to property values, business opportunities and community appearance.
3. To promote the use of signs that are aesthetically pleasing of appropriate scale and integrated with the surrounding buildings and landscape.

Ms. Brunner stated the way the code is organized is that there are signs that are permitted, but an applicant still would need to obtain a sign permit. There are also signs that are exempt, and these are ones you can install without having to get a signed permit. There are also signs that are prohibited, such as internally illuminated, flashing, animated signs, roof signs that stick out of a roof, etc.

Ms. Brunner stated the two districts this change is being proposed for are the Industrial District and the Industrial Park District, both of which are mostly located in south Keene, with one exception. The district is intended to provide space for industrial activities, such as manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, that are not typically suited for commercial areas by virtue of operational characteristics and space needs. The industrial park district is located in two areas in Keene, including the Optical Avenue area in southeast Keene and along Maple Avenue near Route 12. This district is intended to provide relatively low-intensity manufacturing, research, and development firms that are intensive, clean in nature, and promote an attractive industrial park environment. These tend to have very large parcels of land with large buildings and large manicured lawns.

Ms. Brunner next explained feather signs. She addressed page 27 of the staff report, which includes an image of this type of sign. She said that feather signs have a pole on one side that is attached to the ground with a long piece of flexible material attached to it that is designed to move with the wind and attract your attention. They can be designed to be pedestrian scale at a minimum of seven feet tall and can go up to about 25 feet tall. The tall ones are usually designed for areas with automobile traffic.

Currently, under the code, these signs are prohibited. This ordinance would change that, specifically, for the Industrial and Industrial Park Districts. It would be a temporary sign up to 30 days, four times a year. There is no minimum to the number, but they need to be installed 10 feet apart and 15 feet off the property line. One of the issues with feather signs is if they are not installed properly, they could blow over.

Ms. Brunner went on to say there is a definition being proposed, which states the following: *Feather Sign (also known as Blade Sail Sign) - A sign made of flexible material that is generally, but not always, rectangular in shape and attached to a pole on one side so the sign can move with the wind.*

Ms. Brunner stated, when she was working on this draft language, she had a conversation with one of the Code Enforcement Officers, and they did raise some issues with enforcement. This type of sign is currently prohibited citywide; hence, it is easy to enforce if there is a complaint. However, this Ordinance could cause some issues when there is a complaint received, requiring a determination of where the sign is located and if it is permitted in that district. The biggest issue enforcement raised is with the perception of fairness, and how it will look if feather signs are allowed to be located in one district versus being located in another district. The other issue is to make sure these are installed correctly.

Regarding consistency with the 2010 Comprehensive Master Plan, Ms. Brunner stated the Master Plan is broad with respect to Sign Code and this is a very specific change. She indicated the City of Keene has a long history of local manufacturing, which is an important component of the economy. The master plan does include a strategy to “*encourage and recruit industries that are in line with building up local manufacturing and industrial economy... high quality jobs that pay a living wage are viewed as imperative to Keene’s long term economic sustainability. Expansion of tax base and lessening the tax burden on homeowners.*” The Plan goes on to talk

about the need to *retain and recruit a workforce*. Ms. Brunner stated that allowing for feather signs for the purpose of advertising job openings can help support this. This concluded staff comments.

Chair Farrington stated he is in favor of this Ordinance and clarified the 15-foot setback and 10 feet apart is at the road interface. Ms. Brunner stated along the road, they have to be 15 feet back from the property line with 10 feet of space between each other. Chair Farrington stated whether there is consideration of limiting these signs within the property, such as at a car dealership. Ms. Brunner stated what she was envisioning was along the road, but perhaps they could be installed on the property. They would still need to be 10 feet apart and they could only be up for those 30 days and four times a year.

Ms. Brunner went on to say the reason Staff were supportive of this request is that the Industrial Districts are fairly unique in that they are very different from other parts of the City. They have larger lot sizes and not a lot of interaction with the street. These are uses that tend to be set back more from the street, bigger buildings, bigger massing, with large parking lots.

Chair Bosley asked whether any car dealerships fall in the dark purple section (where feather sign use is proposed). Ms. Brunner stated she was not entirely sure, but most car dealerships are located in Commerce Limited.

Councilor Haas stated Chair Farrington raises a good point and felt he did not want to get into that level of regulation. He stated he was in favor of the Ordinance, but the City would need be ready for the enforcement issue.

Mr. Kost, with respect to the 10-foot spacing issue, stated if someone is driving 30 miles per hour, you would travel 10 feet in .227 seconds, which means you see four and a half of these signs per second. He felt this was a lot of clutter and could be distracting to drivers.

Mr. Hoefer asked what the motivation for this ordinance was. The Mayor responded by saying there are manufacturers on Optical Avenue who have been asked to remove signs. He stated he cannot address the height and distance issue but would hope that this is what the public hearing would elicit. Stakeholders that have an interest offer their opinions. He stated the reason he supports this and believes it is unique to these districts is that when you look at the Sign Code and what it is intending to prohibit, it is obstructions and interference of pedestrian access. The Mayor stated he did not feel those kinds of issues exist in these designated zones. He did not feel there would be pedestrian obstructions so long as the signs are kept out of the right-of-way.

Chair Bosley stated she would like to discuss the distance issue raised by Mr. Kost before this item moves on to the public hearing process.

Councilor Haas stated, with respect to spacing issues, it would be good to have that data and know what other guidelines there might be by which the committee should keep an eye out for. He felt the real question is going to come from Commerce areas as to why those areas can't have these types of signs. Councilor Haas addressed Ms. Mastrogiovanni, who owns a business, and asked for her opinion on these signs. Ms. Mastrogiovanni stated she has used these signs but not

in Keene and stated they are good for marketing, but did not feel they were very attractive. She agreed with the time allotted to them and raised concern about Staff having the time for enforcement and felt how many in a row is something that should also be addressed.

Chair Farrington asked about off premises sign. Ms. Brunner stated they are prohibited.

Councilor Jones thanked Staff for bringing this item up as a draft and was glad this issue is being considered for two districts. He also thanked Staff for finding the section, which makes this consistent with the master plan. He felt the draft accomplishes what the Mayor is looking for and it should be moved forward.

Mr. Hoefer referred to the area on Maple Avenue where the Baptist Church is located and noted that one side of the street permits this sign, but the opposite side doesn't and asked that the committee keep this in mind for inconsistencies. The Chair felt perhaps the area across the street was Low Density, and these signs would not be permitted in those locations. She went on to say if this ordinance was successful, the city is likely going to expand it to other zones as long as it was not creating a burden on code enforcement and creating terrible obstructions for drivers and pedestrians. If that happened it will likely be rescinded.

Mr. Clements noted the City cannot regulate content for signage it can only regulate form and location.

Mayor Kahn stated zoning was not something he looked at when he brought this forward. He looked at Optical Avenue (Industrial Park). He noted another location where this would be most appropriate is at Black Brook Corporate Park. However, this is not an area that is listed.

Chair Bosley stated her one concern is the lots near the roundabout and the distraction that could occur for cars traveling through, especially with drivers who are already uncomfortable using roundabouts but stated this was not enough to make any changes right now.

Ms. Brunner stated she has heard a few concerns: distance between the signs, limiting the number of signs, and distance to the setback from an intersection. She stated there could be an A version created or this item could be placed on more time and Staff could bring back another draft for consideration by the committee.

The Mayor felt the distance from an intersection is a valid precaution. He wasn't sure how to regulate distance. However, getting the language correct was important.

Chair Bosley posed the following questions to the Committee:

1. Does the Committee want to see a number of these flags per lot? Two Yes – Two No
2. Does the Committee want to see a greater distance than ten feet between the flags? Two Yes Two No
3. Do we want to see a restriction on the flags being adjacent to an intersection? Everyone said Yes

The Chair asked that staff create an A version and keep it moving forward.

Councilor Jones asked about including the Corporate Park District. Ms. Brunner stated if Corporate Park was to be included, she would suggest continuing this item to see if it needs to be re-noticed.

The Chair asked that this be moved forward to get some experience with it and then look at other zones that could be included.

Ms. Brunner asked the Committee for the specific changes they would like to make to the language of the Ordinance. Chair Bosley asked staff what they would recommend based on the Committee's discussion. Ms. Brunner suggested that Item #1 of the Ordinance be amended to read as follows:

"Feather Signs that are 20 sf or less in the Industrial and Industrial Park Districts (sign permit required, max duration of 30 days at a time and no more than four times per year per property, spaced at least 10 ft apart, set back 15 feet from the property line and a minimum of 25 feet from an intersection)."

A motion was made by Chair Bosley to amend the ordinance to include a setback from an intersection to a minimum of 25 feet and create an A version of the ordinance. The motion was seconded by Councilor Jones and was unanimously approved.

There was no public comment as there was no public to address the Committee. The public comment portion of the workshop was opened and closed.

Councilor Jones stated churches are referred to as institutional use and it takes an 8 vote from Council to locate a church in any zone and they have to abide by the zone they are located in.

A motion was made by Councilor Jones that the Planning Licenses and Development Committee request the Mayor to set a public hearing on Ordinance O-2025-08-A. The motion was seconded by Councilor Madison and was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Harold Farrington that the Planning Board finds Ordinance O-2025-08-A consistent with the 2010 Master Plan. The motion was seconded by Mayor Kahn and was unanimously approved.

**c. Ordinance – O-2025-09 – Relating to Single Family Parking Requirements.
Petitioner, City of Keene Community Development Department, proposes to
amend Table 9.1 of the Land Development Code to require one parking
space for "Dwelling, Single Family."**

Chair Bosley stated this is a housekeeping item that came out of the parking ordinance change, which failed to include a parking requirement for single-family dwellings.

Planner Evan Clements addressed the Committee and stated that this ordinance is to fix an error from a previous ordinance that accidentally omitted "Dwelling, Single-Family" from the parking

table. This would bring the parking requirement for single-family dwellings in line with all other residential uses in the City.

There was no public comment as there was no public to address the committee. The public comment portion of the workshop was opened and closed.

A motion was made by Councilor Jones that the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee request the Mayor to set a public hearing on Ordinance O-2025-09. The motion was seconded by Councilor Madison and was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Harold Farrington that the Planning Board finds Ordinance O-2025-09 consistent with the 2010 Master Plan. The motion was seconded by Mayor Kahn and was unanimously approved.

IV) More Time Items

1. Private Roads
2. Neighborhood / Activity Core areas (“Neighborhood Nodes”)
3. Short Term Rental Properties

Ms. Brunner asked whether the Committee wanted to keep short-term rentals under the More Time Items list. The Chair stated it should be left on the list and asked about the grant that was going to enable the City to hire a consultant to work on this item. Ms. Brunner stated the grant for 79-E was approved but not the grant for short-term rentals. The Chair asked the item to be kept under More Time Items as Council has an interest with this item.

V) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Bosley adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Emily Duseau, Planning Technician & Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Additional edits by,
Katryna Kibler, Clerk’s Office