

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PLANNING, LICENSES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

6:00 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Kate M. Bosley, Chair
 Philip M. Jones, Vice Chair
 Robert C. Williams
 Edward J. Haas (Remote)

Members Not Present:

Andrew M. Madison

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

Staff Present:

Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager
 Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney
 Paul Andrus, Community Development
 Director
 Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk
 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner
 Richard Wood, Fire Marshal/Building
 Inspector
 Kürt Blomquist, Emergency Management
 Administrator
 Mike Hagan, Code Enforcement Officer

Chair Bosley called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Having declared a quorum present in the Council Chamber, Chair Bosley recognized that Councilor Haas requested to participate remotely due to work travel. Councilor Haas stated that he was calling alone from his location. Hearing no objections from the Committee, Chair Bosley granted the remote participation.

1) Pablo Fleischmann/Keene Music Festival - Request to Use City Property - August 30, 2025

Chair Bosley welcomed the applicant, Keene Music Festival Director, Pablo Fleischmann. Mr. Fleischmann said his annual request was basically the same (as previous years), with the potential for expanding onto some private property, but he said that is unlikely to happen. In general, the event will be the same footprint, it has been organized entirely by volunteers, and it will be loud from 11:00 AM–9:59 PM. They hope for great weather as always. Chair Bosley said she had personally only heard positive things about the Keene Music Festival and thought the community always has a really great experience.

Chair Bosley requested staff comments. Deputy City Manager, Rebecca Landry, noted that this is one of Keene's longer-standing events and thanked Mr. Fleischmann, as the City was happy to have it back. Ms. Landry reported that the Protocol process had been going well, and everything was in order based on the following:

- Keene Music Festival: August 30, 2025, 11:00 AM–10:00 PM
- Up to 80 bands expected

- Merchant sidewalk sales allowed (but might not happen)
- Road Closures: Portions of Railroad Street and Lamson Street
- Public Works, Police, Fire, and Community Development Departments' teams all met to ensure the requirements were met for food preparation, street closures, barricades, portable bathrooms, etc.

Vice Chair Jones called Mr. Fleischmann wonderful, stating the way he pulls the Festival off is amazing, and thanked him for what he does for the community. Mr. Fleischmann was appreciative.

Chair Bosley asked how this year's 80-plus bands would compare to the 2024 Festival. Mr. Fleischmann replied that the 2025 total would likely be closer to 60–65, which is the same as 2024. Chair Bosley asked if the expansions onto private property mentioned would potentially allow for additional bands. Mr. Fleischmann said that since the Farm Café (at Toadstool Bookstore on Emerald Street) closed, they were looking for another smaller stage, which could add another 8–12 bands. In general, he said it would be the same footprint. Chair Bosley said it is great to keep it simple.

Councilor Haas pointed out that the Farm Café reopened under new management and operation, so he hoped for another stage down Emerald Street.

There were no public comments.

Vice Chair Jones made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Councilor Williams.

On a roll call vote of 4–0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends that the Keene Music Festival be granted a street fair license to use downtown City rights-of-way, as well as use of downtown City property on Central Square, Railroad Square, and designated parking spaces on Main Street to conduct the Keene Music Festival on Saturday, August 30, 2025 from 8:00 AM to 11:00 PM, with downtown merchant sidewalk sales permitted in locations where a minimum of six feet of clearance is maintained for pedestrian access. In addition, the applicant is permitted to close off a portion of Railroad Street from Main Street to Wells Street and a portion of Lamson Street from Main Street to Federal Street. This permission is granted subject to the following conditions: the signing of a revocable license and indemnification agreement; that the petitioner provide a certificate of liability insurance with the City of Keene listed as additional insured in the amount of \$1,000,000; and submittal of signed letters of permission from any private property owners for the use of their property. In addition, the petitioner is granted use of the requested parking spaces free of charge under the provisions of the Free Parking Policy. Said permission is granted subject to obtainment of any necessary licenses or permits and compliance with all laws, including obtainment of any necessary licensing for the use of intellectual property, and compliance with any recommendations of City staff. The petitioner agrees to absorb the cost of any City services over and above any amount of City funding allocated in the FY 26 Community Events Budget. Said payment shall be made within 30 days of the date of invoicing.

2) Keene Elm City Rotary Club - Request to Use City Property - Clarence DeMar Marathon - September 28, 2025

Chair Bosley welcomed the applicants, Kristen Leach of 37 Middle Street and Mick Blume of 54 Skyline Drive. Ms. Leach said they were requesting use of City property for the annual Clarence DeMar Marathon. Chair Bosley recalled that after Covid, it took time for all of the associated marathons to return and asked if all would be happening this year. Ms. Leach said yes, the Marathon, Half Marathon, Kid's DeMar (650 children were registered), and Super Senior DeMar would all be happening.

Chair Bosley requested staff comments. Deputy City Manager, Rebecca Landry, explained that the Full and Half Marathons begin outside of Keene, but the Super Senior and Kids DeMar start in Keene and comprise the last 1.2 miles of the course. The Deputy City Manager appreciated how well organized this event had been, saying they thought of everything, with so many volunteers, officials, and experts involved to ensure it is a safe event, so that all can participate to whatever extent desired. She thanked them for the tremendous coordination. Deputy City Manager Landry noted Police and Fire would ensure safety protocols are in place, in addition to medical services and equipment ready at various locations, which is necessary for people running in adverse or extreme weather conditions. The City was grateful for the community spirit of this event.

Vice Chair Jones recalled, according to Runner's World Magazine, this being rated one of the top five race events in New England. Mr. Bloom said that was correct. Vice Chair Jones said that was a special honor and the City was proud the DeMar Marathon was a part of it. Ms. Leach and Mr. Bloom were appreciative.

The Deputy City Manager added that the City would close the Dog Park and Disc Golf Park during the Marathon as well.

Councilor Haas noted that he would be volunteering for this year's event and wondered who among his fellow Councilors or City staff would be as well. Vice Chair Jones raised his hand; he and Councilors Williams both noted that they were long-term members of the cheering section, which Ms. Leach said is necessary. Chair Bosley might run with her kids, adding it is always great to see the town and businesses come together (e.g., handing out water).

There were no public comments.

Councilor Williams made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Vice Chair Jones.

On a roll call vote of 4–0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends that The Elm City Rotary Club be granted permission to sponsor the Clarence DeMar Marathon on September 28, 2025, subject to the signing of a revocable license and indemnification agreement and the submittal of a certificate of liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 listing the City of Keene as an additional insured. This license is conditional upon the petitioner providing an adequate number of volunteer race marshals to ensure runner safety along the course, and submittal of signed letters of permission from any private property owners for the

use of their property. Said permission is granted subject to obtainment of any necessary licenses or permits and compliance with all laws, including obtainment of any necessary licensing for the use of intellectual property; and compliance with any recommendations of City staff. The petitioner agrees to absorb the cost of any City services over and above any amount of City funding allocated in the FY 26 Community Events Budget. Said payment shall be made within 30 days of the date of invoicing.

3) Councilor Jones - Request for Resolution (Declaration) Honoring the LGBTQIA+ Community

Chair Bosley welcomed comments from Councilor Jones, who noted this was asked of him because he wrote the original Declaration that passed in August 2021. He said one of the community members rightfully wanted to see it updated; the Councilor said these were different times. So, he and Mayor Kahn met with Keene Pride and had two meetings with the City's Human Rights Committee to gather lots of input. Councilor Jones explained that he recommended accepting this item as informational. Then, he would introduce a new document at the June 19, 2025 Council meeting based on language from Keene Pride and the Human Rights Committee that the Councilor thought was more acceptable and open.

Councilor Williams said he heard controversy that the City could not use the word "diversity" in its statement and asked if that was true. Vice Chair Jones replied that the City could use any word it wanted in the end, as it would be the City Council's document. He explained that there were some people saying that the State of NH was opposed to using the word "diversity" but that did not mean the City could not use it, and it would be up to this PLD Committee to ensure the wording the City wants is in the Resolution. Councilor Williams said diversity, equity, and inclusion are very important to the City of Keene, so he would be unwilling to sign anything omitting that reference. He hoped to come up with language including everything, and Vice Chair Jones said he thought they would.

Councilor Haas asked if concerned citizens could submit letters of comment on the new document. Chair Bosley said yes, but those letters would not be available to the Council until Vice Chair Jones' new submission is officially provided to the Council in the June 19, 2025 agenda packet. Then, Chair Bosley assumed the matter would likely be referred back to this Committee, when members of the public could submit written statements and come speak.

Chair Bosley opened the floor to public comments.

Anne Farrington of 38 Red Oak Drive spoke in opposition to the proposed resolution but given the potential for new wording, she would wait to speak on it. She read a letter on behalf of her friend, Tom Savastano of Winter Street:

"Dear Planning, Licenses and Development Committee, I'm writing to express my opposition to the proposed resolution honoring the LGBTQIA+ community on the agenda tonight and reported in the 04/09/25 meeting minutes. Our City government has already run fairly on pluralistic principles. For example, all groups are provided the same opportunity to use public spaces as long as they follow the guidelines that are applied to everyone—dot the Is and cross

the Ts on the applications, provide the insurance, satisfy any necessary committee review, and you'll be given the opportunity to have an event. It's predictable and fair. Exactly what everyone should expect. I don't believe it's fair to single out particular identity groups for special honor, however well-intentioned it might seem. City government should just continue treating everyone equally and fairly, without straining to recognize specific groups. Statements verbally celebrating or creating special recognition or status for a particular group go too far and ultimately distract from the necessary duties of local government to all of its citizens. Thank you for your consideration, Tom Savastano."

Anthony Ferrantello of 84 Woodland Avenue asked the Committee to rescind what he called this ill-advised proposed resolution, stating it gave the impression of creating a privileged, protected class of sexual categories of people that provides a benefit only to them. He said the role of representative government is equal treatment under the law, not to favor only one specific group. Mr. Ferrantello thought the Committee would not be surprised to hear that there were other competing groups in the community with vastly different worldviews who did not take kindly to being forced into compliance, acceptance, and celebration of what he called the favored group's ideology and worldview. He stated his understanding that this PLD Committee was established to handle matters relating to land use, code enforcement, economic development, housing permits, licensing, planning, and zoning. As a retired architect, Mr. Ferrantello was familiar with those matters, but as a PhD candidate in organizational leadership, he failed to see how this proposed resolution fit under any one of those matters; if it did not fit, he suggested the Committee may be overreaching its authority. Mr. Ferrantello stated that the U.S. was in a culture war with this honorific gesture, the Committee would be contributing to more division in the culture war based on matters the Committee was not established to handle. He said the Committee should exercise care and foresight before giving incentives to identify special groups, because he thought that more often than not, special groups get energized to discriminate against those who think differently. Mr. Ferrantello said these cases exist in various U.S. cities and countries such as the U.K., Canada, Sweden, Australia, and others. To that end of exercising care and foresight, he asked the Committee to stay in its lane, rescind this ill-advised proposed resolution and reduce its ability to cause harm, and focus on its delegated tasks and fostering equality of life for all Keene residents under the law.

Jodi Newell of 32 Leverett Street spoke in support of a resolution that includes LGBTQIA people. She did not think this was about extending special privileges or changing anything about the way the City of Keene operates. She said it would let people who are directly and explicitly under attack right now know they are welcome in this community. Ms. Newell said she came to speak because she heard that "diversity, equity, and inclusion" was being taken out, but she was happy that it might be reconsidered.

John Schmidt of 31 Green Acres Road did not know what exactly was in the proposed resolution but stated that if it was honoring this LGBT movement he was "dead against it." Mr. Schmidt stated his agreement with past psychological assertions that this kind of behavior is a mental illness. Mr. Schmidt stated: "They don't need encouragement. They don't need being honored. As a Christian myself, I find this behavior an abomination. We have to tolerate them, I understand that, but we don't have to encourage them. We don't have to give them honors for their behavior. I don't know if you know much about the Bible, but God destroyed Sodom and

Gomorrah because of these types of behaviors. So, you'd be going against God when you make a statement honoring this type of behavior. Good luck with that. If you do want to honor somebody, let's honor somebody that contributes to society and has babies. How about we honor parents that raise kids? There's very few kids coming out of this LGBT movement."

Mayor Jay Kahn wanted to bring down the temperature in the room. He thought Councilor Jones' and the Human Rights Committee's intentions were to update the welcoming statement the City Council embraced in 2021. The Mayor acknowledged that times had changed and Councilor Williams feelings that some words are very important ways of conveying the purpose of the 2021 statement. Mayor Kahn said it would be up to this Committee to wrestle with whether there are better words for a 2025 statement that reflects the welcoming intent embraced in 2021 that respects people of all kinds of classes. The Mayor hoped people with varying beliefs would come together and recognize there is a way to express ourselves and our welcoming intent to all people who wish to be active participants in our community.

Merrick Finn of 48 South Street said he wanted to make a simple comparison statement. He stated that everyone needs to be welcomed, and everyone needs to be involved—that is who we are. He said the City would present that everyone is welcome and needs to be loved because it is the best foot forward. Mr. Finn felt the question of honor was a different level. He referred to the word *honor* in Webster's dictionary, "a good name or public esteem (reputation); a showing of usually merited respect (recognition); a person of superior standing, now used especially as a title for a holder of high office; one who's worth brings respect of fame (credit); evidence of or symbol of distinction." Mr. Finn referred to objective standards of valuing someone with an honor, citing objective standards in music, art, entertainment, and business because—he said—there are people who have credible merits contributing to the culture of society. Mr. Finn stated that a person could make the choice to be LGBTQ or not—"I could do that"—so, it should not be honored. He suggested honoring families or small groups, not the City honoring classes of sexual orientation or ideology, calling it completely unheard of, and stating there is "no place of honor here for that." Still, Mr. Finn said there is a welcoming place of love in Keene that he supports, but not for this honor that he called a different caliber of merited distinction.

David Morill of Mechanic Street—member of the Human Rights Committee—said he expected to make minor suggestions to the proposed resolution language but would await the new document to review. Otherwise, he expressed appreciation for the desire to update, improve, and strengthen the 2021 Declaration.

Chair Bosley thought the Committee's and public's comments made clear that the semantics of the proposed resolution would really matter, including individual words. She said Vice Chair Jones had worked hard to develop a good starting point for conversation, and Chair Bosley was excited to see the next proposal to work on something that fits the community altogether.

Vice Chair Jones made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Councilor Williams.

On a roll call vote of 4–0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends that the Request for Resolution (Declaration) Honoring the LGBTQIA+ Community be accepted as informational.

4) Presentation - 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan - Emergency Management Administrator

Chair Bosley welcomed the City's Emergency Management Administrator, Kurt Blomquist, for a presentation on the City's Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2025. He began by displaying photos of past hazard events in Keene as reminders. In addition to reviewing the updated process and features of the new Plan, the presentation was set up to present per the FEMA guidelines. He said he would conclude by asking the Committee to recommend that City Council adopt the Plan. Mr. Blomquist proceeded with his presentation.

A Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is a locally developed document that identifies potential natural and manmade disasters—referred to in the past as “threats” and now referred to as “events.” The HMP assesses vulnerabilities, performs risk assessments, and outlines long-term strategies for how to reduce the threats of future disasters to the community. The HMP is required to be updated every five years. It is also required to receive certain Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding. The plans became a requirement in the early 2000s, and the City has been doing HMPs every five to six years since 2005. The components of HMPs: Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis (looking at events the City is most subject to), Critical Facilities (Community Life Line) Identification & Risk Assessment (identifying the critical risks City facilities are subject to), Mitigation Strategy Development & Actions, Implementation Plan, and Monitoring Plan.

Next, Mr. Blomquist outlined the process to update the City's HMP through the City Manager's office:

1. Established a Planning Team:
 - a. Deputy City Manager, Fire Chief, Police Captain, Assistant Public Works Director, GIS Coordinator, Code Enforcement Officer/Flood Plain Manager, Parks and Recreation Director, Emergency Management Administrator, and Cheshire Medical Center Manager of EMS and Emergency Management. Southwest Regional Planning Commission was the contractor assisting on the update.
 - b. The Planning Team met four times to review various activities and portions of the Plan updates between January and end of April 2025.
2. Public Workshop: February 27, 2025 at Heberton Hall.
 - a. A two-hour workshop that has sparse attendance from the public. Focused on (1) disasters that attendees were concerned about, (2) things the City can do to address those disasters, and (3) what the City is more at risk of.
3. Community survey taken using the City's FlashVote tool.
 - a. 262 community members participated, providing helpful data indicating concerns. Results could be made available to the Council.
4. Discussions with:
 - a. Information Technology Director on cybersecurity.
 - b. Assistant Public Works Director – utilities on emerging contaminants (particularly for water and wastewater areas).

5. Draft HMP made available for a public comment period on the Southwest Regional Planning Commission website (SWRPC; having the HMP available on their website is a part of their contract for hosting the Plan) from May 14, 2025–June 13, 2025.
 - a. Hard copy at the Public Works Department.
 - b. Will eventually be published on the City of Keene website.
6. Second Public Meeting (two required) – Planning, Licenses and Development Committee meeting of June 11, 2025.
 - a. Mr. Blomquist welcomed public comments and questions.
7. City Council adoption of HMP – June 19, 2025
8. FEMA review and approval.
 - a. 60–90 days to process and provide feedback.

Mr. Blomquist continued, outlining the draft HMP:

- Community Profile
 - Describes Keene, provides statistics about the community
- Planning Process – Description on how the Plan was updated.
- Risk Assessment
 - Includes review of past natural and technological hazards/threats
 - Identification of Community Assets/Critical Facilities and their vulnerability
 - Identification of natural and man-made hazards/threats and ranking
- Capability Assessment
 - Evaluation of existing resources (to address threats)
 - Integration of other plans (to help implement the Mitigation Plan)
- Mitigation Strategies
 - Identified Hazard/Threat types, identified what types of actions can be taken to reduce impacts
 - Ranking of mitigation strategies
 - Update/status on previously identified mitigation strategies (from 2018)
 - Action plan for proposed mitigation strategies: the who, when, and how

Next, Mr. Blomquist reviewed the Risk Assessment portion of the HMP in more detail, noting there was a shift from Critical Assets/Facilities and their vulnerabilities to what were now referred to as “Critical Lifelines.” He showed a table listing Community Lifelines and associated Assets:

Community Lifelines:

- **Safety & Security** – Law Enforcement/Security, Fire Service, Search and Rescue, Government Service, Community Safety
- **Food, Hydration, Shelter** – Food, Hydration, Shelter, Agriculture
- **Health and Medical** – Medical Care, Public Health, Patient Movement, Medical Supply Chain, Fatality Management
- **Energy** – Power Grid, Fuel
- **Communications** - Infrastructure, Responder Communications, Alerts Warnings and Messages, Finance, 911 and Dispatch
- **Transportation** – Highway/Roadway/Motor Vehicle, Mass Transit, Railway, Aviation, Maritime

- **Hazardous Materials** – Facilities, HAZMAT, Pollutants, Contaminants
- **Water Systems – Potable Water Infrastructure, Wastewater Management**

Assets:

- **P (PEOPLE:** residents, workers, visiting populations and socially vulnerable populations like seniors, individuals with disabilities, lower-income individuals, etc.)
- **S (STRUCTURES:** like community centers, historic places, planned capital improvement)
- **E (ECONOMIC ASSETS:** Major employers, primary economic sectors, key infrastructure like telecommunications networks)
- **N (NATURAL, HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES:** Areas of conservation, beaches, parks, critical habitat)
- **CF (CRITICAL FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE:** Hospitals, law enforcement, water, power)
- **CA (COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:** Major local events such as festivals or economic events like farming or fishing)

Mr. Blomquist showed an example of a Risk Assessment—what are the threats/disasters with the potential to impact the community? The Planning Team assessed those threats from the perspectives of human, property, and business impact probabilities—meaning the particular chances of the threats happening—the severity if they were to occur, and the risk. Each area was scored between 1–5 (low–high) for human, property, and business impacts to assess vulnerabilities.

Next, Mr. Blomquist described the list of Natural and Human Caused Hazards/Threats to the City identified in the HMP (listed highest-to-lowest threat):

Natural Hazards/Threats:

- Flooding
 - With 5–6 watersheds in the City, and Keene in a valley, this was reflected in the Community survey.
- Tornado/Downburst/Extreme Wind
 - Emerging threat
- Extreme Heat/Temperature
 - With climate change, especially in evening hours.
- Lighting Strikes
- Severe Winter Weather
- Drought
- Wildfire
- Earthquake
- Infectious Disease
 - Added post-Covid. Includes Measles, H1N1, Bird Flu, etc.
- Dam Failure
 - 55 high hazard dams & multiple private dams
- Erosion/Landslide

- In the hillsides, and combined with flooding, especially if those areas are developed.
- Solar Storms & Space Weather
- Unique and related to telecommunications disruptions

Human Caused Hazards/Threats:

- Cyber Event
 - City staff hear about this a lot as society becomes more connected
- Known and Emerging Contaminants
 - (e.g., PFAS)
- Hazard Materials (Transport)
 - Rts-9/10/12/101 intersect, with chance of incident
- Utility Interruptions
- Hazardous Material (Fixed)
- Urban Fire
- Aging Infrastructure
- Armed Attack (assault, sniper, vehicle, etc.)
- Biological Terrorism
- Terrorist Attack (Lone Wolf, vehicle, WMD, drone, etc.)
- Civil Disorder
- Radiological
 - Particularly from staff's perspective because Vermont Yankee was active in Vernon and still maintains spent fuel rods in cast dry storage.

The next section of the HMP is the Capability Assessment, which is an evaluation of existing resources. For example, Mr. Blomquist highlighted the following four existing programs, but there were eight pages of others listed in the HMP:

1. Emergency Operations Plan (2016) – Multi-hazard protection. Average effectiveness (historic performance). To be updated in the next three years.
2. Zoning Ordinance – Multi-hazard protection. Average effectiveness. Portions of the Zoning Code were updated in 2025, but staff time is a barrier.
3. Building Code – Multi-hazard protection. Average effectiveness. Currently under 2021 ICC Building Codes updated on July 1, 2024.
4. Fire Code – Excellent effectiveness. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Codes updated in 2024.

The Capability Assessment integrates other plans, like the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Comprehensive Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations, City of Keene Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy, and annual Operating Budget. Integration helps minimize impact on future CIPs, recover quickly from disasters, etc.

Mr. Blomquist described the next section of the HMP, the Mitigation Strategy. The Planning Team reviewed existing Mitigation Strategies (2018) and identified new Strategies to address evolving risks, analyzed and ranked the Mitigation Strategies (scored them), updated 2018 actions (complete, ongoing, etc.), and developed an Implementation schedule (who, when, and how). Next, Mr. Blomquist showed a table, demonstrating the process the Planning Team went

through for each Hazard type to identify: Prevention, Property Protection, Emergency Services, and Public Information. He provided the example of a Drought Hazard: Prevention – Implementation of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan; Property Protection – Water Emergency Plan; Emergency Services – Develop Water Distribution Plan for Low Pressures & Rural Areas; Public Information – Provide information to residents on water conservation/drought resistant landscaping and/or rain gardens.

The next section of the HMP is the Planning Team's ranking of the Mitigation Strategies based on whether they would be socially acceptable to community, technically possible, have a low administrative burden, be politically acceptable, legally authorized, economically beneficial, and environmentally sound. Natural Hazards were ranked on a scale of 1–5 (1: Very Low, 2: Low, 3: Medium, 4: High, 5: Very High) and Human Caused Hazards were ranked on a scale of 1–3 (1: Low, 2: Medium, 3: High). Mr. Blomquist showed a sample ranking chart for multiple Hazards and Mitigation Strategies. He explained that some things scored high but were addressed through certain City actions. The Planning Team also reviewed previous Mitigation actions from the 2018 HMP: Who (leadership), Status (started/not started), and discussed status/progress.

Mr. Blomquist described the final section of the HMP, the Implementation Plan, which uses the highest-ranked Mitigation Strategies to provide the who, when, and how. He provided an example listing from the Implementation Plan:

- Proposed Mitigation Strategy: Develop & Maintain Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for the City Departments.
 - Score: 26
 - Priority: High
 - Hazard(s): Multiple Hazards
 - Who: Emergency Management Director
 - When: Mid-Term
 - How: Grants/City Budget, \$30,000

Mr. Blomquist welcomed questions.

Chair Bosley appreciated the book of details and the incredible amount of effort the Planning Team put into the HMP process. She thought of Keene as a safe community, but with the number of community events, she said it takes a lot of manpower to respond to emergencies appropriately. She recalled the Emergency Management Director—especially through Covid—putting a lot of effort into ensuring the City had the proper protections in place. Chair Bosley said it was very important and an obvious reason why the City's various plans are necessary; she called it a team effort. Mr. Blomquist agreed that the City Departments were doing these things across the board even if not at the forefront; Public Works and Community Development Departments, for example, address Hazards throughout all programs they manage—sometimes it is not always obvious, like seeking a grant. Mr. Blomquist agreed with Chair Bosley that a lot of work goes into keeping the community safe.

Councilor Haas thanked Mr. Blomquist and strongly hoped the comment period would be extended through the end of next week (June 20, 2025) or longer because he missed the

opportunity so far and imagined others had too. Councilor Haas looked forward to reading the HMP in-depth. He asked if he could draw lines directly from where capital improvements are needed in the HMP to projects listed in the CIP. Mr. Blomquist said it should be possible, adding that within the CIP, departments—particularly Public Works and Parks & Recreation—would often indicate what a project is supporting, like Critical Infrastructure. He said it is an opportunity to ask questions of departments during CIP review. Councilor Haas added, for the next HMP update, that it would be ideal to add references to where parts appear in the CIP. Councilor Haas also asked about the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) compliance requiring elevation certificates and asked how many the City had on hand. Mr. Blomquist said he would have to refer to the Community Development numbers but the NFIP elevation certificates had to do with the recently updated FEMA floodplains and properties at different elevations that are at risk of flooding. By requiring someone to demonstrate they are in the floodplain, it provides that property owner with information about their risks. Councilor Haas asked if the City was requiring property owners to produce Elevation Certificates. Mr. Blomquist said only if there was a question about whether the City believed the property was in or out of the floodplain.

Councilor Haas continued, explaining that he would like to see more emphasis on Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP), stating they are not as hard as a full contingency plan or performance plan. He suggested departmental flow charts of activities, identifying needs for continuity of operations, stating it would pay off in efficiencies identified through the effort. He would communicate more with Mr. Blomquist separately. Mr. Blomquist agreed that COOP are critical, noting that a lot more was required because of Covid. He said people may rail against government, but at the end of the day, they want to know that everything is okay if they go to register their car or get their water bill; so, building in that normalcy is what people look for after a particular event and is important for the City. Councilor Haas reiterated his suggestion for departmental flow charts of operations and a COOP to improve efficiencies. He added that it would be great to have dates listed for when plans are anticipated to be completed. He understood the limitations of funding but wanted to see things with more definitive schedules that departments do their best to meet. Lastly, Councilor Haas said the HMP only mentioned enforcing Building Codes for new construction, but he knew the City had codes to address existing construction and deteriorated buildings too, so he hoped for more emphasis in those areas as well. Chair Bosley thought Councilor Haas could make an apt member of the Hazard Mitigation Plan Review Committee in 2030.

Councilor Williams thanked the Planning Team for this important process. One potential hazard he did not see on this list was heavy smoke, noting that it might be considered under wildfire. He cited a recent smoke event due to wildfire in Canada that caused Keene to be red overnight (there is a rating system of NH air quality found on NHDES website <https://www4.des.state.nh.us/airdata/>). He knew there was potential for significantly worse, including very unhealthy air in Keene's valley. He wondered if there was anything in the HMP to address that concern. Mr. Blomquist said no, there is a certain amount of directedness from FEMA, and at this time, air quality was not identified as any kind of hazard. He said it would be an interesting question of how to prepare for or mitigate air quality issues when you do not create them. That is part of the reason the City has other plans, like the Emergency Operation Plans, which allows the City to prepare for poor air quality days. Unfortunately, some of these

things are locally directed, but he noted that some things had emerged since the last update, like solar storms and known and emerging contaminants. So, Mr. Blomquist imagined that air quality could be in the next update, but it would depend on the direction of policy.

Vice Chair Jones noted that the Master Plan Steering Committee built some of what Mr. Blomquist presented to them into their Strategic Pillars for the Comprehensive Master Plan, so he thanked him for that presentation. The Vice Chair asked about the Implementation Plan and communications. If all digital and electric utilities were down, he asked how the City would communicate with the public. Mr. Blomquist said that is a part of the City's COOP, though he said it had been a while since the City had looked at it—among those Councilor Haas pointed out that should also be reviewed regularly. Councilor Jones repeated his question about how the City would actually communicate in that instance. Mr. Blomquist replied with AM radio and the national emergency system. He thought back to the 1960s/70s and sending trucks around with loudspeakers, for example, or using message boards. He had similarly worked with staff on how to prepare for a blackout. Vice Chair Jones thanked Mr. Blomquist again for being the voice of preparation.

Mayor Kahn said the City benefitted from Mr. Blomquist's long-term experience as the City's Emergency Management Director and the valuable continuity he was bringing to his current role. Discussion ensued again briefly about the Plan on the SWRPC website (<https://www.swrpc.org/keene-hazard-mitigation-plan-comment-period/>). The Mayor shared two observations that were brought to his attention. First, he cited his son observing flooding in Asheville, NC, for two weeks from a high spot. Roads were not passable, and all businesses came to a stop because communications were halted due to no credit card communications. He said amazingly, many vendors gave things out when people did not have cash to transact. The Mayor said he would be looking for that sort of thing when reading the HMP. Mr. Blomquist said the Plan would not necessarily address it but would address how the City could prepare to minimize disruptions, such as businesses having continuity of operations plans. Many individual businesses had recently consulted him about this matter. Mayor Kahn agreed about COOP and suggested an advice and advisory page for businesses in the HMP, guiding them to resources. Second, Mayor Kahn asked if there was a suggested evacuation route. Mr. Blomquist said that type of information is more so in the City's Local Emergency Operations Plan, noting again those are things that need updating, stating that past evacuation routes were associated with Vermont Yankee. Mayor Kahn recalled, said the evacuation route was the second thing he was looking for the HMP, and otherwise he was looking forward to reading the full Plan.

Councilor Favolise was happy to see the emphasis on flooding in the HMP as somebody who lives in close proximity to the Ashuelot River and represents a constituency where a large number of homes and properties are in the floodplain. He was glad to see it and it made perfect sense to him. He wanted to associate himself with Councilor Haas' comments about keeping the Plan and comment period up and accessible because he also had not had a chance to review the Plan in detail yet and wanted to do so before voting to adopt it at the next City Council meeting. Councilor Favolise asked whether and to what extent this Plan took into account some of the Community Assets or Community Infrastructure that are a part of Hazard Mitigation—Police, Fire, Cheshire Medical. He said each of those three institutions had some significant staffing challenges in one way or another, so he wondered whether and to what extent the Plan

recommendations took the staffing shortages into account? Mr. Blomquist said the City's Plan does not necessarily get into that detail. What is placed in the Plan is the responsibility of those organizations to look into and develop their own plans to manage. For example, the HMP does not ask Cheshire Medical Center what it will do about its staffing challenges, it presents the issue to Cheshire Medical Center and the need for it to develop a COOP. The City is here to provide assistance and help them figure that out. That was why, for example, the Cheshire Medical Center Manager of EMS and Emergency Management was on the HMP Planning Team to help ask those questions.

The Committee and Councilors were advised to send other questions to Mr. Blomquist before the June 19, 2025 City Council meeting because he would not be in attendance.

Vice Chair Jones made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Councilor Williams.

On a roll call vote of 4–0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommend the City Council adopt the 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan and that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute the Plan.

5) Warrant for Unlicensed Dogs - City Clerk

Chair Bosley welcomed the new Deputy City Clerk, Kathleen Richards, who was seeking authorization to issue the annual warrant for unlicensed dogs. The Deputy City Clerk pointed out that starting in 2024, this request started appearing before the PLD Committee; previously, it was referred to the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee. For the City to meet its statutory requirements of New Hampshire RSA 466, specifically 466:14, which says that "The town or city clerk shall annually, between June 1 and June 20, present to the local governing body a list of those owners of dogs that have failed to license or not renewed their dog licenses pursuant to RSA 466:1." Chair Bosley recalled the Committee changing its meeting schedule to align with that statutory requirement. The Deputy City Clerk agreed, noting this was now also aligned with the correct Committee for licensing.

Deputy City Clerk Richards explained that this warrant for unlicensed dogs would result in a \$25 fine being issued to all owners with dogs who remained unlicensed as of April 30, 2025. The City Clerk provided two lists for the Council's authorization. One list had the owners who had not renewed their dog licenses this year—at this time, nearly 365 dog owners with a total of 464 dogs remain unlicensed. The second list represented new unlicensed dogs—at this time, 62 owners with a total of 67 new dogs. The City Clerk's office is notified by veterinarians when new dogs receive rabies vaccinations, which will not be until they reach a certain age; once they get to that age, they should be licensed. The City Clerk's Office has used the following mechanisms to remind dog owners of the dog licensing requirements: public notices were printed in the Keene Sentinel and posted on the City website (one in February and one in mid-May), biweekly reminder emails were sent to dog owners beginning in February, reminder postcards were sent to owners with no e-mail addresses on file in April, and automated phone calls at the end of May. Once the warrant is approved by this Committee and the City Council, the City Clerk's office can create forfeiture fine letters and mail them out around July 9, 2025 notifying the dog owners that the fine is due on July 28, 2025. Typically, the Deputy City Clerk

said most owners who receive the notices come in to renew the Licenses before they get that \$25 fine. She concluded that as of this date, the City Clerk's office had issued 2,690 Dog Licenses for this period. Chair Bosley hoped they were all using the Dog Park.

Chair Bosley asked if there had been a flood of dog owners into the Clerk's office since these lists went public at the last City Council meeting. The Deputy City Clerk said no, the last flood of people coming in was when the fines first started at the end of April. Chair Bosley asked (noting somewhat sarcastically) if the Clerk's had ever tried sorting the data by whether a particular dog breed's owner tends to not register; she found it fascinating that she saw a lot of Labrador retrievers on the list, for example. Ms. Richards replied that it would be interesting to correlate, noting it could just be that the majority of the dogs in the database were Labradors. She said the Clerk's could try to evaluate it if the Committee was interested. Chair Bosley said was mostly curious. She hoped the message would get out to people that the importance is to register their dogs and make sure they are up to date on all their shots. The Deputy City Clerk agreed.

The Deputy City Manager, Rebecca Landry, added that it could be simpler for dog owners who suffer the loss of a pet to call and notify the Clerk's office, so they do not receive a letter asking them to renew a License the next year. Chair Bosley agreed, stating in the past, she replied to a Clerk's office email notifying of the loss. She appreciated the level of attention the Clerk's office put into trying to get everyone licensed.

Councilor Haas asked if the Clerks had any idea of how many repeat offenders would actually renew their licenses. The Deputy City Clerk said she did not believe they had evaluated repeat offenders because it was not a statutory requirement; the requirement is based on the state statute determining the fee schedule. The late fee is based on the requirements of timing. At this time, there was nothing in the statute about looking at licenses year-to-year. Councilor Haas understood, noting he and Councilor Williams spoke about there being little motivation to proceed and easily falling into collections the next year because the fines are not that large and are capped by state legislation. There was a lot to take on here, and Councilor Haas said it was unfortunate the City did not make more money on this. Chair Bosley said it is a bit of work but does ensure the community has blanket protection against rabies, which she thought was the point of dog registration on a basic level, recalling 2,690 dogs certified this year. Councilor Haas countered that those 2,690 were generated from dogs licensed the previous year plus what were reported from vets who vaccinate the dogs, so the list is biased toward vaccinated dogs already. He knew the original intent of dog licensing was to get dogs vaccinated against rabies but, was not sure it was working the way it should. Chair Bosley said that if someone adopts a dog that subsequently does not receive vet care, the City would not know. The Deputy City Clerk agreed. The Deputy City Manager added that this is a state requirement and something the City does because it is a good thing to do, but it is definitely not a moneymaker. She said it is good to have this information if someone complains that there has been a dog bite, for example, to quickly find the owner's contact and vaccination information. However, she added that many people just forget to renew their Dog Licenses. Also, many newcomers to town from out of state are unaware of the Dog Licensing requirements until they get the City's letter.

Councilor Williams made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Vice Chair Jones.

On a roll call vote of 4–0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends the City Council issue a warrant for unlicensed dogs pursuant to NHRSA 466:14, and the Keene Police Department and the City Clerk’s Office be directed to issue a civil forfeiture to those dog owners who have failed to license their dog by April 30, 2025.

6) Relating to Amendments to the Land Development Code, Feather Signs in Industrial Districts - Ordinance O-2025-08-A

Chair Bosley noted that because there were already public hearings, there would be no more public comments accepted at this meeting. She welcomed Senior Planner, Mari Brunner, for a summary. Ms. Brunner had little to add because the public processes had concluded without public comment. She said the Joint Committee of the Planning Board-Planning, Licenses and Development Committee had a lot of discussion and created the “A” version of the Ordinance with the 25-foot setback from intersections required. The signs must also be spaced at least 10 feet apart and be at least 15 feet from the property line. They would be allowed only on a temporary basis, up to 30 days at a time, four times per year, and only in the Industrial and Industrial Park Districts.

Chair Bosley recalled that there were no public comments. Her greatest concern was setback from roundabouts and intersections for driver safety, so she appreciated that amendment. Otherwise, she was comfortable with the language as written. She thought these were good test Districts to see how the community feels about these signs in general. She said then the Council could revisit and amend the Ordinance as needed, responding to problems or potentially expanding if it proves an asset.

Vice Chair Jones said these signs were not something he paid attention to until the Mayor brought this request forward. In his travels around the northeast since the Mayor’s proposal, the Vice Chair noticed feather signs in many places that were sun-bleached and tattered from the wind. He said that is not the aesthetic Keene wants, so he was glad to have these standards. He knew some people questioned why this was not expanded to the Commercial Districts, too. He thought it was best to take the small steps and see how these first two Districts work before moving on to anything else.

Vice Chair Jones made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Councilor Williams.

On a roll call vote of 4–0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends the adoption of Ordinance O-2025-08-A.

7) Relating to Amendments to Land Development Code - Single-Family Parking Requirements - Ordinance O-2025-09

Chair Bosley noted that because there was already a public hearing, no more public comments would be accepted at this meeting. She welcomed Senior Planner, Mari Brunner, for a summary. Ms. Brunner explained that Ordinance O-2025-09 was to fix an error in Ordinance O-2024-20-A, which accidentally omitted single-family dwellings from the list of uses in the

minimum parking requirements. She said there were no public comments at the public workshop of the Joint Committee of the Planning Board-Planning, Licenses and Development Committee. There was one comment at the City Council Public Hearing from someone who was in favor of eliminating the minimum parking requirements entirely. Ms. Brunner said some cities and communities had done that; most of them larger, major metropolitan areas, with robust public transit systems and on-street parking programs. So, Ms. Brunner wanted to state that she thought it was something the City could look into and that it could work in Keene. However, she thought it would be prudent to do that as a part of a more comprehensive parking plan for the whole City that looks at where on-street parking is feasible. She also suggested modernizing the Ordinance language around the on-street parking program to ensure that it does not inadvertently create issues in residential areas outside the downtown without public transit available.

Chair Bosley appreciated that, recalling that during the workshop phase, this Committee discussed the originally-proposed Parking Reduction Ordinance at length and considered something more restrictive. Ultimately, the Committee decided that the parking requirement in Ordinance O-2025-09 was appropriate and to reevaluate and create any further changes as a part of a more comprehensive study. Before any further reduction, Chair Bosley wanted to assess on-street parking realities and the long-term outlook after learning curves—for both City Departments and residents—of the first winter of on-street parking allowed overnight.

Councilor Williams agreed. He said he is generally in favor of reducing parking requirements to allow for increased density, which he thought was an important goal of the City's. However, he said the City would need to be careful to avoid backlash and anticipate any problems that could happen ahead of time, which is why eliminating the requirement should be a part of a broader parking plan. Councilor Williams hoped to see a broader plan move forward because in the long run, he would like to see the market dictate how much parking the City has.

Councilor Williams made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Vice Chair Jones.

On a roll call vote of 4–0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends the adoption of Ordinance O-2025-09.

8) Relating to the Discharge of Fireworks - Ordinance O-2025-19

Chair Bosley welcomed Fire Marshal/Building Inspector, Richard Wood, for an update on Ordinance O-2025-19. The primary goal was to address a concern raised by Councilor Williams about the amount of noise and the impacts to neighborhoods from fireworks displays. After discussing the concerns with the Committee a few times, Mr. Wood and the City Attorney, Amanda Palmeira, drafted the proposed Ordinance, which would limit the number of discharged fireworks to a maximum of five per year in the City, three at any one site. Mr. Wood noted that these “shows” were not the same as consumer fireworks purchased and used at home. The Ordinance included some other things that had come up, particularly an issue regarding consumer fireworks being used as display fireworks. He explained that the State of NH had recently submitted an Administrative Rule change on that issue, which staff wanted to capture in the Ordinance with a new paragraph—Section 2 Section 2 clarifies that for the City's

purposes, consumer fireworks discharged by someone other than consumer are still regulated under Section 1, meaning they fall under the number of shows and the restrictions and would come before this Committee for a permit. Mr. Wood said everything else in the Ordinance was intended to relate to the Committee's conversations and the connection of the Ordinance back to state RSA. Further, he said they wanted a tight (strong) Ordinance.

Chair Bosley saw the addition of Section 2 and recalled discussing that state update. She asked for a timeline of when it might be adopted by the state or if that did not matter. Mr. Wood said the purpose of putting Section 2 in the Ordinance was to make that adoption date irrelevant to what we do. He continued, explaining the state already had a section dealing with consumer fireworks discharged by someone other than the consumer. The state wanted to add the requirement that a competency certificate is required to display fireworks (meaning a licensed shooter). Mr. Wood said it was within the City's authority to add this re-regulation to its Ordinance without the state adopting it, so he and the City Attorney did not want to wait and see. Mr. Wood recalled that there was an actual instance in the City of consumer fireworks to be discharged by someone other than consumer at a permissible show in 2024 and the original person who showed up to perform commercial discharge of fireworks was not licensed and the licensed person show up later. Staff took this opportunity to clarify within the Ordinance. Chair Bosley said for her, these changes got to the heart of what this Committee had asked for. She liked Section (2)l because it resolved certain ambiguities. She thought this would be a much clearer, easier way of dealing with it. Vice Chair Jones asked if the year listed twice in the Ordinance referred to the January 1 calendar year, not the City's fiscal year (July 1), and Mr. Wood said yes.

Councilor Williams appreciated all of this work and the discussions to come to this good point. He particularly appreciated and thought it was important that the loophole of consumer fireworks as display fireworks was closed. He added that there were four fireworks events in 2024, so he did not feel the ceiling of five events per year in this Ordinance was a significant restriction. He thought it made sense; while fireworks are a lot of fun, they come with costs for our air quality, birds, animals, dogs, and people. Councilor Williams thought five events per year would be fun and more than that might not be. He thought this Ordinance was a good way to handle the ongoing discussion.

Chair Bosley noted that typically, before enacting this Ordinance, past fireworks display users had been very gracious in taking the intention of this Committee to heart, working with their partners to make sure that not one entity was taking all of these opportunities. So, she thought this was an understanding community and she called that wonderful.

Chair Bosley opened the floor to public comments.

Councilor Jacob Favolise of Main Street echoed Councilor Williams and everybody's comments about the work of staff on this. Councilor Favolise recalled being a newer Councilor discussing this and saying, "Well, we should have some language around this if we are going to be denying permits moving forward." The Councilor stated he knew there had been some discussion or concern that the way this language was written was going to result in some "nefarious horse trading of locations and parcels." He said he was not necessarily concerned

about that, stating there were very few locations in the City even appropriate for displays of this kind. Councilor Favolise also echoed Chair Bosley's comments about the response and concerns received from some about people coming in for licenses and looking to share the wealth among those spaces. Councilor Favolise thought that would be a really good example of the Council making a statement of intent and staff working really hard to interpret that in a way that is both enforceable and really consistent with what the Council originally wanted. He thanked staff again for their work on this and looked forward to the full Council discussion.

Chair Bosley added that in her time on the Council, she often heard that if the Council was going to vote on something, then it should update or fix certain rules, but it rarely followed through. So, she appreciated Counselor Williams pushing this issue over the past few years, so it finally got to this place. Chair Bosley said it felt good.

Vice Chair Jones made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Councilor Williams.

On a roll call vote of 4–0, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends the adoption of Ordinance O-2025-19.

9) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Bosley adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker
June 14, 2025

Edits submitted by,
Terri Hood, City Clerk and Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk