

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MINOR PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 6, 2025

10:00 AM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Paul Andrus, Community Development Director
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer & Public Works
Director's Designee
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner / Acting Zoning
Administrator
Megan Fortson, Planner & City Manager's
Designee

Other Staff Present:

None

Members Not Present:

Fire Chief

1) Call to Order – Roll Call

Paul Andrus called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM. Roll call was conducted.

2) Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Ms. Brunner nominated Paul Andrus as Chair. Ms. Fortson seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Brunner nominated Evan Clements as Vice Chair. Ms. Fortson seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) Minutes of Previous Meetings

A) Pre-Submission Meetings – October 3, 2024; December 5, 2024; January 1, 2025; and January 30, 2025

Ms. Brunner made a motion to approve the pre-submission meeting minutes from October 3, 2024; December 4, 2024; January 1, 2025; and January 30, 2025. Ms. Fortson seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

B) Minor Project Review Committee Meeting – September 19, 2024

Ms. Brunner made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 19, 2024. Ms. Fortson seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Final Vote on Conditional Approvals

Ms. Fortson stated that there are no applications ready for a final vote.

5) Adoption of 2025 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Brunner stated that to clarify, the first monthly meeting is always for new applications, and the second monthly meeting is only held if there is a continued application from the first monthly meeting. She continued that the second monthly meeting is thus put on the calendar if needed, but it is often not held.

Ms. Brunner made a motion to adopt the 2025 meeting schedule as presented. Ms. Fortson seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

6) Staff Updates

A) Site Plan Review Thresholds

Ms. Brunner, Senior Planner, stated that Planning staff wanted to discuss this with the group, and they will probably be coming back to them with more updates later in the year or maybe next year. She continued that the MPRC has been meeting for four years. Now that they have had a few years to test this new concept of having a staff committee that reviews site plans, they have data to look at. What they see is that they are not getting the number of projects that they expected to come to the MPRC. Staff have had preliminary conversations with the Planning Board Chair and the Planning, Licenses, and Development (PLD) Committee Chair about potentially modifying the site plan review thresholds to make it an option that is more realistic for folks.

Essentially, they would have a conversation with the Planning Board to see if they are in favor of modifying the site plan review thresholds to raise the threshold for going to the Planning Board, which would hopefully increase the number of projects that could come through this body. The reason for that is the process to go through the MPRC is shorter than it is for the Planning Board, and the City has a goal to make the planning review process as efficient and streamlined as possible. This would be in alignment with that goal.

Ms. Brunner continued that until now, the MPRC has had sparse meetings and not many projects to review. If and when this change goes through and they raise the site plan review thresholds, this body might start seeing more activity. She will keep the MPRC informed about any changes being proposed.

Chair Andrus asked what the process will be by which they generate ideas around those different thresholds. Ms. Brunner replied that they will probably work directly with the Planning Board to discuss what those thresholds could be. She continued that they will also want to loop in at least the PLD Committee ahead of time, to get feedback on the proposed changes before they submit a formal Ordinance. The process is that first, the Planning Board would have to adopt the changes through a public hearing. Then, the City Council would have to adopt the changes to incorporate them into the Land Development Code (LDC). Thus, it requires a vote from the Planning Board and from the City Council.

Mr. Andrus asked, regarding the Planning Board review process, if (Planning staff) intends to bring a draft Ordinance with proposed changes up front, or if there is a process by which they have a work session with the Planning Board. Ms. Brunner replied that the initial conversation she was envisioning – which will ultimately be up to the Planning Board Chair – is a more informal discussion with something like presentation slides showing what the current thresholds are. She was hoping for a conversation with them to get some feedback before staff puts something into writing as a formal change.

Chair Andrus thanked Ms. Brunner and asked if there was any more discussion on this matter.

7) **New Business**

Chair Andrus asked if there was any new business. Ms. Brunner stated that Paul Andrus is the new Community Development Director, and they are excited to have him here. Chair Andrus replied that today is his fourth day, and he is happy to be here.

8) **Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- March – Pre-submission Meeting – March 6, 2025 at 9:00 AM
- March – 1st Monthly MPRC Meeting – March 6, 2025 at 10:00 AM
- March – 2nd Monthly MPRC Meeting – March 20, 2025 at 10:00 AM (*if needed*)

9) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Andrus adjourned the meeting at 10:21 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Megan Fortson, Planner