

**CITY OF KEENE  
NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, February 22, 2016

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

**Members Present:**

Gary Spykman, Chairman  
Nathaniel Stout, Vice-Chair  
Mayor Kendall Lane  
Douglas Barrett  
Christine Weeks  
George Hansel  
Chris Cusack

**Members Not Present:**

James Duffy  
Andrew Bohannon  
Tammy Adams  
Pamela Russell Slack

**Staff:**

Rhett Lamb, Planning Director  
Tara Kessler, Planner  
Michele Chalice, Planner

**I. Call to order – Roll Call**

Chair Spykman called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and a roll call was taken. Christine Weeks extended condolences on behalf of the Planning Board to the Russell family on the passing of Pat Russell.

**II. Minutes of previous meeting** – January 25, 2016

A motion was made by George Hansel to accept the January 25, 2016 minutes. The motion was seconded by Mayor Kendall Lane and was unanimously approved.

**III. Nominations / Elections**

A motion was made by Mayor Kendall Lane to appoint Gary Spykman as Chairman and Nathaniel Stout as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Board. The motion was seconded by Christine Weeks and was unanimously approved.

Chair Spykman introduced Chris Cusack to the Board and explained the makeup of the Board to Mr. Cusack.

**IV. Continued Public Hearing**

**1. SPR-04-14, Modification 6 – Talons Restaurant – 141 Winchester Street – Site**

Plan – Applicant Katie Cassidy Sutherland, Architect, on behalf of owners 141 Winchester St, LLC, proposes an 80-seat restaurant. The primary proposed use is a 4,000SF restaurant with a 450SF accessory indoor recreation area with pool table and video games, and a 500SF accessory bar service. The site is 0.29 acres in size and located in the Commerce Zoning District (TMP# 052-02-004). The applicant has requested the Planning Board consider an additional extension of the 65-day time period for the Board to act as required by NH RSA 676:4.

A motion was made by Mayor Kendall Lane to continue the public hearing for Talons Restaurant, SPR-04-14 and to extend the decision deadline to March 28. He noted this matter is still before the Zoning Board and the decision made before that Body will affect the way in which the Planning Board acts on it. The motion was seconded by George Hansel.

The Chair asked for public comment. There were no comments from the public.

The motion made by the Mayor was unanimously approved.

V. **Public Hearing**

1. **SPR-16-01 – 17 Washington Street – Site Plan** - Applicant, Igor Monteiro, on behalf of owner, MDP Development LLC, is proposing to use the recreation field at 17 Washington Street for a youth soccer program. The applicant is seeking a waiver from the Planning Board's Development Standard #10 Lighting (Tax Parcel #017-07-007).

Mr. Lamb stated staff realized that there was a flaw in the notice for this application. There were a large percentage of abutter letters returned "undeliverable". He indicated it seems the addressing of envelopes the applicant had done and given to the Planning Department were flawed. Staff has been in contact with the applicant and their attorney and they have agreed resend corrected notice letters so that the abutter will have a proper notice for the hearing at the March meeting. The applicant, however, asked this application to be opened tonight and continued to the March meeting and proper notice will be provided to those who did not receive notice. There was confusion as to who the mail should have been sent to; the property owner or to the person living at the property.

A. **Board Determination of Completeness.**

Mr. Lamb recommended to the Board that Application SPR-16-01 was complete absent the notice issue. A motion was made by George Hansel that the Board accept this application as complete. The motion was seconded by Christine Weeks and was unanimously approved.

B. **Public Hearing**

The Chairman opened the public hearing. The Mayor asked about taking public comment. Mr. Lamb explained if there are abutters present today it should be explained to them that testimony from abutters will be taken on March 28<sup>th</sup>. He felt it would be inappropriate to take testimony today as folk who did not get notice are not here to hear comments being made today.

C. **Board Discussion and Action**

A motion was made by George Hansel to continue the Public Hearing for SPR-16-01 to the March 28, 2016 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Kendall Lane and was unanimously approved.

VI. **Advice & Comment**

1. **85 Emerald Street** - Monadnock Flooring and Bulldog Design are proposing renovations and additions to the present two-story structure and site at 85 Emerald Street.

Chair Spykman stated this applicant has withdrawn the request for Advice and Comment. They are planning to submit a site plan application for the March 28, 2016 meeting.

VII. **City Council Referral**

2016/2017 – 2021/2022 Capital Improvement Program

Finance Director, Steve Thornton was the next speaker. Mr. Thornton stated each year with input from the community and City Council, the City Manager and staff develop a proposed six-year capital improvement program (CIP). The proposed CIP is reviewed by the Council and Planning Board before approval and tonight staff is seeking the Board's comments on the CIP.

The focus of the CIP process is to plan for the city's future and the guiding vision of the CIP is to advance the comprehensive master plan (CMP). The key areas being considered are, quality built environment, natural environment, vibrant economy, strong citizenship, learning culture, proactive leadership, and healthy community.

Mr. Thornton explained the CIP outlines projects that are in excess of \$20,000 and are a useful life of more than five years. Individual projects are submitted by departments and are consolidated into a capital program.

Following review by the Planning Board, a public hearing will be held and once the plan is approved by the Council, the first year of the CIP will be included in next year's operating budget.

Mr. Thornton explained the CIP document to the Board next.

Pages 1-5 have the City Manager's introduction, Executive Summary and various highlights. However, the bulk of the book is proposed projects by fund and each project includes a description, financial, reason for the project, and their relationship to the CMP. Mr. Thornton then referred to page 8 which indicate over the next few years what the City is proposing for projects that estimate about 70.5 million dollars of which 27% is for roads, 6% stormwater management, 23% water and sewer projects, and the rest is for Fire Department, Library, Fleet and Police Department.

Mr. Thornton referred to page 12 which outlines new projects that have never been identified in the CIP before. The first is the library campus development project which calls for the rehabilitation of the Heberton Hall at a cost of 8.8 million dollars of which 2 million is to come from city support and the balance will be raised through a capital campaign. This project is scheduled for FY17.

The second new project is from the Parks and Recreation Department – improvements to Carpenter Field. The proposal is to refurbish carpenter field by adding a walking path, improving drainage, adding lighting and seating. This project is scheduled for FY21.

The next project is from the Police Department for police communications at 350 Marlboro Street and portable radio replacement. The estimated cost for this project is \$550,000.

The final project is Victoria Street extension in FY22 for 1.7 million dollars. This project will extend Victoria Street to Marlboro Street.

Mr. Thornton then went over some ongoing projects – Winchester Street; reconstruction of the roundabout from Route 101 to the Winchester Street bridge and south to the Swanzey line. There is also a project to rehabilitate Goose Pond Dam which received a letter of deficiency from the State.

There are several water and wastewater fund projects including:

- A downtown revitalization study which was last done in the 80's.
- Fire Department is looking to replace three vehicles and two ambulances.
- Completion of Wheelock Park through the sale of land to Eversource.
- Skate Park reconstruction to be funded through a capital campaign.
- Work on sewer lines.

Headworks Treatment project at Martell Court which is the pump station at Martell Court. In the water fund there is 1.5 million dollars being proposed to clean and reline sewer mains to extend the life and capacity of the lines. There are water main replacements in certain neighborhoods, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Woodward and Babbage Dams, and improvement to two of the water tanks.

Also included is a project to evaluate the Court Street and West Street well fields to determine if they should be rehabilitated or replaced with some other type of solution.

In closing, Mr. Thornton stated on February 25<sup>th</sup> the Finance Committee will conduct its second review of the CIP with focus on the Airport, Public Works (water, sewer, engineering, solid waste and fleet) and Planning. There will be a public hearing on March 3 in the Council Chambers at 7 pm and on March 10 at 6:30 pm the Finance Committee will meet again to deliberate and provide recommendations. Finally, on March 17 the Council will vote on the adoption of the CIP.

Mr. Lamb stated the origin of the Planning Board's involvement with the CIP is statutory in nature. The city has had an extensive CIP process for many years and by the end of the summer all departments prepare their projects for the upcoming CIP. The departments are also asked to list both the focus area of the master plan where their projects originate and the vision and strategy. Mr. Lamb called the Board's attention to a few other items in the CIP which refer to the master plan. Page 71, Downtown Revitalization program which proposes investing in the downtown, investing in public space and noted this was a critical item.

Mr. Lamb said Flood Management comes up significantly in the master plan (page 72). Page 89 refers to stormwater systems management and local improvements. Page 57 refers to the Climate Vulnerability Study – with nearly three million dollars going to be invested in the next few years in flood and stormwater management, the Planning Department suggested this study to look at changing patterns in rainfall. Beaver Brook is an area where a hydraulic study and hydrologic study is going to be done to determine ways to reduce risk and look at areas in the watershed where there are constrictions as well as areas where flood storage could happen. The Board's role today is to provide advice to the City Council and this should come in the form of a motion.

Mayor Lane stated the projects the Planning Director mentioned are important to the Board when it comes time to review projects. The Climate Vulnerability Study is important as the city attempts to adjust to the change in storm patterns. The Beaver Brook study is interesting and the Mayor stated when he was first elected Mayor, he had a discussion with the Army Corp of Engineers who at that time did not feel there was money in their budget to complete this work and this was not a high priority item at that time. However, recent discussions have indicated they feel this might be a project of importance to them and they might be prepared to conduct the hydraulic study of Beaver Brook.

Storm Water Management on page 72 and 89 are significant as the city starts discussing in-fill development and the city's ability to manage stormwater is critical. The Mayor stated there is also discussion that has happened about development on the east side and this area is also challenged by flooding issues, unless the city wants to invest money to address the flooding which happens in this area.

The Mayor then talked about the Victoria Street extension which was included in the CIP a while ago. The Mayor talked about the history of this extension which went back as far as the 1930's as part of the downtown bypass project and the city at that time owned several properties here. There were other iterations of the extension to open up land for development. It then came back as a project to divert traffic from Water Street which the Council initiated but the question was where does traffic go when it gets to Marlboro Street. It is now back again as a project to divert traffic from Water Street as well as to open up property on the Kingsbury land for development. This plan will require crossing wetlands as well as the Rail Trail which is causing concern from the Cheshire Rail Trail group. The final issue is how this is going to be paid for and the hope is development on

the Kingsbury property will cause tax increment financing to ultimately pay for it. The Mayor stated he wanted people to think about this project because there are issues which need to be addressed.

Vice-Chair Stout asked where the parcel mapping project is. Mr. Thornton stated this project has already been funded and it is an ongoing project. The completion date is end of this year. The investment of this project is about \$200,000. Mr. Stout asked whether there are other GIS projects that have not been funded. Mr. Lamb answered in the negative and added the Council did fund the aerial mapping project, and the planometric project which are just wrapping up. The Board would be seeing a demonstration of same very soon.

Councilor Hansel talked about the training he went through as a new Planning Board member which helps him to be able to recommend this CIP to the Council.

Ms. Weeks asked about the Woodland Cemetery storm management project and asked whether this was a CIP project. Mr. Lamb stated this is a grant funded project and is due to go out to bid shortly and the hope is the project will be completed by the summer. He added the project is for the removal of fill associated with past cemetery activities. This would restore wetlands and generate some flood storage in an area where this is much needed. Ms. Weeks asked where the fill will go. Mr. Lamb stated the city is working with a landowner just outside Keene who will accept the fill. The cost is in transporting the material. Ms. Weeks asked what the plan going forward when that need comes up again for fill storage. Mr. Lamb stated this is something he would need to check with the Parks and Recreation Director. Mayor Lane asked whether this was city fill or privately owned. Mr. Lamb stated it is believed it is related mostly to cemetery activities and the extent of contamination has been well documented to make sure there is no issue before it is disposed at this other property.

Mr. Barrett referred to the pie chart on page 12 and used the Library Campus project as an example where only two million dollars of the 8.8 million dollars is the city's support. Mr. Barrett noted to the reference of the 70 million coming from other sources and asked for clarification. Mr. Thornton stated the 70 million dollars is for all projects (water and sewer, parking projects etc.) and the general fund is in the neighborhood of 52 million and there are other sources of funds coming in. Mr. Lamb stated projects at the airport for instance are grant funded (Federal & State) at a level of 95%. Mr. Thornton referred to the bridge program which is funded at 80/20; the city's portion is 20%.

Mr. Thornton then talked about the bonding of projects. Mr. Thornton explained over the last several years major facilities were built in the city such as the Police and Fire Departments, Public Works Facility and the facilities they replaced were very old. These projects happened over a period of ten years. He indicated what is seen in this CIP is a decrease to debt service and referred to page 24 and noted over the course of this CIP the city's debt service will be reduced by about 13%.

Vice-Chair Stout asked when the fiscal policies were set this year whether the reserves were adjusted up or down. Mr. Thornton explained the Finance Committee will be considering the fiscal policies on March 10. The unassigned fund balance which is what Mr. Stout is referring to and the fiscal policies indicate that the unassigned fund balance should be between 7% and 10% of the combination of the city's general fund operating budget and the tax commitment to the county and the school. This amount has not been changed and is currently at 8%. Mr. Stout asked what the city's credit rating was. Mr. Thornton stated the city is at an AA stable rating which is a very good rating.

Mayor Lane stated the library project is listed in the CIP for 8.8 million but the actual cost is supposed to be approximately 14 million. The 8.8 million refers to the bond and the fund drive and does not reflect any of the tax credits or the outside grants which are going to be given. The Mayor asked why the project is not listed at 14 million. Mr. Thornton stated when the CIP was put together, 8.8 million was the city's understanding of what would be the city's obligation. The 8.8 million is the capital campaign and the city's contribution; MEDC's figure includes a lot of cost which is internal to them. He explained MEDC will establish a non-profit corporation to manage this project and then turn it over to the city. The Mayor stated it is important for people to understand the city is getting a 14 million dollar project for a city investment of 2 million..

Mr. Cusack, with reference to the Victoria Street extension, asked whether the city knows where this street would come out. Mr. Lamb stated it is still being worked out, but currently the plan is that it will come out next to the site owned by Bob Rountree. Mr. Cusack stated his understanding is that there will be significant amount of truck traffic coming off Victoria Street onto Marlboro Street at the same time we are trying to calm Marlboro Street and whether this issue is being addressed. Mr. Lamb stated this is a good point but the truck traffic is already on Marlboro Street the city would be giving it a new route to get to Water Street. Mr. Cusack stated Baker Street and Dartmouth Street are residential streets and was hoping truck traffic could be kept away from these areas. Mr. Lamb stated this is something they could look at; there are truck routes designated in the city and this could turn into an enforcement issue.

Ms. Weeks referred to a letter to the editor about economic development and asked how those concerns would be addressed. Mayor Lane stated if someone wanted to bring specific concerns about issues such as that it would go before the Planning and Licenses Committee. He noted this letter first talked about the high tax rate and then talked about investing in the city which is something the city is constantly wrestling with how to reduce the tax rate and also invest in the city. The Mayor stated the city does not respond to specific letters to the editor but citizens are always welcome to write to the Mayor and Council. In response to Ms. Weeks' comment, Councilor Hansel stated as a Councilor and Planning Board member he is going to be looking at areas which could be used as industrial sites and felt this is something that should be on the minds of Board members. He felt if a big employer was to come into town there isn't a site where they could locate. Mr. Lamb added Councilor Hansel has already initiated review of economic development programs which will go before the PLD Committee the next time they meet and there will be some discussion following that based on State Statute 79-E (a tax incentive program) and asked any interested Board members to follow along in that discussion. He also emphasized the work done at the last Joint Committee which would also be moved forward.

Chair Spykman emphasized what the Planning Director had said earlier in that this board has a statutory role in the CIP adoption process and Keene is blessed to have professional staff who do most of this work but encouraged the Board to be involved in this process. He felt it might be prudent for next time to be involved in the CIP much earlier in its process. Vice-Chair Stout agreed most Councilors and Board members would like to be involved in the CIP process much earlier but city staff do such a good job he would not want to affect that process but did express concern that the CIP document is getting smaller. He did add getting involved early in the process would be good. Mr. Lamb talked about getting the Board and Council involved in the CIP process earlier as well as scheduling the CIP tour during the summer.

A motion was made by Mayor Kendall Lane that the Planning Board recommend to the City Council the adoption of the Capital Improvement Program 2016/2017 – 2021/2022. The motion was seconded by Christine Weeks and was unanimously approved.

Ms. Weeks complimented the presentation.

**VIII. Planning Director Report**

None

**IX. Upcoming dates of interest**

Planning Board Meeting – Monday, March 28, 6:30 PM

Planning Board Steering Committee – Tuesday, March 15, 5:00 PM

Joint PB/PLD – Monday, March 14, 6:30 PM

Planning Board Site Visits – Wednesday, March 23, 8:00 AM – to be confirmed

On a unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Krishni Pahl  
Minute Taker

Reviewed by: Rhett Lamb, Planning Director  
Edits: Lee Langella