

**ADOPTED**

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**COLLEGE CITY COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, April 25, 2016**

**4:00 PM**

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

**Members Present:**

Co-Chair Chris Cusack  
Bettina Chadbourne, Councilor  
Chris Hrynowski  
Marcia Kayser  
Phil Jones, Councilor  
Dottie Morris  
Darryl Masterson  
Robin Picard  
Kelly Ricaurte

**Staff Present:**

Andy Robinson, KSC Liaison  
Tara Kessler, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Dick Berry  
Co-Chair Dean Eaton  
Paula Jessup  
Atticus Rollins

**1. Call to order**

Chair Cusack called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM.

**2. Minutes – March 28, 2016**

Councilor Jones made a motion to accept the minutes of March 28, 2016. Ms. Morris seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. The following corrections were discussed by the Commission: pg. 2, paragraph 2 should read, and “the five criteria model is being discussed.”

**3. Review of Discussion on the Draft Commission Report**

Ms. Kessler distributed a draft document outlining elements of a foreword section of the draft Commission Report. Much of the information contained in this draft foreword is an overview of activities that have taken place since the Commission was formed, including improvements in collaboration and communication between the College and City. She asked Commission Members to review and provide feedback on the draft and to share any information that should be added.

Ms. Ricaurte inquired about the item that noted approximately 10% of classes are now held on Fridays at Keene State College. Chair Cusack noted that it should read 13% instead. Ms. Hrynowski noted that there is a push towards having more classes on a Wednesday/Friday schedule. Ms. Kessler noted that she received data from the police department in reference to noise complaints, unlawful possession of alcohol arrests, and open container violations. Ms. Kessler stated that the Police Department has been capturing data for the first semester of each calendar year, dating back for a period of 10 years. This data is for the entire City, not just college-related activity. With respect to noise complaints, there were 180 in 2015, compared to the preceding 9-year average of 270. With respect to unlawful possession of alcohol arrests, there were 86 in 2015, compared to the preceding 9-year average of 180. With respect to open container violations, there were 27, compared to the preceding 9-year average of 68. Ms. Kessler mentioned that the Police Chief has noted that the lack of an official Pumpkin Festival must be considered as a potential contributor to these decreases. However, he believes that lack of an event has little impact on the decrease in noise complaints. Ms. Chadbourne asked if students are educated during their orientation on the City's Noise Ordinance change from 11 p.m. to 10 p.m.. Ms. Picard stated that they are told during the off-campus orientation.

Ms. Kessler asked Commission members to note any important information missing from the list she shared. She continued, stating that the goal of the meeting is to refine it and articulate bullet points to add to this report. Ms. Kayser asked if there is a list of Keene State College accomplishments. Ms. Ricaurte noted that hours of service completed by students are compiled annually. This figure is approximately 104,000 + hours of service each year. Ms. Ricaurte stated that she will find out the exact figure for this past year.

Commission members suggested highlighting student volunteer participation in events, such as Greene Up Keene, and at places, such as the Community Kitchen. Ms. Kayser suggested mentioning the Salamander Brigade as well. Ms. Hrynowski noted that the Greek system is very involved in community service.

Ms. Picard suggested speaking with law enforcement in reference to the landlord observations of changes in the students living off campus. Ms. Picard stated that the Fire Department has a new program to go through each house in Keene with a detailed inspection, instead of a visual review.

Ms. Chadbourne inquired whether information is available on the changes in occupancy and vacancy of properties that were once student rentals in the neighborhoods surrounding the College campus since the Mills and Arcadia were developed. Ms. Kessler stated that this information is not readily available; however, it might be useful to collect to inform future discussions and planning efforts. Chair Cusack stated that his class obtained housing data and conducted surveys but this should be revisited. Ms. Hrynowski stated that the Mills apartment complex has vacancies and have been offering significant discounts to help fill empty space. Ms. Chadbourne inquired about available space at Davis Apartments. Ms. Hrynowski stated that she believes these apartments are filled.

Councilor Jones stated that he sent a memo to City Council about the need for improved lighting on Ralston Street. He noted that this memo will be going before the Council later in the week. He stated that the road should become more pedestrian friendly.

Ms. Kayser inquired about the recent pedestrian/vehicle accident on Main Street. Ms. Kessler stated that prior to the accident City staff had been meeting to discuss potential short-term solutions to improve pedestrian safety in this area of Main Street. She noting that the City had not designated funding for improvements in this area, however, staff are investigating solutions that can be done with limited funding and potentially, in partnership with the College.

Ms. Hrynowski stated that a speed signal was put up a few days before the accident. Chair Cusack noted that pedestrian warning signs used to be located in the middle of the crosswalk. Ms. Hrynowski stated that the crosswalks need to be repainted and are not visible. Ms. Chadbourne noted that the Public Works Director stated that the crosswalks would be re-painted this year. Mr. Masterson suggested installing rumble strips. Ms. Kessler noted that she will bring all suggestions to the Public Works Director. Ms. Chadbourne asked about the neon pedestrian-ahead signs that were once on the road. Ms. Kessler noted that she was informed that the College stopped putting these out because vehicles repeatedly hit them. Ms. Morris suggested putting a sign ahead of the crosswalks letting drivers know that they are approaching crosswalks.

Ms. Kessler noted that lighting at the crosswalk by Foundry Street was discussed at a previous meeting. She asked the Commission if there is a need for additional lighting as there is currently a pedestrian activated beacon at the crosswalk. The Commission agreed more lighting is needed.

Ms. Kessler inquired if there is anything going on outside of this Commission that should be added to the foreword. Ms. Kayser stated that there has been a lot of support from the neighborhood. Ms. Kayser noted that there has been a change in hours of noise and things are quieting down in the evening. Councilor Jones noted that there has been an improvement with the students and the different neighborhood groups. Ms. Hrynowski stated that the campus liaison officer at the Police Department has been helpful and make students feel safe. Ms. Picard stated that the city has been helpful with providing extra police on duty three weekends in the spring during large events, including the upcoming pub crawl. Ms. Ricaurte noted that the local businesses are also participating in the crawl and have been supportive. Ms. Chadbourne noted that there have been positive changes on the north side of Keene as well.

#### **4. Commission Structure/Governance**

Chair Cusack stated that the Commission Steering Committee met to talk about the agenda for this meeting and decided it would be important to revisit an earlier conversation about the long-standing structure of the Commission. Ms. Kessler stated that the Commission is considered a special commission and is not recognized as a long-standing committee or commission by the City. She noted that special commission run the term of the Mayor; whereas, long-standing commissions/committees, which are recognized in the City Code, do not expire. These long-standing commissions/committees have rules of procedure and must follow City Code. Ms. Kessler noted that in the past, the Commission expressed an interest in becoming a long-standing committee. She continued, noting that the City Attorney recommended the Commission discuss rules of procedure, governance structure, membership, and agreed upon language for the Commission's purpose. Ms. Kessler noted that the City Mayor would continue to nominate members on the City side and the Keene State College President could continue to nominate

members on the College side. Ms. Kessler noted that all City committees are advisory to City Council.

Ms. Kessler read aloud the current Commission's charge: "Facilitating long range planning and short- and long-term recommendations to the College and the City on issues or mutual concern. It is to create a model for how a campus and college collaborate effectively and importantly engage each other in the resolution of the most pressing issues. It will create a framework to also deal with emergent issues." Ms. Kayser asked if there should be something about President Hout and Mayor Lane in the purpose as well. Ms. Morris suggested keeping the purpose broad in order to tackle many issues. Chair Cusack stated that the President is open to shared governance.

Councilor Jones asked if the Commission would like to continue in the long-term. Commission members were in agreement that they would like to be a long-standing committee. Commission Members discussed the differences between a commission and a committee and possibly changing the name of the Commission. Ms. Kessler noted that there are distinctions between the two and that she will find out more details for members.

Mr. Robinson suggested sending the current charge to all of the new members of the Commission as a reminder. Ms. Ricaurte noted that the charge should be revised to replace "issues" with "opportunities" in the last sentence.

The Commission discussed the wording with "model" in the charge. Ms. Ricaurte noted that the term model represents how a city and a college work together. The Commission decided to change the wording to "will serve as a model" instead. Councilor Jones noted that the framework of the Committee is already set up. Ms. Kessler stated that the functions of the Commission must also be created.

Ms. Kessler discussed the membership of the Commission. She stated that the Commission currently has representation from citizens, neighborhood groups, city councilors, students, business owners, and college faculty and staff. Mr. Robinson noted that the current setup works well. He noted that the original Commission, which was called the Town Gown Committee, had more members in high-level leadership roles and was not as productive as this Commission has been. Ms. Ricaurte noted that students need to be added to the Commission. Chair Cusack stated that he nominated a student and the President accepted the nomination. He noted that she will be a senior next year. Ms. Kessler noted that the charge only has long- and short-term recommendation and not medium. Ms. Ricaurte stated that the most important thing is setting up timeframes. Ms. Chadbourne stated that it is best to keep the charge broad.

The Commission agreed to keep membership as seven representatives from the city and seven representatives from the college. Ms. Kessler noted that terms for other Committees last three years with two consecutive terms but they can be shorter for some positions like the students. Ms. Kessler suggested having alternatives as well. Mr. Robinson asked if three years is intimidating for some professors. Ms. Kessler noted that resignation is allowed through the City Code. Mr. Masterson noted that three years goes along well with the cycle of the college. The Commission agreed upon three years for all members and 1 year for students. The Commission agreed to have two student representatives. Ms. Hrynowski stated concern with the length of terms for business representatives. Ms. Ricaurte noted that many people will be gone in the

summer. Mr. Robinson stated that three years can be the goal and individuals do not have to stay the whole time. Ms. Kessler stated that each year can take on a new charge depending on the level of activity and may affect the terms. She put a hold on the membership discussion. Co-Chair Cusack noted that he does not see the three year commitment as a problem, but could see concern with meeting frequency. Ms. Kayser noted that having a break in the summer might need to be an option. Ms. Ricaurte noted that the activity level should drive the meeting frequency.

Ms. Kessler read aloud the roles and functions of similar Committees like the Bicycle Pedestrian Pathways Advisory Committee and the Partner City Committee. She noted that the Commission could outline the roles of advocacy and education or an annual report. Ms. Kessler noted that the functions represent what the Commission is committing to as a group and will act as a guide.

Councilor Jones stated that a one-year report to the City Council could be the goal of the Commission. Ms. Ricaurte noted that on the college side, the yearly report to City Council can be submitted to the Keene Sentinel and presented on KSC's website. Chair Cusack noted that the communication with the College President is informal and not on a schedule. Ms. Kessler stated that one of the functions could be checking in with the President and the Mayor periodically. Ms. Ricaurte suggested a function to record the progress made on implementing the recommendations. Ms. Kessler stated that there should be a process developed for prioritizing strategies/recommendations. Chair Cusack stated that the Commission should also look back at the recommendations every year to monitor and evaluate progress.

Ms. Kessler inquired about public outreach and how it should be included into the functions and roles of the Commission. Mr. Robinson stated that the Commission has always been very good at holding forums etc. for the public. Councilor Jones suggested having a process for holding routine public forums. Ms. Ricaurte noted that the public needs to be involved and the Commission should have the flexibility of addressing items up as they come. Ms. Hrynowski noted that there are people at the College and in the community that can help facilitate discussions or public meeting. She continued, stating that housing is becoming a problem with a decrease in renting and that changes are occurring in the neighborhood that will affect the community and College. Ms. Hrynowski stated that landlords are choosing not to rent vacant properties that were once student rentals because they will not receive as much income as they did renting to students. Councilor Jones and Ms. Kessler noted that there are a few initiatives underway focused on the enhancing the Marlboro Street corridor and adjacent neighborhoods. She noted that the Marlboro Street Rezoning is currently in the public workshop phase and the next meeting will be held on May 2, 2016. Ms. Picard asked about the timeline. Ms. Kessler stated that it depends on how long the workshop/forum phase lasts, but it will be at least a few months before it is before City Council for a final vote.

Ms. Kessler noted that Ms. Picard will be going to the International Town Gown Association's annual conference in June and stated that there are many interesting models and workshops for review, specifically on housing. Ms. Picard stated that it is in Chicago from June 4<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Kessler asked Ms. Picard to share relevant information with the Commission upon her return. The Commission agreed that it would be beneficial to have Ms. Kessler attend. Ms. Picard stated that this is not her level of expertise and suggested that Ms. Kessler attend on behalf of the City

if possible. Ms. Kessler stated that she will look into the feasibility of this. Ms. Kessler noted that she has been researching some of the presenters and workshop information to see if any can serve as a resource for the City.

Ms. Kessler stated that she will create a list of draft functions from the discussion and asked Members to share edits the Forward handout.

**5. Adjourn**

Chair Cusack adjourned the meeting at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Lana Bluege, Minute-taker  
April 25, 2016

Reviewed and edited by:  
Tara Kessler, Planner  
May 16, 2016