

City of Keene
New Hampshire

COLLEGE/CITY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 5, 2015

4:00 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room

Members Present:

Bart Sapeta, Co-Chair
Emily Hague, Councilor/Co-Chair
Philip Jones, Councilor
Marcia Kayser
Chris Cusack
Dick Berry
Dottie Morris
Chris Hrynowski
Kelly Ricaurte

Staff Present:

Andy Robinson, KSC Liaison
Tara Germond, Planner
Rhett Lamb, Planning Director

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

Caitlin Licence
Margaret Rice
Cynthia Georgina
Paula Jessup
Ted McGreer

1) Call to order-

Co-Chair Hague called the meeting to order at 4:06 PM. Roll call was conducted.

2) Review Minutes – September 14, 2015

Ms. Kayser made a motion to adopt the minutes of September 14, 2015 as submitted. Co-Chair Sapeta seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3) Update on Release of Initial Report and Recommendations –

Co-Chair Hague reported the initial report has been posted to both the College and City websites. She was also on the radio (WKBK) this morning with Dan Mitchell talking about the report and taking questions from the public. Co-Chair Hague outlined the City process to be followed noting the report would go to City Council on October 15th where it will probably be referred to the PLD Committee (October 21st). The Co-Chairs will present the report to the PLD Committee and have experts present to answer questions. This will also be an opportunity for the public to

ask questions. Ms. Germond verified the NH Listens report is listed as an appendix item to the Commission's report on the website.

Co-Chair Sapeta reported he spoke with KSC President Huot regarding updates every six months/annually; he noted she is open to that. Co-Chair Sapeta asked if the Commission members felt this should be requested periodically or if they should wait to hear. Mr. Lamb suggested this be an item for discussion if the Commission wanted to continue as a permanent body. Co-Chair Sapeta suggested the Commission could make a decision on this sometime in the future.

Regarding the continuation of the Commission, Co-Chair Hague suggested the Commission figure out what worked about their structure in the process so far, and how do we make recommendations to the College/City about how to keep this thing going. Discussion ensued regarding timing and budget considerations for both the College and the City.

4) Commission Structure and Role –

Co-Chair Hague noted the discussion results from the previous meeting, and asked the Commission members what they would like to recommend going forward. In response to Mr. Berry, Co-Chair Hague noted items/issues could be added to the charge. Mr. Lamb suggested the Commission could include in their next report more detail on how to make the Commission a permanent committee as well as the recommendation for the Commission to continue. The following is a list of questions raised during the discussion.

- Should the Commission always be reactive or should it also be able to deal with specific problems?
- Should the current group size and meeting frequency remain the same if the Commission continues as a permanent body?
- Can the Commission ask to hold elections for officers or should they continue to be appointed? The recommendation was made to have both the Mayor/President get involved before making any specific recommendations.
- A recommendation was made to continue having a Councilor from the PLD Committee or Council-at-Large serve on the Commission.
- As students may not be as interested in the next issues of focus, can they be part-time members and attend meetings when the issues are relevant to students?
- A recommendation was made to connect with the larger group of the International Town and Gown Association.
- Should the Commission include representatives from Antioch University and River Valley Community College in the long-term?
- A recommendation was made to ensure people understand the authority or lack of authority the Commission has. This is an advisory committee under the City's authority.
- Can term limits of members be specified?
- Is this Commission endorsed by the NH State University system?

Co-Chair Sapeta summarized the items for the next discussion.

a. Inform potential new members of the amount of work involved with serving on this Commission.

- b. Do we solicit new members or wait for the Mayor/ KSC President to appoint them. It was noted that recommendations should go through the Mayor/ KSC President.
- c. Commission members should be mindful of the fiscal year budget processes for both the College and the City.
- d. Commission members should be mindful of timeframes for setting deadlines, especially with respect to finals and end of semester deadlines for KSC staff).
- e. Regarding staff support, it was recommended to keep what the Commission currently has at a minimum and/or possibly increase staff support.
- f. Set term limits for members.

The discussion concluded with Co-Chair Hague indicating she and Co-Chair Sapeta would work on recommendations to bring forward to the next meeting for discussion. She also noted they would gather additional input from the Mayor and President Huot. Mr. Berry requested the Mayor and President Huot be asked how this Commission can be most useful. Councilor Jones suggested the new City Manager and the College’s new Vice-President of Finance should also be brought up to speed.

5) Summary of Process with Timeline-

Co-Chair Hague noted this topic was placed on the agenda for discussion as the Commission begins to tackle its next issue areas. She reiterated the busy six month period (March-August) that ensued with the previous issues. Co-Chair Hague asked two questions: “What does the group want the next process to look like?” and “what does the group want to accomplish before the turnover of leadership in January?”

Mr. Berry clarified the next topics are parking/infrastructure and taxes. Co-Chair Sapeta noted how the two topics overlap. Ms. Kayser pointed out that so much has already been done with parking, and asked how this Commission would address the issue. Co-Chair Hague recommended returning to this topic when the Commission began discussion on agenda item #6. Commission members posed no objections to this recommendation.

Co-Chair Hague asked the Commission how they wanted to tackle the two remaining issue areas. She added that there is more information to be gathered on these topics. In response to Mr. Berry, Mr. Lamb indicated that he would have the Marlboro Street Rezoning Committee Report available for the next meeting. Discussion continued and Ms. Germond noted that both entities (College/City) already have plans addressing parking and infrastructure. She asked if this Commission would be offering more in the way of process between the College/City or reiterating some of the recommendations already mentioned. Co-Chair Hague clarified Ms. Germond’s comments, are we going to make hard recommendations or are we asking questions for consideration. Co-Chair Sapeta charted the process last used by the Commission, which is outlined in the graphic below).



Co-Chair Sapeta gave a brief outline of the steps taken during this process and the timeframes utilized. Mr. Lamb asked if this was the process the Commission wanted to continue with or was there a way to shorten the timeframe during some of the steps. He also asked if the Commission feels that any of these questions rise to the level of needing the NH Listens scale of evaluation/input. Discussion continued with members stating their opinions and areas of concern. Co-Chair Hague summarized possible roles the Commission could take as follows.

- Find areas of conflict between the College/City Master Plans and make recommendations about how to solve those conflicts. She cited Proctor Court as one example.
- Make recommendations that encourage culture changes that would help preserve the tax base.

Commission members were in agreement with these roles. Mr. Lamb refined the discussion by noting he feels there is a big difference, economically, between buying property and building a parking lot and buying property and building a wellness center. Commission members agreed they needed to know the status of the proposed Wellness Center at Gilbo Ave. Mr. Robinson suggested letting President Huot know that this information would impact the Commission's discussions on parking and the tax base. Discussion continued with Co-Chair Sapeta asking if there is something the Commission members would like to see prepared for the next meeting. Commission members agreed it would be beneficial to have someone there to discuss the College Master Plan, and also someone from the Keene Public Works Department to discuss infrastructure.

6) Discussion on Themes –

a. Recap of Issue Areas –

Ms. Germond reported that she sent out the requested materials in advance of this meeting (Master Plans and Parking Study). Continuing, she noted that she produced a summary of relevant recommendations or information from the KSC Campus Master Plan, the Keene Comprehensive Master Plan, and a 2010 Parking Study. In this summary she highlights areas of overlap between the documents and of common concern to the College and City. Ms. Germond indicated some of the key areas to focus in are the area of Gilbo Avenue where the proposed Wellness Center would be built, the area surrounding the KSC Campus on Winchester Street, Winchester Court, and the east side of Main Street near Proctor Court, how parking and infrastructure tie into student housing and campus/downtown connectivity, and the importance of safer bicycle, pedestrian, motor vehicle connection between proposed areas of development for students/KSC in the City and the KSC campus.

b. Parking and Infrastructure- Presentation

Commission members viewed and discussed a PowerPoint presentation narrated by Mr. Lamb and Ms. Germond entitled, "City of Keene Overview of Parking Challenges & Proposed Strategies". Ms. Germond noted Kurt Blomquist, Director of Public Works is interested in coming to discuss/present infrastructure with the Commission. Co-Chair Hague asked if it would be possible to have this presentation posted to the website. Ms. Germond noted she is working with the IT Department to create a page for this Commission on the City website. Ms. Germond also reported that meeting packets for this Commission are now posted to the City's agenda page. At this point discussion returned to agenda item #5.

c. Property and Tax Base – Not discussed at this time.

7) Other or New Business – Nothing at this time.

8) Public Comment – None at this time.

9) Adjourn – Commission members agreed to meet bi-weekly again until the Christmas holiday. The next meeting will be held on October 26, 2015, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM, in the 2nd floor Conference Room. Additional meeting dates are as follows:

- November 9, 2015
- November 23, 2015
- December 7, 2015

The next meeting will include an update on KSC's Master Plan and the Commission will hear from Kurt Blomquist, Director of Public Works.

Co-Chair Hague adjourned the meeting at 5:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Lou Sheats-Hall, Minute-taker
October 7, 2015

Edited by,
Tara Germond, Planner
October 16, 2015