

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

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

**Monday, November 27, 2017**

**4:00 PM**

**Keene State College Alumni Center**

**Members Present:**

Darryl Masterson, Co-Chair  
Bart Sapeta, Co-Chair, City Councilor  
Joshua Jarvis, Alternate  
Phil Jones, City Councilor  
Dick Berry  
Chris Cusack  
Paula Jessup  
Kelly Ricaurte  
Dottie Morris (left meeting early)  
Marcia Kayser  
Robin Picard  
Bryanna Weigel

**Staff Present:**

Tara Kessler, Planner  
Kim Schmidl-Gagne, KSC Liaison  
Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager

**Others Present:**

Kendall W. Lane, Mayor  
Dr. Melinda Treadwell, KSC President

**Members Not Present:**

Bettina Chadbourne, City Councilor

**1) Call to Order**

Co-Chair Sapeta called the meeting to order at 4:06 PM and roll call was conducted. Steve Fortier, Director of External Relations at KSC attended as a guest. In addition, Co-Chair Sapeta stated that Mayor Kendall Lane, The City Manager Elizabeth Dragon and KSC President Melinda Treadwell would be attending the meeting at a later time.

**2) Approval of Minutes – October 23, 2017**

Ms. Kayser noted that CCC member Bryana Weigel's name should be corrected to Bryanna Weigel under the Members Present List. In addition, Ms. Keyser's name should be corrected to Ms. Kayser under the Members Present List and Ms. Kim Schmidl-Gage should be corrected to Ms. Kim Schmidl-Gagne under the Staff Present List.

Councilor Jones made a motion to adopt the minutes from October 23, 2017 as amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Morris, which carried unanimously.

**3) Subcommittee Updates:**

- a) **Neighborhood Revitalization**
- b) **Inclusiveness & Diversity**

Chair Sapeta asked the CCC to take a few minutes to review the draft of “Building an Inclusive Community”. Ms. Kayser recommended that the advice and work of the subgroup continue with one individual willing and able to search for planned events who would bring the information to the CCC for the possibility of advocacy. She stated that the CCC did not need to become event planners. Ms. Jessup stated that the Downtown Revitalization Group has an event planner in place that may sit well on the CCC for event planning due to the importance of downtown.

Ms. Kayser suggested that this point of contact check around to the local colleges to see what is happening in the community. She stated that the CCC could help promote these events. Councilor Jones recommended inviting the event planner to the next Inclusiveness and Diversity Subcommittee meeting to see if this was something of interest to them.

Mr. Fortier stated that a big component of his job at KSC is the Red Fern Art Events, student activity events as well as watching the events in the larger community and reporting these events back to the KSC community. He noted that his Twitter account is specific to reporting this type of information. Mr. Fortier stated that he has also asked to join the Inclusiveness and Diversity Subcommittee.

Co-Chair Sapeta recommended that the CCC discuss these ideas with The Mayor, President Treadwell and The City Manager.

The City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon joined the meeting.

Councilor Jones asked what the focus of the KSC “The Silent Witness” was based on. Ms. Ricaurte replied that this was an anonymous online reporting tool for students to report crimes, incidents, or serious violations that may affect the health, safety, or welfare of the KSC community. Chair Sapeta recommended expanding the short term recommendation of “The Silent Witness Program” by adding a footnote that lists the link to the KSC website that explains the program.

Ms. Morris said that some of things that KSC wants people to report may not constitute a crime but may constitute a biased incident. She asked if the report should make that part clear or leave it as reporting a crime. Co-Chair Sapeta recommended changing the wording in the draft for reporting a bias related incident or crime, similar to KSC’s “The Silent Witness”. Ms. Morris and Mr. Jarvis will meet to determine the appropriate language for that recommendation in the draft.

Ms. Kessler recommended working with the KPD to see how they are currently handling reporting a crime or biased incident. She reported that she contacted Police Chief Russo and the KSC Liaison Officer to invite them to attend a CCC meeting to discuss how the citizens in Keene report an anonymous crime. Ms. Kessler suggested the CCC have prepared questions in advance of the meeting so she could share these with Police Chief Russo.

The Mayor Kendall Lane joined the meeting.

The City Manager introduced herself stating that she has been in local government for over twenty years, served the town of Plymouth for a number of years and worked as the City Manager for the City of Franklin for 9 years. She explained that she was currently working on getting an understanding of all of the resources available in the community as well as the initiatives of the

groups in the City. The City Manager stated that she was impressed with the amount of people in the community that take part in solving problems. She explained that she was present at this meeting to learn more about the CCC as well as learn about the charge of the CCC.

The Mayor introduced himself to the CCC, stating that he has been the Mayor for the last 6 years. He stated that he appreciated the amount of time and work of the CCC. Mayor Lane explained that the CCC was a model developed by himself and former KSC President Dr. Huot to model to other communities and colleges the best way to address relationships between colleges and municipalities. He stated that Keene to some degree is unique and one of the big aspects of the culture in Keene is the volunteer work. The Mayor noted that the City was also fairly self-reliant and is a stand alone community. He stated that a big part of the culture is the willingness and the desire of the people to participate in the governance of the community. Mayor Lane said that the contribution of everyone is incredibly valuable and appreciates the effort in being a part of the CCC going forward.

The CCC introduced themselves to The Mayor and The City Manager.

Chair Sapeta gave an overview of the CCC, stating that the CCC started in 2014 and there were four original topics that were given to the CCC by Dr. Huot and Mayor Lane. The topics consisted of Housing and Neighborhoods, Infrastructure and Parking, Citizenship and the Property and Tax Base. He said that there were two reports written and given to the City as recommendations from the CCC. Chair Sapeta reported that the CCC has two subgroups and one group was working on "Building an Inclusive Community".

Chair Sapeta explained that the other topic was Neighborhood Revitalization and that the subgroup was in the process of reviewing a robust draft. He stated that his idea is to continue the task force but to also have someone at the City level be more involved in the revitalization of neighborhoods, especially the neighborhoods that surround KSC.

Interim KSC President Melinda Treadwell joined the meeting.

President Treadwell introduced herself to the CCC, stating that her role is to provide leadership and support to KSC. She stated that KSC is in an aggressive time of action. She explained that there has been a sizeable structural gap between the enrollment decline and operational cost. President Treadwell reported that there is another meeting at KSC to discuss how to right size the college between now and July 1, 2018. She noted that KSC was in the midst of a lot of active conversation. She said that she feels positive and does not anticipate a continued enrollment decline. President Treadwell stated that the goal of KSC is to build back up and be a healthy part of this community. She stated that no one should be fearful that KSC's future is in question. President Treadwell noted that the size of the organization will continue to be smaller than what it was at one time given the reality of mathematics and demographic. She reiterated that KSC will continue to be a vibrant institution of higher education.

President Treadwell stated that she appreciates working with The Mayor on the CCC but also in a broader way of a partnership with the City. She stated that the City is instrumental to the success of KSC and believes that there is a shared mutual interest between the City and KSC. President Treadwell stated that her commitment to the CCC and to the broader community will continue.

The Mayor stated that the future of the City of Keene and the future of KSC are closely

intertwined. He explained that it is in the City's interest to do whatever anyone can do to assist KSC in being successful.

President Treadwell stated that there have been a number of open houses at the college and has heard from students that there is a desire from potential students and parents to have a tour of Keene be included in the open house. She explained that the open houses are showcasing the academic and student engagement experience of the campus. The tours will now include a tour to show the uniqueness and proximity to such a quintessential New England town. It was reported that positive feedback from the tours has been received from the potential students and parents.

President Treadwell reported that as of last week KSC was at 168 accepted students, which is ahead of last year. She credited this to the efforts of the enrollment management team, admissions, faculty, staff and engagement from the City of Keene. She reiterated that KSC is hopeful and owes a lot of this to the City of Keene. The Mayor stated that it needed to be recognized that the campus to KSC is the entire City of Keene and when students come to Keene they are experiencing the entire community. In addition, their education is also about being part of a larger community.

Chair Sapeta asked President Treadwell if she had a recommendation on restructuring the CCC or if the CCC should be focused on a different charge. President Treadwell stated at the last CCC meeting KSC was getting ready for the Pumpkin Festival. She reported that there was a debriefing this afternoon with the Keene Police Department and the Keene Fire Department about the experience of The Pumpkin Festival and planning for next year, assuming the event will continue. President Treadwell stated that she mentioned at the last CCC meeting to think about ways to celebrate events such as the Fall Festival and to also coordinate these events more efficiently. She suggested building a calendar of events that would be shared between KSC and the City. She said that her idea is to collectively shepherd these events and leverage the efforts of the City and KSC. President Treadwell stated that these events would declare what it means to be a citizen of Keene and also to celebrate the region's values in a community spirited way.

She stated that there may be a way to charge an off shoot of the CCC in events planning. President Treadwell stated that she would love for KSC to be a part of a clearer calendar in order to put more energy behind a smaller amount of regional celebrations.

The Mayor stated that there has not been an opportunity to meet with President Treadwell and The City Manager to discuss the charge of the CCC going forward. He discussed the fact that there are a lot of public activities within the community, many of which have a direct bearing on KSC. The Mayor suggested that KSC, the City and The Chamber of Commerce get together quickly to develop a calendar of events that the City will license. In addition, he recommended putting a timeline on the licensing requirements for these events. He noted that it would not be in the best interest to have all of these events fall on the same weekend and to spread these events out. The Mayor also said that the amount of volunteers needed for these events would need to be looked into and would take time to evaluate.

Another issue that The Mayor discussed was issue of diversity and making Keene a more welcoming community. He stated that there are a lot of groups that are working on a similar type of topic. The groups noted were the Martin Luther King, Jr./Jonathan Daniels Committee, the Jonathan Daniels Social Justice Center and the Historical Society. The Mayor stated that there was no real coordination between groups and there was a strong need to develop coordination in order to be more efficient. He emphasized the importance of making Keene a welcoming community where people want to stay and be a part of this community.

The City Manager stated that she thinks a lot of different groups are working on great things. She stated that what she sees as a challenge is allocating staff resources and prioritizing in terms of capacity. She stated that when there is an organization taking the lead on a task her preference is to work with that organization instead of creating another subgroup or another committee. The challenge is the communication between all of these groups. The City Manager reported that she has been trying to identify who these groups are and how the City may play a role without creating a larger burden on a group of volunteers or staff members.

The City Manager stated that the coordination of back to back events costs the City and College a lot of money. She stated that it was a balancing act because the events are important to local businesses and the downtown area. It was noted that there needed to be a better effort to coordinate these events. She referenced the Fall Festival, the Monadnock Pumpkin Festival and The Pumpkin Festival all held within a short time frame.

She reported that last week a subcommittee of the City Council evaluated The Pumpkin Festival in terms of cost at the City level. She stated that this was the first time anyone there could ever remember evaluating the entire cost. It was reported that the cost of The Pumpkin Festival at the City level was close to \$50,000.00 and \$19,000.00 was billed out for the event. The City Manager said that in order to make informed decisions the City needs to have all of this information available to become more efficient.

President Treadwell reported that they have analyzed the cost associated with the Pumpkin Festival and that amount would approach \$20,000.00 and did not include 150 hours of volunteer contributions. She noted that this was a costly single event that served fewer than 400 people. President Treadwell stated that this does not mean the event should not be held but there needs to be a way for the City and KSC to be close collaborators on a smaller slate of events.

President Treadwell moved the conversation to the two main areas that are of concern. She stated that this was diversity and equity issues. It was noted that these issues withheld KSC from attracting and retaining talented staff and students. President Treadwell voiced her concern that this was an issue in the community right now and some students struggle when they leave campus. She stated that this was something that needs to be looked at as a community. She explained that when students have hate or disrespect directed toward them on campus the college can attend to the incident but when this occurs off campus this is a challenge for the City and College. She stated that she was excited to hear what CCC has discovered and would recommend.

Another area of concern President Treadwell mentioned is the expense of events and restructuring the calendar of events in the community. She noted that students would benefit from these cultural experiences from the events held in the community.

The Mayor moved the discussion to off campus housing. He stated that off campus housing was an issue and questioned what off campus housing would look like in the future. The Mayor explained that during the time when KSC was expanding the student population was spreading on the east side of Main Street. He stated that these neighborhoods were being converted into student housing and due to the decrease in student population and the desire of students to live closer to campus has reversed this trend. The neighborhoods, he stated, particularly the east side neighborhoods, are perhaps not suitable for family housing. He stated this becomes an issue if KSC would like to have faculty living closer to campus and the housing available is not suitable for them to live. The Mayor noted that these issues are happening across the country. He said

that his hope for the CCC is to research what other campuses are doing across the country that are in same transition and come up with a recommendation. He noted that the City has developed a new zoning ordinance for the east side that encourages housing rehabilitation. In addition, he stated that the City is also looking into RSA 79E and Economic Revitalization Zones to make certain neighborhoods within the City attractive to invest in.

The City Manager added that the purpose of the new zone is to encourage more types of economic development. For example, converting some buildings to commercial on the lower level and housing on top will hopefully encourage invest in that area. She said one of things she has taken a look at is the breakdown of assessments of what is taxable and not taxable. The City Manager said that one of the things she is focused on is getting more taxable type properties. She explained that a certain percentage of properties are going to remain nontaxable and that is one of reasons why the City is looking for programs to encourage private investment to turn into tax dollars. The City Manager stated that she is curious to see what is going to happen with the current constructions and conversions that are creating additional housing stock in the community. She explained that this was all about supply and demand and questioned what is going to happen if the City and KSC is not growing. She questioned what will happen to housing stock and the neighborhoods that already have an issue with housing stock. She noted that this was something that needed to keep an eye on. She stated that eventually the market will take care of itself and that the City will be able to fulfill that need of additional housing stock.

The City Manager moved the conversation toward the lack of manufacturing in the area and suggested looking at other types of business the City could attract. She noted that the City is sort isolated and separated from surrounding areas and that it is a challenge trying to recruiting people to the area who may feel that separation. The City Manager stated that the City was looking into working with Cheshire TV to do a recruitment video for the police department and then a video marketing the community as a whole.

The Mayor stated that the City needs to find ways in which upper classmen at KSC become more integrated into the community before graduation so they are more willing to remain in the community after graduation. He said providing entainment, housing and jobs is all part of that equation. The Mayor noted that there were currently 500 plus within the community that are going unfilled and that the City has to take care of the businesses already in the City. He stated that the solution is to ensure that the graduates of KSC have the capabilities to fill these open positions. If not, he stated that businesses will not stick around if these jobs cannot be filled.

The Mayor explained that the housing behind the old Middle Scholl is part of the effort to recruit millennials to come to the area. He noted that this was part the reason why the project was approved.

Chair Sapeta thanked Mayor Lane, The City Manager and President Treadwell for their comments and comprehensive review. He stated that one of the things the CCC has been successful at is bringing people together from a variety of different backgrounds and working those connections outside of the Commission. Chair Sapeta opened the meeting up to the members to ask questions.

Mr. Cusack stated that there is a group of senior capstone students that are working on housing topics within the City and their reports will be available in the next week.

Ms. Picard stated that she would like to see the CCC continue focusing on neighborhood

revitalization and the need for students to feel welcomed. She stated that there were very simple low cost methods to start that messaging. Ms. Picard recommended having college paraphernalia in the downtown shops for sale with stickers in the windows with the KSX mascot. In addition, she recommended having special promotions for students and banners welcoming back students on move in day. She said that in time the culture would change with residents.

Ms. Picard also suggested looking at certain City Ordinances so neighbors feel that buildings are maintained and underage parties are addressed by the City and KSC. She stated that all of this will help change the culture of the neighborhoods.

Ms. Morris added that there is a need to communicate to the students that this is not a transitional experience and that this is their home. She noted that people treat homes differently than a temporary place. She suggested establishing that transition from the beginning with students.

Ms. Jessup asked who is responsible for the banners that hang along Main Street. Mayor Lane replied that it was the Rotary Club. President Treadwell stated that it was a great idea to design some banners around Opening Weekend, Parents Weekend, Alumni Weekend and Athletics at KSC. In addition, Ms. Jessup recommended having signage on Route 101 and to advertise the amazing athletic field at KSC.

Mr. Berry stated that if there are no jobs available in the City that can make use of the knowledge the graduating student has then the student is not going to stay here. He stated this was for high school students as well as the college students and suggested that someone from the school board be included in these discussions. Ms. Jessup asked what industries were participating in the job fairs or placements at KSC. President Treadwell replied that she was wanted to incorporate a workforce pipeline.

She stated that her recommendation is to identify 15 businesses to work with to target computer science graduates, product design graduates, and other graduates to grow the workforce pipeline.

Mr. Fortier reported that he met with Senator Jeanne Shaheen this morning along with Phil Suter and Danielle Henderson from KSC to discuss workforce development. He reported that New Hampshire was number one in the country with the highest student debit. He stated that was one of the contributing factors that play a large role in who is able to enter workforce in the Monadnock Region.

Ms. Picard stated that she tried to develop a priority rental housing programs with landlords to get them to start upgrading. She noted that there was a lack of cooperation with the landlords so she decided to try a different option. She reported that KSC, Code Enforcement and the Fire Department developed a two credit course at KSC. She explained that there 12 students that will go out with Code Enforcement and see the work of Code Enforcement, the Fire Department and the Police Department. She stated that they are doing this in terms of student rental housing and goal is to have students become better educated about student housing and also be advocates to have the landlords to bring up housing standards. She noted that this was a PILOT program with the intention for students to start connecting the dots.

Ms. Schmidl-Gagne stated there is a need for new businesses in the area. She stated that there needs to be more opportunities for students to be able to explore ways to start new businesses. Mayor Lane stated the employment of the future is developing small businesses and giving them the opportunity to grow.

Chair Sapeta asked if there are any resources available from the City or KSC. Mayor Lane replied that The City Manager, President Treadwell and himself will have to determine what resources are available and come back to the CCC with what is feasible.

Ms. Kayser asked if Antioch would be involved in any of these discussions. President Treadwell encouraged River Valley Community College, Antioch and any other higher education community in the area to work with the City because it is vital to the economic future of this region.

Mr. Fortier announced two upcoming events at KSC. The first event is a meeting with USNH Chancellor Leach on December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30-9:30 in the Alumni Center with prior registration for required at The Chamber of Commerce. The second event is Mapping Keene that is held at the Red Fern Arts take place in March/ April 2018, inviting participants from the campus and community to explore and preserve their experiences of the common, the familiar, and the gems of the everyday experience in Keene to generate a greater sense of place, of community, of what makes Keene special. Prior registration is required by contacting the Red Fern Arts at KSC.

**5.) 2018 Meeting Calendar**

Ms. Kessler asked the CCC to determine if they would be meeting on December 26, 2017 or if the meeting would be postponed. In addition, she stated that the CCC would need to adopt the 2018 CCC meeting calendar. Co-Chair Masterson made a motion postpone the December 26, 2017 meeting and to adopt the 2018 CCC meeting calendar. Ms. Jessup seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**6.) New and Other Business**

None at this time.

**7.) Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, January 22, 2017 at 4:00 PM in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room of the City Hall.

**8.) Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Co-Chair Sapeta adjourned the meeting at 5:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Jennifer Clark, Minute Taker