

**CITY OF KEENE  
NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, January 22, 2018

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present

Gary Spykman, Chairman  
Douglas Barrett, Vice-Chair  
Mayor Kendall Lane  
Councilor George Hansel  
Pamela Russell Slack  
Chris Cusack  
Nathaniel Stout

Staff:

Rhett Lamb, Asst. City Manager/Planning  
Director  
Michele Chalice, Planner

Members Not Present:

Andrew Bohannon  
Martha Landry

**I. Call to order – Roll Call**

Chair Spykman called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and roll call was taken.

**II. Minutes of previous meeting** – December 18, 2017 Planning Board Meeting

A motion was made by Mayor Kendall Lane to accept the December 18, 2017 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor George Hansel and was unanimously approved.

**III. Discussion**

Planning Board Lighting Standards

Planner Michele Chalice addressed the Board first and stated she was first going to talk about why the City regulates lighting and the intent of the current standards as well as what staff has been experiencing on this issue. Ms. Chalice stated the first reason to regulate lighting is for public safety, the other reasons are light pollution and energy efficiency. The intent of the lighting standards is to design lighting with considerations for the setting, use, architecture, landscaping, existing trees, neighboring properties, to avoid very bright or very dark areas, to make sure objects appear close to natural color as possible, and to make sure light does not spill over or cause glare. As well, to allow flexibility in mounting heights in order to achieve lighting that is compatible with the scale of the surrounding architecture and a site that is aesthetically pleasing, encourage the use of sensor or time controlled lights for security lighting and for energy savings, preserve the rural character of the community in non-urbanized areas, encourage use of technology and encourage energy efficiency.

Ms. Chalice asked what type of experiences Board members have had with lighting in the community. Ms. Russell Slack stated her experience is that every sidewalk is too low as well as Main Street. Mr. Stout stated he has the opposite concern with invasive lighting in a prior neighborhood he used to live. Vice-Chair Barrett talked about the parking lot off Gilbo Avenue which is extremely bright and the other area is on Page Street where street lighting is scarce (just two lights for the entire street).

Chair Spykman stated his experience has been the City's standards have been on older style lighting, hence have had to grant more exceptions.

Mayor Lane agreed the sidewalks are not well lit and the City has been cutting down trees to eliminate this problem. He noted the City did cut back on a number of street lights and set new standards for street lights but added once you walk away from a street light it makes it impossible to see and then get blinded at the next street light.

Councilor Hansel stated with LED there is a broader spectrum of color and felt this is something that would need to be considered as well. Dr. Cusack stated the biggest concerns are the sidewalks which is a safety issue.

Ms. Chalice stated staff is often criticized about the existing standards as to how outdated they are. The existing standards do not account for new technology, and there are new ways of regulating lighting; she referred to a method called “BUG” Back light, Uplight and Glare rating system. Ms. Chalice went on to say staff has often been told the City’s gas canopy standards are not adequate and referred to some of the sites throughout Keene, where waivers from the current standards have permitted for higher lighting levels.

Given new technologies the lighting plans the City has relied upon might not be as reliable as originally thought. What staff is seeing is after a plan gets approved by the Board several have gone through value engineering where the applicant is offered lighting fixtures at a reduced cost. These fixtures may not achieve the lighting levels the Board approved.

Foot candle recommendation – the current standard calls for an average and a minimum but we might be at a point where maximum might need to be considered, where the City might not want lighting to be over a certain limit.

CCT and Blue Light Health Concerns – Ms. Chalice stated the medical association is raising biological concerns about blue light. Ms. Chalice referred to her handout which talks about the various light zones. The City has a maximum limit of 3,000 watts on its street lights.

Terminology:

BUG - Back light, Uplight and Glare

CCT – Correlated Color Temperature (to be specific about the type of light put out by a lamp).

Fixture – The actual device secured to the wall or ceiling.

Foot Candle – Unit of measurement of light that exists on a surface.

Glare – A light entering the eye directly from a fixture.

IES – Illuminating Engineering Society of North America.

Lighting Zone – An area within which lighting standards apply.

Light Pollution – The adverse effects of light.

Illumine – Amount of light from a fixture.

Mayor Lane asked whether Ms. Chalice has any examples of lighting standards that have been adopted particularly in the northeast. Ms. Chalice stated she has a list of about seven communities; she noted for instance Portsmouth is taking the zone issue to an entirely different level – they have a maximum illumination level per acre for each of several different zoning districts. She indicated she could bring back examples of what has been recommended by the lighting designers to the next meeting.

Councilor Hansel asked for clarification as to lighting inspections done by the City for compliance hearing purposes. Mr. Lamb stated staff has not measured lighting using a light

meter unless there have been concerns raised by residents regarding a design. If there is a dramatic change to the fixtures, staff will advise the applicant of such an issue. Councilor Hansel suggested staff look at how other communities are enforcing their lighting standards.

Chair Spykman asked how useful the lighting plans that come before the Board really are; unless the Board is planning on pursuing a compliance hearing, it is really estimating the lighting.

Mr. Stout stated what he would like to see is better education for homeowners and more sensitivity between homeowners. He felt technological changes would suggest this as important.

Councilor Hansel liked the idea of having different zones; different neighborhoods being able to use different type of lighting depending on their need seemed interesting to him.

Mayor Lane stated he does not disagree that the standard needs to keep up with the technology needs. He stated he would however, like to see how other northeast community standards.

Vice-Chair Barrett noted to the push back issue Ms. Chalice had raised and asked whether this could be because Keene's standards seem to be more comprehensive which consultants are not used to seeing. Ms. Chalice agreed there is an element of this but does not get the impression Keene's standards are incorrect, it is just that there could be some flexibility. Mr. Lamb noted if there are going to be standards drafted it needs to be current and keep up with technology. Chair Spykman pointed out with LED you are able to have controlled lighting and Keene's standards don't take that into account.

Councilor Hansel talked about his visit to Portland, Maine where most light fixtures have some sort of artistry to them and wasn't sure whether this would be something Keene would consider for the downtown. Chair Spykman asked "at what point is it light, signage or art?" Mr. Lamb noted if for every third application a waiver is being granted, then Keene's regulations are likely out of date.

Dr. Cusack asked if lighting was to be considered for the bike trails whether they would follow the same standards as used for Main Street. Mr. Lamb stated street lighting and lighting for trails are not subject to Planning Board review – this is a decision made by the Council and Public Works. He stated he wasn't sure of the standards, but lighting is being considered for the trails in the spring. This concluded discussion on this item.

Ms. Chalice suggested she bring back to the Board the different options used by other communities in New Hampshire.

#### **IV. New Business**

Ms. Russell Slack brought up the issue about Broadband – At a small business meeting recently the issue was raised as to why broadband was not available at Hillside Village and why the Planning Board had not raised this issue. The Chairman felt this might be a worthwhile discussion in front of the Joint Planning Board/PLD Committee. Mr. Stout felt the Planning Board should be in on this discussion. He added the State Senator is working on a statute relative to this matter.

Mayor Lane stated the provider of broadband would determine what broadband is available and customers have very little input; Fairpoint and Time Warner have control of coverage in this area and will provide with what they feel a community needs. As far as Hillside Village is concerned

there is a secure line for C&S that runs right through the middle of that project and Verizon has made it very clear this line is dedicated to C&S. There was also another dedicated secure line installed by Time Warner just for Smith's Medical. Hillside Village can always install its own line at a cost of close to a million dollars but the ability for the Planning Board to control what broadband a development could have is non-existent.

Mr. Lamb agreed this is not really a Planning Board item but it instead a long range planning item for the City. There are groups working on this and it was a top priority in the economic development action plan. Asst. City Manager Rebecca Landry has been working with the City Manager on this as well. He felt there are others who are better suited to handle this item. Mr. Stout asked it would be appropriate for the Board to put forward a recommendation on the need for better broadband. Chair Spykman stated this is something that is handled at the Joint Meeting level and hence did not feel it could be agendized but a presentation on the item could be requested.

Mr. Lamb stated staff could work with the Chairs of both bodies to get this on the agenda for the Joint session.

**V. Director Reports**

None

Chair Spykman noted Election of Officers should have been an item on the agenda for this month.

A motion was made by Nathaniel Stout to nominate the three existing officers for Chair, Vice-Chair and Steering Committee member. The motion was seconded by George Hansel and was unanimously approved.

**VI. Upcoming Dates of Interest – February 2018**

Planning Board Meeting – February 26, 6:30 PM

Planning Board Steering Committee – February 13, 12:00 PM

Joint PB/PLD Committee – February 12, 6:30 PM

Planning Board Site Visits – February 21, 8:00 AM – To Be Confirmed

On a unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Krishni Pahl  
Minute Taker

Reviewed by: Rhett Lamb, Planning Director  
Edits, L. Langella, M. Chalice