

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held Thursday, July 16, 2020. The Honorable Mayor George S. Hansel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Mayor Hansel read into the record the Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04. He continued the members of the City Council would be participating remotely. The Mayor asked that during the roll call for attendance, each Councilor identify their on-line presence and if there are others with them in the room. Roll called: Stephen L. Hooper, Michael J. Remy, Janis O. Manwaring, Michael Giacomo, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Gladys Johnsen, Terry M. Clark, Raleigh C. Ormerod, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Catherine I. Workman, Mitchell H. Greenwald, Kate M. Bosley and Thomas F. Powers were present. A motion by Councilor Powers to accept the minutes from the July 2, 2020 regular meeting was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor. The Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Hansel reminded the City Council's summer vacation schedule will start with the cancelation of the Standing Committees for Wednesday, August 12, 2020 and Thursday, August 13, 2020 and the cancelation of City Council meeting on August 20, 2020. The Standing Committees for Wednesday, August 26, 2020 and Thursday, August 27, 2020 will remain as scheduled. Mayor Hansel announced a fiscal policy workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 6:00 PM.

#### PRESENTATION – ARTS AND CULTURE CORRIDOR CONCEPT – MONADNOCK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mayor Hansel welcomed Arthur Robert, Monadnock Economic Development Corporation Executive Director.

Mr. Robert indicated that he had a brief presentation to introduce the arts and cultural corridor concept which summarizes the results of the conceptual design and study proposed for downtown Keene. Mr. Robert indicated that this presentation will build on conversations that were started prior to his tenure in his role as Executive Director of MEDC in which he started in April 2020. Mr. Robert indicated that he is a career economic development professional with utility, non-profit and government industries at both the State and local levels and most recently served as Community and Economic Development Director for the City of Framingham MA, which has about 70,000 residents and approximately 2500 business establishments. He continued that MEDC is looking forward to finding a path ahead for one or more elements in the arts and cultural corridor concept and make it a reality.

Mr. Robert continued with providing background on his employment with MEDC and previous experiences in the economic development industry. Mr. Robert provided a summarization of the planning and design concepts. Mr. Robert indicated that this plan was developed by planning and design professionals from Stevens and Associates based in Vermont and supported by a large contingency of community outreach and engagement that tested ideas, developed questions and strengthened the overall thinking, which led to a preferred conceptual design. Mr. Robert

summarized the preferred conceptual design by pointing to elements which comprise the corridor combined with connectivity. This concept will create a destination that provides much more value than the sum of its parts. He indicated that he would summarize some of the challenges that will need to be addressed to move the project forward. His presentation will also speak to some work already underway and the presentation will end with some next steps.

Mr. Roberts stated that arts and culture has an important and impactful presence in Cheshire County. He pointed to a number of different studies and most recently a conservative study focused on Cheshire County completed in 2017. That study revealed 146 business in the arts and culture industry directly employed 507 people and supported well over 600. These businesses had an economic impact that generated over \$18 million in total industry expenditures and paid out household incomes in excess \$12.7 million and drove events that combined generated well over \$5 million in event related spending.

Mr. Robert continued by indicating that Keene's downtown is home to a number of different important venues and activities, it is certainly an attractive destination for the region and because of what is there and what can be added it has great potential for new attractions and amenities. He reflected his perspective as a newcomer, indicating that there is open space available just off the downtown for either development or appropriate activities and venues or placement of activities and/or art to make the area much more interesting and attractive. He continued indicating that Keene State College is an asset because of the student base and creativity flow and its ability to partner to make great things happen.

Mr. Robert shared that his vision for creating an arts and cultural corridor is to create a destination where an attractive and highly walkable corridor along the Cheshire Rail Trail connects art venues, arts installations, and activated public space for performance venues. He indicated that this will create a vibrant corridor that can generate broader impacts benefiting residents and business. Such a destination will add value to residents but it is important that an activated space that reflects creativity and energy will also be attractive to the creative economy businesses. He continued that web companies, design firms, marketing organizations, video and gaming businesses and their employees thrive in a dynamic urban setting that is marked by creativity and activity. He indicated that he believes that an arts and culture corridor can contribute to creating that atmosphere to attract those types of firms and businesses into the office space available in the area. He indicated that they are pursuing a design that leverages much of what we already have here. A great foundation of businesses and attractions are captured in the downtown railroad heritage area of the Cheshire Rail Trail which runs east to west. There is a great base of downtown arts and culture and community organizations. He continued that in talking with MEDC board members there was indication of long term commitment in the community to building a vital downtown which has extended thirty years into the past, providing a foundation for next steps, such as an arts and cultural corridor. He continued that they want to this well and right by creating of a number of venues, a number of attractions, and exciting and interesting activated public space where people will want to be. It will be a destination of value exceeding the sum of the parts because it will have individual venues connected together in an attractive space where people will want to be.

He indicated that prior to his arrival the former MEDC Executive Director, Jack Dugan had many conversations with lots of people to obtain input and build interest to create a foundation for defining what an arts and cultural corridor could look like. We have an opportunity to take this idea to the next level by engaging with professionals planning support through Stevens and Associates to further refine those ideas and portray those ideas but more importantly take those ideas out into the community to share them, gain feedback, test ideas and obtain questions to finally produce a stronger preferred recommended conceptual design. In September 2019 that public engagement produced a number of elements community “walkshops” led by our consulting team that walked residents and others around the downtown area to point out what is possible and get people to physically look at space and by that physical interaction yield some helpful feedback and questions.

Mr. Robert continued that the Hannah Grimes Center hosts the annual Radically Rural event. Last year they had an event that focused on the idea of the arts & culture corridor, providing another venue to share with not just residents, but visitors throughout the United States, and get feedback on what people thought made sense or questions they had and opportunities to strengthen the concept. In October 2019, the consultant team hosted a community workshop pop-up event that deployed examples of what could be part of activated space in the downtown in the arts & culture corridor area. Based on people being able to see and experience it they got some fact-based feedback. Instead of just reacting to a PowerPoint slide, people were able to see, touch, and respond. The team hosted a design charrette in December that pulled a lot of the ideas and feedback together and then a more conventional community planning setup that laid out the charts, and people had markers to mark up the maps based on their questions and suggest improvements. One piece that was not formally part of the process was the community engagement that Beth Wood, the Downtown Coordinator, did with businesses on a one-on-one basis, during this period as she did her work in the downtown. She met and talked with many downtown business owners to explain the concept and ideas, and gain feedback. The feedback she provided informed the process and helped drive the results.

Mr. Robert continued that what resulted from all of that work and all that feedback was the creation of a preferred conceptual design. He indicated that it is summarized in the slide. It portrays an 11-acre site, ranging from School Street in the west to the Monadnock Food Co op in the east, connecting a number of different elements that can make up this corridor. It is connected by a walkable corridor ranging east/west across Main Street and ultimately through an amphitheater on the eastern edge near the Monadnock Food Co op. It is an 11-acre opportunity comprised of multiple elements, multiple parcels, all resting in a complex urban setting. There are multiple parcels and multiple owners that need to be considered. This concept is ultimately put into a downtown area that reflects decades of planning and prioritization around important long-term needs, ranging from managing traffic on Main St. to managing pedestrian flow and encouraging walkability and foot traffic, and planning utilities that support all of these.

He continued that this conceptual design includes a number of elements. In his review of the conceptual design study, he identified the set of elements shown in the slide. The possible components that together will make up an impactful arts & culture corridor include a covered

pavilion that could host different activities and events, which KSC has expressed great interest in and can certainly become a destination venue. It can anchor the corridor and encourage people to walk from one end of the corridor to the other. Other possible components include a skate park, which has enthusiastic fundraising efforts to design and construct a new one, which would be a destination of particular interest to young people; artists' "live/work/gallery" space, which has two possible locations – either rehabilitation of a building on Federal Street or new construction off of railroad land on the eastern edge of the corridor; a small performance venue (amphitheater) near the Co-op, which will be complete with the Co-op's expansion and provide another space for people to gather for various performances; and a small theater that the Colonial Theater has expressed interest in.

Mr. Robert continued that it is important to create a walkable corridor. There are two components: first, creating a walkable Gilbo Ave. corridor to School St. There is a separate section where Gilbo Ave. meets Main St., and crossing Main St. through railroad land. There is an opportunity to define that space and create an attractive walkable corridor and activate it with a number of different elements – overhead café lighting, railroad cars that can host small performances or pop-up stores, public art installations, and more. People have expressed interest in water features, fire pits, and other places constructed that encourage people to meet and gather. Wayfinding signage is important so people can find these different elements and find their way from one end of the corridor to the other.

He continued that critically, the conceptual design recommends a defining monument or marker to pull together the corridor across Main St. heading to the east and the west. It calls for an interesting idea, which is to place a modern arch across Main St. as a way to complement and contrast the existing, traditional, New England town architecture everyone enjoys. Last but not least, the design recommends creating a non-profit organization that can oversee operation of the corridor; manage scheduling of the different venues; manage occupancy for the different arts and culture sites, including the artists live/work/gallery space; maintain and ensure upkeep, not just of the corridor, but of its many elements, like lighting, water features, fire pits, and so on and so forth; and also play an important role in coordinating the maintenance and placement of public art. In this conceptual design is a complex opportunity of interrelated elements that each require different forms of attention, in terms of defining, developing, and making real.

Mr. Robert continued that they have developed a path forward for what this could look like. The conceptual design study pointed to, but certainly did not help resolve, a number of challenges. This slide summarizes a few of them. Certainly, funding is critical, and as he said before, different venues or elements have different costs and different revenue streams, so they will have to figure out how to make each piece of the corridor work. They will have to look at them differently. Over time, MEDC has been very effective accessing resources, including federal ones, to help finance projects. They expect that the other forms of incentives they will have to figure out how to tap to bring into these projects. He anticipates that there will be a role for philanthropy in all this and ways that they have not seen with MEDC projects in the past. The preferred conceptual design identifies where different corridor elements could be located, but those locations need to be finalized, and ultimately, site control needs to be assumed in order to

move forward. There are lots of property owners, and the property owners of today might not be the property owners of tomorrow, so there will have to be a lot of follow-up conversations.

He continued that to make a project like this work, City support will be very important. The one decision that MEDC looks forward to working through is the idea of closing Gilbo Ave. between Main St. and James St., which is a relatively short stretch. Closing it would maximize the creation of a space that can be activated and be the center of the arts & culture corridor. That said, they recognize that there are challenges that come with that. That road does manage traffic today, and they would like to figure out a partnership with the City to find a way to close that portion of the street and manage traffic. They know there are private property owners today that rely on access to Gilbo Ave. They would like to find a way for them to be successful without relying on that access. It is an important project element that they think will require some attention.

He continued that certainly, because of the funding challenges involved, they hope there will be opportunities to leverage Chapter 79-E, and any form of simplification of the permitting process to lower the time and costs associated with getting a project started would be appreciated. They look forward to taking advantage of the Building Better Together initiative that comes together.

He continued that another challenge is determining the feasibility of the artists' live/work/gallery space. They are talking about new construction and renovation and they have to understand what the revenue streams are associated with renting that space and how that relates to construction, as well as ongoing operations. This is a new area for MEDC. They look forward to addressing those feasibility questions as part of the predevelopment process.

Mr. Robert continued that given all of this, they have to be sure that they are working in alignment with existing City initiatives. As the City Council knows, MEDC has been working closely with the City and KSC to define, fund, and ultimately build the business partnership hub – essentially a training facility that can bring together academics and precision manufacturing leaders to create new opportunities to train existing workers and the next generation of workers, college students and others. That project generates impacts and challenges that they have to manage and they want to move forward together with the City on all of that.

There have been conversations about creating an intermodal center in downtown Keene, which would include structured parking. The location and function of such a facility are both very important, and where that facility would ultimately be sited would have implications for how they would organize and move forward on the corridor. They want to stay in close touch. Main St. planning continues and there is ongoing interest in improving utility infrastructure and they want to account for all of that, which they believe there is a way to do.

Mr. Robert stated that there are some corridor elements that are moving forward; they have the opportunity to be built upon and connected to an attractive, walkable corridor. The amphitheater will soon be completed as the Co-op is complete, creating a new location for performances, on the eastern edge of the 11-acre corridor. The Colonial Theater is moving forward on establishing a new small theater as well as renovating their existing one. That is an important draw at the center of downtown, and the center of what could be an arts & culture corridor. It is a great asset

and part of the foundation to build on. Also, the skate park interest has grown. There has been substantial fundraising and interest in moving on to the design phase. That will become an important draw for young people and an important element of the total project.

He continued that up until this point, they have been talking about a conceptual design. He has shared the preferred path forward tonight. The challenge before everyone is to determine a path forward from concept to reality. They have done a lot of work but there is still a lot of outreach necessary. It is important to continue the conversation with a number of audiences, most importantly, the City Council. This presentation is the first in a series that will get them from where they are today to a path forward. MEDC intends to follow up with arts and culture and downtown groups to share where they are and get feedback. They have begun to and will continue to coordinate with City staff, through the Property and Development Committee. He thanks the City Manager for inviting them into that process and making that team of City leaders available to the MEDC, to provide feedback and challenge their work in ways that will ultimately lead to a stronger final product. An important part of that is assessing whether there is a way of closing Gilbo Ave., assessing the feasibility of artists' live/work/gallery space, and considering all that he described earlier, and coming back with a realistic implementation plan that orders progress on different project elements in ways that will best support the City's many objectives, but also in a way that will be sustainable and successful.

Mr. Robert stated that he wanted to close with a few points. Today we live in the very near term, with a pandemic that has put us in the kind of situation where we communicate electronically and are pushed apart, all thinking about tomorrow and the next day. Everyone looks forward to getting past this pandemic, maybe with a combination of vaccines and herd immunity. That is at some point in the future. Knowing that, what we have before us is an opportunity to plan strategically and implement deliberately in a way that will help prepare the downtown for the next level and create a new destination that is attractive and vital. It will create value that is more than just the sum of its parts. MEDC looks forward to working with all parties to make that happen.

The Mayor asked if anyone had questions.

Councilor Greenwald stated that to the best of his knowledge, this project has never been endorsed by or authorized by the City Council. It has been an MEDC proposal which has been saying "Go forth, design," but it is not a done deal. He continued that the more they keep talking about it, it does not necessarily make it an endorsement. He wants that to be clear. He has two questions: first, what is the Property and Development Committee?

The City Manager replied that it is a committee that the City has – all the department heads come together and review the projects that are ongoing or upcoming in the City. She continued that it is an opportunity for them to brainstorm and communicate across all of the departments and they have invited MEDC to those meetings to give updates on their progress, and also so the City can give MEDC feedback and answer questions, such as making sure they are thinking about pedestrian and vehicular activity and coordinating efforts, if this project is going to move forward, to make sure that Main St. is working properly with Gilbo Ave. Councilor Greenwald

stated that it is the first he has heard of this. He asked if any City Councilors are involved. The City Manager replied no, it is a staff committee that has been in place for many, many years. Councilor Greenwald replied that he thinks that is a flaw in the concept.

Councilor Greenwald continued that a bigger question is: will any part of this pay property taxes? Or would it all be non-profit subsidized philanthropy? Will any of it be a for-profit organization? Mr. Robert replied that they do not have an answer for that yet. He continued that it is clear that a significant portion of what they are talking about, the corridor itself, would be activated public space. Whether there are particular activities that can generate tax revenue has yet to be seen. It is certainly a possibility. They can pay attention to that going forward. He understands how that could be a factor in any decision the City Council makes about how to move forward.

Councilor Greenwald stated that he has many more questions. If it is all going to be non-profit he is a little distressed about that. He continued that they need tax payers and job producers. He thinks it could be a mix if it is going to happen.

The Mayor asked if anyone else had questions. Councilor Williams stated that he noticed there is artist live/work space in the concept. He asked if there would be any other housing. Beyond arts and tourism, to speak to the needs of the city, which are housing, places to work, not so much in terms of bringing people in, but for the people who are here. Mr. Robert replied that in terms of what the art & culture corridor and what it could provide to residents of Keene directly, they are contemplating the artist live/work space. Artists are challenged to find places to live and to work, and live/work space can offer the opportunity for Keene-based artists to not just get established, but to live where they work and potentially put some of their wares up for sale. Beyond that, regarding the Councilor's question about jobs and housing, in its current form, MEDC believes that the corridor as defined will create an environment that will be attractive to "creative economy companies." Creative economy companies want to be where people are, and want to be in dynamic, activated settings that are stimulating and offer a lot of what they need in a small space. By creating the corridor MEDC believes they can encourage creative economy companies to locate and grow. The plan they put together does not contemplate housing, but Councilor Williams raises an important issue. They know there is a housing shortage. That contributes to higher rents and makes it more difficult for people to live and work in Keene. Although they had not contemplated it, they could look at housing as part of the project.

Councilor Jones thanked Mr. Robert for the presentation. He continued that the City Council had a presentation from six architectural students about 5 or 6 years ago on that same area, after the City completed the Gilbo Ave. overlay. They used the Gilbo Ave. overlay as the guideline. It called for a certain type of streetscape. They also used the City's Comprehensive Master Plan. That is something the committee should take a look at, because the students had some great ideas about open spaces, streetscape, and economic development. He also wants to thank Mr. Robert for including Chapter 79-E because he thinks that is probably the biggest answer to Councilor Greenwald's questions. That is how they would get tax-paying entities in there. He thinks there are some places where they could extend TIF into that area, to help with infrastructure. That is something they should look at.

Councilor Jones asked, why would they not extend it down Island St. and include the Colony Mill? Mr. Robert replied that it is not a simple question. Extending the corridor further would introduce more opportunity but also more complexity. The design team recommended a footprint of this size. Certainly there would be potential to extend it. He would want to look at adding elements with care, and if they were to do so, to be very deliberate about it so that they can be confident that each piece works on its own and the connectivity adds the value that is so important.

Councilor Clark asked what MEDC's next steps are for furthering the plan. Is it funding? Is it looking at particular solid concepts of buildings or something else? Mr. Robert replied that there are several elements. He continued that a fair amount of time has transpired over the course of the design study. They wanted to start with the City Council, to share what they have learned, and to start a conversation with other groups in the arts community and the downtown. They want to touch base with groups to see what folks think and what they are truly interested in going forward with. There are those questions about Gilbo Ave. that they need to get to clarity on, and they have some feasibility work to do. He would like to get through those steps, in collaboration with the City, and develop a phased approach to putting together a number of corridor elements and the connectivity the MEDC thinks is achievable and sustainable, but critically, to share with the City Council to get their feedback and ultimately their support. They are talking through something that is big and important and will have a huge, positive impact on the city and they want to move forward knowing, through interaction, to get to something that the City feels comfortable with.

Councilor Filiault stated that considering this is such a major project, alluding to what Councilor Greenwald said, he thinks that the City Council is woefully out of the loop at this point regarding this project, especially one so large. He continued that obviously they will have questions about funding and taxes and infrastructure and road closings and businesses maybe being bought out or moved. His personal recommendation is that before another minute of staff time is put forward on this, the City Council needs more of an update on some of these questions. He knows the City Manager said staff has been looking at this for a while, but there are no Councilors on that committee. He thinks they should slow down. He appreciates the update tonight, but it is the first update they have had on this in [a long time], and for some of the new Councilors it is the first time they have ever seen anything on this. Slow down and get the City Council more up to speed about finances and the questions. He knows they are looking at tax credits and some other non-tax-paying finances to come through and help fund this, but especially with this economy now and the way things have changed, there is no guarantee those tax credits are even going to be there anymore. He is not saying he is for or against this project. He does not have enough information right now to come close to making a decision.

Councilor Bosley stated that to follow up on what Councilor Filiault is saying, as a new Councilor, this is her first introduction to this project. She is also a tenant on Gilbo Ave., as a business, and she has not met with anyone concerning how this would affect her business. Mostly, her concern would be parking. She would also ask that they spend a lot of time reaching

out to the different businesses in the community and get them to buy in and explain how this change will affect them.

The Mayor asked if anyone else had questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked Mr. Robert for the presentation and for kicking off this conversation.

#### CONFIRMATION

A motion was made by Councilor Powers and duly seconded by Councilor Bosley to confirm the following nomination: Ritu Budakoti to serve as an alternate member on the Human Rights Committee with a term to expire December 31, 2023. On a roll call vote, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor, the nomination was confirmed.

#### COMMUNICATION – COUNCILORS REMY, BOSLEY AND GIACOMO – CONTINUED REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC MEETINGS

A communication was received from Councilors Remy, Bosley and Giacomo, recommending that the City Council and all other public bodies continue the availability of remote access for participation by members, the public and City staff with both video and audio beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. The communication was referred to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee.

#### MSFI REPORT – ECLIPSE MANAGEMENT GROUP – CONSTRUCTION ON CITY PROPERTY AT KEENE ICE

Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee report read recommending to report out the request from Eclipse Management Group for construction on City property at Keene Ice. The report was filed as informational.

#### MSFI REPORT – WATER SUPPLY AND WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES - OPERATIONS MANAGER & ASSISTANT PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee report read recommending the declaration of a Stage 1 – Water Conservation Alert as per Section 98-74.1 of the City Code of Ordinances. A motion by Councilor Manwaring to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Councilor Giacomo. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### PLD REPORT – KRISTIN FINNERTY – REQUEST TO DISCHARGE FIREWORKS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report read recommending the communication be accepted as informational. The report was filed as informational.

#### FOP REPORT – FIRST RESPONDER COVID 19 STIPEND PROGRAM – HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that the City Council accept from the State of New Hampshire, pursuant to RSA 21-P:43, First Responder COVID 19

funding in the amount of \$205,485.42 and the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend this funding provided for a state established stipend pay program for the time period beginning May 4, 2020 and ending June 30, 2020 for police officers and firefighters. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Council Hooper. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### FOP REPORT – ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS – PARKS, RECREATION AND FACILITIES DIRECTOR

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept a donation of \$2,500.00 from Pathways for Keene, Inc and that the money is allocated for a kiosk at the trail head of Emerald Street and the Ashuelot Rail Trail. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Council Hooper. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### FOP REPORT – AVON STREET WATER AND SEWER REPLACEMENT PROJECT – BUDGET ADJUSTMENT – PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to use an additional \$3,448 from the project balance of the Sewer Main Improvement Capital Project (08055) and an additional \$22,018 of unspent personnel and operating funds in the FY 20 Water Fund Operating Budget for the replacement of water and sewer utilities in Avon Street. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Council Hooper. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

The City Manager began her comments by noting that last Wednesday in the early evening we had a rain event that created flash flooding in different areas across the city. Unfortunately, the Central Fire station sustained some damage as a result. A roof drain became separated and water entered the building, the roof drain has been fixed but we still need to make some repairs to the ceilings on first and second floor.

She continued her comments by announcing the Community Development Department recently launched an energy plan website that features podcast-style episodes and interviews produced by the City's UNH Sustainability Fellow, Carly Peruccio. The first podcast is about Community Power programs and how this type of program could benefit the City of Keene. The website also features an interview with the Director of Energy and Sustainability for the City of Greenfield, Mass about how Community Power has saved their ratepayers a significant amount of money while also offering 100% renewable electricity. You can view the website at the following website: [www.KeeneEnergyPlan.com](http://www.KeeneEnergyPlan.com).

She continued with some encouraging news to report: Spectrum has worked with the city to draft an application for the GOFERR Emergency Broadband grant funds to provide service to our four unserved streets (76 homes). This is an exciting opportunity. In addition to our letter of support to Governor and the committee, we have also encouraged residents in these neighborhoods to write to the GOFERR committee to advocate for this application.

Ms. Dragon went on to provide an update on the work of the Keene Rebound / downtown opening task force relative to "Sidewalk Saturdays". The task force created a survey for downtown businesses. In addition to sending the survey out via email several City Councilors volunteered to visit businesses personally. (Councilors Remy, Workman, Jones, Filiault, Giacomo, Bosley, and Johnsen all visited blocks of business in the downtown) This personal touch from the city councilors made a huge difference in our effort to connect with the downtown business community. She thanked them for doing this. The next step is for city staff to create a temporary sidewalk obstruction license for expanding use of the sidewalk on Saturdays for the rest of the season (through the end of October).

We currently process sidewalk obstruction licenses through the City Clerk's office. This new temporary license will include COVID-19 CDC precautions and the retailer will need to continue to follow the governors opening guidelines for retail business. While retailers are able to welcome customers inside their stores (in a limited capacity)-many people still prefer to be outside.

Once we have drafted the revised license, John Rogers will visit each location and review and approve their plan to utilize the space to ensure we maintain ADA accessibility. There will be no fee for this temporary license as it is an experiment. Next year if businesses wish to continue they would need to apply for the regular sidewalk obstruction license, which requires a \$100 fee for the season.

The Downtown coordinator is assisting with communication/outreach/and coordination. While the hours each retailer may decide to use the space could be different we are hoping to coordinate some common hours in the downtown and assist with getting the word out. I want to thank the clerk's office, city attorney, and John Rogers for their help making this happen. I recognize the additional work it takes to implement this kind of experiment and I am grateful for their help.

The City Manager continued her comments by saying that we are currently in the process of physically modifying space in the City Clerk's Office (utilizing GOFERR funds). These modifications will create a space similar to the set up in the Revenue office. The Revenue office has been able to maintain operations throughout the pandemic because there is a physical barrier between the employees and the public. The modifications in the Clerk's office (which is a much smaller space with closer contact) will allow us to fully open up the Clerk's Office and provide all of our normal services. The work should be complete in 1 to 2 weeks.

Related to property tax collection, this year due to COVID-19, the city teamed up with the communities of Rochester and Durham to request the Governor grant the ability to waive up to 3 months of interest and penalties on the June tax bill to ease the financial burdens on tax payers. The governor, granted that local authority in executive order# 25.

Property taxes were due July 10, 2020. We collected 89% of the warrant by the due date and another 3% since then so we are at 92%. For context the Manager noted that last year taxes were due July 9, 2019 and by that date we had collected 93% of the taxes. It is encouraging to see our collection numbers remain very close to last year.

The Manager ended by announcing some Fire Department personnel changes (some changing of hats). She went on to extend congratulations to Gregory Seymour who has been appointed to the training officer position, as well as to Francis Pierannunzi who was appointed to the position of Fire Alarm Officer and a lateral transfer of Joshua Brooks to Operations Lt.

#### MORE TIME

More time was granted by the Mayor for the following item in Committee: Let it Shine – Request for Use of City Property – Pumpkin Festival. The Mayor noted that the Keene Music Festival organizers have notified the City that for the overall safety and welfare of the community that they would be canceling the music festival for 2020. The Mayor stated he would be pulling the item off the PLD more time agenda and reporting it out.

RESOLUTIONS: R-2020-24: IN APPRECIATION OF TIMOTHY K. PELOQUIN UPON HIS RETIREMENT; R-2020-25: IN APPRECIATION OF ARTHUR L. JOHNSON UPON HIS RETIREMENT; and R-2020-26: IN APPRECIATION OF ALAN L. PURRINGTON UPON HIS RETIREMENT

Resolutions R-2020-24: In Appreciation of Timothy K. Peloquin Upon His Retirement; R-2020-25: In Appreciation of Arthur L. Johnson Upon His Retirement; and R-2020-26: In Appreciation of Alan L. Purrington Upon His Retirement was read by title only. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor. Resolutions, R-2020-24; R-2020-25; and R-2020-26 declared adopted.

#### PLD REPORT AND RESOLUTION R-2020-28: A RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE WEARING OF FACE COVERINGS

Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report read recommending the City Manager be requested to introduce into the City Council a resolution with respect to encouraging the use of face coverings, as presented to the PLD Committee, with the addition of encouraging the use of the Keene Safe program. The Mayor stated that several Councilors have approached him about the need to have an Ordinance rather than a Resolution on the issue of wearing face coverings. He believes that time is of the essence and that they City Council should make a decision on whether an Ordinance is warranted before taking our summer break on August 6. The Mayor has

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asked that the City Attorney be prepared with an ordinance, which uses the language in Resolution R-2020-28. A motion by Councilor Filiault for a motion to Suspend the Rules to allow discussion of the proposed Resolution or if it going to be in an Ordinance form was seconded by Councilor Clark. After a brief discussion, the motion was withdrawn. A motion by Councilor Bosley to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Greenwald. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to Suspend the Rules to adopt the Resolution R-2020-28 was seconded by Councilor Bosley. A brief discussion took place. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to adopt Resolution R-2020-28 was seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor. Resolution R-2020-28 was adopted. A motion by Councilor Filiault to Suspend the Rules to introduce an ordinance that would be moved forward to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee was seconded by Councilor Clark. A brief discussion took place. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor. Ordinance O-2020-09 was read first time by title only. The Ordinance was referred to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

A true record, attest:

  
City Clerk