

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PLANNING, LICENSES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

6:00 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Kate M. Bosley, Chair
Philip M. Jones
Raleigh Ormerod

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager

Members Not Present:

Michael Giacomo, Vice Chair
Gladys Johnsen

Chair Bosley called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and explained the procedures of the meeting.

1) Keene Young Professionals Network – Keene Food Festival - Request to Use City Property

Chair Bosley asked to hear from Councilor Remy.

Councilor Michael Remy stated that he understands that this item will be placed on more time because protocol meetings have not happened yet and that is required before they go through the approval process. He continued that the Keene Young Professionals Network (KYPN) is looking to do an event largely similar to last year's, and will probably make some tweaks and improvements based on what they learned. For example, there were issues of sun [lack of shade], and discussions about how to correct that, clarity about the tokens, etc. They are largely looking to repeat a successful event. It went well and ended up being far less expensive than KYPN had anticipated, from the City services side. That was good to know, even though the City was nice enough to donate the services last year.

Councilor Remy continued that they are in the planning stages right now and welcome any volunteers and sponsors. If anyone is interested, he encourages them to reach out to keeneypn@gmail.com.

Chair Bosley thanked Councilor Remy for bringing this event back. She continued that last year it was very well attended, and a big help to getting downtown back up on its feet. She asked if there were any questions from the Committee.

Councilor Jones stated that he congratulates the KYPN for doing this. He continued that this was a concept that came out of the Keene Rebound Committee that he and Councilor Remy were both on, and the KYPN took it and made it work like magic, which he thanks them for. He looks forward to this event. Councilor Remy replied yes, many people were involved.

Chair Bosley asked if members of the public had any questions. Hearing none, she asked for a motion.

Councilor Jones made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Ormerod.

On a vote of 3-0, the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee recommends that the request for the Keene Young Professionals Network to use City property be placed on more time to allow protocol meetings to occur.

2) In Support of a Medicare for All Plan - Resolution R-2021-46

Chair Bosley asked to hear from James Murphy.

James Murphy of Keene, NH, stated that the Resolution that was drafted by staff is just right. He continued that he is happy with it and cannot think of how it could be written better. He wants to thank everyone. Keene's passage of the Resolution would join over 80 small to large cities that have adopted Medicare for All resolutions. Some are local towns such as Peterborough, Andover, Hanover, and Putney, VT. Large cities include Hoboken, Duluth, St. Paul, Indianapolis, Stanford, New Haven, New London, Washington, DC, Milwaukee, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Orleans, Durham, Cook County, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Ann Arbor.

Chair Bosley thanked Mr. Murphy for coming back and reading through this Resolution. She continued that she knows the PLD Committee supported this before the full Council, which also supported it. They are happy to have it back. There has been a lot going on for the City and she knows it took a bit of time to get all the wording together, but it was important, and she thinks it was done very well.

Chair Bosley asked if there were any questions from the Committee. Hearing none, she asked if members of the public had any questions or comments.

Dr. Ahmed Kutty, of Peterborough, NH, stated that he was one of the activists who got this resolution passed in Peterborough last spring by warrant article. He continued that they had something like 70 or 100 more in favor than opposed, which was a fairly good majority of people in support. In Peterborough, they asked the Selectmen write to their Congressional delegation to say their community supported it, as expressed by the wording of the Medicare for All Resolution. That is already in the House.

Councilor Remy stated that his comments are not specific to the Resolution itself, but this is a highly partisan issue, whether it should be or not. He continued that he does not think it is the position of the Council to take a position on this particular issue, because they will be representing half of their population and not representing the other half.

Chair Bosley stated that she had one question as she reviewed the wording. She continued that Section 6 states, "Whereas a Medicare for All plan would guarantee that all residents of the City of Keene will be fully covered for healthcare without co-pays, deductables, and other out of pocket costs, and would save millions in taxpayer dollars now spent on premiums that provide often inadequate health insurance coverage," the sentence continues, "for government employees," but she thinks that statement is fair for all individual citizens of Keene, as well as the City's employees. She would like to see "for government employees" stricken so the sentence ends with the word "coverage."

Councilor Jones stated that he agrees. Chair Bosley asked Councilor Ormerod if he is comfortable with that change. Councilor Ormerod agreed.

Chair Bosley asked if members of the public had any questions about that edit. Hearing none, she asked for a motion.

Councilor Jones made a motion for the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee to recommend the adoption of Resolution R-2021-46-A. Councilor Ormerod seconded.

Councilor Jones stated that he loves this concept and is all for it. He continued that out of the 34 more civilized countries in the world there is only one that does not have some kind of full medical plan for its constituents. However, as he has said right from the beginning, he does not think this is City business. That is the only thing he is opposed to. If they pass this Resolution, the City Council could start receiving requests related to gun rights, abortion rights, voting rights, and so on and so forth, and his question is where it would end. That is his concern. He knows this Resolution will pass and he congratulates Mr. Murphy, but he will be voting 'no,' for the reason stated.

Chair Bosley stated that she would tend to agree with Councilor Jones. She continued that she thinks they discussed this at the original Committee level, and she supports this concept completely and supports it for our nation. She does not necessarily think the City Council is a place for some of these items to come, but regarding this particular item, she voted in favor of it because it does have a cost benefit to the City. Should the City be taking a stand on many of these national issues that do not directly benefit the City? She thinks that the lines start to blur, and the Committee will have to work that out over the coming year as they look at what type of legislative items they want to comment on. In this instance, however, she is happy to support this Resolution.

Councilor Ormerod stated that in this particular case, he is supporting it because it does benefit the citizens of Keene. This really helps them communicate with the State and Federal government regarding what the City's wishes and intentions are. It comes down to the 23,000 residents and other people here in Keene whom this Resolution is going to benefit. Because it benefits everyone, regardless of political party, he will support it.

On a vote of 2 – 1, the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2021-46 as amended. Councilor Jones was opposed.

3) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Bosley adjourned the meeting at 6:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker