

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Wednesday, August 27, 2014, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Neilsen at 6:30 p.m.

Members of the Council present were:

At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond
Ward I Councilor Carolyn Towle
Ward III Councilor Nicholas Koloski
Assistant Mayor Victor Bergeron
Mayor James Neilsen, IV
At-Large Councilor James Reed
Ward II Councilor Charlene Lovett
At-Large Councilor Kyle Messier
At-Large Councilor John Simonds

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager
Jane Taylor, City Solicitor

NON-PUBLIC PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3,II(d) - REAL ESTATE

A motion was made by Mr. Bergeron and seconded by Mr. Reed to enter into the Non-Public Session (in the City Manager's office) Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3,II(d) – Real Estate and to invite Planning and Development Director Nancy Merrill, Mr. Santagate, Ms. Taylor and Council Clerk Dorée Russell into the session.

Roll call vote: motion carried 9-0.

Ms. Merrill said this was about TwinState MakerSpace (TSMS) purchasing the Sawtooth building. The sale includes 11 parking spaces in front of the Sawtooth. TSMS will spend no less than \$250,000 for remediation and fit-up. They will pour a slab with a vapor barrier. The work will be done according to the specifications of the remediation action plan. There is one ground monitoring well and it will be monitored probably one more time. When the project is complete, there will be a use restriction on the property (i.e. can't dig in the dirt). There is a reverter clause in the purchase and sale agreement. They will have two years to start the remediation and improvements on the site. If it is not done, the City will get the building back. They are a nonprofit so they will pay an annual PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) of the City's portion of the tax bill to cover the City essential services.

Mr. Koloski asked about the TIFD (Tax Increment Finance District). Ms. Merrill said the PILOT goes into the TIFD. She said there will be 4-6 jobs created with this.

A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Ms. Towle to exit the non-public session.

Roll call vote: motion carried 9-0

Public session resumed.

Mr. Bergeron said in reference to the investigation that Mr. Santagate does not sit in on interviews and he does not get involved. If anyone has questions, they can contact Mr. Bergeron or Mayor Neilsen.

CITIZEN'S FORUM

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, talked about the upcoming Comcast contract discussions. He said he had driven around the City and made a preliminary map of where Comcast cable is located. He said he is almost finished with it and when he is, he'll let the City make a copy of it.

Chuck Allen, Ward 3, reminded everyone of the music fest to be held on September 13, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., at Arrowhead.

NEW BUSINESS

Sale of City-Owned Real Estate

Ms. Merrill introduced Jeremy Katz, co-founder of TwinState MakerSpaces. Mr. Katz said MakerSpaces is a gym for the mind and hands and will include such things as a metal shop, 3D printer, etc. This will be open to the public on a membership basis.

Mr. Raymond asked about the timeline to be operating. Mr. Katz said between Memorial Day and Labor Day 2015. They have to do the fit-up first.

Mr. Koloski asked what drew him to Claremont. Mr. Katz said Zach Williams, Business and Development Coordinator and Ms. Merrill.

There was a discussion of the benefits of having this in Claremont. River Valley Community College will benefit from this; there will be machine tools/CNC machines; this will be a major economic engine for downtown; there will be 3-6 full time employees.

A motion was made by Mr. Bergeron and seconded by Ms. Towle to authorize the City Manager or his designees to negotiate, execute and undertake all such actions as may be required to subdivide a parcel of City-owned land located at 44 Main Street and identified as Tax Map 119-348, commonly referred to as the "Sawtooth Building," and further to convey a portion of the subdivided parcel and the improvements thereon to TwinState MakerSpaces, Inc. for redevelopment of the building for the business purposes of

TwinState MakerSpaces, Inc., its successors and assigns, as well as other site improvements, and to accept all proceeds related thereto for deposit into the applicable City account.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, said this looks speculative to him and he asked if Mr. Santagate and the Council have done due diligence.

Councilors thanked Mr. Katz for choosing Claremont.

Roll call vote: motion carried 9-0.

Economic Development Update

Mayor Neilsen introduced Doctors Middleton McGoodwin, Superintendent of Schools, and Alicia Harvey-Smith, River Valley Community College (RVCC) President.

Mr. Santagate said our #1 goal is economic development. He agrees taxes are too high. We don't have enough mix of commercial and industrial properties. We need to broaden that base. Although some people say there are no jobs in the City, the reality is that there are plenty of jobs. Structural has 30 jobs that are unfilled, but we don't have the trained workforce. There is a concern that you have to teach people life skills before they can take a job. We need to have a trained workforce.

Mr. Santagate showed a PowerPoint presentation: Elephant in the room – identify and admit a problem exists. He hears from businesses that they don't want to come here because employees don't want to put their kids in substandard schools and that we don't have a trained/skilled workforce. He has been on the River Valley Community College (RVCC) Advisory Board for 8 years. 75-85% students going to college need remedial math and English, but they received As and Bs in high school. Teachers are trying hard, but kids need parents' help too. He talked about partnerships to fix this and the direct correlation between education and income, education and good jobs, and education and attracting businesses to Claremont. Economic Indicators-information came from Claremont Master Plan, U.S. Census Bureau, 2004 UNH study and a whitepaper by Dr. Ross Gittell, Chancellor of Community College System of NH; Claremont Master Plan – Economic Development Chapter adopted June 27, 2011; how to define economic development: education, workforce development, quality job creation, tax stability and expanded tax base, adaptive re-use of vacant properties (Live Free and Start State Program), brownfields rehabilitation, housing, quality of life; Educational attainment has a strong positive correlation with per capita income across the 50 states. NH is in the top tier; areas of future growth: computer & mathematical specialties, architecture & engineering, life sciences, education, arts, entertainment, sports media, managerial business, financial operations, and legal; Economic Indicators - no high school diploma (or GED) Claremont is 12.70%; Less than an Associate's Degree Claremont 74.70%; Bachelor's Degree and above Claremont 12.60%; median household income Claremont \$41,350, State of NH \$64,925.

At 7:38 p.m. Ms. Towle left Council Chambers and returned at 7:42 p.m.

Dr. McGoodwin showed a PowerPoint presentation: Indicators of Claremont's Improvement & Future; A look back & looking forward, academic achievement goals, much to be proud of; Entry Plan; clarify focus and priorities for administration, teaching staff, School Board and community; Focus, Goals & Priorities; Guaranteed Curriculum; SAU #6 Vision Statement;

An SAU #6 School Board Goal; Academic Priorities – academic achievement goals; College & career readiness skills; SAU #6 School Board Goal: define academic achievement into five measurable goals. Report on progress against goals no less than quarterly; One result of clarifying priorities-31% increase in math scores when implemented in California; Valley News article “Peek into Brain Shows How Youngsters Learn Math Skills”; Target = essential skills, very important skills, important skills, nice to know and unimportant; Good to Great, Jim Collins; High Performing School District; College & career readiness; River Valley Community College working with Stevens High School; Catch the Wave – high school students earn college credits; Looking Forward, Young Women's Conference, October 3, 2014, Claremont Community Center; Looking further forward; Claremont Pride;

Dr. McGoodwin said one challenge is to not lower expectations.

Dr. Alicia Harvey-Smith talked about synergy, expectations of employers, soft skills training; clarity and focus and the need for essential skills for achieving; Academic and social integrations; Emphasizing student life (clubs); Create pathways; Align students with the resources. RVCC supports economic development. She talked about the different programs and of over 500 individuals that have gone through, the majority are employed. She talked about working with Granite State College to get students from a two-year college through their Master's Degree in one location. She talked about partnerships with Colby Sawyer and Rivier Colleges and industry partnerships with Sturm Ruger, NH Ballbearing, Hypertherm, Whelen, Corning, etc. They have 15 new contracts signed this year. Education is core to economic development.

Councilors commended Mr. Santagate, Dr. McGoodwin and Dr. Harvey-Smith on this collaboration. Ms. Lovett said it is very important to have a balanced approach if we are going to talk about issues within the school district and talk about the successes as well.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, shared the Council's good feelings of this vision and collaboration. He urged consideration of engaging the community (i.e. making lifelong learning for seniors painless).

Dr. McGoodwin talked about academics and athletics. Athletic eligibility now includes academics.

Steve Raymond, Ward 1, thinks this is good. It is the only way Claremont will move forward.

Lisa Portelli, Ward 3, said in Florida that she helped people with disabilities get jobs. This presentation is incredible. She said job shadowing and internships are helpful.

David Putnam, Ward 2, said what was heard is critical to keep hearing to change the culture of this community. He talked about the loss of the middle class. We need to inspire the community to improve and this group of Mr. Guy Santagate, Dr. Middleton McGoodwin and Dr. Alicia Harvey-Smith can do that.

Mr. Koloski asked about the students that were attending Lebanon College. Dr. Harvey-Smith said that RVCC is working with Lebanon College to move the students to RVCC. Dr. Susan Henderson talked about allied health radiology program is needed at RVCC and they are working to do that so that all Lebanon College students can go to RVCC to complete their degrees.

Airport Plan

Rick Bergeron, Fire Chief, said our airport is a NH block grant airport, which allows us to procure federal funding through FAA to pay for a variety of projects. He showed a PowerPoint presentation: Claremont Municipal Airport – conditions of the facility; photo from easterly end showing the buildings; picture of the tarmac; Ascutney Air, LLC, privately owned (pay lease to the City) building; self-service gas depot (12,000 gallon underground tank); picture of the main hangar, built 1927, in the past year received a grant for reconstruction of this building; picture of a private hangar and snow removal equipment building; T-hangar City-owned 6 units; T-hangar building concrete electrical vault operates the runway and taxiway lights; picture of a private hangar built in 2007 (leased land); picture of the newest hangar, 6 units; overview of airport projects from 1952 to 2012; showed Capital Improvements Plan;

Mr. Simonds asked about the lease payments for the privately owned buildings. Chief Bergeron said the money goes to the City. Some of the hangar space rents go to the fixed base operators (FBO). The FBO takes care of snow removal.

Chief Bergeron said in reference to advertising on the fence that it can be done. In reference to the property at the end of runway 11, a parking lot is a possibility.

There was a discussion about tying the airport in with the train station and making the airport a point of interest. Chief Bergeron talked about leasing a portion of the terminal building to be made into a café.

There was a discussion about improving the airport website.

Ms. Towle said the repair facility should be a part of the website.

Mr. Koloski asked how long the FBOs have been there and if it goes out to bid. He wants to talk about things like cleaning up the area, advertising signs on the fence, flowers and transportation needs to happen up there. He would like to add this to a future agenda. Ms. Towle and Mr. Reed agreed with Mr. Koloski.

Councilors agreed that Council Clerk Russell would send an e-mail to the Airport Advisory Board members with those items listed above and to ask for input and for barriers they see.

Chief Bergeron will set up a meeting of the Airport Advisory Board in September and will try to come back with some suggestions of what the Board sees as stumbling blocks for expansion at the airport. Ms. Lovett asked if there could be hard data included (i.e. number of planes coming in and out, and the times). Mr. Raymond said there is no way to track that. Chief Bergeron said transportation is important. He said there is a computer-based system that monitors airport traffic and it would answer those questions, but we haven't been able to put that into the budget; it's about \$3,500.

Amtrak Update

Ms. Lovett made an announcement about the event for Bruce Temple tomorrow in the John D. Bennett Atrium, 5:30 – 7 p.m.

Ms. Lovett highlighted the Ad Hoc Committee – Claremont Amtrak Stop Initial Report August 27, 2014. She said there are three phases and they just completed the exploratory phase. We need to improve the website. The Committee is working with Wheelock Travel to create travel destination packages. The Committee will work with the City on installation of Amtrak signage. The Committee will explore public/private partnerships, survey passengers for their needs. One of the byproducts of this work will help in becoming a stop on the high speed rail line. She requested to have the Planning and Development Department participate in the Committee's work in ways that are to be determined. In eight years there has been a 48% increase in ridership. The Committee is now in the developmental phase. They would like to do periodic updates to the Council starting in October. The next phase is finding resources for implementation.

Ray Gagnon, Amtrak Ad Hoc Committee member, said the Passenger Rail Authority is enthusiastic about this group. In reference to implementation, it is the intent of the Committee to work with the private sector and other entities to make this happen. He said the Lamberts and Lambert Auto are to be commended for their willingness to work with the Committee and for the work they have done.

Mr. Koloski said of the three movies that have been shot here, two came because of the rail and three used the rail in the movies.

Mr. Simonds asked if there is federal money available for the train station building. Ms. Lovett said that will be part of the development phase. Depending on the plans, there may be different revenue streams available.

A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Ms. Messier to accept the Ad Hoc Committee – Claremont Amtrak Stop Initial Report August 27, 2014.

Voice vote: motion carried 9-0.

Ordinance 539 Smoking Ban – First Reading

The purpose of this proposed change is to restrict the use and disposal of tobacco products and equipment in certain of the City's recreational parks, as well as the facilities located in these parks.

Enactment of this proposed Ordinance will result in reducing the use and disposal of tobacco products and equipment in several of the City's parks and their facilities and will reduce the exposure of those attending and participating in activities at these parks to tobacco use, including second-hand smoke.

Ms. Taylor said that Ms. Lovett had asked to have this on tonight's agenda. It is similar to what has been seen before with a couple of exceptions. Ms. Taylor worked with Parks and Recreation Director Mark Brislin to identify designated areas and locations where use of tobacco products would be banned during special events. There is a provision that would allow the Director of Parks and Recreation with the City Manager to shut down a designated area or relocate it if there is abuse, without having to come back to Council.

Ms. Messier said that allowing tobacco use within five (5) feet of any entrance or exit, etc. is too close. Ms. Taylor stated this is a minimum distance and a designated smoking area could be much further away.

Mr. Bergeron said he doesn't like the idea that the City Manager the Parks and Recreation Director can do away with all the smoking areas without Council approval. Ms. Taylor didn't agree with Mr. Bergeron's interpretation.

A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Mr. Raymond to adopt Ordinance 539 Smoking Ban on first reading.

Mr. Koloski read the explanation of proposed action into the record.

There was discussion about e-cigarettes and Mr. Koloski suggested that may be an area that could be challenged because of the variations in e-cigarettes.

Mayor Neilsen said if Council sees the City Manager and the Parks and Recreation Director are eliminating the smoking areas, then Council can take action. He doesn't think it's necessary to make changes to the smoking areas through an ordinance.

Ms. Messier said she will vote no because 5 feet is too close.

Roll call vote: motion carried 8-1 (Ms. Messier voted no).

Arrowhead Trees Update and Contract for Parking Study/Robert Easter Way

Mayor Neilsen gave a Moody Park Update: One harvest \$83,692.89 with a \$66,332.25 net to the City. The other harvest was \$23,509.27 with a \$18,128.72 net to the City. The money is in an undeveloped land fund. Quite a bit of the money from Moody Park is being used in Moody Park. Asphalt from the road will be ground up and laid down from the entrance to the top. A group will look at the trails to determine if some should be eliminated, if new trails should be added and to determine handicap accessibility. In reference to the brush piles, they will be cleaned up to the brush line. This will be hired out.

Mr. Santagate said where it was trimmed, the sun is hitting the forest floor on that side, so it will be different on both sides of the road.

Mr. Santagate talked about Arrowhead and that there are 37 trees that need to be removed. He talked to Pathways and Arrowhead is included in the study. The money for the study is in the budget from what was saved from demolition of the outdoor pool. They will be asked to look at Arrowhead first and to look at the runoff.

Mr. Bergeron disagreed. He said half the trees that they are talking about are dead. He doesn't see how this will impact the runoff. Mr. Santagate said we need an expert to tell us that.

A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Mr. Simonds to authorize the City Manager to sign the contract and to expend encumbered funds from the demolition of the outdoor pool.

Voice vote: 8-0, 1 abstain (Ms. Messier abstained as she is an owner of a property that abuts that area).

Chuck Allen, Ward 3, said these trees won't affect any runoff. Most of the trees are dead. The culvert is below those trees.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND DIRECTIVES

Ms. Messier asked about the timing to meet with the State Representatives to be able to discuss tax credits for films and the welfare rules.

Ms. Lovett requested an update at the next meeting regarding the assessment of the Arrowhead trees. She wants verbiage in the contract that Arrowhead will be the first area to be looked at. She asked Mr. Allen when he would have to have the trees down. Mr. Allen said before the ground freezes although they won't be able to seed it this year.

Mayor Neilsen said there are two issues. One is to remove trees and the other is to move soil to get the groomer in there. Part of the study is about moving the soil to change the slope to be able to get the 12-foot groomer in there.

Mr. Reed asked for an update on the church roof. Ms. Taylor said they were working on it today.

Mr. Bergeron asked for an update on the property on Pleasant Street. Also, he would like an update on the waiver for ATV use of the Rail Trail.

Mr. Koloski wanted the same information as Ms. Lovett and he would like to know who will take the trees down and who will pay the timber tax, if required. He asked what happened to the parking garage windows. Chief Bergeron said someone took out windows with machine nuts. Planning and Development is working to get them replaced.

Ms. Towle asked for a written update on the energy audit of City-owned buildings. She asked where we are with getting the financial records from the JSL. Mr. Santagate said a letter is going out tomorrow to the four contacts demanding the books.

Mr. Raymond also asked about the waiver for ATVs on the trail. Mr. Santagate said a key person at the state was out all summer, so we haven't been able to get the information. We hope to have it at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:55 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Lovett and seconded by Ms. Messier to adjourn.

Voice vote: motion carried 9-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell
Clerk to the Council