

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Wednesday, August 26, 2015, 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

Absent:

At-Large Councilor John Simonds

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager  
Jane Taylor, City Solicitor

Mr. Bergeron read a letter from Very Reverend Shawn Therrien thanking the Police Department regarding the work they did because of the vandalism done at St. Mary's Church. Mr. Bergeron also talked about an article in Image Magazine that mentioned Claremont's Bouteille Wine & Gift Merchants and Valley Regional Hospital.

Ms. Messier said she has received many compliments on the new sign in front of City Hall.

Mr. Koloski said he attended the ribbon cutting for Valley Regional Hospital's Urgent Care Facility. He said he was also happy about the flowers in front of City Hall. He talked about the article in the Eagle Times regarding the selfless act by Fire Chief Rick Bergeron who gave \$1,000 to Father Stan to compensate for the money the City was not able to return to him. [Note: Father Stan had donated \$1,000 to help get the cannon in LaCasse Park refinished. The project has not yet been completed.]

## **CITIZEN'S FORUM**

Rick Bergeron, Ward 3, explained his gift to Father Stan and said he had hoped it would be anonymous just as Fr. Stan had wanted his donation to be anonymous. He took what he has learned as a firefighter and he assessed, analyzed and came up with a solution to the problem.

He said there is interest from the American Legion to help restore the cannon. He will see what he can do to help move this forward.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### Goodwin Community Center Update

Mark Brislin, Parks and Recreation Director, said in March 2013 the Claremont Savings Bank Community Center (CSBCC) opened. A lot of materials and equipment were moved from the GCC (Goodwin Community Center) to the CSBCC. A lot of materials were left behind that could not be used in the CSBCC. Parks and Recreation has gone through the GCC to see if it can use anything else. Other departments have been taking what they can use. After that is done, there will be a Request for Proposal sent out for disposal of the remaining items. The GCC and Zotto Gym are up for sale with the bids due September 30. The goal is to have the building empty by the end of November.

### Junior Sports League Building Update

Mr. Brislin met with representatives from the JSL in October 2014. Mid-November the City requested the JSL group remove its property from the building. By December 26, 2014, all JSL items had been removed. There are a few City items and Stevens High School items stored in the building such as Christmas decorations and desks. The JSL building was put out to bid the end of May and was reposted a couple of days ago.

### 54 Windsor Road Property Update

Ms. Taylor said the property was advertised again, but no bids were received. There is a meeting scheduled to discuss other options for disposing of City-owned property.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Amtrak Ad Hoc Committee Update

Ms. Lovett showed a PowerPoint presentation - Claremont Amtrak Stop Vermonter Line. She said she also presented this PowerPoint presentation to the Vermont Transportation Rail Advisory Council earlier this afternoon.

- Council created ad hoc rail committee August 2014
- Goal: improve the Claremont stop
  - As a stop on the Vermonter
  - As a potential stop on the NNEIRI (Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative)
- Mission
  - Promote economic development
  - Promote tourism

- Increase ridership
    - Important as NH does not provide funding to the line
- Ridership
  - FY13-2123
  - FY14-2117
  - FY15 (thru July 31)-1657
- Top 3 Priorities
  - Signage
  - Transportation
  - Passenger Security
    - In 1 year all 3 completed
- Signage Completed in November 2014
- Intermodal Transportation
  - Monday-Friday a.m. local bus service completed in Dec. 2014
  - Evening bus service under discussion
  - Weekend shuttles under consideration
  - Car rental partnership option
- Passenger Security
  - Increased lighting in early 2015
    - Property owner initiated
  - Benches/flowers
  - Construction of a waiting pavilion scheduled completion date October 9, 2015
- Accomplishments Highlighted
  - Amtrak case study and article in e-newsletter
  - Roundtable with Congresswoman Kuster
  - Letter to NH Federal Delegation requesting support for Montreal pre-clearance facility
  - Media exposure
- Future Activities
  - September 24 – NNEIRI public hearing
  - October 9 – waiting pavilion ribbon cutting ceremony
  - October 10 – Claremont Tire Tracks bike tour event
  - November 4 – NH Governor/Executive Council coming to Claremont at CSBCC and the focus will be US/Canadian relations and pre-clearance facility in Montreal

Ms. Messier asked about intermodal transportation. Ms. Lovett said the CATS bus goes from the City Center to the train station and back for the morning train. By May, there were about 10 people who used the bus to/from the train stop.

Mr. Raymond asked if donations are still needed for the shelter. Ms. Lovett said yes. The plan is to raise enough money through fundraising and the bike tour event that there would be no cost to the City. After the bike tour event, the Committee will be working on a marketing plan to promote train travel. The Committee's goal is to grow the ridership to 4,000 or more, making the Claremont stop a medium-sized station. Currently, the Claremont stop is classified as a small station and is the third smallest in the Vermont region of the Vermonter line.

Mr. Santagate asked if the state of NH has contributed any support for this. Ms. Lovett said the only NH money spent has been for the NNEIRI study. Mr. Santagate said our Delegation should make that an issue.

#### Charter Amendment Process

Mike Tetu, Ward 1, talked about Lebanon's Citizens Binding Initiative and Citizens Non-binding Initiative. He thinks these would be good additions to Claremont's Charter. He asked Council to work toward putting this on the ballot in November as two separate amendments. He hoped to have a public hearing at the September 9<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. He asked instead of asking him to go out and get the required signatures on a petition, that the Council, per his request, put it on the ballot.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, thinks this initiative is a good thing. He suggested finding out what else the Charter Commission had a consensus on and include those items.

Mr. Tetu suggested Council appoint a committee to look at amendments.

Mayor Neilsen asked Councilors whether or not they would like to see a committee of people bring forth amendments items to go on the ballot.

Mr. Koloski said he disagreed with this and will not vote for it as it preys on low voter turnout. He said he wouldn't mind reviewing this further. As for allowing citizens to have more input in their government, the Council begs for people to come out to give their input and to contact their Councilors.

Mr. Bergeron said the Charter Commission suggested changes and people overwhelmingly said no. He said he will not vote for a Charter change tonight.

Mr. Reed agreed with Messrs. Koloski and Bergeron and said since the Charter change failed, no one has come forward to say they wanted any changes.

Ms. Lovett said she is in favor of looking at the Charter to review some of changes that had consensus during the Charter Commission meetings, but not changing the form of government.

Mayor Neilsen said he thought a number of things that were brought up have merit. He thinks it might be better to look at this after the election. He wants whatever the Council does to be successful. He doesn't think doing it piecemeal over several elections is the way to go.

Ms. Messier said this Council is coming to the end of its two year term, so there is not enough time for a deliberative process. She is not in favor of the Council doing this.

Ms. Lovett talked about the need to have an orientation for new Councilors and suggested making a list of recommendations for the new Council which may help create continuity. She is in favor of recommending to the future Council to set up a committee to look at the Charter and to go through the process of creating amendment(s).

Mayor Neilsen said Council won't bring this request forward and suggested Mr. Tetu pursue getting a petition.

Resolution 2016-15 RSA 79-E Application by Jeffrey & Sarah Barrette for 13 Water Street, Parcel 120-24 – Public Hearing

Nancy Merrill, Planning and Development Director, said that staff recommended this application to the Council and the Council must find that the application satisfies four items on the checklist in order to approve the application.

Council went through the four items:

1. The governing body finds a public benefit under RSA 79-E:7
  - a. Stabilize the building
  - b. At the end of the term, substantial tax dollars would be paid to the City
  - c. Interior will be renovated

Ms. Messier noted that the building is in the Historic District and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, but is not yet on it.

2. The specific public benefit is preserved through a covenant under RSA 79-E:8
  - a. The application states this will be accepted with the stipulation the party enters into a covenant with the City.

Jeff Barrette, Ward 1, said they will do a significant renovation of the building and they will work toward getting the building on the National Register of Historic Places. He said the outside won't change a lot. They will build a ramp, restore doors and awnings over the doors, replace all windows with historically correct windows, upgrade electric, plumbing, install new heating system, and insulate to current energy code. He plans to move his business, Ink Factory, into the bottom floor and have 24-hour storage facility on the second floor. On the Washington Street side, they will rebuild the gable end. He expects to be in the building by July 4<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Towle questioned the six-year tax relief period. Mr. Barrette said that is to get the cash flow from the self-storage to be able to afford the project. There are a few expensive items needed to comply with building and fire codes that will be done between years 5 and 6.

4. The value of proposed improvements is at least \$75,000 or total 25% of the property's current assessed value, whichever is less
  - a. The renovation budget is \$469,000

**A motion was made by Mr. Raymond and seconded by Ms. Towle to adopt Resolution 2016-15 RSA 79-E Application by Jeffrey & Sarah Barrette for 13 Water Street, Parcel 120-24.**

Mr. Raymond read the resolution into the record.

Mayor Neilsen opened the public hearing.

Bernie Folta, Ward 3, thinks this project is a worthy enhancement to Water Street and will be a boost to downtown.

Larry Converse, Ward 2, thinks this is good investment for the City.

Mayor Neilsen closed the public hearing.

Ms. Taylor reminded Council it needed to look at finding number 3.

3. The governing body finds that the proposed use is consistent with the municipality's Master Plan or development regulations
  - a. Ms. Merrill said this is consistent with the Master Plan and the City Center Initiative Report.
  - b. Mayor Neilsen noted that the Council finds the proposal is consistent with the Master Plan

**Roll call vote: motion carried 8-0.**

Extend Claremont 250th Anniversary Committee to December 31, 2015

At the previous Council meeting, Mr. Koloski had requested the Claremont 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee be extended to complete work around the sculpture.

**A motion was made by Ms. Lovett and seconded by Mr. Reed to continue the Claremont 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee until December 31, 2015.**

**Voice vote: motion carried 8-0.**

Arrowhead Water Storage Expansion

**A motion was made by Mr. Bergeron and seconded by Mr. Reed to authorize the expansion of the water storage facility on City-owned property at the Arrowhead Recreation Area for purposes of enhancing the snowmaking resources at Arrowhead, subject to any permits, licenses or registration as may be required by the State of New Hampshire, such expansion to be undertaken at no cost to the City.**

Mark Brislin, Parks and Recreation Director, said this is for Arrowhead snowmaking. The existing water storage is 20 feet x 30 feet x 15 feet deep. The proposal is for a storage area 20

feet x 40 feet x 15 feet deep and it will abut the existing tank. The hole will be filled with stone and covered with landscape cloth and about a foot of topsoil. No permits are required by the state. Water use and registration forms may need to be completed at the end of the season by Arrowhead. There are no issues or concerns from Public Works or Planning and Development.

Ms. Taylor said this is not near any wetlands.

Mr. Brislin said it is on the other side of the tubing hill.

Mr. Brislin said the current water storage takes 24 hours to replenish.

Ms. Messier asked for a list of those involved so they can be thanked.

**Voice vote: motion carried 8-0.**

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND DIRECTIVES**

Ms. Lovett thinks there should be a policy on how to handle future donations. She asked that it be placed on the next agenda or soon after.

Ms. Lovett said she has received lots of complaints regarding neighbors raising ducks/chickens/rabbits, and that is creating issues for neighbors. Ms. Taylor said there have been a number of complaints about backyard chickens in the last two weeks. The City is looking into writing an ordinance. Ms. Towle said there are several areas in Claremont with feral cats. Ms. Lovett said that needs to be on the agenda as well as how to resolve other animal issues. Mayor Neilsen said that will be put on.

Ms. Lovett asked about putting an ordinance on the agenda for backyard campfires that had been previously discussed with Fire Chief Bergeron.

Mr. Koloski said it was brought to his attention that there is a yellow clothes donation bin at a turnaround on Main Street by the Welcome to Claremont sign; he didn't know if it was there by permission.

Mr. Koloski said he has also had call(s) about ducks/rabbits/chickens in the area of the college.

Ms. Towle would like to have a working platform for new Councilors coming in. She asked what the date is to file to be placed on the ballot. Mr. Bergeron said September 16-September 25, 5 p.m.

Mr. Raymond asked about the ATV Trail permission waiver. Ms. Taylor said that NH Department of Transportation hopes to have a recommendation out by the end of the month and then it will go to the Federal Highway Administration.

**CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL**

None

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3,II(a) – PERSONNEL**

**A motion was made by Ms. Messier and seconded by Mr. Bergeron to enter the Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3,II(a) – Personnel.**

**Roll call vote: motion carried 8-0.**

**At about 9:50 p.m. Mr. Bergeron made the motion and Mr. Koloski made the second that the minutes of the meeting be sealed until such time as the personnel involved make a request of the Council to unseal them.**

**A roll call vote was taken of the eight Councilors present and all voted Yes to sealing the minutes.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Koloski and seconded by Mr. Raymond to exit the Non-Public Session.**

**Roll call vote: motion carried 8-0.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**At 9:53 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Towle and seconded by Ms. Lovett to adjourn.**

**Voice vote: motion carried 8-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell  
Clerk to the Council