

The Claremont City Council held a meeting on Wednesday, March 16, 2016, in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Lovett at 6:00 p.m.

Members of the Council present were:

Ward I Councilor Carolyn Towle  
Ward II Councilor Scott Pope  
At-Large Councilor Keith Raymond  
Mayor Charlene Lovett  
At-Large Councilor Allen Damren  
At-Large Councilor Bruce Temple  
Ward III Councilor Nicholas Koloski  
At-Large Councilor John Simonds

Absent:

Assistant Mayor Victor Bergeron

Also present were:

Guy Santagate, City Manager  
Jane Taylor, City Solicitor

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

**A motion was made by Mr. Simonds and seconded by Mr. Pope to enter into a Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3,II(d) – Real Estate and to invite Ms. Russell, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Santagate and Gerry DeMuro into the session.**

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

Entered Non-Public Session at 6:01 p.m.

Mayor Lovett said during the previous Consultation with Legal Counsel where the 54 Windsor Road property was discussed, Councilors had questions that she couldn't answer. She said Gerry DeMuro is the Board Chair from Northern Heritage Mills and would be able to answer those questions.

Mr. Pope asked about his supervisor, Joel Schneid, being a Board member of the Northern Heritage Mills and whether or not he should recuse himself. Mr. DeMuro confirmed Mr. Schneid is on the board. It was determined that Mr. Pope would have no financial gain with this activity, so he did not leave Council Chambers.

Mr. Raymond said the consensus at the previous Consultation with Counsel was to keep this property on the auction list. Mayor Lovett said she had gotten information from the state indicating the historic significance of the building and wanted the Council to have that information.

Ms. Taylor said that at the previous Consultation, Councilors had been cautioned that any information discussed in that session must stay in the room. She was concerned how the subject and information had been conveyed to Mr. DeMuro if it was confidential. Mayor Lovett said she had told him that there were a lot of questions that she couldn't answer; she wasn't specific about what they were.

Ms. Taylor explained the process for retaining tax deeded properties. She said the property may be retained for public use and read the state law. Council would have to have a meeting with this as an agenda item to vote. We are still within the 3 years of the original tax deeding, so the former owner would have to have notice. Sale at auction cuts that off. If Council votes to retain the property, then it becomes a municipal property. In order to sell retained property, there has to be a finding and vote by the Council that the public use is no longer applicable. Then you have to follow the process to dispose of City-owned property (i.e. Request for Proposal). Then Council would decide if the proposal is an appropriate use.

Ms. Taylor said the City is under contract with the auctioneer and if this property is pulled off the list, then the City has to pay 5% of the equalized market value/assessed value (\$114,000) which is about \$5,700.

Mayor Lovett said putting the properties up for auction was a Council decision. She wanted it understood that there is value beyond money for that property.

Ms. Towle was surprised there was so much information in the Eagle Times article today. Mayor Lovett said that article was based on information from Mr. DeMuro.

Councilors Raymond, Damren, Simonds and Koloski commented that they felt the property should be auctioned.

Mr. Koloski talked about the letter Council had received from Wayne McElreavey regarding using the Goodwin Community Center for the Historical Society and asked why Mr. DeMuro's request was being discussed, but not Mr. McElreavey's. Mayor Lovett said Mr. McElreavey's letter was received after the last meeting.

Councilors spoke in favor of Mr. DeMuro's work with Young Women in Engineering, but most felt the property should still go to auction. They agreed to listen to Mr. DeMuro's proposal.

Mr. DeMuro handed out information about Northern Heritage Mills – Young Women in Engineering Workshops. He said matching grants of up to \$500,000 may be available from LCHIP (Land & Community Heritage Investment Program). He handed out copies of letters of support and news articles for the workshops.

Mr. DeMuro said they want to restore the building. He said it will be an extreme challenge; there are incredible opportunities for grants for the project. He said he is an architectural historian. He talked about the history of this property. He estimated it would cost well over \$1 million to repair.

Mr. Damren asked how much capital Mr. DeMuro's organization was willing to put up. Mr. DeMuro said he should have \$100,000 for repairs to start with, in two months, but he would have to have it approved by his Board. He talked about the sequence of cleaning up the area, securing the building and stabilizing it.

Mr. Temple asked why Mr. DeMuro doesn't bid on the property. Mr. DeMuro said his board wants to see a commitment from the City. They need financial partners. He said that building has a pedigree. Some of the equipment they already have can be used in the barn.

Ms. Towle said we have told others the City would not take properties off the auction list to sell separately and we must treat all fairly.

Mr. Koloski said the Council has wanted to get City-owned property back on the tax rolls and preservation is important, but he is concerned this is a pipe dream and they will sit on it. He doesn't want the taxpayers to pay \$5,700 to the auctioneer for pulling it off the list.

After discussion, it was determined there was not enough time to notice a meeting to discuss pulling this off the auction list before the auction which will be held on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Consensus was the property needed to remain on the list for auction.

**A motion was made by Mr. Damren and seconded by Mr. Simonds to exit the non-public session and return to public session.**

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

Public session reconvened at 7:11 p.m.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**At 7:11 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Damren and seconded by Ms. Towle to adjourn.**

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorée M. Russell  
Clerk to the Council