



PLANNING BOARD WORK SESSION

Monday, February 27, 2017 7:00 PM
Council Chambers, City Hall

MINUTES

Approved 3/13/2017

Mr. Wahrlich called the work session to order at 6:00 PM and asked for a roll call.

I. Roll Call

Present: Marilyn Harris, William Greenrose, Richard Wahrlich, James Short, Charlene Lovett, David Putnam

Absent: Bruce Kolenda, Victor Bergeron, Nicholas Koloski, Marlene Jordan, Rois Neil Ward, Jr.

City Staff: Michael McCrory, City Planner

I. Review of Minutes –

a. February 13, 2017 – Work Session

Motion: To accept the minutes of the February 13, 2017 work session as written

Made by: Mr. Putnam **Second:** Mr. Short

Vote: Mayor Lovett abstained; all others voted in favor

II. Parks & Recreation chapter (Red-lined version dated 1/19/2017)

Mr. McCrory said the comments and suggestions from the last meeting have been incorporated into the chapter. He briefly reviewed them.

The land at Ashley's landing is owned by the City, but there is an easement on it that was granted to the state of New Hampshire to maintain the boat launch. The state maintains it during the summer months; the City plows it during the winter. Mr. McCrory has a copy of the easement.

Mayor Lovett said she had been told by someone at the state that the City could not put picnic tables and other amenities there because of the boat launch. She said it is important to clarify this matter as there has been discussion about creating a group of "stewards" to oversee the area, and learned that the state had control of what could and could not be done there.

Mr. McCrory said he would coordinate with the Parks & Rec department and look into it.

Mr. McCrory continued to review the changes. He said Mark Brislin, Director of the Parks & Recreation Department, and the Steering Committee have accepted the proposed changes.

Referring to the relationship between the Parks Department and the school athletic department, Mayor Lovett said it is not just the operational relationships that should be created. She said there should be some type of joint policy between the City Council and the Claremont School Board that would underscore the need to formalize partnerships where resources are shared in order to maximize use of publicly-funded facilities in the most economic manner possible. It would serve as the “bridge piece or umbrella” which these action statements would support. She was uncertain where it should go or if it should even be in the Master Plan.

Mr. Putnam said at present the only means of contact between the City and the School is through the Parks & Rec department.

The Board discussed where such a statement might best fit in the Plan. Ms. Harris suggested perhaps the Plan’s vision statement might be appropriate.

Mr. McCrory said the Community Facilities chapter contains an entire section on school facilities and this idea might work there. Mayor Lovett thought that was an excellent idea and asked if it would be added to the vision statement for the chapter. Mr. McCrory said he would take the concept of what Mayor Lovett was talking about and see how it applies to the chapter. Mayor Lovett agreed to that.

Mayor Lovett asked if there had been any discussion about establishing a wellness committee. Mr. Putnam said it is a conversation that has been had at several different levels and is continuing. He said the Steering Committee is trying to make sure public health is included wherever it’s relevant. He said he is advocating for a separate chapter on public health at some point. Mayor Lovett thought the idea might fit well as an action item under Goal #1 of the Parks & Rec chapter. She said there is a long-term benefit to the City and the School District if wellness is being promoted. She said theoretically insurance costs should decrease due to a decrease in claims. She said public health is a very broad issue and was recommending that this chapter focus only on the beneficial outcomes (both health and financial) of fitness. The City’s health insurance costs just increased by 23.1% presumably because of the number of claims filed.

Mr. McCrory asked if this would be part of the Parks & Recreation Commission’s mission. Mayor Lovett felt that the Commission would look at it from an entirely different perspective.

There was discussion on who the wellness committee would answer to, what its membership should like and how the programming would be advertised.

Mr. McCrory said in his experience working in public health, a primary focus has been about equitable access to whatever facilities are available. He said that in the context of community wellness and how we might be able to enhance it, the City needs a good grasp on what the community’s opportunities and barriers might be. He said the Parks Department has been taking some steps to do that – they have engaged a private consultant to assist them to identify certain things; the school districts participate in the DOT-sponsored Safe Routes to School program; and we are now working with the state on grant-funded improvements to the rail trail. When we think about how these play into community

wellness, we think about how the communication of that works. How do people learn about these opportunities and how do they provide feedback on them? When we think about what this Master Plan chapter provides, there is in those goals, some desire to do some planning initiative for the parks system. The Center for Disease Control has been “kicking out” millions of dollars nationally to do these types of studies and evaluations. There may be future rounds where the City can take advantage of those community assessments to take a look at the City’s recreational opportunities and the barriers for the public to use them or participate in them. If we are talking about an organized approach to community wellness, we are at a very early stage. What might need to happen is rather than saying let’s put people in a room and let them hash out their own mission, maybe we want to develop that mission as part of this planning process for the Parks Department. For example, there is now an Energy chapter to the Master Plan that has an actual initiative and actual items to follow through on for community energy, efficiency, renewables, and so on – the chapter lays the mission out very clearly. Maybe in the next year when we are able to convene an energy committee, they will be able to follow through on it. Developing the mission through this planning process will help clarify it, instead of asking the committee to define it, as we may not get what we are envisioning. He suggested an action item under Goal #1 of *developing a mission statement for community wellness as part of the Parks Department planning process.*

Mr. Putnam said that based on conversations with Planning & Development Director, Nancy Merrill, and conversations with the steering committee, many chapters will reference community health and poverty and other relevant issues. He said he and Ms. Merrill have agreed that rather than start a new chapter on public health right away, wait and see how well progress in being made regarding the individual public health issues that are outlined in each chapter. In a year’s time the planning board should evaluate progress we’re making with public health concerns. This could lead to adding a new chapter at any time.

Mr. Greenrose liked the idea of putting it as an objective under Goal #1 to say “to develop a definition of community wellness” and a scope. There needs to be a definition around it; then you can pursue it. Right now, there are a bunch of these things scattered around, but maybe they should be identified in the different chapters – it should be tracked to create that long-term vision. What does it mean when we say “community wellness”?

Ms. Harris asked if the task of creating the mission statement was to be assigned to the Parks Department. It is to be determined.

Mr. Putnam said the City Center Initiative committee heard four different presentations about energy and learned that it is common to have an energy chapter in the Master Plan. He asked what the planning board could do to assist in a similar way what was being discussed here. Mr. McCrory said the City Center project was a multi-year project that ultimately led to the actions items that Mr. Putnam was referring to. He said the Master Plan will identify community wellness as an important goal. That in turn translates into a broad planning process for community recreational resources, which would include the community wellness that the Mayor was talking about. It is an intentional step-wise process that we can follow.

Mr. Putnam said he was concerned that the Master Plan has a lifespan and there is a goal that asks for a mission statement addressing the wellness of our community – then what? Mr. McCrory said it will take commitment.

Motion: To accept the Parks and Recreation Chapter (red-lined version dated 1/19/2017) as presented and amended at this meeting.

Made by: Mr. Greenrose **Second:** Mr. Putnam

Vote: Unanimous in favor

III. Community Facilities chapter

The Board did not review this chapter due to a lack of time.

II. Historic Resources chapter

The Board did not review this chapter due to a lack of time.

III. Other

There was no other business.

IV. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

The work session adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

deForest Bearse