



## PLANNING BOARD WORK SESSION

Monday, March 27, 2017 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers, City Hall

### MINUTES

Approved 4/24/2017

- I. **Call to Order**  
Mr. Wahrlich called the session to order at 6:00 PM.
- II. **Roll Call**  
**Present:** Richard Wahrlich, Bruce Kolenda, David Putnam, Charlene Lovett, Victor Bergeron  
**Absent:** Nicholas Koloski, Marlene Jordan, Marilyn Harris, William Greenrose, James Short  
**City Staff:** Michael McCrory, City Planner
- III. **Review of Minutes**
  - a. **March 13, 2017 – Work Session**  
**Motion:** To approve the minutes as presented.  
**Made by:** Mr. Putnam      **Second:** Mayor Lovett  
Mr. Kolenda noted that he was shown as present at this meeting and he was not. The minutes will be corrected.  
**Vote:** Mr. Kolenda abstained; all others voted in favor
- IV. **Master Plan Update**
  - a. **Community Facilities Chapter**  
The Planning reviewed the chapter dated 3/21/2017. Mr. McCrory reviewed corrections and changes that had been made in the draft since the last meeting:  
  
Page 7: “*Restoration of old cemetery books (to include burial/ death records).*” This statement has been stricken. (It is unknown if the restoration has been completed, but the department has the funds with which to do it.)  
  
Page 21: Bullet added to Goal 2, Objective 1 – “*Maintenance of municipal structures should respect the historic qualities that are acknowledged in the historic resource chapter.*”  
  
Page 22: Goal 3, Objective 1 - Mr. McCrory said that staff felt the wording of this goal best summarizes most of the concerns voiced at the previous meeting as it is worded. The last bullet was modified to read, “*Review fire service and response based on population growth trends.*”

Mr. Putnam said that at the last meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Board had asked, that since this is a five to ten-year document, to include language that covers a feasibility study, “understanding the quality of our facilities and all the departments, and understanding their conditions and their future use; what their life expectancy were; fitting with the trends now and future expectations for new trends in the community. In the minutes from our last meeting we talked quite a bit about it.”

“One of the ideas we had that, and the Mayor recommended that, because this is a big enough item to be its own objective, that we have a specific goal identifying how that could be part of this document and worked out collaboratively with the Planning Board and administration for the future.”

He said he wanted to bring it up again so the Board could have a discussion. He said he felt it would be very irresponsible for the Board not to have some language in the Plan talking about the City’s facilities – “where they are now and where we think they should be ten years from now. It would help us be more aware of where we are now with all our facilities so we don’t get caught in the same trap that we were with the community center – letting the Goodwin Community Center go so far out of date that by the time that we got up to speed to building a new community center and doing something about it, it was late in the game... We were kind of forced into having a new community center without a lot of good planning through a document like the Master Plan. I think this is the type of plan that helps prepare the community and the City of Claremont to think about its future needs regarding its facilities.”

Mr. McCrory said the thought was that Goal 3 would best address that kind of perspective. Mr. Putnam said, “Not real well. I think Goal 3 is very specific.” He said he is proposing more of a global look at all of the departments and their facilities, rather than be specific to the fire department and the library.

Mr. McCrory said if one looks back through the chapter, the one facility that would need some conceptual thought is the fire department. If the City grew to a certain size, the fire department would have to re-assess its services. He was not sure of any other statements of need for capacity in any of the other departments.

Mr. Putnam said it’s not just for capacity, it’s conditions for upgrades.

Mayor Lovett mentioned both the library and the police department. Mr. McCrory said they are covered under Goal 3. Mayor Lovett said, “But by doing that you are stove-piping each of those buildings, instead of – one of the objectives in my opinion should be the consideration of consolidation. Is that a good thing to do financially or not? Is it feasible or not? But the way these objectives are written, you are thinking along the lines of how do we maintain or upgrade each of these

individual facilities to meet future growth or to overcome the barriers they currently have because they are over-capacity?”

Mr. McCrory said this is not being voiced by the department heads. He said his concern is, “would we be unsuccessfully leading a horse to water by imposing something that the department heads aren’t necessarily interested in?”

Mayor Lovett said, “But this is about planning for community growth and going through the exercise of, ‘is it financially cost-effective to consider consolidation’ – not of departments but of locations. We have a lot of different locations performing a lot of different missions...My concern is before we continually put money into these buildings and trying to upgrade them to meet today’s standards – are we better off at some point considering re-locating some of these facilities under one consolidated building. I think in planning we should be considering that as a possibility.”

Mr. Putnam said that, “What the Mayor is proposing is one perspective to the idea of what a feasibility study of all of the City’s municipal buildings would look like – that’s one of the questions you answer. But from a broader perspective it’s helping us plan for the future with all of our buildings so that it not only meets expectations of need, but also helps us understand from many different perspectives – the CIP Plan, opportunities for grant applications, when that information is included in the Master Plan, it then becomes a topic that keeps on living. In ten years from now when we do the Master Plan over again, it’s a good way to review what was done for that survey, for that analysis, so you can see what’s happened with it and what progress you’ve made in making improvements to all of your facilities...it’s about being responsible for all of our assets. I think it’s bigger than what individual department heads are thinking about right now, because they pretty much think year-by-year...they live budget-by-budget.”

Mr. Bergeron said, “Department heads aren’t going to come forward and say they need a new DPW garage because the director knows there’s no money to do that with at this point. The thing we need to do, like I said at the last meeting, is, if you are going to do any kind of investigation into expanding buildings or making new buildings, the whole complex should be done. Every building the City owns should be going through some kind of review. Is it going to be feasible to build a new DPW garage somewhere else or repair the one we got? We’ve got to look to the future which we sometimes don’t do in this community. When they built the police station, renovated it, people did not want to do it – they wanted to build a new one. But everybody pushed to keep it where it was. And what it was, if you didn’t look for the future, it wasn’t going to go anywhere, because there’s no place else to build in where it is. That’s what we sometimes do- instead of looking to the future – what’s the future going to be ten or fifteen years down the road if we don’t do

something. I think all the buildings need to go through some kind of a study. What would it cost to renovate the building? What would it cost to build a new one and combine things together? I think that study needs to be done to help everybody...It wasn't bad planning that sent the community center down the tubes, it was bad management by both the City Councils and the people running it. They allowed it to get in that condition – it wasn't due to planning.” He said the City just wasn't putting the money into the upkeep of the buildings. However, there were no plans in place to provide guidance, either. Mr. Bergeron said maybe he and the Mayor could bring this up at budget time to start looking into this.

Mayor Lovett said the community center was “a perfect example. We took all of these community facilities with the outdoor pool, the Goodwin Community Center, the indoor pool and the Zotto gym and we said, ‘rather than invest more money into trying to keep these older buildings going, we’re going to take the money and invest it in something that will have an entirely different outcome, a better outcome’. So, the way this is written now, it’s just linear thinking, it’s not ‘is there a better way to do all of this’, knowing how much money would have to go into each building to meet the needs of today and future growth.”

Mr. Putnam said, “it’s not that we need a better way, we just need to add this to it; it is adding more depth to whole chapter.” He gave an example of his experience within the school system.

Mr. Bergeron said the chapter is well done, but it only picks out the fire house and the library.

Mr. Wahrlich said he is looking at this from two perspectives – “to move the fire department out and the police department out into one roof, would take away from the whole historical perspective downtown – so are we talking about that?”

Mayor Lovett said that would be part of the analysis. Mr. Putnam said those are the questions that would be asked during the feasibility study. He said, “It’s not right for us to throw that out as to reasons why we do this, because it’s not. The reason why we do this is so that we know what our options are for the future; so that we understand where we have to be in ten years with our buildings, so that we don’t get caught in traps of being behind and having to do things in a panic or a rush.”

Mr. Wahrlich said, “I’m hearing two different things. One is, if we are all under one roof, it would be less expensive to maintain everything and more efficient. The other thing I’m wondering is what would trigger that? To me it would be population. We are currently at 13,000 and change; the highest we have ever been was 15,000. So are we talking about that or an assessment of the buildings themselves and what they need?” Mr. Bergeron and Mr. Putnam both said yes, and how they fit into a

long-range plan for the future of Claremont, whether or not how our population grows, the buildings age-out, different technologies come into play.

Mr. Wahrlich said, “If we brought in the fire chief, he could tell you exactly what he needs.”

Mr. Putnam said, “All the department heads would be part of filling out the report, but then you would also bring in (if we had the grant money or the funds for this) a consultant who would know what to look for.”

Mr. Wahrlich said, “So are we saying that a goal would be to see if we can get that assessment?” Mr. Putnam said that was one way he would look at it.

Mayor Lovett said it’s not all about population growth. The fire station is a perfect example. It has everything to do with the change in fire trucks. The equipment needs are different.

Mr. Putnam said the discussion about this has been based on what everyone knows. He said what we don’t know is what we have to find out. Mayor Lovett agreed. He said the department heads’ discussion is going to be based on what they know now and what they may need in the next year or two.

The Board continued to discuss the building assessment study idea.

Mr. Wahrlich asked if the Board’s intention was to seek a grant for this. Mr. Putnam said if it’s in the Master Plan it allows a variety of ways to fund it.

Mr. Wahrlich asked Mr. McCrory what he was hearing from this discussion. Mr. McCrory replied that he was hearing a fairly strong sentiment that it should be in the Master Plan. He said much of what the Board has been discussing is already in the CIP. He said he feels the chapter, as it stands, covers what the Board s talking about, but if the Board wishes to make this a specific action item, he needed to hear what the Board specifically wants to do.

Mr. Putnam felt that someone reading the Plan isn’t going to get that idea because it is from a broader perspective. Mr. Wahrlich asked if it should be added to Goal #4.

Mayor Lovett suggested the following as a separate goal: *Conduct a feasibility study that examines the pros and cons of individual facility upgrades vs possible co-location/consolidation of community facilities.* Mr. Putnam felt this was too narrow.

Mayor Lovett’s 2<sup>nd</sup> suggestion: *Conduct a feasibility study to examine the current condition of (the City’s) community facilities and their ability to meet current and future needs.* Mr. Putnam agreed with this suggestion. Mr. Bergeron agreed as well.

Mr. McCrory suggested placing the new objective under Goal #3. The Board felt it wouldn't fit the way Goal #3 and its objectives were written.

*GOAL 3. Facility improvement or replacement projects shall address established unmet needs for services and/or overcome barriers to public access to services.*

Became:

*GOAL 3. Facility improvement or replacement projects shall address established unmet needs for all services.*

This objective was added:

*Objective 3: Conduct a feasibility study to examine the current condition of the City's community facilities and their ability to meet current and future needs.*

The Board then suggested additional corrections and changes.

Changes/corrections requested by members of the Board:

- St. Mary's cemetery is not maintained by the City; it is privately maintained; City does burial only
- Change "*Mt. View Cemetery*" to "*Mountain View Cemetery*"

Page 9:

- Change "*EAP*" to "*EPA*"
- Change "*mg*" to "*million gallons (mg)*" next to Whitewater Reservoir
- Add "*and connections*" to the statement "*Replace all lead service lines*"

Page 10:

- Change "*Ascutney Street separation*" to "*Ascutney Street sewer/stormwater separation*"

Page 12:

- Request to add "*Visitor Center*" after "*Planning and Economic Development*"

Page 13 – request to quote the precise number of seat at the Opera House

Page 15 – request to add *rail and public transportation* to the list under "*Transportation*"

Page 16:

- Correct "*Sugar River Career and Technical Center*" to "*Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center*" in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraphs under *School Facilities*

- Change “129 years” to “150 years” under *Stevens High School*

Page 17 – the reference to the Disnard School transitioning to an elementary school in 1971 should be corroborated as it did not seem accurate to some Board members.

Page 18: Add reference to the “3 plus 1” program with Granite State College

Page 22: Goal 3 –Objective 1 was modified to state,

The Board asked to continue reviewing the chapter at the next workshop.

**V. Continued Review of ADU Zoning Ordinance Update**

**VI. Other**

**VII. Adjournment**

The work session adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*deForest Bearse*