



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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PLANNING BOARD APPROVED MEETING MINUTES – MASTER PLAN WORKSESSION April 12, 2011

PRESENT: Tom Cottrill (Chair), Peter Bianchi (Selectmen's Representative), Emma Crane (Conservation Commission Representative), Michele Holton, Michael Doheny (alternate), Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator), Paul Gorman, John Tilley

NOT PRESENT: Jeff Hollinger (Vice-Chair), Dierdre Sheerr-Gross (Alternate)

Chair Cottrill called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and asked Mr. Doheny to sit in for Jeff Hollinger, who was absent. Cottrill noted that the purpose of this meeting was to work on the Master Plan, however, there was one regular business item and asked Peter Stanley for a summary of that item.

Mr. Stanley said that Mr. Ben Cushing was there to ask how he should proceed in seeking approval for his real estate business, Colby Agency, to occupy the space that was CB Coburn. Previously, someone was interested in opening a yoga studio in the space, and was actually approved on a trial basis due to limited parking availability, but they have since backed out. The parking spaces required for a real estate office is one more than available, but the discrepancy would not be as large as that of the yoga studio. Mr. Stanley suggested allowing this request to file via the Fast Track Application.

Mr. Stanley said that the parking standard for real estate offices was raised when the real estate businesses were much busier. He didn't see an issue with this particular case, but wanted the Planning Board to weigh in. He stated that the yoga class needed 15 spaces, to be used before 8am and after 5pm, which was approved. There are 17 spaces available for the entire property, which serves both residential and two other business inhabitants.

Mr. Gorman asked if, when the Planning Board makes a decision like this, would it remain with the space forever. Mr. Stanley said that a record of their decision goes in the folder that corresponds to the space. The meeting is referenced and they keep a record of what transpired. New uses require another review by the Planning Board.

Mr. Cushing noted that the agents would park in the back of the building. He shared an informal tally of the previous two weeks of the parking space use where he is now located to show the anticipated parking needs. He reminded the Board that he was before them two years ago asking the same question; moving from Newport Road to the Kidder Building. He has grown even more since then and needs more space. Mr. Cushing said that his business is such that there could be several cars for 15 minutes, and then no cars the rest of the day. He noted that since he is one space short, he spoke with John Souliotis (owner of abutting property to the south) to see if Mr. Souliotis could and would let Mr. Cushing use one space. Mr. Cushing said that Mr. Souliotis would be open to that arrangement. Mr. Cushing offered to provide written documentation to allow the use of that other nearby parking space for the building, if it would satisfy the Board and thus allow the move.

Mr. Stanley said he was reticent to head in the direction of long-term off-site parking agreements, since they are difficult to administer and enforce. It makes more sense to accept the applicant's parking data and review the situation in a year to ensure the adequacy of parking at the site.

Mr. Doheny said that the proximity to public parking should allow for this exception, as well as the relationship Mr. Cushing has with Mr. Souliotis. If the parking became a problem they could come back and discuss other options. Chair Cottrill recommended checking back on this in one year to see if it was working. Mr. Stanley agreed that this would work.

IT WAS MOVED (Michele Holton) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to allow this issue to go through the Fast Track Application Process, provided Mr. Cushing checks back with the Zoning Administrator in one year to review the parking situation and whether Mr. Cushing will have to seek additional parking by way of a written agreement with the abutting property owner.

Mr. Cushing agreed with the motion. Mr. Stanley commented that they have done this sort of thing before and referenced Ellie's Café. They did an informal study to show that there was adequate parking with the seats being used. It was found that many customers were walking or biking from other locations.

Mr. Cushing said that they have 13 agents currently, however the most activity during the week is on Wednesday mornings when they have staff meeting. At that time there would be 7-12 cars there for up to 2 hours. He noted that the real estate world has become virtual; people work out of their homes, make use of their cell phones, and can do their work anywhere. If there are two or three people in the office throughout the day, it would be the average.

Mr. Cushing asked what would happen if a real estate firm came in and had 30 agents. Mr. Stanley said it would be self-limiting to an extent, and parking is based on the square footage of the space, not the number of employees.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Master Plan- Community Facilities and Services Chapter

Michael McCrory was there to review his draft of the chapter. Chair Cottrill discussed the format of the chapters and how they are not consistent. Mr. McCrory said he did not cross-reference the other chapters to see the precedent of how the chapters were set up. He didn't see an issue with the set-up of this chapter, as it was a different kind of chapter. Mr. Gorman commented that Chair Cottrill's point was important – the chapters should all look the same. Mr. McCrory said he has developed a standard sort of paragraph header font he will use when he assembles all the chapters into one document. With regard to content, Mr. Stanley said he thought it a waste of time to focus on the information that came from the survey. He opined that it made for good filler, but not good substance. He suggested to Mr. McCrory to refer to the survey in summary fashion only, and keep the survey results as an appendix to the document. He felt it was easier to read through the document without including tables, graphs and charts of the survey results.

Mr. McCrory said he had basically cut the chapter in half and had done some editing. He believed that it was easier to comprehend the issues and recommendations as they appear within the chapter versus having them all lumped at the end. Mr. Stanley noted that Ken's approach was not a lot dissimilar to this, but was longer. He added that they still do not have all the maps from Mr. McWilliams who he has contacted. Mr. McCrory said he had received some GIS maps and would forward them to Mr. Stanley to check to make sure there wasn't anything missing.

The Planning Board began reviewing the chapter, page by page.

There was an extra “and” in the second paragraph, in the second line before “now.”

Page 2

Mr. Stanley noted that in the first paragraph it gives a figure of \$25,000 which should actually be \$50,000. He provided copy to Mr. McCrory about how the referenced gift should be described.

In the second paragraph, it was recommended to remove the “s” from “offices.”

In Figure VII-1, Chair Cottrill asked if there was a way to make the chart easier to read. The key showed such small samples and was confusing. He suggested inserting the percentages instead of using a key.

Page 3

Chair Cottrill suggested the addition of headers at the start of each point. He made further suggestions to pare down the wording. Basically, he offered that the grammar should be cut from the text in this list to create a bulleted list. Everyone thought this sounded reasonable. Mr. McCrory said that he would use this method for all remaining issues and recommendations in the chapter.

It was noted that it should read “Continue to use” instead of “encourage the use of” volunteers.

Recommendations

2. This should be changed to “Continue town policy to encourage...”

Mr. Tilley suggested combining issues 2 and 3, and recommendations 2 and 3, as they were similar and went hand-in-hand.

Mr. Stanley said they should create another item. With reference to archives, certain things require certain timeframes to be kept. He was hoping to move to keeping files electronically so more space won't be necessary.

4. Chair Cottrill said they need to identify the needs/opportunities for capital improvements, maintenance, etc.

Page 5

Ms. Holton said that it should be written as “LSVNA and Hospice”

Mr. Tilley suggested putting the organizations that the town funds in descending order as to the amount of support they provide. The list could note: By direct financial support from the town to:

NLAS should be written out initially as: New London Ambulance Service.

Mr. McCrory noted that he had transferred some of the data directly from the prior draft. If there was a need or desire to update it, members should let him know and he would investigate.

Page 6

These items would be re-listed in terms of the amount of support given by the Town.

Page 7

Instead of writing out “Lake Sunapee Regional Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice” every time, Mr. McCrory would include “VNA” in parenthesis.

Issues:

McCrory would make these into bullet points.

Mr. Tilley said that #1 says “The most significant issue” but should become “one of” or “a significant” issue.

Recommendations:

Ms. Crane said that #2 should say “To continue to encourage...” Her experience was that churches and non-profits are stepping up and filling the needs as much as they can.

Mr. Stanley said with regard to #3, rather than speaking directly... the “town should consider regulatory changes that would assist in this process as opportunities present themselves.”

Page 8

Mr. McCrory said he cut a lot from this section, but could cut even further if they thought it was still too wordy. Mr. Gorman felt there were judgments made in the document that had no substantiation (the use of “robust”, “massive” etc...) He assumed that the paragraphs were written by different people who were striving to “toot their own horn” but that this wasn’t what the document was about. Others agreed with Mr. Gorman’s sentiment.

Page 9

Issues

Mr. Tilley suggested it should say “New London Police Department needs to remain current in this medium. He said that they have a regional dispatch service; does it provide revenue to the Town and should it be included? He wondered if they should say who was involved and give a brief description. Mr. Stanley said that towns participating in the regional dispatch system come and go over time and that revenue is decided depending on the number of calls. Mr. McCrory would include the towns presently served at this time within the dispatch service. He would add this in the first paragraph of the Police Department Communication section.

Chair Cottrill said that there was no discussion of technology in the text, but appears in the issues. He didn’t care as much about the number of vehicles the Police Department has, but he was more interested in the fact that technology had been addressed as an issue, which should also have a recommendation. Mr. Stanley said that some historical trend information is relevant to a planning document, regarding the number of cruisers. Chair Cottrill said that the text doesn’t address staff, but that it should. Mr. Stanley said staffing history and trends are important. He felt it worthwhile to include staffing information, for example, it would be helpful to include that there is one detective who works primarily on internet crime.

Recommendations

3. Mr. Cottrill wondered if speed limit enforcement was necessary in this document versus say, drug enforcement. Mr. McCrory asked if the board believed it was an issue in the town. Chair Cottrill opined that it wasn’t, but others disagreed. Chair Cottrill suggested that inadequate placement of speed zones is an issue.

After some discussion, Mr. McCrory agreed he would focus more on current staffing and training issues in this section. Chair Cottrill suggested combining issues 2 and 3.

Page 10

With regard to the Fire Department Mr. Stanley said he would provide some text, including some corrections, to Mr. McCrory. Mr. Tilley thought historical data was unnecessary. Mr. McCrory said it is good to have some context, but it can be limited more if they wish.

Page 11

Mr. McCrory asked if the figures from the community survey results were really necessary within the text. Omitting the charts would save paper. Everyone agreed that a summary statement was all that was needed and that the charts and graphs could be removed.

Chair Cottrill asked about the number of Fire Department calls from 1980 and what accounts for the substantial rise since then. Being the fire department, he wondered for instance, how many structural fires were handled versus automobile accidents. He wondered if a statement could be made as to why there was such a rise. Mr. Tilley suggested that fire calls should be isolated from other calls so they can pinpoint where the Fire Department is going most often. Mr. Stanley said that calls change with the times; more people have propane instead of oil now, so the type of call and work they do is different. He said that this could all be described in one paragraph to show that there has been a decrease in actual fires due to fire prevention. Many thought that this sentence should be included.

Issues

These would all be made into bullets.

Page 12

Recommendations

1. Fire Department “should” continue to...

Chair Cottrill noted that there were three issues and five recommendations. Mr. Stanley said they could remove #2 completely, as they do this routinely already.

3. Mr. McCrory said he tried to tweak this recommendation, but it was more of a broader workforce question rather than about the fire department, itself.

Page 13

There was some talk about the names of the hospitals referenced. Mr. McCrory suggested changing this to: “regional and statewide hospitals.”

Hospital and Ambulance

Chair Cottrill thought they should do a fact check on the referenced 7% each year. He thought it would be good to have an estimate for 2011.

Mr. Bianchi thought the way the ambulance was staffed was not important. He said historically the hospital has run the ambulance for New London and other towns. This model is being studied for possible future changes. It could be said “at this time”...and then include the current information. Mr. Bianchi explained the study that is being done by the hospital and the surrounding towns. Mr. McCrory felt the inclusion of this ongoing study in the document was important.

Mr. Tilley wondered if it was OK to include in the writing that the structure of the ambulance service will likely change or that they anticipate major changes in the structure. It was agreed it was appropriate.

Page 14

Issues

These will be made into bullets.

#4 would be moved up to the top of the discussion body.

#3 refers to “emergency medical service.” Chair Cottrill wondered if that meant that the hospital had an ER. Mr. McCrory said that it did. Mr. Bianchi said that the reason they can present it in this way because

they combine the cost of the ambulance and the ER. They decided to have #3 focus on the ambulance and take the rest out.

Public Works Department

Chair Cottrill asked if they needed to include the levels of jobs. No one thought this was necessary. The staffing total number was fine.

Highway Division

Chair Cottrill thought this was a bit wordy. Mr. Stanley suggested deleting the last paragraph. The miles of roads maintained should be included. Mr. McCrory said that this number may be in the Transportation chapter, but that it could also appear in this area.

Chair Cottrill suggested deleting the mentioning of “5 bays and 2 offices” and leave in just “9,000’ of heated garage space to house all Town equipment.” They should make a point that this is unusual or unique; most towns do not have this sort of facility.

Page 15

It was noted that the second paragraph is where the miles of roads should be inserted. Mr. McCrory said that he would strike all references to CIP (Capital Improvement Plan), which has all the relevant information on the whys and he didn’t see it as an appendix. He thought they could add this if they wanted to. He would refer to the CIP at the beginning of the chapter and take it out of the text. Mr. Tilley thought they would want that information in there as opposed to not mentioning it when it is a planning issue. They agreed to keep the CIP information in the chapter, as it appears in both the Police Department and Fire Department sections.

The Community Survey Results paragraphs will be combined into one, and the table would be removed.

Issues

These would be bulleted.

Mr. McCrory said there was some discussion previously in the chapter regarding salt and salt reduction zones. Mr. Stanley said they use salt to keep sand from freezing. There is only one salt reduction zone, which is maintained by the State because it is on a State road. They decided to remove the third issue. They kept one issue: “...and buildings should be maintained and replaced.” This would leave just one recommendation.

Page 16

Mr. McCrory said he would revise the table to make the figures come out correctly. He noted that it appears that there is a consistent 20% recycling rate, and thought it was interesting that the town has reached that recycling capacity regardless of the volume of trash.

Page 17

Mr. McCrory said he added some information about waste disposal services. Mr. Stanley said that the Town Highway Division accepts all oil, and should include “vehicle batteries” not “engine batteries.” Also, they should include “other types of rechargeable batteries.”

Page 18

Mr. Tilley noted that the issues and recommendations don’t match. Chair Cottrill thought that the wording could be tightened up.

Mr. Tilley shared that another issue he has heard is people's complaints about the hours of the Transfer Station, which is not mentioned. He wondered if it should be included. Chair Cottrill agreed and opined that the Transfer Station should be open on Sundays, not Saturdays, as many seasonal/weekend guests have no local place to dispose of trash at the end of the weekend, leaving them with either taking the trash home or leaving it until the following Saturday. Many thought that it should be open on both Saturday and Sunday. Mr. Doheny said that the Master Plan is a vision of how they'd like the Town to be. If this is something they want changed, it should be included. Mr. Bianchi commented that Mr. Lee has refrained from keeping the Transfer Station open during the weekend because he wanted his employees to have at least one week-end day to not have to work.

The word "could" needed to be removed from "Stump dump could is not..."

With regard to Single Stream Recycling, Mr. Bianchi said that the Town has adopted the provisions for it, but that the plant has not yet been created in Concord to facilitate it.

Issues

These would be bulleted.

Mr. Tilley asked to add the hours of operation of the Transfer Station to the issues. Mr. McCrory asked if the survey asked about the hours of operation. He was answered in the negative. Mr. McCrory suggested saying "anecdotal information suggests that..." the transfer station be open on the weekends.

Mr. Stanley said that #1 was not an issue and suggested its removal. They do this already and it is an ongoing issue that is being addressed.

#4 could have added that recycling methods could increase the tax burden over tipping fees. Mr. McCrory said that recycling rates have been static for the last number of years and increasing recycling would increase the tax burden over tipping fees.

Mr. Bianchi said they don't sell or recycle the glass – they do remove it from the stream and keep it for projects. They also sell it to others who want to use it.

Page 21

Mr. Tilley believed the fourth paragraph numbers were inaccurate. They are in flux. Ms. Crane wanted it known that the town does not support the community garden board financially at all, and is run totally by volunteer funds and labor. Mr. Gorman thought this information should be shrunk down to one page. Mr. Tilley thought they should have to prepare themselves with the coming of electronic books. That will be their biggest issue in the next five years whether they know it or not.

Mr. Gorman didn't think that #3 was true; they need to address the technology issue.

4 should be removed from issues and recommendations, as that work has already been done.

Chair Cottrill said that the second paragraph should focus on the building, and then the copy should mention the garden. There was some talk about the square footage of the library versus the square footage of the lot on which the building is located... and that it does not seem to make sense. Mr. Stanley said the site is a little less than one acre. The library lot is actually 43,000 square feet. The figure of 14,500' would be changed to 43,000'. It was agreed to combine paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 into one. Mr. McCrory suggested keeping some information regarding the parking to allude to the access of the building. Ms. Crane thought they should still mention the handicapped spaces.

It was decided to remove the library objectives and also remove “the library is unique...”
Plus remove the staff hour’s paragraph and update the information on how many card holders there were.
With regard to the free passes to area attractions, remove the list; don’t describe each one. It was decided to keep the sentence about the website and internet access, and to combine the 1970 paragraph with the current library information into one paragraph. The figure would also be removed.

Page 22

Issues

- #1 this has been addressed and is not really an issue; ongoing repairs are mentioned in earlier text.
- #2 tweaks this to reflect the digital media discussion.
- #3 End at “expansion area.”
- #4 the safety issue should remain.

Page 23

Recreation

Mr. Stanley noted that a citizen of New London has contacted Mr. McCrory directly about the community center. He explained that private fundraising did not come through and so now the project has been halted.

Mr. Bianchi felt that it was an issue. The 1941 building was offered to the Town to be used as a community center. The man who is spear-heading this issue calls him occasionally to talk about it. He felt it was a wonderful idea but that they won’t get any money from the Town for it. Mr. Bianchi thought it was a valid, live issue for the town, though private funding wasn’t there. Mr. McCrory wondered if the community center was a resource that should be mentioned in the Master Plan. Mr. Bianchi said that it was a part of the town, but died because it didn’t get the money. He said a community center would serve the before-mentioned need of space. Mr. Tilley suggested framing the text around what to do with the 1941 building, and one idea is to use it for a community center. Mr. Stanley said the Town has nothing to do with the building as it is owned by the school district. Mr. Doheny wondered if the community center should even be placed under the Recreation Department section. Everyone agreed that it did not.

It was decided to delete the figure and tighten up the survey results in the paragraph and remove the bullet points.

New London Recreational Facilities and Programs of 2007

It was suggested to remove “of 2007” from the heading.

They would reduce the paragraphs into one. Instead of talking about the possible Bucklin Beach expansion, they should talk about facility planning. They will specify the beaches and the ice skating rink. Future expansion would be addressed as an issue.

Mr. Bianchi noted that the use of the beach is being changed but he wasn’t sure it was an issue. Mr. Tilley said that if New London desired to be a regional business hub and wanted to draw tourists to spend their money, that to attract them they have to provide amenities like the beach to increase property values and keep taxes low. He thought that was a huge deal and should be included. Mr. Stanley said that they do accommodate the tourism issue.

Page 24

Ms. Crane asked to have the Conservation Commission website included in this section. She noted the “four natural areas” but explained that there were many more. Mr. McCrory said there would be a referral

to the Conservation Commission website. He would write something like “There are natural areas, and for a list of those, browse the New London Conservation Commission website at...”

Sidewalk Bike Plan

It was suggested to remove the bullets and say that there is a plan over the next 10 years to improve resources.

Page 25

Private Recreation can be shortened and it was suggested that Colby-Sawyer should be under “Commercial Recreation.”

Page 26

Cemeteries

Chair Cottrill asked if the lots in the chart are actually remaining lots, but may not be for sale. He added that the next two paragraphs are wordy and need to be tightened up.

It was suggested to remove the first sentence from the one issue, and to tighten up the recommendation as well.

Page 27

The figure should be taken out. Mr. Stanley had some modifications to the table to add figures from 2005 and 2010, which are dropping. He would provide that information to Mr. McCrory directly.

Mr. Gorman asked why they include table VII-5. Mr. Stanley said that it shows actual enrollment figures versus what was projected. It shows that the projections are not very good.

Mr. Bianchi said the projections made for the New London census were off. New London is not a growing town.

Mr. Doheny thought some important data that was missing was the number of high school students who do not attend KRHS but obtain schooling elsewhere. Several on the board thought that would be a good number to include. Mr. McCrory said they notice trends in enrollment. Mr. Stanley said New London’s enrollment has been flat for about nine years.

Mr. McCrory said he would figure out some new language and would note a decrease in enrollments and explain that New London has a desire to improve enrollments by some means. Mr. Tilley said there was no plan needed to improve enrollments, but it was interesting to know how many students from New London do not continue to the Kearsarge Regional High School and what is that a sign of? Mr. McCrory didn’t think there was a good way to find this without a survey. Chair Cottrill suggested calling Proctor Academy, Bishop Brady and KUA to see if they can help.

Other Notes

Mr. Stanley said that there was nothing planned for the business meeting at the end of the month. He suggested continuing with the Utilities Chapter at that meeting. Chair Cottrill said he wouldn’t be there. Jeff Hollinger will chair the meeting. Emma, Tina and Michele would be there as well.

Due to another meeting Mr. McCrory had to attend that same night, the New London Planning Board meeting would start at 7:30pm.

Officer Elections

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Doheny) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to appoint Tom Cottrill as the Planning Board Chair. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Paul Gorman) AND SECONDED (Michael Doheny) to appoint Jeff Hollinger as the Vice-Chair of the Planning Board. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Michael Doheny) AND SECONDED (Emma Crane) to appoint John Tilley as Secretary of the Planning Board. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:02pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London