



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

375 MAIN STREET • NEW LONDON, NH 03257 • WWW.NL-NH.COM

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

December 14, 2020

6:00 PM

Via Zoom

PRESENT:

Janet Kidder, Chairman
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
John Cannon, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT: Tim Lund, Celeste Cook, Winfried Feneberg, Marilyn Kidder, Tom Vanatta, Peter Nichols, Kate Turcotte, Steve Theroux, Janet Miller Haines, Michael Williams, Nancy Kingsley

Chair opens meeting and Welcomes candidates for appointment to the Housing Commission

Chair Kidder called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and read the zoom authorization information. Roo, call: Nancy Rollins: present, John Cannon: present, Chair Kidder: present

Discussion of purpose of Housing Commission and Board's expectation

Chair Kidder stated that the Housing Commission will consist of seven members and five alternate members for a total of 12 people, all of which must be residents of New London. Each candidate will speak about why they want to be appointed to this commission and what they feel they bring to the group. Chair Kidder wanted the candidates to be aware that there is a time commitment involved, not just to attend meetings but also preparation for the meetings. The Selectmen recommended that voters approve the establishment of a Housing Commission as they felt that New London could benefit from an organized approach to the study of the housing needs in the community.

Selectman Rollins stated that there have been many discussions related to challenges in New London regarding certain types of housing availability, particularly, workforce housing. The Upper Valley has undergone some significant work and development in establishing workforce housing. Town Administrator Kim Hallquist sent each candidate the statutes which outlines the powers and duties of what a housing commission can be. It would be the expectation of the Board of Selectmen that once members are selected that an organizational meeting be held to determine a chair and any other governance members desired. There are resources available through the Upper Valley Regional Planning Commission of which New London is a member.

Brief discussion with each candidate regarding their interest in being appointed and what they will bring to the group

Kate Turcotte - Ms. Turcotte has lived in New London for 8 1/2 years and has two children, one in college and one in high school. She grew up in southern New Hampshire. She is a professor of Sociology at Colby-Sawyer College and works in the areas of sociology, criminal justice and social work programs there. She is absolutely in favor of the study of and introduction of workforce housing in our community. She will be on a sabbatical from Colby-Sawyer College for the next year as she pursues her Master's degree in social work to be able to start a graduate Social Work program at the college. Ms.

Turcotte has experience in research methodology and has participated in two projects looking at community well-being and assets. She also stated that faculty at the College do not make the salaries to be able to afford to live in this community. Some colleagues have left in part due to not being able to be a part of the New London community. Colby-Sawyer College has allocated dorm space to faculty to help address this but there are rules and regulations when living in a dorm and it's difficult to gain professional status. She loves this town and would like to see some changes happen in the arena of housing.

Tom Vanatta - Mr. Vanatta has lived in New London for 3 1/2 years and moved here from Newbury NH. He lived in Newbury for 15 years but prior to that was a full-time educator for 37 years and the last 20 years he was the Superintendent of schools. He has a good understanding of the need for housing. He was very involved when he lived in Newbury and was on the Zoning Board and the Planning Board so he understands zoning and planning very well. A great deal of time was spent developing an elderly housing project in Newbury. He is also very familiar with the Upper Valley Regional Planning Commission as he worked with them for many years.

Marilyn Kidder - Ms. Kidder has lived in New London since 1972. She and her husband raised their family here and she has been in the Real Estate business since 1983. She has been involved with many organizations in town including the land trust for a number of years. She has a lot of exposure to the issues that make it challenging to find housing in the area. She believes that the workforce type of housing can work anywhere, and it is so valuable in so many ways. She does not think this will be easy because although people want to be supportive of it, there is the idea that they don't want it "in their backyard". She has a lot of expertise about this area and how things work that would be helpful to this commission.

Winfried Feneberg - Mr. Feneberg is the Superintendent of the Kearsarge Regional School District. He stated that every October he looks at enrollment numbers and the diversity of our school district. A vibrant town needs diversity and people of all social strata. While it may be attractive on the surface to have high property values, in order to attract families, we need to have a least one segment of town be affordable. It is not a disadvantage to have variety and diversity. The reason he is interested in this commission is to guarantee the long-term viability of our town as one of the seven members of the Kearsarge School District. We need to work on gaining kids and families from other states and towns.

Celeste Cook - Ms. Cook has been in New London since 1961, first as a summer resident and then moved here permanently in 1990. She is a retired social worker and is presently the Welfare Officer for the town. She has been on the board of New London Hospital and also on the Planning Board. She sees a real need for affordable housing and emergency housing.

Peter Nichols - Mr. Nichols, now retired, was a Real Estate developer in Boston for 30 years. He was born in raised in Connecticut and is a Geologist by trade but spent many years working with his father-in-law in Pennsylvania building subsidized housing. He has been coming to the New London area for 27 years as a summer resident. He feels New London has everything to offer. What he could bring to the commission is experience in hard asset development capability, acquisition, and development financing. He is also a counselor in Real Estate. He would like to give back and the skillset he has to offer really fits well with the Housing Commission.

Nancy Kingsley - Ms. Kingsley stated she is taking this from the opposite end. She has lived in New London for over 30 years, most of that time as a renter. She would be a good resource to share her experience regarding what is out there for workforce housing. She worked in banking for years. She routinely checks to see what is available for affordable housing and it is grim. She would like to see this improve. Her rent has tripled in the amount of time she has lived here.

Tim Lund - Mr. Lund is in the Marketing and Communications Department at New London Hospital and has lived in New London for 8 1/2 years. He has two children in the Kearsarge School District. He is passionate about this community and is excited to see this moving forward. As one of the largest employers in town, he understands that staffing is everything. They are in crisis mode with regards to staffing even before COVID-19 hit and the pandemic has just added challenges to it. They try to attract employees from all areas but to not have options for housing is difficult. Being part of the Dartmouth Hitchcock system has helped and is making them stronger. Mr. Lund is committed to listening and addressing concerns.

Steve Theroux - Mr. Theroux is a retired banker and worked for Lake Sunapee bank for over 30 years. Being a banker, he spent a lot of time financing projects and Section 8 type housing. He brings experience from the financing side. He served four years on a Housing and Business Development committee. This committee had the responsibility to oversee hundreds of affordable housing initiatives throughout New England. The pandemic has really brought to light how important essential workers are to our livelihoods. Providing suitable housing is an important challenge facing us as we look into the future.

Selectman Rollins commented that she is thrilled to have met everyone tonight and to hear the diversity and depth of knowledge of all of their backgrounds. Chair Kidder stated she is happy to see representation from Kearsarge School District, Hospital and College involved as they are the largest employers in the area.

Any candidates that were unable to attend tonight will be contacted to see if they are still interested in interviewing. Kim Hallquist will reach out to all the candidates tonight to thank them and let them know decisions are being made.

Other Business

Set sewer rates for next billing – The sewer rate has not increased in 8 years. There has been some recent pipe breaks and Ms. Hallquist is recommending a .50 increase. This equates to an extra \$25,000. The average homeowner will see approximately a \$25 increase per year. Chair Kidder stated this is an aging infrastructure and we should anticipate future problems with the system. She is in favor of the increase. Selectman Rollins is concerned that this may not be enough of an increase. Ms. Hallquist suggested making a small increase every couple of years. Selectman Rollins is fine with this increase for this year but would like to get on a regular schedule moving forward.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to increase the sewer rate by .50 for next billing. Nancy Rollins: yes, John Cannon: yes, Janet Kidder: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Support of RPC USDA Solid Waste Management Grant application - Kim Hallquist stated this is done every year. The RPC asks member towns to write letters of support and Ms. Hallquist recommends doing this.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to submit the letter to the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission. Nancy Rollins: yes, John Cannon: yes, Janet Kidder: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

- Next regular Selectmen's meeting – Monday, January 4th – 6:00 PM via Zoom

- Zoning Board – Tuesday, December 15th – 6:30 PM via Zoom
- Budget Committee – Wednesday, December 16th – 7:00 PM via Zoom

Items to be signed

- Accounts Payable Voucher
- Warrant – Yield Tax on Timber Cut
- Veterans Credit
- Letter

Applications Approved &/or Denied

Sign Permits – approved

- Permanent Signs 20-33 – Chiarell Law Office, P.C., 71 Pleasant Street, TM 073-083-0-0-0.

Building Permits

- Vicky & Thomas Mills, 96 Burpee Hill Road, TM 082-027-0-0-0. Build treehouse with electric – after the fact. BP 20-142 approved 12/10/20.
- Andrew & Connie McElwee Trusts, 166 Old Main Street, TM 107-018-0-0-0. Build an addition. BP 20-149 approved 12/10/20.
- Bayle & Richard Drubel, 319 Burpee Hill Road, TM070-002-0-0-0. Build an addition & interior renovations. BP 20-150 approved 12/10/20.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary
Town of New London