



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON HOUSING COMMISSION

April 6, 2022, 6:00PM

Whipple Town Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Nichols, Amy Kaplan, Winfried Feneberg, Tom Vannatta, Marilyn Kidder

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tim Lund, Randy Foose, Steve Theroux

OTHERS PRESENT: Nancy Rollins, Selectman; Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator; Mark Fougere, Abby Peel

Call to Order – Chair Peter Nichols called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Consultant Abby Peel, Strategic Social Media

Social media consultant, Abby Peel attended the meeting to discuss social media issues. Ms. Peel explained that she was born and raised in New London and her first job out of college was a morning talk show host on WNTK. During this time, social media for businesses was becoming very popular. She decided to explore this and started a business 8 years ago. The social media business has changed a lot as there is now more of a demand for digital marketing versus helping people set up social media outlets so her services have expanded. The biggest service she offers is social media, but other services include email marketing, website design and maintenance and content graphics. Her biggest clients include doing social media for Kearsarge School District and marketing for the New London Barn Playhouse, but she works with other organizations and businesses in town as well.

Ms. Peel has experience in campaign marketing and understands this communication tactic but stated it is important to know that this is only one area and we shouldn't assume that everyone is on social media. She recommends considering different forms of media to reach people. There is a wide age range of people we are trying to reach so consideration should be given to including email marketing, ads in the *Shopper*, Facebook, Instagram, a website and should show up on search engines. Press releases is another easy thing to do so putting information in the *Intertown Record* or YCN is good as it provides for bigger coverage.

Town Administrator Kim Hallquist stated the town has a webpage and then each department has their own page. There is also an email list of about 1,300 people. Information could also be put in *Municipal Matters*.

Ms. Peel also suggested getting other community organizations to share content that is posted on social media. It's a great way to get our content in front of someone else's audience and shows community partnership. She also stressed if you have social media and email marketing you must create content, especially if using Facebook and Instagram. Posting once a week is ok, but more than that is better.

Winfried Feneberg shared that as a school district the advantage of working with Ms. Peel is that she is the point person. Many of his colleagues have tried to do press releases or write up information

themselves and it's difficult as they don't have the time or experience. Ms. Peel is the expert and has those skills. As a Housing Commission, we should think about what our objectives are and what our vision is so we aren't wasting our time with things that can be done by a person who has the skills to do it.

Approve minutes of March 23, 2022 – Deferred until the next meeting.

Housing Needs Assessment Campaign

- **Report on poster/flyer distribution and personal outreach** – Winfried Feneberg reported that he sent the invitation to take the survey out to all the Kearsarge School District employees. Peter Nichols and Amy Kaplan distributed the flyer to the laundromat, Flash Photo, Hannaford, Grounds, New London Hospital, Colby Sawyer College, Chamber of Commerce, Tuckers, Pizza Chef, Colonial Pharmacy, Millstone at 74 Main, Ledyard Bank Transfer Station, Park & Ride and the library. Kim Hallquist reported that all the town department heads have received it and have been asked to share it with their staff.
- **Future Strategy** – Amy Kaplan will reach out to Blue Loon, Morgan Hill Bookstore, Gas Stations, and Little Brother Burgers.
- **Planning – Employer Interview Panel** – Chair Nichols stated they have previously discussed an employer interview panel. A handful of employers would be invited to be interviewed using a list of questions created to generate a dialogue with them. Ideas for discussion would be explaining difficulty in recruiting and retaining employees, turnover, financial pressures, and incentives. Selectman Rollins asked if the purpose of the employer panel is to continue to define the need and articulate the need. She thinks it's important to state what the purpose is. Mark Fougere stated they will want to dig deeper than the survey and this would allow for that. Selectman Rollins responded we will also want to ask what employers have thought about in terms of solutions. Marilyn Kidder feels it will be important to talk to the community about what the employers have shared with them and how it's affecting their businesses.

Peter Nichols distributed a draft document of ideas he has for interview questions and asked others to think about what questions they want to ask. Winfried Feneberg feels we should ask questions about quality of life and why would employees want to live here. Selectman Rollins stated we also need to think about whether this is only a New London solution or a regional solution and how is that balanced out. Chair Nichols suggested that this be discussed further at the next meeting.

Types of Workforce Housing

Chair Nichols stated in previous meetings they discussed having Mark Fougere share examples of what workforce housing looks like to dispel the myth that workforce housing looks bad. Mark Fougere has broad and deep experience with this and volunteered to take some pictures for the Housing Commission to look at. He provided examples of large and small housing projects throughout New Hampshire.

Review Strategic Plan – Deferred until the next meeting

New Business

- Chair Nichols stated the Board of Selectmen have requested recommendations for a new Housing Commissioner. If you know anyone interested, please have them complete a volunteer interest form.
- **NLHC Rules of Procedure** – At the last Board of Selectmen meeting there was discussion about reviewing the rules of procedure annually. Chair Nichols asked that commission members go through it and be ready to discuss at the next meeting. One of the areas of emphasis is looking at the issue of civility.

Future Meeting

The next meeting will be held on April 27, 2022.

IT WAS MOVED (Marilyn Kidder) AND SECONDED (Tom Vannatta) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson

Recording Secretary
Town of New London