

TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
March 31, 2008

The Town Council meeting was held in the Moose Hill Council Chambers, Town Hall, 268B Mammoth Road, Londonderry, NH.

PRESENT: TOWN COUNCIL; Chairman Marty Bove; Vice Chairman, Brian Farmer; Councilors Kathy Wagner, Paul DiMarco and Mike Brown; Town Manager David Caron and Margo Lapietro, Executive Assistant.

Board/Committee Appointments/Reappointments/Resignations

Re-Appointment of Barbara DiLorenzo on the ZBA from an Alternate Member to a Full Member to replace Stephen Lee. Term to expire 12/31/10. **Councilor Farmer made a motion to re-appoint. Second Councilor DiMarco. Councils vote 5-0-0.**

NEW BUSINESS

Council's Goals and Objectives

Town Manager Caron reviewed the major goals from last year.

Economic Development – Andre Garron had briefed the Council on his strategies. Upcoming challenges are: Airport Access Road, Jacks Bridge TIF District. Council has expressed an interest in hearing back from him on a regular basis.

Second major goal was fiscal issues/tax stabilization – tax rate will go down about 6 cents for this year without any adjustments to market value; the calculations include adding value from construction only. Does not include Rockingham County, waiting to hear from them. Tax rate anticipated to remain stable for this year.

Third major goal was affordable housing initiatives – Housing Taskforce met in May of 07, heard from a number of experts in industry, housing and government in workforce housing. They are finalizing their report this month. A. Garron plans to have an extensive presentation at a meeting at which all local boards will be invited to attend.

The fourth major goal which is just beginning is the review of the development review/approval process in the Planning and Economic Department. The process is two-part:

1. Community education, explain permit and regulatory requirements associated with construction and development.
2. A. Garron is looking at benchmarks for review of plans to streamline the process. Will have results at mid summer.

Secondary Goals

Wireless Communications – Cell tower planned for Nelson Road has gone through the local approval process, waiting for final approval from FAA. Other wireless communication tower located at the northern part of Town went to the Superior Court which upheld the ZBA's decision to grant the variance. Appeal now in Superior Court.

Leadership Londonderry program is continuing.

Heritage Commission and Historical Society will be providing information about starting reconstruction of the Perry House.

Historic Properties Task Force was created in April 2006; they have completed their task and have submitted their recommendations to the Town Council. Staff is now awaiting direction to see how the Heritage Commission would like to proceed.

Capital Improvement Process (CIP) more publicized each year, process working well, will continue.

Road Infrastructure Prioritization is completed every year by Public Works Dir. Janusz Czyzowski when information is gathered in support of the bond requests.

Open Space continuing; Council still supports.

The Energy Efficiency Task Force project will be managed by the Environmental Baseline Committee on behalf of the Town. Staff will have a review of the draft Charge on Monday, and has advertised for members. There is a group of high school students who want to take an active part in the project.

Staff Responsibilities

Master Plan update scheduled to be done in 2011

CMAQ will be finalized this spring

Automation of Town services - MAAP program through State of NH underway. This program allows taxpayers to register their vehicles on line. Our town is one of the most successful in the state participating in this program.

Traffic Safety Committee has reviewed local roads and recommended two years ago to Council to reduce speed limits on these roads. The committee recommended that speed limits not be revised on collector roads and Council supported that recommendation. They are presently studying arterial roads.

Homeland Security – Police and Fire are working to secure grants

Community Services Grant – About four years ago the Budget Committee began a process to allocate \$80K of funding to various social service agencies providing service to the Town. The Budget Committee will need to meet this spring to make recommendations on future allocations.

Continuing to maintain and update CAFR, this year staff is looking at revising Budget presentation to see if it meets the criteria for the distinguished budget presentation award, and adds value to the local budget process.

State Government Matters – Staff has been involved with communication with state representatives on issues of importance. It would be helpful if the Council could reinforce those issues. Retirement and education funding are the most significant issues during this session.

Councilor Brown said the bill passed in the House with a significant margin. Labor will lobby their senators very heavily. He also stated there are two provisions to that bill which will stabilize the retirement system. One would transfer \$250M from the special account to a medical subsidy which will terminally fund the medical subsidy for those people who are currently eligible. The other major component is removal of the 8% annual inflator in the medical subsidy, which is in current law. The combination of those two facts, coupled with action taken last year by the Legislature, would stabilize the retirement system to a great degree. Councilor Brown said if it doesn't pass we should notify taxpayers that they will have a bill for \$1M in the FY10 budget. Town Manager Caron said if that bill passes, on the Town side, our retirement will go down about \$15K. School side will go up a couple of hundred thousand because the school teacher rate is going higher. The fire rate is proposed to go down; police and public employees will go up very slightly. Town side will go from \$500K increase to about \$17K decrease for FY10, if wages remained constant. Town Manager Caron said if the bill doesn't pass the increase for Town and School will be approximately \$1.3M - \$1.4M.

Councilor Farmer explained the S.M.A.R.T goals for the Council. Suggested using the draft outline he provided as a framework. He explained the goals are more time-based, very specific, measurable, achievable or attainable, realistic or results focused and time based. Discussion ensued.

Councilor DiMarco said a lot of the goals have high marks and are on-going objectives. Suggested taking parts of the larger projects and focus on smaller ones. Councilor Brown said he agrees with Councilor DiMarco, start with goals that that we can accomplish, don't go beyond 4-5 goals.

Councilor Farmer said some of the goals can be short-term and very quick. These are Council goals we are working on, not the Town Manager's. Clarity is one of the central components. Councilor Wagner said she likes the idea of being concise about the goals, sounds like we are writing a review statement. She said it doesn't have to be so structured, doesn't want to micro manage every step of the way. She said she would like to see less paperwork, be a doer group, actively and effectively go after goals. She suggested that Council have 5 simple goals, streamline and do it better. Councilor Bove said he has been on the Council nine years and has seen too often goals set-up, didn't measure what was accomplished. This new method requires goals to be in writing showing what we expect. We can look at it next year to see if it was attained. Discussion ensued regarding goals for economic development.

The general consensus is to use the list of goals provided by Councilor Wagner, re-write them, discuss and review what goals we want to do. Some of these are already being done by staff, return to the April 9 meeting with a list.

Councilor DiMarco said there are some things we don't control, liaison roles could be set for a SMART goal, it is small. He suggested having open houses at all municipal buildings. Councilor Bove said that website changes are attainable goals.

School Board Member Ron Campo said they look at their Strategic Plan; they look at a 5 year time period. They have yearly tasks; bring all the departments together for a joint meeting every year. The Council agreed that it was a good idea to set 5 year goals.

After a great deal of discussion it was decided to work on the following goals:

Financial Mechanisms for Economic Development – TIF Districts and Alternatives

Improved Communications – Improve Website

Strategic Discussions for Developing Future Open Space Plans & Purchases

Consensus to Re-Organize Some Shared Activity between School and Town of Londonderry-
Cost Savings

Marketing and Streamlining the Design Review Process for Economic Development

Drafts will be discussed on April 7.

Building Inspector Vacancy - Town Manager Caron reviewed a memo he wrote regarding the Building Inspector vacancy left open by the retirement of Jim Smith. The memo listed the employees in that office and the services they provide. The Health Officer position is required by state law. Reviewed duties of health officer and enforcement of regulations. Reviewed responsibilities of all employees. Spoke about the walk-ins and future workload requirements. He stated that he was not comfortable with not addressing this opening. He would recommend keeping the building code inspectors because their jobs contributed to the overall public safety in the community. The Council increased the fee structure in October, making this department self sustaining. His recommendation is to keep the current staffing levels in the building department. He proceeded to review different options. Maintaining the current system does not save a significant amount of money; it will show some savings on the salary/benefit side of \$5-\$20K. Councilor Brown asked if a person was hired to replace Jim do they have to go into the union, he responded yes.

Town Manager Caron explained that staffing levels in the building department is below the median compared with other communities. The second option is to maintain a full time inspector and contract for additional assistance. The current Deputy position costs approximately \$84K. Can outsource, but contractual costs are higher. The market determines securing the services, and continuity is a big concern. Councilor Brown then asked what the salary range for the deputy position would be, he responded \$40-60K. The third idea is department consolidation, with the Planning and Economic Development Department. He told the Council that Merrimack and Somersworth use that structure and proceeded to review what each town does. Councilor Farmer suggested removing the Planning & Economic Director from running the department and have him concentrate solely on Economic Development. Town Manager Caron responded that would have no cost savings, would most probably impact the operations of the department, but he would look into it. Councilor Farmer asked if the Health Officer position could be merged with the fire inspector. Town Manager Caron said they have a fire marshal and fire inspector, not sure if it can be combined will look at it. He explained that health violations are responded to and stated that Londonderry, unlike most communities of similar size, has chosen not to inspect restaurants, we let the state do it. Councilor DiMarco said he would like to keep it

separate from the fire department, they look at it differently. Councilor Brown asked if the Town could hire someone without them being part of the union. Town Manager Caron explained that when a contract is initially negotiated between employees and Town there is a list of positions included in that contract. The hours we need for a part-time person to work in that department will fall into the contract. Councilor Brown asked why doesn't the Town Planner handle planning. Town Manager Caron explained that Tim Thomson is the "nuts and bolts" of the planning review process, Andre Garron is supervisory, manages larger scale projects such as studies and master plans, and coordinates economic development. Councilor Wagner suggested combining the departments and see what happens in 6-8 months, bring in a deputy at \$40K-\$60K. Councilor Brown said we should consider option "B" with a contracted worker. Councilor Wagner said she has concern about an outside contractor; consistency would be a big problem. Councilor Brown said he wants to try something different, either option "B" or "C". There are a lot of components to consolidate the departments. Councilor DiMarco stated that we have to try change, and this is one of the opportunities to do it. He said he is not fond of contractors; a full time employee would be best, try consolidation of departments. Councilor Bove said he was opposed to contractors; they have no history on what is going on in town. A full time is better specifically for back-up and their knowledge of the Town's regulations. Councilor Wagner said she agrees with Councilors' Bove and DiMarco to stay away from contracting. Councilor Farmer stated continuity should be maintained, agrees with consolidation. Town Manager Caron was asked to get feedback from A. Garron. He was also asked if Andre was to be separate from his other responsibilities in the department would there be any other possible staff alignments. He responded he will report back to Council on 4/21 with a reorganization plan. He will hire a temporary part-time inspector until the re-organization of the department is done. Councilor Bove explained why he wants to stay with the current system, mainly because of economic development. He said changing the association both departments have with each other doesn't make sense to him. Willing to listen to the idea. He also said he does not personally think it will work; he is in favor of option "A."

Councilor Bove reminded the public that a rabies clinic will be held this Saturday at Central Fire Station, fee is \$10.00.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Farmer made a motion to adjourn to a non-public meeting at 10:08 P.M. Aye Kathy Wagner, Aye Paul DiMarco, Aye Brian Farmer, Aye Michael Brown, Aye Marty Bove.

Notes and Tapes by: Margo Lapietro Date: 03/31/08

Minutes Typed by: Margo Lapietro Date: 04/03/08

Approved: Town Council Date: 04/07/08