



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES November 16, 2014 Tracy Memorial Library

PRESENT:

Janet Kidder, Chair
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator
Sandra Licks, Director, Tracy Memorial Library

ALSO PRESENT:

CAC Members: Rose Bernard, Sue Little, Jack Sheehan, Phyllis Piotrow, Bruce Hudson, Renate Kannler, Hardy Hasenfuss, Emma Crane, Robert Crane, Donn Klingler, Elizabeth Klingler, Will Kidder, Rob Prohl, Maureen Prohl, Hank Otto

Chair Janet Kidder called the meeting to order at 7:30 AM. The gathering today is being held at Tracy Memorial Library so that committee members can tour the building after the meeting. Sandra Licks, Director of the library, distributed an information sheet detailing the current number of active library patrons, the type and number of materials accessible to the public, children's programs offered, and other services and resources provided by the library.

Chair Kidder brought the assembled audience up-to-date on recent areas of discussion at Selectmen's meetings. She reminded those present that at May's Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen were directed to appoint a committee to study the issue of single stream recycling and how it could be established within the town. The committee's report has been received, and Chair Kidder explained the Single Stream Recycling Committee had determined that because of projected start-up costs and ongoing expenditures, adopting single stream recycling (SSR) could significantly increase the town's cost of handling solid waste without any substantial benefit to the environment. Chair Kidder commented that for a small community like New London, the potential costs did not seem warranted. Chair Kidder also advised the group that the committee's report was posted online at the town's website if anyone is interested in reading it, and observed it was very thorough. The Selectmen plan to appoint another committee to look into solid waste issues and perhaps how to re-configure the current transfer station, although space is very tight.

With regard to dispatch, invoices have been sent to all users of New London Dispatch, and all towns saw a substantial increase in their bills. Chair Kidder said their response to this increase will give the Town of New London a good idea of each town's interest in continuing with New London Dispatch. She observed that even if the towns feel the rates are acceptable, it does not mean the Budget Committee or voters will approve them. All the other towns hold their annual meeting in March, so New London will know what their thinking is going forward in May. The Selectmen will continue their dialogue with member towns to make sure all issues are discussed.

Chair Kidder reported that substantial improvements had been made to both the Elkins dam and the warming hut on the green. A new spigot was added to the warming hut so there will now be water on site.

The Conservation Commission has been addressing flooding issues from beaver dams where logging was recently done on Pleasant Street, and the town has installed “beaver deceivers,” which is a device to help lower the water level. Chair Kidder noted there is a picture of a “beaver deceiver” on the town’s website, if anyone is curious to learn more about them.

Other miscellaneous issues recently discussed by the Selectboard concerned the work being done at the Sunapee Wastewater Plant, which is almost complete. The Board is gathering information about the cost of fixing ventilation issues at the Town Hall. Chair Kidder mentioned that the town and the Ausbon Sargent Protective Association hold easements to Clark Lookout, off Davis Hill Road. The owner has shut down access due to safety issues. Kim Hallquist is currently communicating with the owner in order to determine what needs to be done to restore access to Clark Lookout. Finally, the Selectmen and Budget Committee members will begin budget considerations in December.

It was noted that the group known as *Solarize Kearsarge*, will host an Open House today at 438 Hall Farm Road in New London, to publicize solar power. He noted that they expect over 100 people to sign up for information. While the cost of electricity is expected to double within the next year, solar heating has gone down 90 percent in the last five years. He urged anyone interested in learning more about solar power to attend the Open House this afternoon.

Hardy Hasenfuss asked Chair Kidder what the cost is expected to be on repairing the gazebo. She responded that the Selectmen have not yet received any bids back, and until they have two or three, they will not be able to answer that question. Chair Kidder said the gazebo has structural issues – there is substantial rot underneath – and it cannot be used next year unless it is fixed. She noted that the town can probably pay for repairs without asking for additional funds. The window boxes were not slanted when the gazebo was built, so when plants were watered, the boxes did not drain properly. Another issue was that the boxes were solid underneath, so no air was circulating, which held in more moisture. The repairs will probably require lattice work be done so air can circulate correctly.

There was a question about dispatch, asking if there was going to be any attempt by the Selectboard to tell the towns they need to have some kind of cooperative long-term arrangement. Could this be a condition? Chair Kidder replied that both she and Peter Bianchi feel that New London should not make this kind of arrangement if the technology becomes so outrageously expensive that the better solution might be to go with a regional group. However, if the town decides to go that route, they will not be able to get out of it. She cited as examples the regional school district and the partnership with the Town of Sunapee on wastewater treatment. Chair Kidder emphasized that the Board is not ready to commit to anything at this stage. She said if the price of keeping our own dispatch costs too much, the town does not want to be tied into that, and has other options. Hardy Hasenfuss asked if the other options were viable? Chair Kidder said yes, the Board has approached other services. Selectman Bianchi noted that if people go on the town’s website, they will find an approximately 20-page summary of available options, and the report does conclude there would be no appreciable decrease in service and might be less expensive.

Chair Kidder then turned the meeting over to Sandra Licks, Director of Tracy Memorial Library. Ms. Licks thanked everyone for coming, and observed that she had served as library director for the last eight years. She thought folks attending today's meeting might have varying degrees of familiarity with the library, so had drawn up an information sheet with statistics from 2013. She wanted to give people a

sense of what goes on at the library and its many uses. She said she would update everyone on recent happenings at the library, and then conduct a tour and describe the function of different rooms.

On the sheet distributed to committee members, Ms. Licks pointed out the numbers which reflect active users – people who have used their library cards in the last year or so. In 2013, the library was utilized by about 2,700 people; approximately 2,000 of those were adult and children residents. Ms. Licks commented that the library has a “door counter,” and last year, about 80,000 people came in and out of that door. Mr. Otto asked if residents have to pay a fee to use the library, other than through their taxes. Ms. Licks said they did not, but that non-residents pay an annual fee of \$60, which usually increases by a small amount every year, and would probably be capped at \$90. The library does give free cards to non-resident school children in the Kearsarge Regional School District. Tracy Library also has a reciprocal agreement with Colby-Sawyer College. Ms. Licks emphasized that the library wants to be inclusive of the larger community.

The section of the hand-out concerning materials and circulation delineated the number and types of materials used, and indicated the most popular items being borrowed. Ms. Licks noted that movies are very popular and adult fiction was the highest circulating item. She also mentioned that library customers had downloaded an e-book or audio book approximately 3,500 times last year.

Ms. Licks described some of the children's programs the library offers, such as Story Time, First Graders' Evening, Great Stone Face Book Review, Spring Fever Flicks, Reading Adventure Club, Booktalkers, and many more. She noted that last summer's reading program, "Fizz, Boom, Read," served 160 local children. Kathy Tracy serves as the Children's Librarian and is constantly tweaking programs. Daisy, the reading therapy dog, has recently retired from her duties at the library, and had a party a couple of Saturdays ago. Daisy made reading fun for children, and the library is hoping to bring in another reading therapy pet, perhaps a rabbit.

The library offers resources 24/7 through their website - **info@tracylibrary.com**. Books can be downloaded anytime. There are a number of data bases available to search, including a genealogy data base. Language tapes and encyclopedias are available. The computers at the library are for public use. Tracy Library has just installed six chrome boxes, which is a new model of computing. There are no longer any free standing towers, just internet cruising machines, which cuts down on costs and maintenance. The library also has two laptops available and Microsoft Office. Tracy Library offers wi-fi, and patrons can use both black/white and color printers. A item of much interest is the telescope at the library which is used in conjunction with programs offered by the Astronomical Society. The telescope can actually be checked out, along with manuals and charts that go with it. Selectman Nancy Rollins commented that she was very impressed with the number of services the library provides.

Ms. Licks remarked that the library's meeting room is used by approximately two dozen different organizations. Tracy Library also loans books to other libraries. Two in-house book clubs and a dozen private book clubs use Tracy's intra-library loan. An audience member commented that she had heard the staff at Tracy Library is fun and enjoyable. Ms. Licks also noted that the library offers homebound delivery services. About 12 volunteers drop books off weekly.

Tracy Library has a very active "friends" group which carries out fund-raising duties and finances special projects. This group revamped the meeting room, purchased new blinds for the building, paid for the telescope, and provided the built-in audio-visual equipment in the meeting room. The friends group has decided to bring back the library's old newsletter *Tracings*. The group also sponsored the library's Local Author Night, which was very well attended. The library now has air conditioning in every corner of the building.

Ms. Licks observed that the library's volunteers do remarkable work in a variety of areas, such as gardening, shelving books, shelf reading, book covering, and leading programs, to name a few. The library held a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon in October.

Selectman Bianchi commented that, as we all know, there have been many upgrades and renovations at the library in the last few years, so there should not be any new major capital expenses on the horizon. He thought the library appeared to be in very good shape. Ms. Licks responded that the next big ticket item - probably in 2016 - is finishing the mechanical systems work, costing around \$50,000. Also, she would like to reconfigure the main floor to accommodate a second bathroom. She noted that the stone wall on the perimeter of the library has been repaired, which should buy it about another 10 years of life before it has to be rebuilt, which would be a sizable expense.

A question was asked about how many people used the New Hampshire Room, and Ms. Licks responded that there was not a lot of traffic up there. She said the room has been a well-kept secret and the library has been promoting it as a place in the library to get work done. The library also uses the room for tutoring.

There was a question about whether the library had a back-up generator, and the answer was yes.

Chair Kidder thanked Sandra Licks for taking the time to update everyone on what is happening at the library, and remarked that Tracy Library is a gem. Ms. Licks noted the library gets tremendous community support. A suggestion was made that the information sheet provided by Ms. Licks be handed out at a town meeting, or be included in the town report.

A short break took place, and then Ms. Licks conducted a tour of the library.

The next meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee will be held on Saturday, January 24, at the New London Fire Station, at 7:30 AM. Committee members will take a tour of the Fire Station after business has been concluded.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Work, Recording Secretary
Town of New London