

Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting
October 9, 2010
7:30am

Meeting Attendees: Tina Helm (Chair, Selectmen), Peter Bianchi (Selectman), Mark Kaplan (Selectman), Bob & DJ Lavoie, Jack Harrod, Terri Bingham, Bob MacMichael, Carolyn Lockhart, Phyllis Piotrow, Joe McCarthy, Hardy Hassenfuss, Rick Anderson, Karen Hوجلund, Ann Loeffler, Gary Markoff, Messer Pond/Forest Acres Road residents

Chair Helm called the MEETING TO ORDER at 7:30 AM.

Chair Helm gave an update on the wastewater treatment project. The Sewer Commission met with the Board of Selectmen on September 30 and they had a constructive dialogue with Neal Cheseldine from Wright-Pierce. They are exploring doing the project in phases, and have also received a second opinion from Ed Rushbrook. It was obvious that something needs to be done. Chair Helm said that they must submit a warrant article in March that will pass. She noted that there is a possibility of getting a grant and/or a low interest loan from the State.

Chair Helm noted that at the last Board of Selectmen meeting, Ms. Levine presented the budget that had been submitted by the Department Heads. The Selectmen now have until just before November 15 to discuss and come up with a recommended budget to hand over to the Budget Committee. She reminded those at the meeting that it was an 18-month budget. Ms. Levine shared that the presentation and the proposed budget were posted on the Town's website. Chair Helm added that they would publish, in advance, the topic of discussion for the next Board of Selectmen's meeting, with regards to the budget portion of the meeting so that interested parties could attend. She encouraged the public to attend and get involved in this process.

Chair Helm noted that the assessments have gone out and the Town assessors are currently entertaining hearings for those people who would like to understand the assessments better. The hearings are slated to start this week. The tax rate is projected to be set by the first of November.

Chair Helm said that the Mill Pond Dam's second opinion has come in but that she hasn't had a chance to review it. Ms. Levine said that this was a non-public subject at this point, so no discussion should take place.

Chair Helm said that Mr. Kaplan was their representative with regards to the donor Town tax discussion. Mr. Kaplan reported that as of July 1, 2011 they will begin paying \$1 more per thousand which, in the Town of New London, will amount to \$1 million dollars. They have spoken to the representatives and have not gotten very far. He said there could be a change in the legislature, which could help. Mr. Bianchi said that adding a dollar to the current amount was a 25% increase in the Town portion of the tax bill.

Mr. Markoff asked what had been the substitute for the funds that were previously collected by the donor Town taxes. Mr. Kaplan said the donor tax subsided when the state said that all the money raised from the donor tax would stay in the districts they were collected in. In July they plan to increase the rate. Ms. Levine said that the federal stimulus money kept the issue at bay for two years. When they first eliminated the donor Towns, they changed the formula for how aid was calculated and it determined what was going to the Towns. Anything raised in a community stayed in that community. In the last two years stimulus money was used to offset that. Ms. Levine said that the \$1 million being raised would be used in lieu of the ARRA money for the schools which is scheduled to be discontinued as of June 2011. Chair

Helm stressed that citizens should become involved in the state and local levels to try and voice their opinions.

Chair Helm said that Tom Galligan, President of Colby-Sawyer College, was present at the meeting to talk about the College. She added that there were some people from Forest Acres and Messer Pond present.

Mr. Galligan greeted those at the meeting. He noted that it was family weekend that weekend and thought that it would be a great weekend for not only the College, but also for the Town. This is his fifth year as president and he said that he has observed a good relationship between the Town and the College. He remarked that the Academy Building used to belong to the College until they gifted it to the Town. He went on to explain that there were about 280-290 employees from this area who work for the College and another 100 or so who work for Sodexo, so in total about 400 people from this area work for the College.

Mr. Galligan reported that the median salary is about \$50,000 plus benefits. That is about the national average. He added that the College is the largest tax payer in New London. They pay \$350,000 in taxes each year, which is about how much it would cost to give their employees a 3% raise. Mr. Galligan shared that New Hampshire is the only state in the United States that taxes colleges and private schools. The tax he was referring to is the property tax. Those buildings not directly related to education are taxed. They are not taxed for classrooms, the Hogan Center, and Colgate. The residence halls and dining hall are taxed. Mr. Galligan said that this taxation is a statewide issue for colleges and private schools.

Mr. Galligan noted that the College has 1150 students. In the spring they anticipate to be at about 1050. By spring, some students find out college isn't for them, they are struggling academically, or they don't like the rural lifestyle. Their average enrollment this year is 1100. Mr. Galligan said that students contribute to the economy by frequenting stores such as Dunkin' Donuts, local pizza places, and the grocery store.

Mr. Galligan reported that they currently have 420 first-year students. Last year they had 455, but didn't want that many first year students this year. He said that graduation rates have gone down. Nationally they look at five and six year graduate rates, so it is clear that it is taking longer to complete a degree. He added that more men are not finishing the school at which they start and are not even moving on to their second year. Right now at Colby-Sawyer College, the graduation rate is hovering just below 70%. He listed several reasons why the students don't return, including: the student is not ready for college, Colby-Sawyer College doesn't offer the major they want, 9.6% of Americans are out of work, and tuition is \$44,000 per year.

Mr. Galligan noted that 90% of students get financial aid, amounting to \$20 million just this year. This does not include endowment funded scholarships of between \$600,000- \$700,000. It also doesn't include private gifts. Last year they raised \$1.6 million in private funding. Without this financial aid, these students could not afford an education. He explained that there are merit grants and students also fill out the government form (FAFSA). Everyone who wants financial aid or a federal loan has to fill out that form. Of the 1000 families, their average family income has declined by about \$12,000. Mr. Galligan said that it would be unfair for him to assume that first generation students are the neediest, but that seems to be the case. They had over 300 first generation families in the College last year. He opined that the farther one goes in education, the farther the horizons are pushed for them, their children and grandchildren. Mr. Galligan reported that there were 120 families whose adjusted gross income was less than what tuition costs. It is happening all across America. Public schools have gotten very popular amongst undergrads. They are certainly a place for opportunity, and more and more students from the private schools are going

on to the big public schools like UNH, Keene and Plymouth. However, the cost of public education has gone up as well, so it is less affordable.

With regards to growth, Mr. Galligan said that 10-12 years ago, the Board of Trustees told them to get to 1000 students and stabilize. They got to 980 and then dropped to 880. Then they got to 1000 and now they are at 1100. This shows that they are not stabilized. He explained that in a business, stabilizing means no growth, but that doesn't seem possible in a college. There are aspects of the College that are like a business, but it cannot be figured as such. They need to either cut costs or raise their price. They need to find a way to have a controlled growth. They have asked a space analyst to analyze space needs to find out what they would need to grow to 1,250 or 1,500 students. They are still waiting for the final report. Mr. Galligan believed that to grow to 1,500 would be very expensive. He said he would be surprised if that was the option they chose. They will probably look at 1,100, 1,150 or 1,250 for their five to six-year growth.

With regards to off campus housing, Mr. Galligan reported that about 86-92% of students, over the last 4-5 years, have lived on campus in residence halls, and 8-14% have lived off campus. This year there are about 150-160 students living off campus. When he checked the database to see how many were living in New London, he found eight students. One of those students is a fulltime employee who also takes classes, so that leaves just seven students living off campus. Mr. Galligan said that they do think most of the off campus students live in Sunapee as it may be a little cheaper and closer to the mountain. He said they ask their students to give them an address of where they are living, and many give their home address, which is not usually where they actually live. Their data may understate the number of students who have addresses off-campus. They are worried about their students and their well-being and their relationship to the Town. They ask the students to update their address, but they don't always do it. The College sends emails and calls the students, but has only received responses after sending a text message, as that seems to be their main method of communication these days.

Mr. Galligan said that they have been fortunate in New London, as they have a fantastic relationship with both the Town and the Police Department. The campus is able to handle the small things, but when larger things arise, Chief Seastrand comes in and they handle it. He felt that they can learn from other cities that don't have such a good relationship with their police department. Mr. Galligan said that he hoped to meet with the students who live on Forest Acres Road and the Messer Pond area before this meeting, but wasn't able to because he didn't have their addresses. He stressed that they need to keep talking and keep the lines of communication open between the Town and the College.

Mr. Galligan urged people to call the police if they felt in danger. It was not helping anyone if there was a serious problem and they don't call. He said that they have got to get the addresses for these students living off campus, but how? They can try to tell them to share their addresses with the College. Some will do this and some won't even respond to the request. He said that if people are renting to a Colby-Sawyer College student, they should let the College know so they have some accurate information in their database. They could ask the landlords to let them know who is living off campus. Renting to students may be different than renting to other groups of people.

Mr. Galligan noted a yellow house that they had treated as off-campus housing and now treat it as on-campus housing so to be added to the safety loop to be monitored. If citizens have a problem with a student, it becomes a joint issue. Mr. Galligan said that they are willing to talk to the students and bring them in to find out what was going on.

Nancy Constable, who rents to two students, has a house on Forest Acres Road. She said that some of the issues they are faced with aren't with the renters, but their friends who come and visit. Some of the

information and communication that would help is how to deal with the people who are visiting the off campus housing. In her lease they can't have more than two cars in the driveway. Ms. Constable felt that it was the parties, the extra trash and the speed of the vehicles on the road that was an issue, and she didn't think it was her renters doing it. She said it was bigger than who is renting the houses. Mr. Galligan said he understood that and felt it would be an ongoing problem and a greater challenge.

Mr. Bianchi recalled that Mr. Galligan said they don't know who the students are or where they live. In the fall there is a roster of students. Those who are not in the dorms must be off-campus. It would seem to him that they could ask those 100-150 students off campus where they live. Mr. Galligan said they could do that and hope for a response, but it would help in that endeavor if landlords will give them information about who they are renting to.

John Doyle of Forest Acres Road asked if the College had a code of conduct for the students. Mr. Galligan answered that they did. Mr. Doyle felt that the students represent the College and reflect the College with their actions on and off campus. He wanted to know if the College had a way to review violations of that code. Mr. Galligan said that they did; the student conduct code basically says what they can and cannot do. It talks about the enforcement of violence, drugs, and under-aged drinking. They have a Community Council before which the students go if they are charged with something. It is a learning experience and something that looks like adjudication. If they are found guilty, they have to go see a counselor. Every student with an alcohol conviction has to go meet with a counselor. They can be put on probation, can be banned from housing on campus, can be suspended from the school, or in rare cases, can be expelled.

Mr. Galligan explained the HOPE program, which works hand-in-hand with their code. If someone is intoxicated, they can go to HOPE, which is a place equipped with beds, blood pressure machines, and staffed by students who are in the health sciences and nursing programs. Students can sleep there until they can move on. If they go to HOPE themselves, and their blood alcohol content is below .25, they can go there and sleep, and are assigned a counselor. If their blood alcohol content is above .25, they go to the Hospital and are assigned a counselor. If they are brought to HOPE by a roommate, the same scenario would occur, but if they are brought to HOPE by an RA or Campus Safety, they have to go through the Community Council. The code of conduct applies to on-campus behavior, but does not apply off-campus. Once a student is off campus, the enforcement device is the New London Police Department.

Mr. Doyle said with his experience in two other colleges, that wasn't the case. Students who were living off campus had the code of conduct extended to them. He asked how often students have to go to the Community Council. Mr. Galligan said that so far this year, it hasn't been active. Some years are more active than others. Mostly the reason students have to go to Community Council is not because of fights or drugs, but because of under-aged drinking.

Carolyn Lockhart asked if there could be a way to exert pressure to find out the addresses, as an emergency may necessitate knowing. Mr. Galligan said that *in loco parentis* no longer applied. The movement has been that parents are less responsible than they used to be. He thought the landlord has the knowledge and it would be great if they could let them know of renters. Ms. Lockhart said there is a house on County Road and one can go by it anytime, day or night, and there are 4-7 cars in the driveway. She met the owner and he said he has two students living there. She felt that the students sublet rooms to other students. Mr. Galligan said that wouldn't surprise him. Ms. Lockhart noted that some people think that the house is a drug house, as there are so many cars coming and going.

Joe McCarthy said that he is a dispatcher at the Police Department. On the midnight shift, he gets calls from people who are reporting something after the fact. He stressed that people need to try and call when

something happens. They are there 24x7 for that kind of service. They need to know sooner than later. Mr. Galligan agreed. He added that if the police get a call and students are getting in trouble, the College does find out about it. When the police go to a house they need probable cause to enter. When Campus Safety goes to a dorm room on campus, they have the right to go in if they smell marijuana, or suspect that alcohol is being consumed illegally. This sort of thing can't be done at a private house.

Mr. Galligan remarked that students live somewhere else because they could be paying less, and also because they like the freedom. He felt that the landlords would be in good spot to enforce rules about things such as too many cars in the parking lot.

Terri Bingham, CAC member and resident on Messer Pond, said she'd like to understand the criteria for being kicked off campus. They are still able to go to school but they are not acting properly enough to stay on campus. Mr. Galligan said that it could be a repetitive violation of their code, for instance alcohol violations or drug use. It could also be because of a fight. If it is really terrible, it is beyond a housing ban. He would characterize it as repetitive violations of citizenship. There are people who they let stay in school but they don't feel comfortable that they are on campus. These students would not be moving off-campus on their own, but would be moving back with a family member. These are students who can't cope with school and want to keep going but decide to move out with families.

Ms. Bingham said that in town, a potential lessor isn't aware of the actions that may have gotten the students thrown off campus. They don't know anything about them other than they are enrolled in the College. These students may become the magnet that others students are drawn to. Sometimes it can be okay and they can talk to them and they are nice, and other times they are not so nice and are vindictive. It becomes a situation where it is not pleasant for anyone. For the most part the students are wonderful, but when there is a situation like that, it isn't particularly pleasant. She wasn't sure how to deal with it. Some of the experiences she has had have been very unpleasant. She has experienced very rude students who use foul language to older people, and she has found extra trash thrown around. Mr. Galligan agreed that most students living off campus are fantastic people. If he knows who they are who are causing the problems, he can certainly talk to them. He also said that when they talk about the number of people who are banned from housing every year, it is maybe one or two, a very small number.

Mr. McCarthy suggested taking down license plates and then the police can patrol the area. If something happens at 3:00 AM and they have access to a phone, they should call right then and there..

Buzz Constable said that as a Forest Acres homeowner and Messer Pond Association member, he thanked the Town for this forum. He felt they all had a role to play in this issue. He said he would be happy to give the College the names of the people who rent from him and his wife. He added that the real estate brokers in Town were good at coming up with a lease that makes sense and having telephone numbers of parents included. There was no reason why a landlord can't be the first line of communication about who is living in their home(s).

Mr. Constable added that the neighborhood has two houses that have rentals on Forest Acres Road. At least they can give addresses, but maybe not the names. He said when he waves at the guy who speeds by his dirt road to slow down, there is always a confrontation. Reporting this sort of thing to the police can bring attention to this behavior and make them better aware of the driver if they are seen speeding or driving recklessly. They've tried getting immediate neighbors to introduce themselves to the kids when they move in so they can start a relationship. He was shocked that if students are misbehaving off campus and the College hears about it, why they wouldn't call them in and talk to the students causing problems. Mr. Galligan said right now they don't have the authority to do this. Mr. Constable said at the very least the Dean of Students could call them in to talk to them. Mr. Galligan said that there are only a few

students living off campus and as more start living off campus, this issue would come up more. He said that the College and police work together on this type of thing.

Phyllis Piotrow asked why they can't identify those not living on campus. She wondered if they couldn't have a requirement that everyone live on campus unless they sign a permit from the College to be able to live off campus. They could take a sort of pledge or sign a code of conduct in order to live off campus. She thought they could do that even if they couldn't legally enforce it. Mr. Galligan said he wondered whether that was not putting in place structures that they can't handle without more knowledge and more communication. If together they could come up with some sheet of responsibilities as a neighbor (he suggested working with Ms. Levine and Chief Seastrand) to give to students living off campus.

Dick Cavallero said he has lived on Forest Acres Road for 17 years and has been a friend of Colby-Sawyer College. He said that a house that rented to students had a 4x8 piece of plywood painted in school colors that said "Colby Cartel." He said that Mr. Galligan had said that "they are not responsible for students off campus which is a matter of law, and not choice." He thought it was in their self-interest and the interest of those 99.5% of the students who are nice kids, to know that their reputation is being tarred by these who did something foul to a man who spent his time in Vietnam before they were born. That makes the rest of the students look awful.

Chair Helm asked if anyone felt there was anything the Town should be doing. She mentioned that some towns enact ordinances to better control off-campus housing and she asked for feedback on that idea.

Bruce Stetson of Messer Pond wondered why it was okay to take a student who has been thrown off campus for drinking, fighting or drug use and then not tell or warn the Town about them. Mr. Galligan said they don't have the right under the privacy laws to extend that knowledge. Mr. Stetson said that they are washing their hands of the students who can't be taken care of on campus. Mr. Gallagher disagreed. Mr. Stetson opined that what they were doing on campus bans them from the College housing, and then they are thrown into the community where they are forced to be a burden on the community and the police department. Mr. Gallagher disagreed with Mr. Stetson's remarks.

Ms. Constable opined that it was absurd that people would think that the kids won't drink. In Burlington, Vermont, they have a noise ordinance. If parties get loud and it is past 10:00 PM they will be shut down by the Police Department.

Nancy Stetson said that no one has brought up the people who are paying the bill to send this person to College. Mr. Galligan said they are not allowed to inform parents of these activities unless the child has waived their federal privacy rights. They are not even allowed to give students' grades to the parents unless the student has waived their privacy rights. It was noted that in the 1980s this law was put into effect. Mr. Galligan said that he encourages families to have students to sign the FERPA waiver at the beginning of the year but not all of them do. If the student is physically at risk (suicidal, or if they have committed an act of violence), they can notify the parents. Otherwise, the student has a privacy right.

Chair Helm asked again how people felt about an ordinance. She gave an example of Durham, NH (home to the University of New Hampshire) that has just passed an ordinance making the landlords legally responsible for disorderly conduct in rental units. The question she had for those assembled was whether they'd like to charge the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator with an ordinance like this in their behalf. Ms. Levine said they need to be careful as it would not only apply to landlords who rent to College students, but to anyone who rents to anyone. The only people renting property in New London are not College students; they are the minority.

Mr. Harrod asked about the possibility of a noise ordinance. Mr. Constable said that type of ordinance would make a lot of sense regardless of who is renting the houses. He said that he was not big on ordinances unless they are needed, but the Board of Selectmen can certainly help get an article in the paper to discuss things that went on in this meeting. He thought it could be a good PR piece. Chair Helm agreed and said that this could be an upcoming topic for Ms. Levine's "From the Desk..." column.

Mr. Stetson said that Keene would be a more comparable town than Durham. Keene might have a more applicable ordinance. Mr. Galligan said that Henniker would be another town that would be similar. There are other towns where the towns and police are not as positive as New London. He explained that communication is critical. As a citizen, if there is going to be an ordinance, why don't they start with something that is not as regulatory as what Durham is doing, but something (like a pledge) that isn't going to be enforced would worry him as well. Chair Helm said that it is the responsibility of all of them. It is a community that they all love and want to live in harmony. She opined that they love having the College in Town.

Ms. Constable said to remember that they are talking about a few bad apples and 90% of the kids at Colby-Sawyer College drink but do so responsibly. Sometimes the students can be harder on their community than their school community. Some students would be insulted that some fellow students were acting in this way. She thought they should do something to help the Colby-Sawyer student community become aware that this problem exists and that it is tarnishing their relationship with the Town.

Mr. Markoff brought up the recent suicide of a gay student at Rutgers and he wondered what the College's response was to the events at Rutgers. Mr. Galligan said they are facing and continue to campaign to talk about Gay/Lesbian/Bi-sexual/Transgendered (GLBT) students and to provide a safe campus for them. They need to make sure it is a safe campus for everybody. Their Dean of Students sent out an email to all students that talked about the issue of safety and safety in terms of being GLBT and the campus being a safe welcoming inclusive community for everyone. They sent another email out about National Coming Out Day. He saw it as an issue of tolerance. They have alerted their RA's about what happened at Rutgers and asked them to be in tune about what is happening with regards to safety for all students. In America and at Colby-Sawyer College, this has been an issue they haven't talked about a whole lot. It is something they need to talk about. It is relevant, because it is a safety issue. They will continue to deal with it. The technological aspect of it is incredible. There is no privacy. There is an incredible social philosophical dichotomy going on. Texting, circulating film and being able to post on YouTube is so easy now. Mr. Galligan reminded those at the meeting that the previous day was the anniversary of the Matthew Shepherd incident, which brought about more discussion.

Mr. Harrod said that he was the chair of the Town's Energy Committee. He wanted to say that the cooperation between the College and the Energy Committee was seamless and wonderful. He also wanted to thank the College for what they are doing for sustainability.

Bob MacMichael said that he remembers back when the conference room they were currently sitting in was four apartments, and he painted them. The teacher he painted it for – Mr. Currier – is gone. In those days boys could go out with the girls on campus but had to be off campus by 9 PM. He lived in the days when the College meant so much to this Town and he felt it still did. Mr. MacMichael opined that there were a lot of problems nowadays. Back when they had only 350 students and one security guard who left at 7 PM, it was so much simpler. He ended the meeting by saying that with growth comes problems.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London