



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## APPROVED CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES February 4, 2012

### PRESENT:

Tina Helm, Selectman  
Peter Bianchi, Selectman  
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator  
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

### ALSO PRESENT:

Hardy Hasenfuss, Jack Harrod, Renate Kannler, Will Kidder, Sue Little, Peter Hoglund, Maureen Prohl, Rob Prohl, Don Klingler, Rick Anderson, Howard Hoke, Jack Sheehan, Bud Dick, Beth Swanson, Terri Bingham, David Payne, Phyllis Piotrow, Bob MacMichael, Ann Loeffler, Carolyn Lockhart

In the absence of Chair Kaplan, Ms. Helm called the meeting to order at 7:30am.

Ms. Helm said that the Board of Selectmen would like to review the things that have gone on in the town since the last CAC meeting. Mr. Bianchi said that after some town buildings were damaged by freezing conditions in Concord, they have requested estimates for getting a low-temperature alarm put in New London's town office.

Mr. Bianchi said that they have also just recently presented the budget to the Budget Committee. The board of Selectmen has voted to give the employees a 2% raise but right now it is in the hands of the Budget Committee. He added that they have been working on the Elkins project and have received nine requests for qualifications (RFQ) for the work. They have narrowed the firms down to five, but no decision has been made as of yet. The Board of Selectmen and two members of the Elkins committee, Ms. Hallquist and Ms. Johnson, will work to rank the firms in their preferred order. They will then be able to interview these firms in the order they have been rated. Mr. Bianchi explained that once a firm is passed over and another is interviewed, they are not permitted to go back to a previous firm to ask them to do the work, even if their price is lower. In order to go back to someone else that had been bypassed, they must re-submit a RFQ and re-rank and interview. This is a State regulation and these are the rules they have to abide by. On February 21<sup>st</sup> they will meet to go over the remaining five RFQs. Mr. Bianchi said that each of the firms have been pre-qualified by the State. Maureen Prohl and Mike McChesney will be the two representatives from the Elkins Committee who will join the Board of Selectmen in this process.

Mr. Bianchi said that the sidewalk project on Pleasant Street will be started in May, and the Lamson Lane project will be underway as well. He added that they received a letter from the State regarding the Pleasant Lake dam. The town had budgeted \$30,000 for engineering for the dam to be checked. Wright Pierce (the engineering firm who they chose for this job) led them to believe that what would need to be done was to create a new flood control plan. Wright Pierce has since been informed by the State that the dam would need to withstand two and-a-half times a 100-year storm. Engineers will be coming in on Monday night at the regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen's meeting to talk to them about details and suggestions. Estimates on changes to the dam to meet compliance with the new standards have come in between \$300,000 and \$500,000. Mr. Bianchi added that in all the scenarios offered by Wright Pierce, the

boat ramp has been eliminated. They have to consider that if the dam needs to have extensive work done, they might not want to go forward with the Elkins project as there is a good chance all that new work could be ripped up to fix the dam later on.

Ms. Prohl believed that they had to have access to the lake by State regulation. Mr. Bianchi said that there is supposed to be access to the lake but it doesn't have to be provided by the town. Fish & Game has no money or interest in helping the town with this. They have been contacted in the past with a request to help with the boat launch and have offered no assistance.

Ms. Helm emphasized that they just got this letter and they are on top of it at this point. They wanted to share this information with the CAC as it was something they will have to deal with. She urged them not to panic.

Ms. Loeffler asked if they may lose the grant money if they have to hold off on using it, due to needed repairs to the dam. Mr. Bianchi said they are not sure yet but at this point it raises a "what-if" question to consider. He also noted that the State will be cooperative with this dam project and it may take several years to complete it. Mr. Anderson added that this new regulation is likely affecting hundreds of dams across the State. Ms. Helm suggested that people attend the Board of Selectmen's meetings to keep on top of issues like this one. She felt that participation from the taxpayers was important.

Mr. Hoke said that if the water goes up enough to go over the top of the dam, there was a reserve area near the strawberry fields, and the water would also flow other places, such as through Elkin's Beach. Mr. Bianchi said there were many questions they would ask of the engineers on Monday night and he was sure they would discuss scenarios having to do with a breach of the dam.

Ms. Helm noted that there were eight proposed amendments to the Zoning Regulations that are being discussed at the Planning Board meetings. They will be on the warrant in May. She explained that there were two ways Zoning Amendments can be put forward to the town. 1.) if a group wishes to change a regulation; and 2.) If the Town leadership feels that there is a zoning regulation that needs to be changed. In either case the change needs to be approved by the Planning Board. Peter Stanley presented eight possible changes, which can all be seen on the town's website. She wanted to bring two of them to the attention of the CAC members:

Article 11, section 11 - Temporary storage trailers on property for non-profit organizations. The trailer could be present for a duration of two months, with the ability to renew for two additional months. The Planning Board supports the article. Ms. Prohl asked about trailers parked near people's homes. Mr. Bianchi said that if there is construction going on, a trailer can be there, but this specific change is targeted towards temporary storage for non-profits and they must be removed in two months, or renewed for an additional two months.

Ms. Helm added that another proposed amendment was brought to the Planning Board by the college, which helps define Institutional Recreational (IR) usage. The amendment allows more flexibility for the college to come to the Planning Board for Site Plan Review (SPR) related to the development of athletic fields in the Kelsey Field area. Neighbors have generally felt strongly about this issue in the past. She opined that everyone in the town should become familiar with these amendments that allow for expansion in this regard.

Mr. Bianchi said Kelsey Field was dedicated in 1999 it is located on the left-hand side the college, and left side of Seamans Road (northerly side). In 2004 there was a zoning amendment passed at Town Meeting that said the field could have gravel driveways and only enough parking for emergency vehicles,

and that there could be no structures. Now, the college wants it to be legal to have lighting, structures and something other than a gravel road. It would increase the use of this area. Mr. Bianchi said the college has a well-thought out master plan that includes expansion. This amendment would excuse them from having to come in for variances and/or special exceptions when considering making these upgrades to Kelsey Field, but he reminded them that they would still have to come before the Planning Board for SPR.

Ms. Helm said that the college has not come to the Planning Board with these requests to expand as of yet. It is the Zoning Administrator's job not to promote these proposed changes, but to be the facilitator to carry the applicants through the process. She stressed that these were not things that the Zoning Administrator is advocating. By passing this article as a zoning amendment, it will make it easier for the college to come to the Planning Board with these requests in the future.

Mr. Hoke asked about spot-zoning regulations in town. Mr. Bianchi wasn't aware of this. Mr. Hoke said this was brought up when they declared the forest zone. He said if the Planning Board doesn't want to support this amendment brought forward by the college, it could still be put on the ballot by petition at Town Meeting. Mr. Harrod noted that a petition requires 25 signatures.

Mr. Bianchi said he concluded from Mr. Galligan's presentation at the last meeting that they would like lit, turf fields to keep up with the competition. He explained that there are three phases in the college's expansion plans. Ms. Helm said that the expansion they are looking into at Kelsey Field also includes parking in that area and not just lighting. Mr. Bianchi said that something they are always concerned with is storm-water runoff, which could be greatly increased if there were large parking lots created in this area. Lighting is something else that has been a concern in town. Ms. Helm said that they just wanted to alert the members of the CAC to the fact that this was coming up and thought they should be aware.

Mr. Harrod said that they should consider light pollution. They have nice, dark skies at the moment. He felt this should be on the list of important considerations. Mr. Anderson said that the college is important to the town and the idea here is to be able to compete with other colleges. Other colleges draw students who have lit, turf fields.

Ms. Bingham asked if the tree cutting that was done further down the road from Kelsey Field was a part of the college's project. Mr. Bianchi said that the tree cutting she was referring to had nothing to do with the college. It was a non-resident landowner who wanted to get some money from the property and that, unfortunately, the way it was logged was not ideal. The town has received many complaints about this issue.

Mr. Payne said that the college wasn't looking at a free pass to get whatever they want. There should be some discussion about what the college wants to do so the public can see what their intentions are. Mr. Dick said the advances being made in field lighting are enormous and LEDs are able to highly focus the light on the field and no into the sky. Ms. Kannler said the lights would not be on all night but rather only when there is a game. Mr. Bianchi said that the concern is that the previous administration of the college declared that there would never be a need to light the field. This new administration is changing this declaration.

Mr. Sheehan said that if this request was denied, the school could still have the opportunity to come in and ask for a zoning variance or special exception. Mr. Bianchi agreed that this was true and they wouldn't ever be held back completely to request these kinds of upgrades.

Ms. Piotrow added that technology is changing very fast with regards to pervious/impervious and lighting and it would be interesting if the college could pioneer some new developments. She didn't think the

town should appear to be shutting the door on these types of things. Ms. Helm noted that the college is trying to be a real leader in green technology, and gave the example of their participation in zero-sort recycling.

Mr. Payne indicated that the college has already raised enough money to pay for a turf field.

Mr. Harrod noted that the new cafeteria at the college is being designed in a very environmentally creative way with regards to storm-water runoff.

#### Intersection of Gould Road

Mr. Hoke said that since 1989 he has had the opportunity to observe traffic patterns coming out of Cougar Court. He felt it was a nasty intersection as while traveling on Gould Road it is very easy to become distracted by many things and very easy to go through the stop sign. He has seen near accidents and he almost hit a mini-van that came through the stop sign recently. He has been asking about getting a larger stop sign there, a sign that says "Dangerous Intersection" or even words painted in the street that say "STOP AHEAD." Nothing has been done. He asked that something be done to prevent any further accidents, injuries or even a fatality.

Mr. Bianchi said that the last time this was brought up he thought they were going to put their electronic sign at the end of Gould Road. Mr. Hoke said he didn't recall if this was done or not. He said that would be helpful short-term, but thought something more permanent should be done. Mr. Hoglund suggested a rumble strip be put in the road. Ms. Helm didn't feel that they had done anything with this and thanked Mr. Hoke for bringing this issue up. She didn't feel it would be that difficult to do something.

#### Vision of the CAC

Ms. Helm said she would be happy to facilitate the discussion of the future of the CAC, and welcomed their thoughts/opinions.

Ms. Little said she would like to hear about the situation with the old middle school. She wondered who was using the building, who was in charge, what is happening there, etc. She felt very uninformed about it. Ms. Helm asked Ms. Little what she would envision a good use of the building would be. Ms. Little said that the town needed a community center. She doesn't know if the building is able to support it, who would heat it, etc. Mr. Bianchi said that no one is using the old middle school at this time, however, private individuals are trying to make plans to utilize the building in the future. A private group has a 25 year lease with another 25 years renewable, at \$1/year, for the structure from the cafeteria through the 1941 building.

Mr. Bianchi noted that a group has been trying to raise funds for a community center, privately. Fred Downey is involved in spearheading this, along with Dave Kidder. The school district is heating and insuring and maintaining the building. There have been engineering studies and walk-throughs of the building to determine the shape of the building. The 1941 building has been found to be sound and is in good shape. There are plans on paper, showing the old gym (behind the 1941 building) being a combo/theatre area. Mr. Downey has come to make presentations to the Board of Selectmen. To this point, they have taken the position that there is no town money to support it at the moment.

Ms. Helm asked how the members of the CAC would feel about putting town money into this project. Mr. Dick said that he has recently become involved in this effort. He felt the building should be saved. They are having issues with "turf protection" with unwilling parties to get on board. They want everyone to get together for a common goal.

Mr. Payne said it would be a bad precedent if they put town money into something like this. Part of it is economics and other part is a turf war.

Mr. Hoke said he found, with interactions with Mr. Downey, the assurance that the organizations that would benefit would also be able to maintain autonomy and unique characteristics. There is a lot of suggestion that the organizations that have struggled and have done a good job of creating their own identity and purpose, would be blended into this community center “umbrella” and lose their distinct nature. There may be an advantage to their lives to have a center, but he felt they should come up with an idea for how the organizations who participate will be able to maintain their autonomy; the center shouldn’t try to take everyone over.

Ms. Kannler said that at his presentation, Mr. Downey was not looking for tax money but just for the blessing of the town. Ms. Helm agreed but said in order to go on to the next stage there has to be more than just a blessing offered by the town.

Ms. Lockhart felt there were other towns in the area that had community centers owned by the town and used by tenant groups. Perhaps it would be helpful to have people look at these places and talk to the towns to see how it works. Mr. Bianchi wondered if the town should take over the impetus for developing a community center or if the non-profit group should continue with their efforts alone. Ms. Lockhart thought if the town owned the building, tenant groups could use it. Mr. Hasenfuss said it is not only a matter of owning a building, but paying to operate it. The budget for operating the project is substantial.

Mr. Bianchi said in the past, when the smaller schools in the district were closed the towns were given the buildings. The building could be given back to the town by the district if they wanted to. Mr. Hoke asked if the town of New London gave the property to the SAU when it was formed. Mr. Bianchi answered in the affirmative.

Ms. Piotrow said in terms of long-term planning, the unique advantages of New London are the college, the services the town provides, healthcare, and recreation. She felt there should be more recreation, instead of an effort to put all the recreation in town into one group. She felt they should be thinking in terms of expanding different types of educational and recreational activities. They should bring people into town who are connected to the college; those are the people they would like to attract to the town for the long-term as they would enjoy and contribute to the educational and recreational activities. The other issue Ms. Piotrow brought up was affordable housing and finding out where to put it

Mr. Dick took exception to the last paragraph of the letter Ms. Piotrow had sent to the CAC prior to the meeting, which said that the town didn’t need industry. Mr. Dick said that they need the presence of the hospitality industry in New London. It is currently the largest industry in town. The entertainment industry is present in the town by the existence of the New London Barn Playhouse.

Mr. Dick said that one thing they don’t have in the town is holiday lighting between November and January. He sees this sort of lighting in other towns and finds New London to be exceptionally dark during this time of year. He thanked Ms. Piotrow for her letter.

Ms. Lockhart said this has been discussed in the Master Plan for New London. Ms. Helm noted that the Master Plan has been finalized and there are copies of it in the Town Office if anyone would like to read it. It was felt by many at the meeting that the Master Plan was too long. Ms. Helm noted that their representative from the Upper Valley Regional Planning Commission (UVRPC), Michael McCrory, was charged with creating a summary of the document.

Ms. Little wondered about “soft” industry that had been suggested in the past near Interstate 89. She said a lot of people can work from home now but to attract young people to the town they need to offer more than restaurants, banks and the hospital for places to work.

Ms. Bingham asked if they had thought about putting portions of the Master Plan in the Intertown Record, in synopsis form, as people might be more interested and they might get some feedback on it. Mr. Harrod suggested Ms. Hallquist taking over the column Jessie Levine (prior Town Administrator) had been writing. He offered that this idea could be a good starting point for her.

Ms. Swanson said one thing that detracts from the town to her is that there is nothing open after 5:30pm. She didn't feel that there were enough services open after that time.

Ms. Piotrow said that two of the most important improvements in Town have been the roundabout and the expansion of the parking lot at the park-and-ride.

Mr. Sheehan said if they look at the population in town, a large percentage of people are here because they wanted to get out of metropolitan areas or because they went to college here and wanted to come back. He likes the town the way it is; quiet at night. He understands there is another segment of the population who have children and who want to have more things to do in town. He thought it to be a difficult charge for the administration and the Board of Selectmen to blend these two visions together. There is perhaps some resistance towards changing. There has to be an evolution, not a revolution.

Ms. Little suggested that Ms. Swanson invite 4-5 people to a CAC meeting who feel the same way she does about the lack of services at night and perhaps offer some suggestions on what they would like to see in the town. Ms. Swanson said she wasn't sure what she was looking for, exactly, but said she would consider this.

Mr. Hoke said he was not a native of the area but took part in activities in the area as a kid. He recalled skiing, going to movies at the college, and swimming at the beach. He remembers the other people who were around him as being residents of New London. Today, there aren't many kids from town who are at these places now; they are from somewhere else. The demographic of New London has gone from being a mix of ages to mostly older people. It isn't a matter of affordable housing; they need areas where a young family can buy a \$100,000 home; ¼ acre lots on town services. They need well-paying jobs, industry, etc.

Ms. Lockhart said her daughter and husband live near them with two small children. They love the town and many other young families are moving back to the town. They are always busy and finding things to do. She said they make their own fun.

Ms. Kannler commented that she heard the population of the school is declining and that part of the demographics is happening everywhere. She retired to New London because it is a quiet town. She added that technology keeps people in their homes. They are not far from Hanover or Concord for activities and events. Nothing they offer in New London will draw the amount of people that larger towns or cities can offer.

Mr. MacMichael said he started to appreciate living in the town when he came home from WWII. He recalled that he and his friends used to hang out at the drug store until they closed at 8pm. They were then forced to go home and had nothing else to do for the rest of the night. That's just the way it was. Mr. MacMichael said that the quality of life in New London can't be compared with many other towns. He's seen it when there was nothing here and he is proud to see that the town is where it is and is in the hands of those who are getting involved in it.

The next CAC meeting would be held on March 3, 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London