

**TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING**

APRIL 11, 2018 6:00 PM

TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM

Approved May 2, 2018

PRESENT: Council Chairman Dale Pike, Council Vice Chairman Toni Weinstein, Councilor Gretchen Kast, Councilor Amy Burns, Councilor Casey Finch, Councilor Zachary Dumont

EXCUSED: Councilor Kyle Bowden

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Steve Fournier; Rick Alpers, Shelley Walts, and Nicole Armaganian of Primex Insurance Company

PRIMEX GOAL SETTING SESSION

Introduction and Review of Agenda

Mr. Rick Alpers, Risk Management & Member Services Consultant at Primex, introduced Member Services Consultant Shelly Walts and new Risk Management Associate Nicole Armaganian, and started the meeting at 6:01 pm. He said they were pleased to be there and valued their partnership with Newmarket to help navigate their annual goal-setting session. He said if towns functioned well at the top and had annual goals, it would trickle down through the organization. He said they would discuss where they wanted Newmarket to go and he would play the role of facilitator.

Mr. Alpers said he would review the 2016 goals, take down the top three individual goals of each councilor and the Town Administrator as to what they wanted to see Newmarket accomplish over the next 12-18 months, and then take a 5-10 minute break while they looked at the goals and tried to find some common themes. He said they would then set 3 or 4 goals out of that and put some timelines and dates around them, with further detail in the objectives. He said he wanted them to focus on what the next 12-18 months looked like as a Council, with the Town Administrator, with the Department Heads, and what Newmarket looked like as a community.

Review of 2016 Goals

Mr. Alpers reviewed the previous goals set by the Town Council for 2017, and said the first goal was to build a process for a Unified Town-Wide CIP Plan with delivery by October 2017. Town Administrator Fournier said they were always working to improve it, but that it was much better than in 2016. Mr. Alpers said the second goal was to increase Parking in Downtown, exploring public or private solutions. Town Administrator Fournier said the Council was working with the Newmarket Business Association to try to address the issue, but that land was scarce for the Town. Chairman Pike stated that they had decided last year to resurface the Bay Road parking lot and lease some overnight parking there. Town Administrator Fournier said they also increased parking on Beech Street and changed the rules for the Library parking lot to overnight parking with permit. Chairman Pike noted that metered parking tickets were up, and said it was part of the plan was to discourage long-term parking in Downtown.

Mr. Alpers said that the third goal for 2017 was to continue relations with the School Board and the SAU staff to find further efficiencies and solidify the shared positions with Facilities and Finance. Town Administrator Fournier said the goal had been completed and was working well, and they were looking at sharing other positions as well. Chairman Pike said that the School Superintendent and the Town Administrator, as well as the School Board and the Town Council, worked very well together and were able to meet any challenges. Mr. Alpers said the fourth goal had been to meet with the Planning Board and work together to align the 2017 goals, based off summaries of consultants and Strafford Regional Planning Commission reports.

Mr. Alpers said they were now looking toward 2018/19, and asked the councilors to think about what they wanted to accomplish next year as a Council together, in the community, and where they wanted to go. He asked councilors to think about one exciting prospect on the horizon for Newmarket right now.

Prospects for Newmarket

Councilor Kast said that Newmarket's reputation had risen in the Seacoast as a great place to be and people were coming to visit. Councilor Burns said Newmarket had great trails and outdoor activities, with kayak rental at the waterfront and wonderful restaurants and shops. Town Administrator Fournier said Newmarket was finally addressing the Junior-Senior High School and the Elementary School which were being renovated. He said Downtown had been successful and Newmarket needed to develop gateways on North Main Street and south on Exeter Road to continue development out. Vice-Chair Weinstein said Newmarket was poised to embrace energy efficiency in the community and explore energy alternatives, and said there was a new Energy & Environment Advisory Committee.

Councilor Dumont stated that houses did not stay long on the market long and that people were willing to pay more and make a long-term commitment to the community. Vice-Chair Weinstein said they had an amazing Recreation Department in Newmarket which was exploring opportunities for all ages. Chairman Pike said Newmarket had brought down nitrogen concentrations by 90% in Great Bay, which was a tremendous asset to the community. Town Administrator Fournier said along with that utility issues had been addressed with a new Wastewater Treatment Facility, and said water was no longer an issue with the new Macintosh Well. He said they were updating utilities to be able to handle development, and they continued to invest in development.

Issues for Newmarket

Mr. Alpers asked what still needed a little work in Newmarket, and Vice-Chair Weinstein said parking was a real problem. Town Administrator Fournier said roads and facilities needed improvement, and there was also an issue that Newmarket was becoming unaffordable. He clarified that it was not because of taxes but was due to the value of the homes. Councilor Kast said Newmarket also had a lopsided ratio of owned versus rentals, and Town Administrator said the majority were rentals. Chairman Pike pointed out that Newmarket did not have a lot of industry to stay on top of that and help with the tax rate. Councilor Dumont felt there were walking issues with some sidewalks in disrepair, and Town Administrator Fournier said they would be addressed when the North Route 108 project was completed.

Councilor Kast stated that because of changes in the area, the Downtown in Newmarket had become a commuter path versus a destination. Town Administrator Fournier explained that in summer if the Spalding backed up traffic would be sent via Route 108 to Route 33. Chairman Pike said Newmarket had not seen a lot of commercial development, and said they were looking to move some of the properties taken over by the Town to tax-paying properties. Vice-Chair Weinstein felt that Newmarket's tax rate was something they always needed to keep in mind to align the needs of the Town with reality.

Town Administrator Fournier said Newmarket had a lot of open space but not a lot of parks, and nothing for the outer areas. Vice-Chair Weinstein said there was also no green space Downtown, and said walkability and ride-ability were important for connect-ability. Councilor Dumont also mentioned public transportation. Chairman Pike said that it was difficult to maintain ridership in the Town, and said he also felt that Route 108 was over-capacitated. He said there were some improvements to Route 108 north of town but none south.

Chairman Pike stated that they were nearing a decision on the Macallen Dam Advisory Committee and were optimistic they would reach a good conclusion. Town Administrator Fournier explained that the Town owned and maintained the dam in the middle of Downtown, and said some significant fixes and improvements were needed. Councilor Finch said the waterfront in general would need some repairs for erosion in Schanda Park. Chairman Pike said there was an idea to extend Schanda Park along the waterfront, and Town Administrator Fournier said they were trying to correct right-of-way issues and private-owned property issues to create a Riverwalk. Chairman Pike said that would be enhanced if they were able to create a small park around the dam.

Top 2-3 Goals per Councilor and Town Administrator

Mr. Alpers said he would give the councilors and the Town Administrator 5-7 minutes to write down what they wanted to see accomplished over the next 12-18 months by the Council, the community, the Town Administrator, and the Department Heads.

Town Administrator Fournier stated that his first goal was to address Gateway Development, with the paving project on North Route 108 wrapping up soon. He said there would be a large parcel of empty land, and though the Town did not own the property, they had already invested a lot of money into infrastructure to allow development in that area. He said he would look at development on North Main

Street and south on Exeter Road, and said there were a lot of empty parcels that could be used. He said his second goal was a Facilities Rehabilitation Plan to improve older buildings in the Town and go energy efficient as well. His third goal was Infill Development by adding green spaces or to incentivize new buildings and move parking elsewhere.

Chairman Pike said his first goal was to continue to work with the Planning Board to address future zoning changes on Route 152. He said they also needed an updated presentation on development-related projects. Town Administrator Fournier said they needed a Marketing Plan. Chairman Pike said his second goal was a Facilities Plan which would be sustainable. He said his third goal was to keep roads sustainable after completion and to estimate a cost for upkeep.

Vice-Chair Weinstein said her first goal was Economic Development, but that she had included other things in that such as North and South Route 108, parking, marketing properties the Town owned, and focusing on relationships with local businesses and the Newmarket Business Association. She said her second goal was to continue to work on a CIP/Facilities Plan, and said she would like to see a Facilities Plan that mirrored the Road Plan, on a schedule and with a way to balance costs. Town Administrator Fournier said the Town currently had approximately \$3 million in Capital Reserve Funds. Vice-Chair Weinstein said her third goal was to consider all energy options for their community.

Councilor Kast said her first goal was seeing some creative solutions to CIP, deferred maintenance, and facilities as part of planning, and said energy savings was part of the innovation solutions. She said her second goal was parking, and she said she went back to the visionary exercise to see what the priorities were. She asked what other solutions were available besides more parking spaces, and said Durham had instituted a program called Park Once and Walk. She felt it was timely to get another vision plan as a benchmark, and Chairman Pike said the visioning was part of the Mills in 2015, and was held every 5 years. Councilor Kast said that instead her third goal was to start looking at ways, policy-wise or tax incentive-wise, to start promoting conversion of housing from rental to ownership.

Councilor Burns said her first goal was to develop the gateway which would help attract business and help the tax rate. She said her second goal was Being Green which included energy efficiency, climate change planning, and walkability. She said her third goal was the Facilities Planning, scheduled much like the Road Plan with finding patterns.

Councilor Finch said his first goal was for the Town to become paperless or electronic, which would free up space, be cost efficient, and environmentally friendly which was being green. Mr. Alpers asked for a scope, and Town Administrator Fournier said they were doing everything with a new financial software system, departments scanning bills, and Council agendas no longer on paper with a system online by May to become 100% digital. Councilor Finch said his second goal was energy optimization and his third goal was facilities, parking, and a waterfront plan working the dam project into something larger.

Councilor Dumont said his first goal was trying to incentivize non-restaurant types of businesses in Newmarket to fill areas opening up and develop a plan to help market the Town for businesses. He suggested businesses that could provide more services to the Town would be beneficial. He said his second goal was a Traffic Study to see how traffic entered Newmarket from South 108/Exeter Road,

especially with relation to the railroad crossing. He said he felt the area was too congested, and said it would be a benefit to work with the State and utilize the Town's own resources. He said his third goal was to examine the current housing supply in Newmarket to see if there was a way to incentivize single-family homes.

Mr. Alpers said they were talking tonight about a lot of quality-of-life issues for the community, which showed how far they had come since last year. Vice-Chair Weinstein said that communication had not been mentioned, and said though they were doing a good job as a community, they had lost newspaper coverage. Town Administrator Fournier stated that there were no longer competing newspapers, and felt they were trying to figure it out as much as Newmarket. Councilor Kast said there were a lot of volunteers and asked if there was a way to harness that energy. Mr. Alpers said that communication was the single greatest challenge for any institution, community, or school district, and said it was a way to further their reach. Chairman Pike felt it might be a good opportunity to take the website to another level.

There was a break in the Workshop Meeting from 7:22 pm to 7:34 pm.

POSSIBLE 2018 GOALS

Mr. Alpers said his team had come up with 3 possible goals for Newmarket for 2018/19, and he would assign who would accomplish them and add some dates for deliverables. He said the goals would then be forwarded to Town Administrator Fournier for review and any changes, and Primex would then send them back as a *Draft* to the Town Council for their review and any changes they wished to make before final approval.

Goal #1 – A Facilities Plan that coordinates with CIP; energy efficiency tied in with any renovations of facilities.

Town Administrator Fournier stated that the Town shared a Facilities Director with the School, and that an examination of all facilities would be coming up shortly. He said the inventory would be done at the end of the month, and they would then set up a detailed plan and assign priorities. He said he would coordinate it with CIP which was due at the same time.

Mr. Alpers set a deliverable date of June 1, 2018 for Inventory completion by the Facilities Director, and September 1, 2018 for delivery of the Facilities Plan by the Facilities Director and the Town Administrator, in advance of the Budget.

Goal #2 – Economic Development/Marketing

Mr. Alpers stated that they should begin to look at what it would take to develop the Gateway. He said the Downtown was busy and vibrant and they needed to figure out how to continue to build on that momentum from either end. He said this also included a Marketing Plan with how to best get Newmarket from a pass-through community to a destination. Town Administrator Fournier said the Gateway was a new idea, and the Council needed to have the Joint Meeting with the Planning Board. Mr. Alpers asked

when the Joint Meeting with the Planning Board might happen and Town Administrator Fournier suggested June 15, 2018.

Town Administrator Fournier said the Town had applied for a grant from a Master's Program at UNH for a marketing plan, but had not yet heard. Chairman Pike mentioned that they had an Economic Development Committee which was on hiatus, and Town Administrator Fournier said this would be more like hiring a marketing director to see what products they could offer. He said the utilities issues on North Main Street were being upgraded and Exeter Road was already done.

Discussion: Councilor Kast asked for clarification on the goal, and Town Administrator Fournier said they were trying to get people to stop, and development would slow them down. He said they were previously focused on Downtown and this would be a shift to focus on expanding to the north and south. He said they were looking to improve the tax base and quality of life by offering more services for residents, and improving the view of the community when people come to Newmarket. Vice-Chair Weinstein said she had spoken with people who were looking for space for small businesses in Newmarket which did not exist.

Town Administrator Fournier said he was seeing a lot of development in communities with either plazas or mixed-use buildings. Mr. Alpers mentioned the application to UNH for some kind of marketing plan, and Town Administrator Fournier said they now needed to move on their own. He said there was no money in the Budget currently and they would need to include it in the Budget for FY2020 at the earliest. Chairman Pike asked if there was any sense of the costs, and Town Administrator Fournier estimated between \$10,000 and \$30,000. Councilor Dumont asked how the marketing plan would work, and Town Administrator Fournier said the marketing firm would look at what was already available in Newmarket and meet with focus groups to do a complete rebranding.

Mr. Alpers said that as far as the Economic Development Plan, the Council would first meet with the Planning Board and then execute an RFP in FY2019 for marketing. Chairman Pike said the Planning Board had wanted Design Standards for understanding the look of developments and felt this should not be dropped. Town Administrator Fournier suggested that for economic growth, they should explore hiring an Economic Development Director in FY2020, even on a part-time basis, to focus on getting the marketing out.

Goal #3 – Quality of Life Issues: Waterfront Plan, creating green spaces, walkability, bike lanes.

Mr. Alpers stated that the last goal involved the quality of life issues such as a Waterfront Plan, creating more green spaces and parks, the walkability of the Town, and adding more bike lanes. He said the Council would be working with the Community Development Director, the Town Administrator, and the Economic Development Director for a finality of details. He felt that this goal was important and was also part of the first two goals. He said he was reluctant to put a date to this from a Council standpoint. He said while completing other projects in Town they needed to take these important quality of life issues into consideration when making decisions.

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Councilor Finch felt it involved the usability of the Town in general. Vice-Chair Weinstein felt a goal with marketing should be to advertise the conservation trails in Newmarket. Town Administrator Fournier said a lot of people thought access to conservation land was not allowed, but the opposite was true and they are supposed to have access.

Final Comments

Mr. Alpers said that he hoped the Town Council found the goal-setting process helpful and beneficial. He said the report would be put together within 2 weeks and emailed to Town Administrator Fournier for review and any changes, after which it would be forwarded to the Town Administrator as a *Draft*. He said the Council could then make changes and adopt final goals.

Mr. Alpers said he appreciated the Town Council and the Town Administrator allowing Primex to be part of this process tonight. He said if Boards at the top are working well together, it flowed to the rest of the organization. He said he observed that the Town Council and the Town Administrator worked very well together and felt Newmarket had a bright future ahead. He thanked everyone for their participation.

ADJOURNMENT

The Town Council Workshop Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary