

**TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE
TOWN COUNCIL GOAL-SETTING SESSION**

JUNE 12, 2019 6:00 PM

TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM

Approved July 17, 2019

PRESENT: Council Chairman Toni Weinstein, Council Vice Chairman Amy Burns, Councilor Zachary Dumont, Councilor Gretchen Kast, Councilor Jon Kiper, Councilor Casey Finch, Councilor Helen Sanders

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Steve Fournier, Primex Risk Management & Member Services Consultant Rick Alpert, Primex Member Services Consultant Shelley Walts

TOWN OF NEWMARKET GOAL-SETTING SESSION

Purpose: For the Newmarket Town Council and Town Administrator to come together and establish goals and strategies that will help guide the Town over the next 12-18 months.

Mr. Rick Alpers of Primex said they would start the process with what has changed in Newmarket since their last session. He said they would then review the goals set last year to see what had been accomplished and whether some of those goals should stay on the list and be turned into new goals, and set another two goals for next year.

WHAT HAS CHANGED IN NEWMARKET

Councilor Dumont said the Town made a decision on the Macallen Dam Project and they were working on the Gateway development. Chairman Weinstein said 2 Warrant Articles were passed, one for the Macallen Dam and one for Water Infrastructure, which were significant improvements. Town Administrator Fournier said the Macallen Dam would be renovated. He said for Water Infrastructure, Rural Development had come to them asking what projects they had and said a grant was available for a large project. He said the Town bonded for \$12 Mil to upgrade the current infrastructure and to develop

another well. Councilor Kiper asked how much was covered by the grant and Town Administrator Fournier said they were hoping \$2 Mil to \$3 Mil.

Councilor Finch said an energy audit of Town facilities was completed and facilities were being updated. Town Administrator Fournier said right now the Town Hall HVAC was being updated and lighting changed to LED, and they had done Energy Performance Contracting for a lot of projects. He said the Town shared positions with the School, and with the upcoming retirement of their IT Director they were looking to possibly share that as well. Chairman Weinstein said the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee was a little over a year old but they had instituted positive change and had started a community composting program which was running right on target.

Councilor Dumont said the Town sold a property that was currently being developed on the other side of the railroad tracks. Town Administrator Fournier said they had hired an Economic Development Director to focus on the Gateway as well as other properties like the Wilson Farm, and they would help with marketing after. Councilor Dumont said paving on Route 108 was not yet completed and the Town installed a cellphone tower. Councilor Kast said the tightening of the housing market was continuing to affect residents trying to find tax relief by moving to a less expensive area, and said it also made it difficult for people to come into the area.

Town Administrator Fournier said a negative change was there was no reporter at Town meetings since the media merger of the newspapers. Councilor Dumont felt the Town did a good job of getting materials out to people for access. Councilor Kiper said the School construction was about half done and they were making good progress. Councilor Dumont said they had changed the one-way direction on Church Street and there was a lot of backlash at first. Town Administrator Fournier said it was good for the Town to be able to start looking at their infrastructure which had been held off because of the School. Mr. Alpers said all areas of the Seacoast were highly competitive right now.

Councilor Kiper said commercial real estate was now about 95% full. Councilor Dumont said they had also recently passed an Ordinance to allow alcohol to be served in restaurants on Town sidewalks. Councilor Kiper also mentioned the development of Schoppmeyer Park and improvements at Heron Point. Town Administrator Fournier explained that the church gave the land and easement for Schoppmeyer Park to the Town.

REVIEW OF TOWN GOALS 2018-2019

Mr. Alpers stated that things in Newmarket were very positive for the most part and they had made substantial strides in the School and as a municipality. He said they would now review 2018-2019 Town Goals and what had been completed and what was still ongoing.

Goal # 1 – Facilities Plan that coordinates with CIP

Town Administrator Fournier said this had been completed. He said they had included a repair fund in the Budget for small projects under the threshold, and said they had hired a Facilities Director and signed a

contract for Energy Performance Contracting instead of having a significant bond to upgrade facilities. He said the inventory on Town property had also been done and incorporated into the CIP Plan.

Goal # 2 – Economic Development

Town Administrator Fournier said he had put in the Budget to contract with an Economic Development Director and they were working now on the North Gateway, talking with property owners, and would develop a Master Plan for that area. He said the last step would be a marketing plan and said the project was ongoing and in motion.

Goal # 3 – Quality of Life

Town Administrator Fournier said they wanted to develop a Waterfront Plan but the properties were usually in residential areas and the problem was getting deeds for access to the property. He said they were looking for ways to connect Downtown to the space across from the Mills and were discussing it with a large property owner in the area and got some preliminary costs. He said they were constructing more sidewalks and were contracting to update the Sidewalk Plan.

Mr. Alpers asked about bike lanes, and said the State had added them on Route 108. Town Administrator Fournier said they now had a Rails to Trails corridor that runs from Portsmouth to Manchester. Mr. Alpers said they had accomplished way more than he expected, and said they rarely go into a community with 90% of goals accomplished or underway. Councilor Kast said one thing that changed was that the Town Council Goals and the Town Administrator Goals were now one set of goals. Chairman Weinstein said they also made sure they were attainable, and Town Administrator Fournier said it made it easier because staff knows what is going on.

Discussion of Goals for 2019-2020

Mr. Alpers ask the councilors to take a few minutes to think about their discussion of last year's goals which were accomplished and which are in motion, and come up with 2 goals they want to achieve over the next year. He said out of that they would come up with another 3 goals for 2019-2020 on where to focus efforts and the goals needed to align with those of the Town Administrator.

Councilor Burns said she wanted to see some of the goals continued like Economic Development and Quality of Life. She said they have a lot of sidewalks but need to continue to grow that so more people could walk Downtown without a car. She said they needed to find ways to solve the parking issues, and said the commuter traffic with Route 108 connectors was getting worse. Town Administrator Fournier said it will be interesting to see what happens when the General Sullivan Bridge is finished. He said northbound was open but southbound was still a problem, and when lanes are backed up, commuters reroute via Route 33 to Route 108.

Chairman Weinstein said her biggest focus would be on energy, with renewable energy, reducing waste, and the environment in general. She said the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee started a composting program and wanted to find more ways to implement solar projects. She said they talked

about doing a carbon inventory map to see current usage (carbon footprint) and how they can reduce that and make an impact. She said the Committee was thinking about an education component, shoreline development was very important, and community outreach in general to find another way to reach and connect with people. Town Administrator Fournier said the new screens for Town Hall were in and they would probably do another phase.

Councilor Kast said she would take Chairman Weinstein's first goal and ask the Council whether they were ready to go to the next step and make a commitment to a certain achievable carbon footprint goal by a certain date. She said they could talk with residents about what they want to achieve or they could set the pace. She said Shared Services were underway and they would get feedback from MRI on Financial Services.

Councilor Dumont said two of his goals last year were looked at in some parts. He said as far as transportation, Town Administrator Fournier had mentioned an Urban Compact as a way for the Town to have greater control and oversight to access into Newmarket as well as allowing them to modify things, especially in Downtown. Town Administrator Fournier said they did not currently have an Urban Compact, and for anything for Downtown they have to get permission from the State. He said they wanted to expand access to the Town's natural resources, especially on the waterfront, and said Newmarket was a wonderful community for a Riverwalk.

Town Administrator Fournier said he wanted to continue with Economic Development efforts on the Gateway and use the Wilson Property. He said the property was a 20-acre lot bought for commercial purposes in a residential area which was the only access. He said he wanted to continue developing Shared Services with the School. He also wanted to do a basic review of operational revisions through ordinances and make basic changes to the Town Charter.

Councilor Kiper said parking was a perennial issue. He asked what they needed to do to renovate the Post Office as only half of it was being used and it would be a prime location for a parking lot. Town Administrator Fournier said the Post Office is for the Town of Newmarket. Councilor Kiper suggested ride sharing for short-term parking. Councilor Dumont asked if he was looking for a drop zone, and Councilor Kiper said it was being done in bigger cities.

Councilor Sanders said that this year a liaison position was added to the Newmarket Business Association and she was serving on that and had been made a non-voting member of the Board. She said they were excited to have a voice on the Town Council to share their concerns. She said as a small-business owner, a lot of what goes on in the Town is because we have a vibrant small-business community. She said she would like to see that continue to grow and have Business Association members attend Town Council meetings. She said she also wanted to look into having electric car-charging stations in Town. She said the Business Association would also like to have input on the Economic Development Plan.

Councilor Finch said he was looking at how to optimize and be more efficient, which overlaps with use of solar energy and the carbon footprint. He said the Downtown in general and the waterfront really need some attention, especially with the erosion at Schanda Park, and he wanted to start moving on that. He

said he also thought about how to use the Downtown as a billboard or business sign for the rest of the Town.

Chairman Weinstein said she wanted to add the idea of regionalization and sharing community services and equipment, and said Dispatch had been very positive. She said it was not easy to find a way for communities to share resources.

After a 5-minute break the workshop was resumed.

NEWMARKET TOWN GOALS FOR 2019-2020

Mr. Alpers said they had again put in 3 Goals:

Goal # 1 – Economic Development;

Goal # 2 – Quality of Life;

Goal # 3 – Sustainability as a community and as a municipality

Goal # 1 – Economic Development

Mr. Alpers said they should look into the Wilson Farm Property and continue Shared Services. He said MRI was in-house right now working on shared services, and asked if they should continue their work, what else the Town could do, and what other options were. He said it was hard to put a date to it, but it was a goal the Council and for the Town Administrator should always have in the forefront. He said they should continue to push the waterfront project forward, and should determine what steps needed to be achieved to do that and get the project off the ground.

Town Administrator Fournier suggested they start with Schanda Park and Schoppmeyer Park to spearhead the project. Councilor Dumont asked if he was looking for a private group to investigate and work with the Town, and Town Administrator Fournier said he was thinking of a committee of some sort. Chairman Weinstein asked if that was something the NCDC could potentially be a part of and he said possibly. He said the project would be a Riverwalk from Heron Point to Schanda Park, but they would have to look into ownership of Schanda Park as it was owned by the Conservation Commission and not the Town.

Councilor Kiper asked if that was unchangeable and Town Administrator Fournier it was not but it was on the side of the Conservation Commission to do that. Councilor Finch said it seemed like there was some interest on the part of the Conservation Commission to have that conversation. Town Administrator Fournier said originally Schoppmeyer was going to be given to the Conservation Commission but was given to the Town so they would not run into the same issues as with Schanda.

Mr. Alpers said it sounded like everyone was onboard for some kind of steering committee, and asked how long it would take to charge and form a committee. Town Administrator Fournier suggested by November. Mr. Alpers said they should continue sidewalk improvements to link people to Downtown, and Town Administrator Fournier said he would have a Sidewalk Plan by fall. Mr. Alpers asked about first steps for the Wilson Farm, and Town Administrator Fournier said he had a proposal for a possible redevelopment or reuse and would give a plan to the Council by August 1, 2019.

Goal # 2 – Quality of Life

Mr. Alpers said they should address the congestion and traffic in Downtown and the commuter traffic. Town Administrator Fournier said they were under Strafford Regional Planning Commission, and said DOT updated every year. Mr. Alpers recommended that they continue to advocate for themselves to the State for help in addressing those issues. Town Administrator Fournier said the Urban Compact would help with that. He said he was working with the Town Attorney to either get permission from DOT to grant it, or have legislation drafted to change it, and said the first was preferable. He said it would mean that from the Town line in Durham to Grant Road 152 to the town line in Newfields, roads now maintained by the State would be maintained by the Town. For timing he said by winter of 2019 or spring of 2020.

Town Administrator Fournier said as some point he would need a resolution from the Town Council that they are onboard with the Urban Compact, and then negotiate followed by another resolution accepting the contract. Mr. Alpers said next he put upgrading parking with exploring ride-sharing options. Town Administrator Fournier suggested that they update the Parking Plan as the document was not that out-of-date, and he said he would first need to get a price on that.

Goal # 3 – Sustainability

Mr. Alpers asked if they wanted to have the conversation this year to reduce the carbon footprint by a certain percentage points by a certain date. Chairman Weinstein said that was already underway at the Energy & Environment Advisory Committee level and would go to the Council at some point. Councilor Dumont said he would like to see the map first, and asked how other communities determined possible levels of reduction and if it was a step-by-step process they could put in place. Chairman Weinstein said she thought they could do what they wanted and said they were definitely looking at the models. She said UNH was a real resource and a leader in the sustainability movement. She said they would have a recommendation to the Council by spring 2020.

Mr. Alpers said exploring different kinds of energy for the community would be ongoing. Councilor Kast said there was energy savings through the Facilities Director and there were a lot of incremental projects going on. Councilor Finch said they should also continue to push through efficiencies in buildings. Town Administrator Fournier said they were trying to at least get to standard with energy savings in buildings but not certified.

Mr. Alpers thanked the Town Administrator and the Town Council for allowing them to be part of their goal-setting and said it was fun to watch them and see what they achieved year-to-year.

ADJOURNMENT

The Goal-Setting Session was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Town Council Goal-Setting Session
June 12, 2019

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary