

These minutes were approved at the April 26, 2006, meeting

**DURHAM PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2006
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, DURHAM TOWN HALL
7:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Kelley; Arthur Grant; Nick Isaak; Kevin Webb; Stephen Roberts; Richard Ozenich; Councilor Needell

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Councilor Carroll; Bill McGowan; Susan Fuller; Lorne Parnell

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Agenda

The videotape wasn't on, and the meeting started with the discussion under Report of the Planner

III. Report of the Planner

- Mr. Campbell said he had met with University Planner Doug Bencks on March 6th.

There was discussion among Board members about a letter written by Mr. Campbell to the University concerning a property it was considering purchasing.

Mr. Grant said the owner of the property felt the University was probably the only logical buyer for the property. He suggested the wording "opposed to" in the letter could be modified a bit.

Mr. Campbell said the University was moving ahead with purchasing the property, noting it made perfect sense that they would want to buy it. But he said the concern had been expressed by many people in Town that the University was taking more and more lots off the tax rolls.

Mr. Grant pointed out that the property in question was in an area where the University had been told to expand.

Mr. Campbell said he could certainly be more careful with the wording chosen for the letter. In answer to Councilor Carroll, he said the University hadn't indicated what it would use the property for.

Mr. Roberts provided his perspective on the key issue involved here, that there were limits on the Town's economic development opportunities, given that there were few lots on which to

accomplish this. He said the Board needed to at least think more about where it would want to consider allowing commercial development in Town.

Councilor Carroll said a related issue was the importance of the gateways to Durham staying rural, which was part of the evening's discussion. She noted that Route 155A was one such gateway, as stated in the Master Plan, and also said she wondered how the present Zoning Ordinance fit with this.

Mr. Campbell said some developments standards were developed for the zones in that area of Town as part of the Zoning rewrite, which aimed at preserving rural character.

Mr. Roberts pointed out that the University Master Plan said it wanted to develop in that area.

Councilor Carroll said if the Town was going to promote economic development in order to lower taxes, it was important to make sure that this would actually be the outcome. She said economic development didn't necessarily always lower taxes, even though it was supposed to accomplish this.

- Mr. Campbell said CMAC Committee had recently met, and had approved an additional \$752,000 for the Main Street project, heading out toward Route 4. He said this brought the total for the project to \$1.57 million. He said the Committee had also voted to convert the balance of the funding request (\$243,200) into a new application to be considered in the current round for funding, which was good news.
- He said he had met with Chair Kelley, Tom Johnson, Jack Farrell and Dave Garvey concerning a possible elderly housing project, and had reviewed conceptual material concerning the project. He said the developers were taking extra steps to meet with neighbors in the area, in order to come up with the best project for everyone.
- Mr. Campbell said he had met with the owner of a 15-acre parcel located near Lee off of Old Concord Road, who was looking to sell the property, in order to discuss possibilities for developing it. He said the highest and best use for the site was either a student housing or elderly housing development, and noted that the developer was looking to move forward fairly quickly.
- He said he had recently spoken with Joe Caldarola, from Smithfield Construction, concerning the possible development of his property in the corner of Bagdad and Canney Roads. He said as a conservation subdivision, this would cut down on what he could do with the site.
- Mr. Campbell said he wanted to discuss a letter from the University, under New Business.
- Mr. Campbell said he would like to put the Impact fee ordinance, as well as the school impact fee methodologies used to calculate the school impact fees, on the April 12th Agenda for discussion. He said he would like to have a public hearing on the methodologies on April 26th, so this could then be sent on to the Council for adoption. He asked that Board members read through this material in time for the April 12th PB meeting.

Mr. Campbell said that once the methodology was adopted, the Town could start to use the Impact Fee ordinance. He noted they would be moving forward with sewer and water impact fees in the future.

IV. Discussion of Master Plan Implementation Strategy, Chapters 2 & 3

Councilor Carroll asked if there would be a summary of the Board's comments on Chapter 1 and other Chapters. There was discussion about how this would be handled.

Chair Kelley noted that there would most likely be other portions of chapters of the Master Plan where Board members would like to see changes in verbiage, in addition to the Issues, Goals and Recommendations portions.

Councilor Needell noted that the opportunity to purchase the Sunoco station had come and gone, so the wording in Chapter II concerning this was no longer relevant.

He also noted there had been a presentation to the Board at a past meeting by members of a University class that was studying community development, and said perhaps members of that class could assist the Board with this chapter.

Mr. Campbell said he would contact the professor who had taught this class about that idea.

TOWN CENTER

ISSUE: There is a need for an identifiable Town center in Durham. ...

Goal: Develop a gathering of civic buildings that provides an identifiable, attractive Town Common that serves as the stage for social interaction, both formal and intimate.

Recommendations:

- 1. Establish a committee to identify and develop a program of services (e.g. space needs for the various uses such as library, historic museum, town hall, etc) and to define the needs for a Town community center. As part of this work, conduct community workshop(s) to identify the desires of the community and a better vision for the community center.
Priority: with 2 years**

Chair Kelley asked if a committee was ever formed for this.

Mr. Campbell said no formal committee was formed, but citizens brought their ideas forward, in part through the Library committee. He also said the Public Works Department was currently involved with a needs analysis for the Town Hall building, and whether, if the Town went forward with a new library, it would make sense to develop a combined facility.

Chair Kelley asked if there had been a lot of interest in the idea of the historic museum.

Councilor Needell said there was interest among some people in expanding the entire Courthouse as an historical museum in the future.

There was discussion about competing interests in the use of the Courthouse building, and the fact that the current use of the building brought in revenue, and also saved the Town money in terms of travel time for police officers, etc.

Chair Kelley asked if the Durham Historical Association was pressed for space, and there was discussion about this.

Chair Kelley said he wanted to get a sense of where the public was in regard to the idea of a community center. He asked if there was a lot of support for this idea when the Master Plan was done in 2000.

Mr. Campbell said he had talked about this topic that day with John Parry of the Parks and Recreation Committee. He said the committee wanted to work on the update of the Parks and Recreation chapter, and as part of this, was looking at the idea of creating a strategic plan to follow through with some of the recommendations that were in the Master Plan. He said this committee had talked about a community center in one form or another.

Chair Kelley said perhaps it was not one committee, but several, - the Durham Historical Association, the Library Committee, the Parks and Recreation Committee, etc that would be doing some of this work.

Councilor Needell said it was clear that this recommendation had not been completed in terms of one committee looking at the needs of the entire community, but there were different groups looking independently at various aspects of this.

Mr. Grant asked if Administrator Selig had hired a consultant to define the Town building needs and Library needs, and Councilor Needell said he had. Mr. Grant said the focus now to implement this recommendation was within the Town Council and the Library Trustees, in terms of the Town Hall building and the library.

He said as he read this recommendation, the idea of a community center was not the kind that would be built for youth activities, but was a multi-purpose facility with a large enough meeting room so there could be concerts, forums, town meetings, etc. He said the Town had such a facility, known as the Oyster River High School.

Councilor Needell said as he read this recommendation, it wasn't meant to be a building, or a recreation center, but rather was meant to be a physical center of the Town.

Mr. Grant said in 1995, there was a community assessment committee that projected Durham's vision for the future, and the Master Plan group had also looked at this a few years later. He said the questions those two groups dealt with were whether the Town Hall site was where the center of the community should be, or if instead it should be downtown.

He said he had not served on that part of the Master Plan committee, but said the Master Plan envisioned Madbury Road becoming something different than it now was, and envisioned the possibility that there could be a Town center as part of the Town Hall building. He said it was

thought this would help the business community, by bringing people downtown. He noted that this was part of the reason why the zoning on Madbury Road had been changed to Office Research.

Councilor Needell noted that the 17 Madbury Road property was mentioned specifically in the Master Plan recommendations in this chapter.

Mr. Campbell provided clarification that this chapter's use of the concept of a Town community center was in fact meant to mean a town center, and not a community recreation center. He said other kinds of community centers were discussed in Chapter 5, also noting that Chapter 5 said those kinds of community centers should be developed in consideration of what Chapter 2 said.

There was discussion that throughout the entire discussion in Chapter 2, reference was made to committees that were never formed, and that the Board needed to consider how to move forward concerning this. Board members and Mr. Campbell agreed it would be good not to have to create more committees.

Mr. McGowan said this whole idea of a community center needed to be looked at again in terms of its feasibility, financially and otherwise.

Chair Kelley said it would be tough for any one group to do all of what was needed concerning this. He also noted that there were certainly constraints in terms of finding sites.

- 2. The Committee should analyze and compare, in detail, the available sites based upon the above program. Two potential sites are 17 Madbury Road and a combination of the existing Town Hall/Courthouse site and the Route 108 Sunoco site. Priority: Within 2 years**

Chair Kelley noted that the Route 108 Sunoco site was no longer available. He said there should be more potential sites.

Mr. Grant said the potential still existed to expand north in the direction of the former Smitty's site, from the Town Hall site. He said this was not prime real estate property; and said this could easily enhance what could be done at this particular location, in terms of a library, Town office buildings.

Councilor Needell said this hadn't been ruled out, but said the site would constrain what could actually be done. He said even if the site was not expanded, the Town needed to decide what the site could in fact be used for. He noted that all three options proposed for the library had been rejected.

- 3. The Town should obtain options to purchase the sites identified as potential locations prior to conducting a feasibility study. Two potential sites are 17 Madbury Road and a combination of the existing Town Hall/Courthouse site and the Route 108 Sunoco site. Priority: Within 2 years**

Chair Kelley said he thought the Board could skip this recommendation.

Councilor Needell said he wasn't sure why the 17 Madbury Road option was being dismissed, and asked whether, if it was determined that this was an ideal site, if that would make sense. There was discussion about this by the Board.

Mr. Grant said he didn't think it was a Planning Board function to define where the Town center should be. He said the Town Council had not pursued its portion of the recommendations in this Chapter, which were directed to it. He said this was a decision the Planning Board should have a role in, but said it was not up the Board to go out and look for land where it thought the Town center should be located, and which the Town should buy.

Councilor Needell said this had not been done by the Council, and was on its plate to accomplish. He said he agreed there was nothing the Board could do regarding it.

There was discussion about how it was that the Council had never totally focused on this issue.

Mr. Grant said his perspective was that this happened because the Council got so focused on the Smitty's property. He said the Council should now be assessing these recommendations, which has never really been addressed. He said as he recalled, the Council had never addressed the idea of 17 Madbury Road as a potential town center location. **He also said if there was any value to his suggestion about expanding north on the Town Hall site, the Council should be identifying that it abutted the Town property. NOT CLEAR**

Mr. Roberts said the Council hadn't been effective in its discussion of this issue. He said to say that the Planning Board shouldn't be an agent in planning was a contradiction that the Board should avoid. He spoke in some detail about this, and noted his concern about something like a default town center springing up around the skating rink, because the town hadn't planned for one.

Councilor Needell said the Council was having a Goals Session on April 10th, and said if the Board wanted to make recommendations concerning goals to be considered for the year, it should forward them to Administrator Selig as soon as possible.

Mr. Webb said other properties the Town owned should be considered, such as Arthur Grant Circle, a property that was currently not being utilized.

Mr. Campbell said there had been a number of entities that had expressed interest in the property in recent months.

Chair Kelley said the Board would move on concerning this set of recommendations, recognizing that Town Council action would be required concerning them.

4. **Perform a Town center feasibility study for the Town Hall/Sunoco site, 17 Madbury Road site, and other sites, based on, but not limited to, the following criteria: visibility, image and**

identity as a Town center, ease of access, parking availability, usefulness, connection to the commercial and green space, and pedestrian access.

Chair Kelley noted there was no mention of cost.

There was discussion on why this study hadn't actually been done. Mr. Grant said some of the steam went out of the effort when the Smitty's site was gone. Councilor Carroll said the Council had let go of some of the work when the Library Committee had started up.

Mr. Campbell also explained that nobody had really focused on this from a planning perspective once the Master Plan was adopted, in part because of planning staff turnover, and also because once the Planning Board got going with the Zoning rewrite, it didn't have time to go back and look at it.

5. Appropriate funds and contract for the preparation of conceptual site plans showing interrelationship of old and new buildings, parking, landscaping, and linkages to the downtown, the Oyster River, and the historic district.

There was discussion on what Recommendation #5 was really saying.

Mr. Roberts said the Historic District Commission Chair had asked the Planning Board to treat the Commission's ideas concerning the idea expansion of the Historic District as a high priority. He provided details on this, and noted the Board had assured them it would bring this issue up seriously in the future.

Chair Kelly said this could be put that on the agenda for a future Board meeting. But he said the Planning Board was in no position to discuss funding. He also said it was unrealistic that all of these recommendations were to have been done within 2 years.

6. With public input, purchase, design and construct/redevelop the selected site to meet the Town's present and ongoing needs.

Mr. Roberts suggested that the Board could suggest that this whole block needed to be rewritten, and could be put up for public hearing.

Chair Kelley said these recommendations should be put into the matrix that was being developed, and ideas/recommendations could be added concerning them.

Councilor Needell said for these recommendations and others, it should be fully assessed whose problem it was that a recommendation hadn't been implemented. He said he thought this block needed to go back to the Town Council.

Chair Kelley said the matrix had a column for this kind of thing, and agreed that this was clearly an action item for the Town Council.

Mr. McGowan said he agreed that this whole section needed to be reevaluated.

Mr. Grant said a letter should go to the Town Council for its Goals Session, in time for them to think about it before the meeting.

Chair Kelley said the Council representatives to the Planning Board had made some good points concerning this issue, and the role of the Council, and said perhaps they could do the same for the Council's Goals session.

Councilor Needell noted it was hard to prioritize issues until the Board went through the whole Master Plan. But he said he and Councilor Carroll could relay to the Council the Board's concerns about this chapter.

He said there had been movement from the Library committee recently, and said they might be moving forward this year concerning a site, which would affect these recommendations. He noted that resolution of the library issue was a top priority of the Council last year, and said he was sure it would continue to be one, and would be addressed. He said if there were something specific the Board wanted to direct the Council to take on, it would be good to be explicit about this.

Chair Kelley said he was reluctant to send them something on this, given what was already in motion right now.

Councilor Needell said he wasn't sure there was a rush to do anything, noting this issue would impact Town Council goals over the next few years.

Mr. Roberts said a different, incremental approach had been suggested to the Planning Board, - that it determine what the critical issues were at the current time, and that the Master Plan update address these specific issues. He said the current approach the Board was taking was to look at the whole Master Plan, develop a giant matrix, and then set priorities, and said the question was the best way to do this.

Chair Kelley said he didn't want the Board to get too bogged down in what it called the Master Plan update. He said it was important that the issues, goals and recommendations be put in a matrix to see and evaluate the whole picture.

Mr. Webb said he felt the Board was getting bogged down in its discussion of each recommendation, and suggested it needed to get a quick snapshot of the Issues, Goal and Recommendations.

TOWN APPEARANCE

ISSUE: Durham can foster a greater sense of community through attention to its image and appearance.

Goal #1: Protect and enhance Durham's small town and open rural character.

Recommendations:

- 1. Appoint a committee to work in conjunction with the Town's Director of Planning and Community Development to inventory and prioritize important critical visual images, gateways, and corridors in Durham.**

Councilor Needell said the Land Protection Working Group and the Conservation Commission had done a lot of work on this.

Mr. Campbell noted that a viewshed map had been done relative to the development of the personal wireless facility ordinance, prior to the Master Plan.

- 2. Develop a series of recommendations to protect key vistas and analyze zoning regulations for these important areas. Recommend changes in zoning or land use regulations to protect the future use and the effect on the views of these parcels.....**

Chair Kelley said perhaps this was an action item for the Planning Board.

Councilor Needell said a big part of this was done as part of the Zoning Rewrite, and provided details on this. There was some discussion on this.

- 3. Produce detailed visual resource guide that prioritizes the importance of Durham's significant vistas for use by the Planning Board in its decision-making and by private developers. Priority: Within 2 years**

Chair Kelley asked who this recommendation was saying would produce this guide.

Mr. Isaac said the HDC was putting together an inventory of historic properties, noting there was a cost involved with this.

Mr. Campbell said the Planning Board could ask people to do this, and said it needed to decide whom the best person(s), or committee(s) was to do some of these things.

Chair Kelley said this kind of resource guide would be a great tool for the Planning Board to have when a developer came in, so the Board could say the community really valued a particular vista.

Mr. McGowan asked if this could perhaps be a project for the UNH class they had previously discussed, and there was discussion about this idea.

Chair Kelley said if this was something that was important enough for the Planning Board to get done, it would make sure it was done, and wouldn't need a formal committee.

Councilor Needell said it might be worth noting the Land Protection Working Group (LPWG) guidelines for bringing a property forward for protection.

Mr. Isaak said issues that the “committee” spoken about in these recommendations would address could probably be assigned to other existing committees. There was further discussion about this.

Chair Kelley said he would send a letter to the Conservation Commission to see if they would be willing to take this on.

- 4. After referencing the visual resource guide, consider Town acquisition of scenic easements for the highest priority viewsheds critical to Durham’s visual imagery. Priority: within 2-6 years.**

Councilor Needell noted this was being done by the LPWG.

There was discussion on the criteria for evaluating whether a property should be protected, which includes considerations about scenic vistas. There was discussion on the Mill Pond property and the Merrick Property, both of which were part of the entryways to the Town, and were acquired in part because of their scenic qualities. There was also discussion about the Powers Farm conservation easement.

Chair Kelley said it would be noted in the matrix that a number of groups were working on land conservation.

- 5. Review and assess both the Town’s standards for driveways and road, as well as the State’s regulations for roadway widths, turnouts, and sight distances to determine potential negative impacts on Durham’s rural roadways. Draft a set of clear and comprehensive Town regulations for “rural” roadways, which can be utilized by the Town Council, Town staff, and the Planning Board when considering proposed changes to these roads.**

Mr. Campbell said former Town Engineer Bob Levesque and Public Works Director Mike Lynch had made suggestions for changes to the regulations, but said the regulations hadn’t come to the Planning Board to look at yet. He said this was planned. There was also discussion on existing scenic roadways regulations.

- 6. Once conflicts between the State Dept, of Transportation regulations and Durham’s desire to preserve its rural roads are identified, be proactive with the State. Call attention to these conflicts and discuss them prior to any future projects by the NHDOT. When a proposed project is reviewed by the Planning Board or initiated by the NHDOT, utilize the Town rural road guidelines discussed above to ensure that any upgrades to State roads are done in a manner which is sensitive to the scale of the community. Priority: Within 2 years**

Mr. Campbell noted that as a result of input from the Town concerning the project to widen Route 108, NHDOT had changed some of its plans concerning Durham Point Road and Bennett Road.

Chair Kelley said NHDOT had come a long way in realizing that geometric designs were guidelines, and were being more flexible now, utilizing “context sensitive design”.

Chair Kelley said the Board would wait until it revised the Town's road regulations before doing anything further concerning this recommendation.

Goal #2: Preserve, enhance, and establish landscaped corridors to and through the Town.

Recommendations:

- 1. Create a Town wide landscape master plan, which would illustrate the vision of what Durham could be twenty-five years from now.The Town Council should establish a community based working group led and assisted by the Planning and Public Works Department to begin this study. Members of the Conservation Commission, Durham Garden Club, and the UNH's Sustainability Program should be included in this working group. The Planning Department should research the grant potential for this type of effort. Priority: Within 2-6 years**

Mr. Isaak noted that Tony Federer had done some mapping concerning this.

Chair Kelley said for the most part, this recommendation hadn't been implemented, and said a working group for this was needed, which could include members from the groups listed in the recommendation.

There was discussion about where the volunteers needed to implement the recommendations in the Master Plan would come from.

- 2. Require landscape buffers along major corridors that would screen the view of parked cars from the street. Require future parking to be located behind or to the side of buildings when possible.**

Chair Kelley noted this had been done.

- 3. Update and improve the existing Town Zoning Ordinance, particularly the Landscape Ordinance, and recommend appropriate additions or changes.**

Mr. Campbell noted that Robbi Woodburn had agreed to help with this.

- 4. Establish a Town tree-planting program that would slowly, year-by-year, implement the recommendations outlined in the landscape master plan described above. Allow for participation by homeowners, private organizations, and property owners.....**

Chair Kelley said the Board should ask Public Works Director Mike Lynch about his department's tree planting program. There was discussion about this.

Mr. Grant said the interesting part of this recommendation was the idea of having property owners participate in a tree planting program. He said he wondered whether the Public Works Department's program included a provision for this.

Goal #3: Enhance the appearance of Durham's downtown core.

Recommendations:

Continue future phases of the physical Downtown Street Enhancements, which includes improvements to the appearance of downtown and traffic calming measures such as narrowed roadways at crosswalks, appropriate locations for crosswalks, and improved sidewalks.

- 1. Continue design process for phase two of the Downtown Street Enhancement Project. Consider specific areas to be addressed in future phases.....The Planning Department should lead this work, with participation by the Department of Public Works and citizen volunteers. Priority: Within 2 years**

Mr. Campbell said this year's Budget called for Main Street to be completed and provided additional details on the work to be done.

Chair Kelley noted that the project to complete the other end of Main Street heading out to Route 4 was currently being designed, as a result of an increase in funding for the project.

There was discussion about plans to provide more sidewalks on Madbury Road. Mr. Campbell said he had applied for TE grants for this work, but had been turned down so far.

Chair Kelley summarized that implementation of this recommendation was certainly on the radar screen.

- 2. Using the decisions made during phase one of the Downtown Street Enhancement Project completed in 1999, establish a standard palate of materials and details for typical conditions throughout the downtown and commercial core for street and sidewalk improvements. Priority: With 2 years**

Chair Kelley said the details used on Main Street were being replicated.

Mr. Campbell noted that the Town would be using some different crosswalk materials than had been used previously.

- 3. Encourage the Main Street Program's Façade Improvement Program, which is a program started.....**

There was discussion that the Main Street Program no longer existed. Mr. Campbell explained that the funding for the program originally came from the Town, and the program was supposed to have become self-sustaining. He said although the Master Plan said the program should continue to be funded, the Council got frustrated with the fact that it was still dependent on Town funding.

Councilor Carroll noted that the program was funded jointly by the Town and UNH.

There was discussion about the Main Street program in general, with Mr. Isaak noting that there were about a dozen such programs in New Hampshire. Mr. Campbell said the problem was that the programs generally didn't have a lot of money to operate with, but he said the programs in New Hampshire were pretty solid.

Chair Kelley asked if anyone had participated in the façade improvement program prior to the demise of the Main Street Program.

Mr. Campbell said he believed some work was done, but said the program was never really implemented

Chair Kelley said he had seen the amazing results of this kind of program in South Boston, and throughout Boston, where there had been a dramatic improvement in mixed use areas.

Mr. Campbell noted that Representative Judith Spang had sponsored a bill this year, and the previous year, involving an enabling ordinance to allow towns to require lower tax assessments on downtown properties, which would make it easier for owners to reinvest in their properties. There was discussion about this.

Break from 8:40-8:50 pm

Goal #4: Enhance the appearance of downtown Durham as a whole

Recommendations:

- 1. Adopt a Town property maintenance code in an effort to improve the appearance and maintenance of properties throughout Durham. Priority: With 2 years**

Mr. Campbell said as far as he knew, this hadn't been done. There was discussion as to what the recommendation really meant, and it was clarified that it applied to any property.

Mr. Isaak said the only area where it was being done appeared to be concerning the demolition by neglect provision in the Historic District Overlay Ordinance.

Councilor Carroll pointed out that the Public Works Department did an excellent job of keeping Main Street clean, which was a real service to the business community located downtown.

Chair Kelley agreed, noting that there was a lot of stuff on the ground early in the day on weekends, and the Public Works Department did a good job of picking it up.

- 2. Develop, adopt and enforce architectural standards for specific areas in Town that are important to the image of the Town, principally the downtown and commercial core. Priority: Within 2 years**

Mr. Campbell said some of this had been accomplished as a part of the Zoning rewrite, although it took more than 2 years. He noted that they had seen these kinds of standards brought to bear as part of the Irving application. He also noted that there had been talk about the development of design guidelines, and that Mr. Isaak had done some work on this.

Mr. Isaak agreed that had been one of his tasks, and explained that he had done a draft based on Meredith's ordinance, but had not yet completed it. In answer to Chair Kelley, Mr. Isaak said he did wish to complete this work.

Councilor Carroll asked if there was anything in the Master Plan that addressed the issues of signs.

Chair Kelley said this issue would be addressed by the Board when there was more specific discussion on Chapter 3 concerning the downtown area.

COMMUNICATIONS

ISSUE: Because of the efforts of many local organizations, Durham enjoys the benefit of an active calendar of events throughout the year. Many of the events go unheralded because of a lack of adequate communications. As the Town grows, it needs, more than ever, to promote a sense of connectedness.

Goal #1: Create a greater sense of community in Durham by providing as many means as possible for increased and enhanced communications.

Recommendations:

- 1. Enhance communications by continuing to update and expand the Town Website, which will provide access for approximately 63% of Durham householdsIn addition, establish a dedicated phone line to provide 24-hour access to Town information. Another outlet for information would be a community access cable station that could among other things televise Town Council, Planning Board, and other Board and Committee meetings.... Priority: With 2 years**

It was noted that access to the Town website was now available to about 90% of Durham households.

Chair Kelley said DCAT was now well established. He also noted Administrator Selig's weekly email to residents, which was available on the Town Listserv, as part of the website.

Mr. Webb said this was much appreciated, and Jen Berry's role in making this happen was noted.

- 2. Appoint a Communications Coordinator to develop and expand the recommendations above and to promote upcoming events in the Town..... Priority: Within 2 years**

Councilor Needell said that to a large extent, this was being done. He said the website was quite comprehensive, and also noted that there was now a DCAT coordinator. He also said there was now an MIS manager, who was looking more closely at communications issues.

Goal #2: Foster communication links among local businesses, UNH, local organizations, and the community.

Recommendations:

1. Continuation of the Main Street Program on a permanent basis.....

It was noted again that there was no longer a Main Street Program in Durham.

Councilor Needell said that the “Durham its Where U Live” program was continuing some of the work of the Main Street Program.

2. The Town Council, Main Street Program, and UNH should plan for the extended future of the Main Street Program in Durham. Priority: 2 years

The Board said the Durham Business Association had picked up the slack on this issue.

3. Durham needs to reestablish a newsletter/newspaper to communicate important issues involving business, UNH, Oyster River Schools, upcoming events, and other important information in Town.....

There was discussion of newspapers that had previously been available in Town.

Mr. Isaak asked if there had been an effort to work with the University on this, noting the paper it put out. He suggested that student reporters and local residents could contribute articles to this existing paper.

Councilor Needell said this kind of information was available to a large extent on DCAT. He noted there were a lot of opportunities to promote events, address issues, and even create videos on DCAT, stating that it was presently an underutilized resource in the Town.

Mr. Campbell said in addition to the Town website, DCAT, and the listserv, the Fire Department and the Public Works department also put out newsletters.

4. The Town Council, along with either the Durham Business Association or the Main Street Program, and UNH should investigate a possible partnership to produce this newsletter/newspaper. A committee to study the feasibility for such an effort should be established.

Chair Kelley said it would take the initiative of citizens to make this happen.

Mr. Webb noted Beth Olshansky had provided a forum, the “Citizens Exchange”, which dealt with political issues in front of the Town, but did not deal with events.

5. Criteria for the establishment of a nonprofit newsletter should be researched and studied.

It was agreed this should be done.

6. Explore the possibility of a paper produced and coordinated by an independent organization such as the Main Street program.....

Chair Kelley again said the initiative of individuals would be required in order to make this happen.

Mr. Ozenich noted there were two daily newspapers in Laconia that were free, and were run by private enterprises that made their money from advertising.

7. Create a central and up-to-date bulletin board containing Durham and UNH events. This will require close coordination of town and UNH.

Chair Kelley said it would be a good idea if the Town website had an events page.

Councilor Needell noted that DCAT didn’t list UNH events.

There was discussion that it would be good if there were crossover concerning Town and UNH events, and the suggestion was made that there should be links from the Town web site to the UNH web site.

Mr. Campbell noted the possible idea of having a Town kiosk, where there would be an actual physical bulletin board. There was discussion on whether an online bulletin board made more sense these days.

8. Establish local cable coverage of Town Council meetings and other boards and committees as appropriate.

It was noted that this had been accomplished.

Councilor Carroll said some of the recommendations in this section were things for Administrator Selig and DCAT to look at.

Chair Kelley said there was room for improvement in communication of information to the public in terms of the following: greater usefulness of DCAT and the Town’s web site, and the need for a Town newsletter.

Councilor Needell said there had been some discussion about including an events list in Administrator Selig's weekly email report, but it was determined it wasn't appropriate to put them in this particular newsletter.

Mr. Isaak suggested that there could be a link from the Town website to the list of current events on the UNH website, which would remind people to check to see what was going on at UNH.

Mr. Roberts said he appreciated the history note Administrator Selig included every week in his email report.

VOLUNTEERISM

ISSUE: The Town needs to promote volunteerism.

Goal: Increase volunteerism within the Town to create a better sense of community and to increase the actual number of volunteers, which would shift the current volunteer load from the individuals who continually volunteer their time each year for the Town.

Recommendations:

- 1. Working in conjunction with the Main Street Program.....**
- 2. Increase community events to provide more opportunities for volunteerism....**
- 3. The Town Council should form a committee with the Volunteer Coordinator and Main Street Program to examine other potential events.**

Councilor Needell listed some of the various local events held in Durham each year involving volunteers: Durham Day, pool events, the downtown light-up during the holiday; the music series on Main street (part of Main Street program); the river cleanup; the bay cleanup, etc.

Mr. Grant said he didn't mean to slight these, but said the Town definitely needed to work on encouraging volunteerism in Town, including filling positions on local boards, etc. He said his impression was that there should be people who contacted individuals to ask them to volunteer, rather than relying just on listing openings on boards and committees.

Chair Kelley said he believed that those who were serving on local boards and committees should promote volunteering, by speaking to their neighbors and describing to them what they personally got out of being involved, and other the benefits of serving. He said they all knew talented people in the community.

Councilor Needell pointed out that out of about 120 positions, 112 were currently filled, which was a testament to the volunteerism that went on in Durham.

Chair Kelley agreed, but noted that in order to implement things like a landscape master plan and some other projects touched on that evening, there would need to be additional volunteers.

Mr. Isaak said for some of these tasks, he thought the Town should hire professionals if it really wanted to get them done.

Councilor Carroll noted that the Swap Shop was a very successful volunteer effort, and she provided details on this. She said the Town had held a luncheon the previous year to thank these volunteers for their work.

Mr. Campbell said he had created a brochure on volunteerism that he had considered mailing out to residents.

Ms. Fuller suggested that the “Citizens’ Exchange” and Administrator Selig’s weekly report could be used to get the word out on the need for volunteers.

SAFETY COMPLEX

ISSUE: A new location for the Fire Department and the Durham Ambulance Corps will be needed by the year 2009 when the lease expires.

Chair Kelley noted that the current Fire Station was located on UNH property, and according to the Master Plan, the lease would expire in June of 2009.

Councilor Needell said as part of the updated Fire agreement with the University, the lease would expire in 2019, also noting there was a clause that it could be cancelled with two year’s notice, by agreement.

Mr. Campbell also noted that as part of this agreement, the Town would begin paying rent to the University for usage of the space, beginning in 2009.

Chair Kelley said a new location for the Town’s Fire Department and the Durham Ambulance Corps would be needed when the present lease expired, and said the new Fire Chief would be taking a lead role regarding this issue.

There was detailed discussion about the University’s role in this issue, and the fact that the Fire Department was run jointly by the Town and the University.

Councilor Needell said the Durham Ambulance Corps and its relationship to the Durham Fire Department was currently under review. He said there was the possibility of combining operations in order to achieve greater efficiency, noting there was currently some redundancy in the two operations.

Chair Kelley said that in terms of space requirements, there was a lot of redundancy. He also noted that it would cost the Town \$50,000 a year to rent space in the building, as of 2009.

There was discussion that if a new Fire Department building was constructed on UNH property, the University would donate the land, which would offset the construction costs it would have to pay.

Goal: The Town and the University should initiate a cooperative effort to begin the planning process for this new facility.

Recommendations:

- 1. Both Durham and UNH should continue with the Fire Protection Agreement of January 1, 1997, and set aside funding for a future Fire Department and DAC combined facility.
Priority: Within 2 years**

Mr. Webb said as discussed, the lease agreement had been renewed through 2019. It was noted the new facility was in the CIP.

- 2. As part of its Master Plan Update in the year 2000, UNH should consider the possibility of alternate sites for the safety complex on its property that might allow for a more central location and minimize response times.**

It was noted that the University had done this.

Councilor Needell said that the most recent fire agreement stated that when the present building was no longer suitable or available to the Town, construction of a new building might be required. He said the Town and the University had agreed to jointly fund such a project, and said the cost of this would be shared equally.

- 3. A committee should be established to study the programmatic needs of the future safety complex that would house the Fire Department and the DAC, as well as the police departments and communications center if combined departments were recommended. Potential sites should then be investigated for feasibility and a specific site should be recommended for purchase.**

Mr. Webb asked if there was to be a joint facility on University land, if this made this recommendation moot.

Chair Kelley said it didn't concerning the issue of programming needs. He said the Durham Fire Chief could create some of that, and suggested he could work with a committee spearheaded by professional fire fighters, which would also include citizen representation, as well as representation from the Town Council and the Planning Board.

Councilor Needell said that discussion by the Council about the future of the Police and Fire departments was ongoing, also noting there had been major discussion about the future of the Dispatch center.

SCHOOLS

ISSUE #1: The school district currently has a reactive approach to the school growth issue.

Goal: Build public support to encourage the school board to create and implement a comprehensive plan to meet children's needs....

Recommendations:

- 1. Adequately address and plan for our space needs.**
- 2. The Town should continue to work with the Oyster River School District to plan for current and future space needs.**

ISSUE #2: There is a need to accommodate a larger high school population.

Goal: Provide a state of the art high school facility with room for the expansion of the school district into the next century.

Recommendations:

- 1. Encourage the Cooperative School district to build a new high school or renovate the existing one.....**

ISSUE #3: Based on the long-range forecasts by the district, a third elementary school may be needed by 2004. Durham may be the logical place for a new school since Madbury and Lee already have elementary schools.

Goal: A new facility will relieve crowding at the elementary level and allow the return of fifth graders to the elementary schools, which will then lessen crowding at the Middle School.

Recommendations:

- 1. Use long range planning data to anticipate and prepare for elementary school growth.**
- 2. Although the School District has approval from the voters to sell the Foss Farm school site via an approved warrant article, encourage the Oyster River School District to begin a new feasibility study for its Foss Farm site on Orchard Drive. Contact UNH to gauge interest in sharing the expense of an access road to Route 108.**

Mr. Grant said the Board could skip discussion on school recommendations, stating they had all been met, including the long-range plans.

Chair Kelley noted that in Chapter 1 under Demographics, the school information needed to be updated. There was discussion that this data was available, with Mr. Campbell also noting some of this was used as part of developing the methodology for school impact fees.

Chair Kelley said he would like to see the school demographic information split up by town.

Councilor Needell asked if ISSUE #3 had been dealt with, concerning the idea of a third elementary school.

There was discussion about this. Councilor Carroll said she had heard talk about the idea of selling the property at Foss Farm.

Board members agreed this recommendation as well as the others were being addressed by the School Board, and were beyond the control of the Planning Board.

OTHER TOWN FACILITIES (GRANGE, OLD TOWN HALL, ETC.)

TOWN HALL

ISSUE: The old Town Hall could play a major role in creating a Town center, the creation of additional meeting space and civic gathering space, and/or the generation of additional revenue for the Town.

Goal: Develop a plan for the future use of the Town Hall.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Town Hall needs to be renovated to allow for greater meeting capacity and more efficient office functions, ire recommended by the Town center space needs study. Wait for the results of the Town center study recommendations prior to proceeding with any renovations.**

Mr. Campbell said the meeting room had been expanded, had come out fairly well, and had been fairly inexpensive. He noted that a needs assessment was currently being done for the building as a whole.

- 2. Once the Town center study report is issued, assess the appropriateness of the proposed renovations, in light of the recommendations, and determine a course of action.**

The Board agreed this would be done.

GRANGE

ISSUE: The Grange presents an opportunity for the Town to fully utilize its resources in an effort to enhance Durham's sense of community.

Goal: Develop a plan for the future of the Grange.

Recommendation:

1. Consider the Grange as a useful component when studying the Town Center issue. Utilize this facility, if at all possible, in an effort to provide a community gathering place.

There was discussion that the organization presently using the facility would eventually be moving out. It was noted that the building was in pretty bad shape. Chair Kelley said that lead abatement had occurred, and also said there was significant sag in the building, so that new support for the building would be required. There was discussion about the shape the building was in, and what it might be used for.

Mr. Campbell said the property was still on the list as a possible site for a new library. He noted there were some parking issues concerning the property.

Chair Kelley said updated revenue and operating costs of the facility were needed, as well as updated information on the condition the building was in. He also suggested that an inventory of Town property assets was needed, which would list lots, lots with structures, and where they were located.

Mr. Grant said an inventory of Town property had been done the previous year by the Public Works Department.

Mr. Roberts said the Library committee had done a lot of work on considering integrating a meeting center/room into a library design. He noted that an isolated community hall had limited usefulness, and also said a building containing a library would be more likely to be open more hours.

Councilor Needell said this issue was contingent on how large a library could be built, and said it was important to keep in mind the idea of a community gathering space as part of consideration of this. But he said if this couldn't be fit into the library, it would have to go someplace else.

There was discussion about how many community rooms were actually needed in Durham, and it was agreed that the community needed to answer that question.

There was discussion about the existence of space for meetings at the University library, as well as at the Oyster River High School. Mr. Grant said the space at the High School didn't appear to be available to the community, noting there was a charge to groups for rental of space, which some of them couldn't afford.

Mr. Webb said the auditorium at the High School had been sold to the community in part as a place for Town events, meetings, concerts, etc. but said that realistically, all that was happening there were school related and sponsored activities. There was additional discussion on whether there were Town related meetings at the High School.

Mr. Isaak asked if there was really a need for more space for Town events/meetings.

Councilor Needell said there appeared to be spaces that did exist, and were utilized.

Mr. Roberts said it was a tradition in many NH towns that a community library should provides this kind of service. He said he felt the Library committee had a good organization, and had gotten good data on what the majority of citizens wanted.

Chair Kelley asked if the University allowed private groups to use any of its space, and was told it rented space.

OLD TOWN HALL (Courthouse)

ISSUE: The Old Town Hall could be better utilized for Town and civic functions

Goal: Determine the best use of the Old Town Hall for the Town of Durham.

Recommendation:

Before making any permanent changes, wait for the recommendations from the proposed Town center study. After this study has been presented, discuss the impact on the Old Town Hall and its future. Determine the best use for the building, in keeping with those recommendations and the vision of Durham, Gasoline Alley, and Church Hill as described in this chapter and Chapter 3 – Downtown and Commercial Core. Priority: Within 2 years

Mr. Grant suggested that the Board could skip this section for now.

CRAIG SUPPLY PROPERTY

ISSUE: The Craig Supply property is an eyesore for the community, significant back taxes are owed on the property, and the site is contaminated with a dry cleaning chemical.

Goal: Achieve the following for the Craig Supply property: clean-up of contamination, attempt to get back taxes through the sale price of the property, and redevelopment of the site with a use that provides long term revenue and/or benefits for the Town.

Mr. Grant said the Town was doing this.

Recommendations:

- 1. Continue to seek grants and other sources of funding that will assist in the eventual cleanup pf the Craig Supply property.**

Mr. Campbell said this had been done.

- 2. The Town should continue to work with the University and developers from the private sector to negotiate a reuse plan of the property that will achieve the above stated goal.**

Mr. Campbell said this was not being done at the present time.

3. Once a general reuse plan for the site is agreed to by the parties involved, develop a remedial action plan for the clean-up of the site.....

Mr. Campbell said the remedial action plan for the site had been completed, and the remediation would cost \$1 million plus. He said a parking lot was being constructed as part of the remediation plan, and he provided details on this, noting that the EPA liked this idea.

4. The Craig Supply site should be zoned for office and research uses rather than the current residential zoning. This will allow for redevelopment of the site that is more consistent with the surrounding land uses.

There was discussion by the Board that the site was currently zoned as RA.

5. The Craig Supply site should be evaluated as to its potential to be a part of a greater office and intermodal transportation facility.....The intermodal redevelopment option for the site should ensure that transportation connections and improvements are made in such a way that traffic is not increased and is potentially reduced on residential streets in Durham. Features of an intermodal facility could include:

- **Structured parking provided in the location of the current A-lot to serve the Whittemore Center, the train station, the Field House, the performing arts center, and the general University population. The parking structure could include office space that would generate tax revenue for the community and would also screen the parking and enhance the western approach to campus.**

Mr. Campbell said the University had had various ideas about possible buildings on the site, and he provided details on this. The Board agreed this was beyond the scope of the Planning Board.

- **The Craig Supply site is redeveloped with office/commercial buildings that provide tax or other payments to the community.....**

Mr. Campbell said this was a possible future use for the site, as financial conditions allowed.

- **Bus and shuttle service from the parking garage and A-lot to serve the Whittemore Center, the train station, and the redeveloped Craig Supply site.**

Mr. Grant said this was now in place. There was discussion that it was not serving A-lot, which meant among other things that people coming to the Whittemore Center were not parking in A-lot and getting shuttled to the Center.

Mr. Campbell described the transportation system in place at present, noting that the plan for the parking lot included a bus loop, which connected up with bus and train service out of Durham, and also went out to the A-lot.

- **The loop road would tunnel under the railroad at the Craig Supply property and could include two car lanes, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks that provide improved access from the parking on the west side of the railroad tracks.**

There was brief discussion about this.

V. Other Business

A. Old Business

B. New Business

Mr. Campbell spoke about a letter from the University dated March 22, 2006 regarding a proposed dome, which would replace an existing dome on a building located behind DeMerrit Hall. He said the dome was a receiving structure for a project that did neutron modeling research.

He explained that DeMerrit Hall was being redone, and the neutron modeling facility would be moved out to the area where the satellite dishes were located off of Route 4. He said he had asked Mr. Bencks to send the Board a letter describing what was proposed, and had said he would ask the Planning Board if it wanted the project to come forward for a public hearing. He said this was not a new use, and involved moving an existing use from one place to another.

Councilor Needell said he would recuse himself if there were a vote on this item, since he had worked closely with the people involved in this project.

Mr. Isaak said he wondered about this design, and whether it would look appropriate in the agricultural part of Durham. He asked if it had to be that design, and Mr. Campbell said the dome was needed. There was discussion about what the roof would be comprised of.

Mr. Isaak said the buildings out in that area at present were scattered.

It was clarified that this would be a permanent structure.

Mr. Webb said he didn't see the need for a public hearing.

Mr. Parnell said the University had provided a very vague description of what the dome would look like, but said if it needed to be this way because of technology requirements, there wasn't much the Board could do about it.

Nick Isaak MOVED to have a public hearing on the proposed neutron modeling building. Steve Roberts SECONDED the motion.

Chair Kelley said the Board didn't really know what the structure would look like because not enough information had been provided.

Councilor Carroll asked if UNH had a time bind concerning this. There was discussion that there was time to hold a public hearing before construction started in May.

The motion FAILED 3-4, with Nick Isaak, Chair Kelley, and Steve Roberts voting in favor of the motion.

No alternate was officially appointed in place of Councilor Needell, so am not sure whether the vote should be 3-3 or 3-4.

Councilor Needell asked how the action items with regard to the Zoning Ordinance were going to be addressed, and Mr. Campbell said he could put discussion on this on the Agenda for April 12th.

Kevin Webb MOVED to adjourn the meeting. The motion was SECONDED by Bill McGowan and PASSED unanimously 7-0.

Adjournment at 10:03 pm

W. Arthur Grant, Secretary