



TOWN OF DURHAM

2009-2010 Council Goals

Approved May 18, 2009

CORE PURPOSE: To be effective leaders in ensuring Durham residents are provided with a high quality level of ongoing municipal services and by integrating our daily operations and strategic projects with our long-term vision and objectives. This is the Town Council's highest priority and the underlying theme in all actions.

CORE VALUES: Fair and open-minded approach to issues
Excellence in all endeavors
Trust and respect
Honesty and integrity
Justice

The following three goals have been identified as being high priority items for the Town Council/Administrator in 2009-2010:

GOAL

- ❖ **ADOPT A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AND MOVE FORWARD WITH EFFORTS TO INCREASE TAXABLE VALUE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL CORE** while maintaining our small Town character and sense of history through the encouragement of thoughtful new development or reinvestment that serves the year-round population, better integrates the presence of the University, targets the global marketplace, and is potentially inclusive of workforce housing opportunities, all intended to foster a critical mass of residential, commercial, and retail activity to revitalize Durham's downtown.

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After conducting a Request for Proposal process, the Town has selected B. Dennis Town Design Sole Proprietorship to conduct a comprehensive analysis focusing upon our downtown core to determine whether we have met the goals as outlined in the 2000 Master Plan as implemented through existing zoning regulations. B. Dennis will conduct a three and one-half day charette (Nov 5-8, 2009), to provide residents with the opportunity to give feedback with respect to our downtown central commercial core. B. Dennis will also develop a strategic plan to carry forward outstanding 2000 goals as well as direction discerned from the charette process and as a result of conversations with the Planning Board and Town Council. Finally, the RFP was crafted in such a manner that we anticipate B. Dennis will be in a strong position to assist the Town with its long-term visioning and planning to include updating the Master Plan for the next 10-year period. Key Master Plan chapters. Initially targeted will be the downtown and community core, environmental and cultural resources, tax stabilization, land development regulations, and energy.

As a result of the Economic Development Committee's recent SWOT analysis focusing on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing the community, it would make sense for the Council to revisit this goal and include a specific mention of finding businesses which market not only to the community, but also the world, in order to take advantage of the global economy.

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a. Support efforts to position the downtown area in becoming more vibrant, varied, pedestrian-friendly, and attractive to potential new businesses/investment and the community as a whole by revisiting existing zoning regulations within the Central Business District.	See above comments
b. Consider the possibility of a more detailed strategic planning process (see Councilor Clark's example from 4/6/09) and move forward as appropriate.	See above comments
c. Adopt RSA 79-E to support the substantial revitalization of downtown structures.	Completed
d. Support continued efforts to encourage Mill Plaza redevelopment.	Despite the Town's ongoing effort to engage the plaza owner, there has not been movement to date.
e. Support continued discussion concerning potential downtown location for new UNH Business School and UNH Performing Arts Center.	The University has identified a downtown site for its UNH Business School at the request of the Town. The University has indicated an interest in a new Performing Arts Center and desires a location approximate to the downtown area as a potential venue in concert with the desire of the Town.
f. Facilitate continued discussion concerning the development of a new Hotel/Conference Center within the downtown area.	Significant energy has been dedicated to facilitating interest in the location of the new Hotel with conference capabilities within the downtown core, specifically at the site of the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity on Main Street.
g. Infrastructure planning to support downtown core redevelopment (water, wastewater, stormwater, roads, sidewalks, traffic improvements, and structured parking).	Work ongoing
h. Facilitate various development and redevelopment projects.	Numerous redevelopment projects have either been approved by the Planning Board, are in the Planning Board process, or are soon to move before the Planning Board. Examples include: the Houghton's Hardware site, the Don Thompson Real Estate site, Rosemary Lane, the Perry Bryant project on Mast Road, Rivers Edge, downtown hotel facility.
i. Mitigate the impact of UNH on-campus, tax exempt, for profit, retail operations on downtown Durham.	The Town worked with the DBA to coordinate a forum in the spring with UNH and local businesses to discuss this issue further. In addition, the negotiations with UNH relative to cost impacts for the Town linked to hosting UNH have included this topic and ways in which new

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- j. Evaluate the development of architectural and design standards for the downtown core that reflect comprehensive design standards.

- ❖ **REVISIT LONG-TERM VISION FOR DURHAM** through the update of five chapters of the 2000 Master Plan to include Downtown and Community Core Chapter, Environmental and Cultural Resources Chapter, Tax Stabilization Chapter, Land Development Regulations Chapter, and Energy Chapter. The updated plan will serve as a guide in considering policy changes, land use planning, economic development efforts, the development of affordable housing stock, budget preparation, and capital improvement planning as follows:
 - a. *Downtown and Community Core Chapter* – Identify issues important to creating a vibrant and diverse downtown and commercial core, seamless public transportation system linking the downtown to other parts of Durham and the University, and the development of additional housing within this urbanized area.
 - b. *Environmental and Cultural Resources* – Work with the Conservation Commission and Historic District Commission/Heritage Commission in identifying and studying resources vital to the vision of the Master Plan.
 - c. *Tax Stabilization* – Work with the Economic Development Committee to develop strategies to expand and diversify Durham’s tax base and to explore a wide range of methods to increase revenues and decrease costs in order to mitigate the tax burden upon residents without adversely impacting the character of the community.
 - d. *Land Development Regulations* – This will include review of the current land use map, analyzing existing land use patterns and regulations to

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UNH capital investment can also support our downtown area, as well as serving to stimulate the broadening of the local tax base.

B. Dennis Town Design Sole Proprietorship will assist us in this area.

Please refer to goal item above, “**ADOPT A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AND MOVE FORWARD WITH EFFORTS TO INCREASE TAXABLE VALUE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AND DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL CORE**”

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determine what Durham's build out should look like, and developing a future land use map.

- e. Energy – Work with the Energy Committee to develop an energy section that identifies issues within Durham and outlines steps necessary to develop a more sustainable energy system. The issues and topics of this chapter are envisioned to be integrated into the other chapters of the Master Plan.

[This item will be undertaken with support from a UNH Cooperative Extension grant and with the assistance of an external consultant to be selected through a Request for Proposal process. It will involve the Planning Board, EDC, Energy Committee, Council, Conservation Commission, HDC/Heritage Commission, and active citizen focus groups with a time horizon extending through the spring of 2010.]

❖ **IDENTIFY A SITE AND DEVELOP A PLAN FOR A POSSIBLE TOWN CENTER, LIBRARY, AND POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.**

Significant efforts have been deployed with respect to the location of a new Town Center to include a library, Town Hall, youth center, and recreational opportunities. At this time, the Jacques parcel and The Greens (the Gangwer site on Madbury Road) are the two primary candidates. Various scenarios are in the process of being crafted for each site.

The following fifteen items are included to denote areas of general importance for the Town Council/Administrator in 2009-2010:

- **PROVIDE CLEAR DIRECTION ON BUDGET GOALS** for FY 2010 as part of June 2009 Council budget work session and support Administrator in his efforts with departments to develop service delivery innovations intended to increase efficiencies, reduce costs, and enhance service satisfaction.
- **CONTINUE TO EXPLORE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH UNH** to enhance the intellectual, cultural, and potential future economic benefits of being a university town to include the following:

- a. Complete policing cost negotiation.

On June 15, 2009, the Town Council held a budget work session with the Town Administrator and provided guidance as part of the ongoing budget process. In addition, the Administrator continues to move forward with educating himself and staff with regard to the implementation of Kaizen/Lean manufacturing practices into the workplace.

Significant effort continues to be devoted to the burden the Town shares with regard to policing as a result of being host to the University of New Hampshire. It is expected that within the next few weeks (from 9/23/09) a proposal will move forward

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- to the Council for approval. The Administrator is pleased with the progress in this regard. Beyond this, the University has committed to collaborate with the Town with regard to projects that are mutually beneficial and help to support the downtown core and expanding Durham's tax base.
- b. Investigate ways to mitigate the impact that UNH on-campus, tax-exempt, for-profit enterprises have on downtown businesses. Working with the Durham Business Association, a forum was organized with officials from the University to discuss on-campus operations as well as fostering dialogue with respect to this item. (See description above).
- c. Reconsider what constitutes the appropriate balance of on-campus vs. off-campus student housing and promote desirable student housing opportunities to broaden the tax base and preserve traditional residential neighborhoods. This is an item that the Durham Rental Housing Commission will presumably move forward in the coming months. At this time, the Administrator has made it clear to the University that the Town does not advocate additional on-campus housing to be created until this matter can be further evaluated.
- d. Negotiate continued use by Town of Store 24 Lot or other potential win-win uses for the parcel. We have extended the leases for the Store 24 and Strafford Avenue parking lots for additional six-month terms. The goal is to integrate these leases into broader plans for the downtown area.
- e. Continue collaborative efforts to address joint infrastructure issues to include water (401 Certificate, Lamprey Instream Flow Study, Spruce Hole Well development), wastewater (west end bottleneck, treatment plant upgrades, Great Bay Estuary nitrogen study), stormwater (new regulations and monitoring requirements, etc.) Inflow/Infiltration issues, etc. The Town and University, through the joint Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Committee continue to address this item. We have retained the services of Environmental Attorney, Dana Bisbee, who recently briefed the Council on this item. The Town is taking all reasonable steps to preserve its water interests as well as our natural resources within the Lamprey River. We also continue to plan/implement solutions intended to address the wastewater bottleneck issue at the west end in the vicinity of Cowell Stadium and the railroad tracks.
- f. Explore the viability of locating potential technology spin-off ventures developed at UNH within taxable parcels located off campus in Durham. The Economic Development Committee continues to have an interest in this item. It was recently identified as part of the EDC's internal SWOT analysis.
- g. Development of a performing arts center in the vicinity of the downtown area. (See above)
- h. Locating a new business school in the vicinity of the downtown area. (See above)
A definitive downtown site has been identified at the Town's urging at Rosemary and Garrison.
- i. Development of a hotel/conference facility in the downtown area. (See above)

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- j. RFI for Leawood Orchard site to encourage affordable housing for junior faculty, staff, and graduate students at UNH.
- o **WORK TOWARD THE ADOPTION OF A SET OF SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES THAT WILL INFORM TOWN DECISION MAKING.**
- o **WORK IN SUPPORT OF THE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES'** efforts to address issues relating to site selection, space requirements, cost issues, and site-specific negotiations associated with the establishment of a new Durham library facility at the Mill Plaza or at potential alternate locations as determined appropriate
- o **DETERMINE FUTURE LOCATION OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.** Perform preliminary site/facility design for Fire Department once location selected and establish site by resolution.
- o **WORK TO MORE CLOSELY ALIGN EFFORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES** with broad goals of Town Council **AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN** committees.
- o **EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** by increasing and/or defining opportunities in recreation to include walking trails, playing fields, programs, facilities, and additional regional offerings, and by continuing to explore cooperative efforts with existing entities serving the community.

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The Town continues to have discussions with the University with regard to the Leawood Orchard site. It is anticipated that a Request for Proposal will be distributed by the University in the coming months for this site. An RFI had been issued at the Town's urging earlier this year.

On August 3, 2009, the Council received a presentation from UNH Professor Bert Cohen on The Natural Step for Communities process. Generally speaking, the Town's departments and committees are aware of the importance of sustainability in their various practices. They are also being mindful of cost drivers. The department heads will receive a presentation on the topic in October. The Durham Energy Committee continues to evaluate issues concerning sustainability.

See comments above under "Identify a Site and Develop Plan for a Possible Town Center, Library, and Potential Recreational Opportunities."

Staff brought forward an initiative to amend the approved 2009 budget in order to bring on an architectural firm to assist the Town in both the design and potential site layout for various sites for a new Fire Station. In addition, representatives from the Fire Department attended a national educational session relative this item to give them the tools needed to make more informed decisions on behalf of the community.

In response to this item, we organized an orientation session for all Town boards, commissions, and committees in which we not only talked about rules and responsibilities but also were able to introduce the Chair and Vice Chairs of the committees to one another, as well as walking through the Council goals and making it clear that the Council goals should be integrated into the work of the various Town boards and committees.

Early this year, the Council adopted the proposal put forward by the Parks and Recreation Committee to establish a new part-time Parks and Recreation Director position. We subsequently hired a part-time Director who has initiated a number of programs. In addition, the former Durham District Court facility is now quickly becoming a hub for recreational activity

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- as we have moved the Durham Parks and Recreation office as well as the Oyster River Youth Association office to that location. This should put recreation on the map in Durham in terms of a definitive physical location as well as space for indoor programming to take place.
- **PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN OPEN SPACE, VISTAS, FARMLAND, FOREST, AND CONSERVATION LANDS** through land and easement purchases utilizing conservation bond and land use change tax proceeds in such a manner as to balance the benefit of such acquisitions against the broader tax implications these acquisitions and other municipal priorities have upon the community as a whole.

We continue to work with the Trust for Public Lands regarding their interest in fostering a public/private collaborative program for the land in and around the Spruce Wood area owned by Jack Farrell and David Garvey. In addition, we are involved with discussions regarding the Thompson parcel along the Lamprey River as well as the Colasante parcels adjacent to Spruce Hole bog.
 - **ENGAGE THE OYSTER RIVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD** in an effort to support educational excellence while at the same time providing tax relief for Durham taxpayers.

The Oyster River School Board has embarked upon a goal-setting process involving representatives from Durham, Lee, and Madbury. In addition, we have recently begun to engage the ORCSD more actively regarding the issue of drugs and alcohol in the school district and in the community at large.
 - **ENHANCE AFFORDABILITY FOR DURHAM'S CITIZENS.**
 - a. Work to make Durham more affordable for residents

See comment above.
 - b. Evaluate elderly exemption and veteran tax credit amounts and qualifications currently in place and make modifications as necessary

The Town has revisited and now updated the elderly exemption program for 2010. Complete.
 - c. Work to broaden the tax base

Staff and committees are actively working to broaden the tax base, make our departments more user-friendly, and our processes more predictable.
 - d. Strive for the development of workforce housing opportunities;

We continue to talk about workforce housing. The issue of a Durham Housing Authority is likely to be discussed again in the near future.
 - e. Identify strategies to attract young families to the community;

Our recent promotional video for the Town specifically targets items in which young families would have an interest. These include some of our key recreational sites, the quality of our school system, and the Oyster River Parents of Preschoolers organization, as well as expanded recreational opportunities.

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- f. Explore group purchasing cooperative approach to acquiring targeted services for Durham community;
 - g. Other strategies to be determined.
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- **MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF DURHAM NEIGHBORHOODS** through the development of new desirable opportunities for student housing, consistent enforcement of zoning regulations, other initiatives, and through continued collaborative relationships with the University of New Hampshire, the Durham Landlords Association, the Rental Housing Commission, and neighborhood residents.

Durham police, the Code Enforcement Officer, and the Fire Department continue to dedicate substantial energies toward the impact of student housing within our residential neighborhoods. The Rental Housing Commission will be considering a proposal this fall initiated affected neighborhoods to more actively monitor and control single-family, non-owner occupied properties through an annual permit program of some kind yet to be developed.
 - **MONITOR STATUS OF THE DURHAM BUSINESS PARK AND STONE QUARRY DRIVE TIF PROJECTS.**
 - a. Consider zoning changes within the Durham Business Park Z.O. District to enhance the marketability of the parcel and/or consider alternate uses such as affordable housing or mixed use development given existing economic conditions.

(See above)
 - b. Monitor status of Stone Quarry Drive TIF as needed.

The owner has yet to provide the required surety bond to allow this project to proceed.
 - **CONDUCT ANALYSIS ON USE OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES TO ENCOURAGE ENHANCED PRODUCTIVITY AND COST CONTAINMENT AND/OR TO MOVE PROJECTS ALONG EFFICIENTLY.**

This item is particularly cogent with respect to engineering services. At the present time, the number and breadth of projects on the docket exceed the capacity of the Department of Public Works and our engineer to manage effectively. The DPW is presently researching ways in which this might be improved, to include: a) contracting out more projects; b) bringing existing contracted-out projects in-house and bringing on an additional

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o **EXPLORE AVENUES TO CREATE “MUNICIPAL WEALTH.”**

Town engineer; or c) some other strategy yet to be determined more broadly. This continues to be a question evaluated by our various departments.

a. Renewable energy

We have evaluated the efficacy of wind power in Durham. Due to substandard velocities, wind power does not appear to be viable for our community. Solar and geothermal power, however, may be valuable, and there is a concept being discussed whereby the municipality would issue a bond that could subsequently be used to support low interest loans to residents to provide energy-efficient upgrades to properties. Under this program, the loan would be attached to the property, reimbursed annually through the local tax bill, and the debt would belong to the parcel rather than the owner. At this juncture, this type of program is not currently allowed under the New Hampshire statutory framework; therefore, we may want to consider approaching our legislative delegation for a state statute change if it is something we want to implement.

b. Clean transit

We have engaged the UNH Transportation Services with respect to the idea of broadening its route structure to include more Durham neighborhoods. The Police Department is presently in the process of facilitating a meeting with potentially affected neighbors who have traditionally not wanted loud buses to come through their neighborhoods (re: Edgewood, Emerson, and Madbury Roads). In the interest of finding balance and encouraging energy efficiency, and given the fact that the UNH's new bus fleet is much quieter and less odiferous than in the past, we are moving this issue forward administratively. The University has the largest transit system in the state and is located here in Durham.

c. Leverage our natural resources for recreation and commerce

Durham's promotional video focused on Durham's natural resources and great beauty.

d. Develop a marketing plan for Durham

The Economic Development Committee engaged the services of a UNH marketing class which focused specifically on the kinds of products that might be effective in Durham as well as the shopping plaza. The EDC will be developing a marketing plan, and just recently completed an internal SWOT analysis. The recent promotional video is a part of this program as well.

e. Make Durham a tourist destination

(See above)

GOAL

- f. Invest in infrastructure to promote long-term affordability

- o **WORK TOWARD BROADENING THE TAX BASE BEYOND THE SINGLE FAMILY HOME.**

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Given the present economic downturn and our desire to keep the tax rate stable, it is becoming increasingly difficult to make needed investment in municipal infrastructure, at least in the short-term. Longer term, we have and will continue to actively build in infrastructure investments in order to promote long-term affordability in Durham.

Please reference significant work done in myriad areas noted above.