

**2007 – 2008 COUNCIL GOALS**  
**ADOPTED APRIL 9, 2007 (REVISED 1/14/08)**

**CORE PURPOSE:** To be effective leaders in ensuring Durham residents are provided with a high quality level of ongoing municipal services. 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

**ACTION GOALS:**

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>STATUS AS OF 1/14/08</b>
1. Preserve 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.	In response to specific requests made by the Council in 2006, the Administrator prepared a revised land acquisition policy to reflect suggestions made. The policy was forwarded to the Durham Conservation Commission which, although initially expressed agreement, later endorsed suggestions for modification originating from the Land Protection Working Group (LPWG). This item was brought forward for discussion with members of the DCC by the Council on October 1, 2007. In addition, the issue of diverting 100% of the Land Use Change Tax proceeds from the Conservation Fund to the General Fund was discussed on October 1, 2007. After lengthy discussion, the Council decided to schedule the topic for continued discussion in January 2008. However, we have yet to be able to find a convenient time for the DCC to attend a Town Council meeting. February 18, 2008 is presently being targeted. The Council also approved the purchase of a conservation easement for Roselawn Farm upon the recommendation of the DCC in conjunction with the Town of Lee and the Strafford Rivers Conservancy.
2. Enhance recreational opportunities for the community.	The Recreation Committee has been very active this year in a number of areas. A major challenge for the group, however, is finding monetary resources to put toward initiatives. To this end, we applied for and received a \$20,000 grant for trail improvements at Jackson's Landing and have contracted with an archeological firm to conduct a required archeological evaluation of the site prior to our being able to move forward with the trail. In addition, Public Works initiated a \$258,000 grant application to the Natural Resource Conservation Service which was funded in early 2008. We'll now need to schedule this project into our upcoming summer work plan.

A great deal of work has been put into the Churchill Rink at Jackson's Landing. The Council

established a Rink Committee that is meeting regularly to discuss the ongoing operation of the rink by the Town this skating season. Despite the unanticipated early season failure of the rink chiller tubes, the skating season is going quite well. The Business Department crafted and the Council approved, in 2007, a resolution establishing a Special Revenue Fund which will be utilized to operate the rink with user fees

The Public Works Department has been active in planning for the development of a ball field at the Town's gravel pit located on Packers Falls Road. The project was pushed out by the Administrator to FY 2012 as part of the approved Capital Improvement Plan.

Finally at Jackson's Landing, trails and parking improvements were included as part of a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) plan at Stone Quarry Drive which was approved by the Council. If needed, this may eventually channel approximately \$250,000 in TIF funds toward improvements at the Jackson's Landing facility

3. Move forward with transitioning responsibility for dispatching services from UNH Dispatch to Strafford County with target effective date of January 1, 2008.

We anticipate transition to Strafford County to occur by March 1, 2008 provided all technological, licensing, and training issues remain on track. The MIS Department, Police Department, Fire Department, and Administrator are all extremely active in implementing this initiative which projects a quarter million dollar savings per year moving forward. This is a major undertaking and is demanding significant and constant attention.

4. Review ORCSD funding formula to ensure fairness in apportionment methodology and take action to correct deficiencies noted.

While the Town Council did endeavor in 2007 to work cooperatively with the Oyster River School Board and the communities of Lee and Madbury to evaluate issues of fairness within the existing funding formula for the school district, none of the other entities have embraced this cooperative approach in evaluating the formula. The Council therefore has moved ahead on its own in evaluating issues of fairness with the funding formula. The Administrator recently requested data from the School District to assist the Council's subcommittee in this endeavor. Councilors Niman and Stanhope are active in this effort.

5. Establish a new citizen working group to develop a charge and title for a new committee that is consistent with the Carbon Coalition warrant article approved on March 13, 2007.

The Council had established an Energy Steering Committee in 2007 which worked to develop a charge moving forward. The Town Council ultimately adopted the charge and established the Energy Committee as a full fledged public board of the Town that is presently very busy working on relevant topics. Councilors Diana Carroll, Jerry

6. Initiate discussions with the University with respect to drafting a new agreement addressing the fiscal implications of hosting UNH upon the Town in the area of policing services.

Needell, and Mark Morong have been active in this effort.

The Town engaged the services of economist Russ Thibeault in 2007 who estimated that Durham incurs indirect costs of approximately \$500,000 per year to support UNH in the area of policing services. Although the Administrator had hoped to involve two members of the Council as part of this effort with discussions under way by mid-January 2008, the process has been delayed by challenges in identifying Council representation without a conflict of interest due to past or present University affiliation. As a result, the Administrator plans to move ahead with the Business Manager in addressing this matter with UNH and will provide updates to the Council as negotiations play out.

7. Promote expansion of the tax base.

- o Move forward with Chinburg RFP for development of Durham Business Park.

After much effort in 2007, a Purchase and Sale Agreement was signed with Chinburg Builders with respect to the Durham Business Park on June 5, 2007. On October 3, 2007, the Administrator granted a 90 day extension to afford Chinburg an opportunity to complete its due diligence to insure that this matter is moved forward as planned in accord with the RFP document. The Administrator has put in a call to Chinburg for a status update and awaits additional information at this time.

- o Modify Administrative Code to establish a new standing committee, the Economic Development Committee, to develop strategies to increase the taxable value within the community.

The Town Council acted to incorporate the Economic Development Committee into the Administrative Code in 2007.

- o Evaluate appropriate opportunities for the use of Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts within the community.

With the assistance of consultant Don Jutton, the Economic Development Committee, and the Town Council did move ahead and adopt the statutory framework that allows for the establishment of Tax Increment Finance districts within the community. Subsequently, the Council approved the creation of the Stone Quarry Drive TIF district. At this time, discussions continue between the Town and the owner's representative to develop a "development agreement" in accord with the Stone Quarry Drive TIF plan. In addition, the Public Works Department on direction of the Administrator is preparing an RFQ for engineering services to oversee water and sewer infrastructure improvements within the TIF. We

- o Review and evaluate the existing regulatory process in Durham and move ahead with modifications if needed to streamline it.

anticipate awarding an engineering contract in February 2008 provided the “development agreement” is in place by that time. We will need to move ahead in the near future to establish a Stone Quarry Drive TIF Advisory Committee.

This should be an area of focus for the Council and Administrator during the first quarter of 2008.
- 8. Develop and move forward with strategies to increase taxable value and social capital in the downtown area through the encouragement of new construction/ development that serves the year-round population, integrates the presence of the University, and is inclusive of workforce housing opportunities.
  - o Move forward with the Mill Plaza Study Committee process.

We have moved ahead aggressively with respect to the Mill Plaza Study Committee process. At the initiative of Jim Campbell within the Planning and Economic Development Department, the Town submitted an application to participate in the AIA 150 program for which the Mill Plaza project was eventually selected. The Mill Plaza Study Committee/AIA groups are hard at work in developing a framework for moving forward in this area. It is anticipated that the Mill Plaza Committee will have firm recommendations for Council and owner consideration by the end of February 2008. Owner John Pinto will meet with Durham officials in late February on progress to date. The Administrator is also speaking with Perry Bryant concerning the possibilities of acquiring vacant land in the plaza vicinity adjacent to College Brook.
  - o Address ordinance changes to promote new development in the downtown compact area.

Although Zoning and Code Enforcement Officer Tom Johnson has produced three draft ordinance revisions for consideration, differences in ideas at the Housing Task Force and Town Council has caused each to be sent back to the “drawing board”. Staff has not had time to address this issue since last summer and do not anticipate having time until the spring. It is recommended that the Economic Development Committee evaluate whether this is an initiative that can be handed off to it for further evaluation.

9. Exercise budgetary scrutiny.

- o Schedule work session/sessions on budget.

The Council held a budget work session June 25, 2007. Durham this meeting, the Council provided direction to the Administrator with respect to the upcoming budget development process. The Town Administrator and Business Office utilized this direction in the creation of the proposed 2008 budget and CIP plan. By a vote of 5-4 the Council approved the FY 2008 budget and 2008-2017 CIP with a spending increase of 3.2% over FY 2007 and a projected tax rate increase of 2% in 2008.

10. Support Board of Library Trustees in the development of a new public library facility.

At this time, the Mill Plaza development plan is the primary focus of the Library Board of Trustees with respect to the development of a new public library facility. The Town is providing a great deal of support to the Mill Plaza Study Committee as it moves ahead to create a community vision for the Mill Plaza site.

11. Enhance affordability for Durham's senior citizens and veterans by evaluating the elderly exemption and veteran tax credit amounts and qualifications currently in place.

Town Councilors Van Asselt and Carroll worked collaboratively this summer to develop draft revisions to the existing elderly exemption criteria and exemption amounts for consideration by the Council. Their plan was discussed during the month of August, and based upon feedback received, Councilors later approved a variety of enhancements to exemptions offered.