

MINUTES OF THE EYES ON 30 COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM

March 18, 2024 - 5:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Councilor Paul Goodwin, Chair
Councilor Nancie Cameron, Vice Chair
Planning Board Representative, Jason Barry (arrived at 5:20)
Community Member At Large, Dina Gagnon
Community Member At Large, Jenne Holmes
Planning Technician, Dana Crossley (City Manager's
Designee)
Mayor Matt Gerding

Staff Present: Finance Director, Scott Smith
City Clerk, Kristen LaPanne

Chair Goodwin called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2024

Councilor Cameron made a motion to approve the minutes of February 20, 2024. The motion was seconded by Dina Gagnon and passed 4-0-1. Jenne Holmes abstained.

GOAL SETTING WITH NEW MEMBERS

Councilor Goodwin stated that he has contacted the School Board Chair in regards to filling their vacant position on this Committee and he hopes to have it filled by the next scheduled meeting.

Councilor Goodwin briefly reviewed the seven goals previously identified by the Committee and he asked if anyone had specific goals or incentives to add to the list. The Committee had no additions.

Councilor Goodwin suggested adding a goal that provides identities to Neighborhood Communities in the City such as the *BrickYard, Smokey Hollow, and The Hills*. He shared the feeling of living within a Community where the neighborhood had an identity and he feels that it is important for Community engagement. Councilor Goodwin spoke about the potential to work with the public and adding identified neighborhoods to future City Master Plans that would benefit from improvements. Mayor Gerding commented that identifying neighborhoods was also discussed during the Mayor's Housing Task Force with a lot of support, he added that it has a lot of potential and he envisions it going beyond the Master Plan.

Dina Gagnon shared some concern about over-labeling or over-defining having a reverse effect and the potential to segregate sections of the City. Councilor Goodwin commented that he agrees with Dina

and the goal would not be to cause a divide but rather a connection of the neighborhoods. Mayor Gerding stated that the City of Manchester has recently identified neighborhoods and incorporated it into their Master Plan, he added that he will reach out to a staff member that he knows within the City's Planning Department to inquire about the process and any feedback. Jenne Holmes stated that there can be a big difference if the identities come from the area's residents versus the Committee. The Committee agreed and Councilor Goodwin suggested using an online platform and door knocking to gain input from the Community.

Councilor Goodwin recommended adding a connectivity analysis to the list of goals. He stated that he is aware of the City Council investing funds into sidewalk improvements and he inquired about that planning process and how far those plans go out. He added that Somersworth is a compact City with a lot of potential to add sidewalks to major roadways, create pathways connecting parts of the City, and bike paths, all of which can be added to the Master Plan. Mayor Gerding explained the process of sidewalk improvements begins with an assessment and the Council prioritizes school walking routes, and currently those improvements do not go beyond one year. Planning Technician Crossley confirmed that the assessments begin with the Public Works Department and the City Engineer and those recommendations are vetted through the Public Works and Environment Committee.

Dina Gagnon inquired about the possibility of the Committee receiving a map that provides a visual of the recent improvements of City sidewalks including dates. Councilor Goodwin agreed and he stated that a map could allow the Committee to find gaps that need to be filled in and the potential of identifying a walking loop for the Community.

Jason Barry arrived at the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

The Committee briefly discussed the recently paved path that was completed using a TAP grant and agreed that it was nicely done and they would like to see more of that.

Councilor Goodwin recommended that the Committee add traffic calming to their list of goals, he specifically pointed out the Downtown area and ways to improve pedestrian safety such as adding signalized flashing crosswalks that use solar power.

Councilor Goodwin suggested a goal of participatory budgeting which is a community engagement tool that would allow the Community to determine how to spend a small sum of budgeted funds. There was discussion about how the participatory budget could work and also allow the City Council to get a feel for what the Community is interested in. Mayor Gerding asked if any other New Hampshire communities utilize participatory budgeting. Councilor Goodwin responded that he believes there is one other that does.

Finance Director Smith clarified that participatory budgets are similar to surveys and that the City is still bound by the City Charter. He cautioned that sometimes what can happen if not implemented correctly, the idea can cause residents to have false hope if the City Council chose not to approve what the majority of residents voted for. Councilor Goodwin agreed and added that there would be

clarifying language and he provided an example of the Council vetting out six or seven possible options and utilizing a small amount of funds such as \$25,000.

Mayor Gerding excused himself from the meeting at 5:28 p.m.

Councilor Goodwin mentioned that he would like to start an oral history series where he would have a moderator and invite local residents to share the City's history; he added that he believes that topic would sit within the Mayor's Commission on Culture, Ethnicity and the Arts. Dina Gagnon recalled the previous mayor hosting a Community coffee event which received good feedback from the public. She explained that the previous mayor would take time to interview residents for a number of different topics and those interviews were filmed with the ability to be watched from the City's website.

Councilor Goodwin stated that he would like for the Committee's next task to be to identify deliverables for each of the goals, what the City is already doing, priority levels, and who to assign the goals to. Jason Barry suggested looking thoroughly through the goal list at a future meeting. Councilor Goodwin agreed, he added that he would see where to fold in his suggested goals and potentially create a table to make it easier to view. Jason Barry added that through review of the list, the Committee can determine which goals will likely stick.

The Committee briefly reviewed Resolution 38-22 City of Somersworth "Eyes on 30" Initiative to be reminded of its purpose to ensure they are meeting its expectations.

MISCELLANEOUS

Councilor Cameron reminded the Committee of the upcoming Don't Trash Somersworth scheduled on Saturday April 20th which comes just two days before Earth Day. She stated that the group will be meeting at the Home Depot parking lot to begin their trash cleanup which will run from 2:00 p.m. through 3:00 p.m. Councilor Cameron added that she will be supplying the group with trash bags, grabbers and safety vests.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Cameron made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Jenne Holmes and passed 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen LaPanne, City Clerk