



City Council Meeting Minutes  
February 25, 2012  
City Council 2012 Goal Setting Workshop

Present: Mayor Matthew Spencer, Councilors Brian Tapscott, Jonathan McCallion, Dale Sprague, David Witham, Robin Jarvis, Martin Pepin, Jennifer Soldati, Marcel Hebert and Matthew Durkee.

Staff present: City Manager Robert Belmore, Police Chief Dean Crombie, Fire Chief Don Bliss, Director of Dev. Services/Planner David Sharples, Director of Finance & Administration Scott Smith, and Director of Public Works & Utilities Tom Willis.

Folks arrived starting at 8:30 for coffee. The meeting was called to order at 8:55am in Council Chambers at City Hall. Manager Belmore facilitated the session.

Belmore read the following excerpts from the 2/19/2011 Council Goal Workshop: from the Vision2020 Committee: *Somersworth will be a vibrant and highly sought after community in which to live, work and play that celebrates its history, culture, diversity and industrial roots*; and the Mission statement/core values developed by the Council: *Trust* - with each other and with the Community, being reciprocal in nature, *Respect* - fostering differing views, *Serve* - serving the Public needs.

The City Council discussed last year's goals and placed goals into three different categories: Preserve, Achieve and Avoid. Consensus was to look at goals in the context of completing benchmarks or actually accomplishing the goal within the next 12-24 months. Here is a summary of the Council's consensus for 2012 Goals (not numbered by priority).

**PRESERVE**

**1. Reuse of Hilltop Elementary School Property**

- a. Work in collaboration with the Friends of Somersworth.

**2. Fund Balance & Stabilizing the Tax Rate**

- a. Continue the strategies for a strong Fund Balance to assist in efforts to stabilize the tax rate; continue examination of the use of CRF (Capital Reserve Funds); and discuss issuance of a Bond/s to address needed CIP/infrastructure needs.

**3. Sustainability**

- a. Support on-going initiatives of Sustainability Committee and other possible environmentally friendly efforts.

**4. Regionalization**

- a. Continue on going work to examine opportunities to partner with other communities, the County and the School Department.

## **ACHIEVE**

### **1. Image of City & Marketing City**

- a. Recruit businesses; take steps to attract good companies and retain both businesses and talented residents by offering quality services; be business friendly in our approaches to code inspections and business start-ups.
- b. More positive Press; celebrate City successes.
- c. Foster partnerships with Chamber, Festival Association, Skyhaven Airport, etc.; support efforts like Pumpkin Festival & Children's' Festival.
- d. The new Economic Development Manager would be charged to focus on these ideas and implement steps to accomplish them.
- e. Mayor to explore re-establishing a Christmas / Holiday Parade.
- f. Look to bring Culture and Arts into the City; more destination stops.

### **2. Code and Property Maintenance – Neighborhood Appearance**

- a. Consider quarterly neighborhood clean-ups and more educational outreach on property care; public works to place more trash receptacles in key areas.
- b. City staff will examine and report back to Council on possibility of placing Building and Code Office/Property Maintenance under the direction of the fire chief/fire department operations, examples of this model include the City of Dover and Town of Bedford, NH.
- c. Council's Economic Development Committee to examine possible City Ordinance amendments to better assist with property maintenance and code compliance.

### **3. High Street Infrastructure / Sidewalks / Streetscape**

- a. Examine options to improve pedestrian friendly environment in the City.
- b. Examine Traffic signalization/timing – staff to seek NH DOT assistance.
- c. Better overall planning on sidewalk improvements & sidewalk locations.
- d. Look at Horne Street (NH DES prior involvement); and Garden Street.

### **4. City Information Outreach to Community**

- a. Continue improvements to the Website.
- b. Complete new Cable Franchise Agreement and institute educational channel and eventual Public Access channel.
- c. Explore / implement WiFi Access in downtown area (check Pittsfield model), this was referred to staff and the Council's Economic Development Committee.

### **5. Review City Procedures for more Electronic Efforts**

- a. Implement m/v E-Reg; consider more paperless City transaction efforts for direct payments and banking lockbox process.
- b. Consider I-Pads for use by Council for meeting packets and other reports to be distributed electronically.

**6. Support of Local Business**

- a. Continue “buy local” options and initiatives to include banking efforts (perhaps vendors like Warrens office supplies in nearby Maine as well NH and locally based financial institutions).

**7. Downtown Traffic & Parking Patterns**

- a. Consider other alternatives to enhance a safe, positive traffic and parking flow in downtown area, ex: new diagonal parking in Bristol, NH.
- b. Support Master Plan funding in FY 2013 Budget to complete an update to Transportation section.

**8. Recycling – Transfer Station**

- a. Consider expanding recycling efforts with a partnership program with Dover, Rollinsford, or others, or a Public-Private effort; this was charged to staff and the Council’s Public Works and Environment Committee.
- b. Provide more recycling education to Community.

**9. Promote Environmentally & Health friendly efforts**

- a. Economic Development Manager to pursue possible efforts to promote a bike/walk to work event/s, perhaps with “Somersworth Dollars” for City business purchases as prize incentives. Explore partnerships with hospitals and insurance wellness programs.
- b. Council to make an enhanced commitment to sustainability efforts.

**10. Bonding CIP**

- a. Council consensus to continue the CIP funding discussion in order to examine the possible issuance of a Bond for needed capital improvement work, particularly School CIP items, at \$1million +/- amount.
- b. City Manager and Finance Director are to meet with SAU staff/School Superintendent to formulate a possible funding plan that outlines projects and funding; to include possible use of excess Idlehurst School Bond funds and perhaps use of a Bond Anticipation Note.

**AVOID**

- **Riverfront Development**

- Consensus was this issue would be better discussed at a later time.

Mayor Spencer recommended the Council consider a follow-up goal session later in the year, perhaps in September. Goal Setting Workshop was adjourned at 11:50am by consensus.

Respectfully submitted,

*Robert M. Belmore*  
City Manager  
February 29, 2012