

MINUTES OF THE EYES ON 30 COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
February 20, 2024 – 5:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Councilor Paul Goodwin, Chair
Councilor Nancie Cameron, Vice Chair
Planning Board Representative, Jason Barry
Dina Gagnon, Community Member at Large
City Manager, Bob Belmore
Mayor Matt Gerding

Absent Member: Jenne Holmes, Community Member at Large

Staff present: Planning Technician, Dana Crossley
Finance Director, Scott Smith
City Clerk, Kristen LaPanne

Committee Chair Goodwin called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 6, 2023

Councilor Cameron made a motion to accept the December 6, 2023 minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by City Manager Belmore and passed 3-0-3. Council Goodwin, Ms. Gagnon and Mayor Gerding abstained.

ONBOARDING, REVIEW OF PURPOSE, AND REVIEW OF GOALS FOR
PRIORITIZATION

Councilor Goodwin began the discussion with asking seasoned members of the Committee what they understand the Committee's tasks and deliverables to be, he added that he would like to determine how the newer members ideas could be meshed in with what has already been discussed.

Councilor Cameron stated that her understanding is that the Committee was formed in order for the City to establish goals that will coincide with the City's Master Plan and how the members envision the City in the year 2030. Councilor Cameron listed off the previously defined goals of the Committee including some of the smaller achievable goals that were discussed within each topic.

With regards to the historical signage being installed, Ms. Gagnon mentioned that Berwick is looking into installing historical signage similar to what the City of Somersworth has been working on. Councilor Cameron also noted that she and Mr. Barry are spearheading a new program in Somersworth regarding the City's beautification called Don't Trash Somersworth, which they hope to launch on April 1st.

Councilor Goodwin asked for clarification of what the Committee's objective is. He questioned if the Committee is responsible for solely identifying goals for the vision or identifying goals and putting them into action. Councilor Cameron stated both. Mayor Gerding explained that the Committee was established as a Mayoral Committee to help inform the Planning Board of common goals that would either assist or become part of the City's Master Plan. Councilor Cameron added that the Committee would continue after the goals have been set, to report on the progress of said goals. Councilor

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Goodwin stated that he is task oriented and he would like to determine what goals need to be initiated through what Boards and Committees.

Councilor Cameron continued to read through the goals and objectives that had been previously discussed by the Committee. Councilor Goodwin mentioned that regarding team approach, he has been in contact with the School Board Chair and he expects a member from the School Board will be joining the next scheduled Eyes on 30 Committee meeting.

Councilor Goodwin inquired if a prioritization list had been discussed to date. Mr. Barry confirmed that the Committee had not yet created a list.

City Manager Belmore mentioned that the Committee had a joint workshop with the City Council which resulted in the City aggressively moving forward to join the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire. He added that EV charging stations were also discussed and have now become part of the Planning Board site plan regulations.

Councilor Goodwin requested that the goal list be distributed out to each of the Committee members and he asked that the new members bring new ideas to contribute to the list at the next scheduled meeting. At that time, Councilor Goodwin would like to determine if the Committee is ready to move forward on their vision and begin assigning tasks. Ms. Gagnon mentioned that the Vision 2020 Committee did something similar and she recalled a PowerPoint Presentation of the goals being developed and shared as well.

Councilor Goodwin added that he would also like to determine ways of tracking the goals for accountability and also as a way to get behind the intent of the goals. He talked about continuing to work on rebranding the City of Somersworth and building its reputation in a positive direction.

There was additional discussion regarding follow through of the Committee through 2030 and ensuring that the goals continue to be worked on and met. Mayor Gerding stated that he sees the Committee continuing to move forward through Ordinances and Resolutions as needed to meet said goals. Ms. Gagnon shared that the Vision 2020 Committee had a goal of working on homelessness and they encouraged the City Council to adopt a plan, and out of that, the Tri-City Task Force on Homelessness was formed.

MISCELLANEOUS

City Manager Belmore stated that the Planning Board has been working with the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) on two chapters of the City's Master Plan through a grant which includes Housing and Natural Resources Land Use. Planning Technician Crossley informed the Committee that during the February 21st Planning Board meeting, SRPC is presenting a draft of the Housing chapter to the Board.

City Manager Belmore mentioned that the Economic Development Committee had discussed relooking at 1 Winter Street, the former Bretons Cleaner property, and hosting a community outreach meeting to gain input of residents and abutters to the property. Ms. Gagnon commented that it is a difficult space, and while she likes the idea of greenspace, she shared concerns of safety issues with the site being close to traffic, the train, etc.

City Manager Belmore stated that regarding the lack of downtown parking, SRPC had completed parking studies for other communities previously and will be conducting a study for the City of Somersworth in April or May of this year. He added that the study is covered under the City's annual

dues structure. Manager Belmore mentioned that he has received a number of complaints from restaurant owners in the downtown area regarding the lack of parking available, especially when residents return home in the evenings and need to park for the night. SRPC is looking for volunteers that are willing to assist in the parking study. There was further discussion regarding the parking study and where SRPC will be reviewing parking which includes a number of on-street parking areas and the Somersworth Plaza lot.

Councilor Goodwin commented that while it is important to focus on the Downtown area, he would also like for other locations to be defined throughout the City. He added that he lives within an area that has a strong community identity and would like to have sections of the City identified similar to what the City of Manchester has done, by having different sections of the City having a distinct identity such as the Hilltop and Brickyard areas, which will allow for specific planning for each of those neighborhoods.

There was some additional discussion regarding the Master Plan process and how involved the Eyes on 30 Committee can be throughout the process. Planning Technician Crossley added that SRPC and Planning Board is working on ways to modernize the way that the City shares information pertaining to the Master Plan.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Cameron made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Barry and passed 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen LaPanne, City Clerk