



**LACONIA CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
JULY 18, 2011
CITY HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 200A
6:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Michael Seymour called the meeting to order at the above date and time.

ATTENDANCE:

The following Councilors were in attendance: Councilor Doyle, Lahey, Baer, Hamel and Bolduc. Also present City Manager Scott Myers and Acting Finance Director Donna Woodaman.

ORTON FAMILY FOUNDATION'S HEART AND SOUL GRANT

Planning Director Shanna Saunders reviewed the grant purpose with the Council. This grant is geared toward small cities and towns committed to planning for a future that preserves and enhances their "heart and soul". The Orton Family Foundation helps communities navigate change while upholding the essential values and seeks out the hidden potential within the community. Director Saunders further explained that the grant application is supported by the Carsey Institute and the NH Listens Program; both programs will partner with the City on this grant and offer facilitator training under their Lakes Region Listens program. Director Saunders further explained that the technical and financial gains from this grant will be used to help take the EPA Smart Growth work done in 2007 and adjust the future land use visions and maps and integrate them into the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinances.

Mayor Seymour clarified that the cash match for this grant is split into two fiscal years, therefore the split as presented, would be for \$12,500 for each of the next two fiscal years. Director Saunders confirmed and explained that in return for the match the City will receive \$100,000 in technical services and \$100,000 cash funding. Director Saunders also identified that \$25,000 over two years would be the maximum; there is an anticipation of \$2,000 each year from the Carsey Institute and they have applied for an additional \$5,000 from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.

Director Saunders introduced Bruce Mallory representing the Carsey Institute and the NH Listens Program. Mr. Mallory explained that the NH Listens Program has been very successful in other communities throughout the State; the program is designed to allow members of the community to come together and discuss important issues that they may not otherwise speak out about. This process was particularly helpful in the City of Portsmouth with the issue of building or renovating the new high school; the community input helped prioritize the needs of the community.

Mayor Seymour asked City Manager Myers if there is any input he may have based on experience in Dover. City Manager Myers advised that he is aware of the immense success the Portsmouth Listens program has had; the City of Dover is also following the same concept with the study of the potential to build a new high school. Mayor Seymour asked if City Manager Myers thinks this is a worth while investment. City Manager Myers confirmed he does.

Director Saunders engaged the Council in answering the following questions, explaining that the Council should keep the three village districts in mind (Downtown, Lakeport, and the Weirs):

- **Who will be affected?**

Business owners, employees, residents, tourists, those who use various services

- **Who will implement the recommendations?**

Local organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Mayors Business Owners Roundtable; the United Way and NH Listens

- **Who might stand in the way?**

Business owners, taxpayers and developers

The Council was asked to take some additional time and answer the following questions and send response to Director Saunders:

- **What are events and activities draw networking individuals to the area?**

- **Who can offer insight?**

- **Where do people meet and get news?**

- **What are some network connectors?**

Councilor Hamel advised that he is concerned that this is overlapping the EPA Smart Growth and Master Plan. Director Saunders responded that when the EPA grant was applied for, the vision was to have the village areas looked at for a village overlay district. When the EPA began, the City was advised that they were not ready for the overlay district; a future land use map for each village was done. Director Saunders further commented that out of the EPA study the City was able to accomplish the TIF District for Downtown. This grant would take the recommendations of the EPA Smart Growth analysis and fund the implementation.

Councilor Baer commented that the TIF District business owners are doing the same thing this grant proposes, and it seems like they are trying to accomplish the same goal and it is redundant. Director Saunders advised that there are elements that are the same, however this grant is not for brick and mortar projects. City Manager Myers advised that the TIF funds can not be used for any private projects and this grant would allow for conversations around what each village district would look like at the end of the day; the Zoning needs to be looked at, as well as the streetscapes, sidewalks and other pedestrian ways; this is not a way of funding public improvements like the TIF District does.

Councilor Hamel asked what the \$100,000 going to be used for. Director Saunders explained that zoning changes, studies and ordinance rewriting. Director Saunders explained that the grant will hire one subcontractor to

administer the grant process. Councilor Hamel commented that this grant is going to be used to run meetings. Director Saunders advised that these meetings are to bring people who do not usually come to the table forward so the City can make change with ideas that are accepted by the community. Director Saunders also advised that the professionals to help with these processes are expensive and the City does not have the resources.

Mr. Mallory reviewed some of the meetings held in other communities, which cost approximately \$10 per participant. The process of outreach takes time and energy, which this funding would be used for. Councilor Hamel asked what the City of Portsmouth has accomplished with this type of program. Mr. Mallory explained that the redistricting of the elementary schools process was very productive; with the use of small group discussion they were able to offer considerations to the School Board to use in the redistricting process. In addition, the City of Portsmouth used the small group discussions to get input on the rehabilitation of the middle school as well as the fiscal year budget process.

Councilor Lahey asked if there were any similar processes in other projects, such as the conversion of the Allen Rogers Building. Director Saunders advised that although this project predates her time with the City, she is aware that there were discussions held regarding the Shoreland Protection Overlay District in Downtown in direct relation to the Allen Rogers project. Councilor Lahey asked if there were any type of conversations regarding the renovations of the Sundial Shop building. Director Saunders advised that this project was proposed by an independent group so no discussion was had in that circumstance. Director Saunders advised that the conversations regarding the Colonial Theatre, Bloom's and the parcel now housing the Lake Opechee Inn, are recent examples.

Councilor Lahey recommended making the focus a more narrow issue to give people a goal to work toward. Director Saunders advised that when they initially began looking into this process, the thought was to focus on the Weirs because there needs to be conversation. When looking into the grant further, it requests that the community as a whole be used in the process. A tool of the Lakes Region Listens is to train the facilitators in the community and use them for future projects; they could be utilized in a focused project such as the Weirs. Mr. Mallory commented that there will be focused work areas within the two year process of this grant.

Councilor Hamel asked Acting Finance Director Woodaman if the allocation can be found in the 2011-2012 budget. Acting Director Woodaman advised that the funds would come from Contingency.

City Manager Myers advised that if there can be 200 people participating in the Master Plan process it would be amazing for the community. Director Saunders responded that almost 200 people came out to discuss the prison, so getting 200 people to discuss the City's road map is attainable.

After discussion regarding outside funding sources, Mr. Mallory advised that the Carsey Institute has committed to \$2,000 each year of the grant. Mayor Seymour asked Director Saunders if she was fine with the Council appropriating only \$21,000; Director Saunders concurred.

Councilor Doyle expressed concern that this study is going to be done and will turn into a report that never gets implemented. Director Saunders advised that this will allow for an outline to follow and will be supported by the community; Mayor Seymour concurred noting that everything takes time.

Councilor Doyle moved to approve \$10,500 for fiscal year 2011-2012 and \$10,500 for fiscal year 2012-2013 in matching funds for the Orton Family Foundation's Heart and Soul Grant. Seconded by Councilor Bolduc. **Motion passed unanimously.**

REDISTRICTING

City Manager Myers explained that New Hampshire State Law requires that at the conclusion of each Census each City is required to look at there existing ward boundaries and adjust them to equate to the “one person, one vote” make up. To achieve this, the City will need to make amendments to the City Charter, which outlines the specific streets and boundaries for each ward. City Manager Myers advised that the City will have there data within the next few days and would like to have the Government Operations and Ordinances Committee to meet very soon to review the recommendations.

Councilor Hamel and Councilor Baer expressed concerns with the possibility of changes moving them out of there current ward. City Manager Myers stated that if the lines were adjusted and approved by the voters, the Councilor would be permitted to complete the term for the ward which they were elected in.

Councilor Doyle moved to hold a meeting of the Government Operations and Ordinances Committee on Monday, July 25 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the redistricting of voting wards. Seconded by Councilor Lahey. **Motion passed unanimously.**

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Bolduc moved to adjourn at 6:58 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Lahey. **Motion passed unanimously.**

A True Record Attest:

Mary A. Reynolds

City Clerk