

CITY OF LACONIA - CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
Government Operations and Ordinances
June 11, 2019
6:00 P.M.

6/11/2019 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bownes called the meeting to order at the above date and time.

2. RECORDING SECRETARY

Cheryl Hebert, City Clerk

3. ROLL CALL

Chairman Bownes noted Councilor Cheney and Councilor Hosmer were both present and a quorum has been established.

4. STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

5. GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ORDINANCES (Bownes, Hosmer, Cheney)

5.A. Discussion of establishing a Laconia Historic District

Chairman Bownes made it known the the Planning Department received a completed demolition permit along with the application check for the demolition of the church. Due to the Diocese filing the demolition permit prior to any adoption of a Historic District, the permit request will be handled under existing rules. There has been some minor modifications to the proposed Historic District and copies will be available and posted to the website as soon as possible.

City Manager Myers explained to the committee that with the filing of a completed demolition permit today it will not be affected with what the committee and Council is trying to accomplish with the proposed adoption of NH RSA 676:12 and the establishing of a Historic District.

Councilor Hosmer questioned if the demolition permit can not be accepted because it is not complete, does it affect the proposed adoption of RSA 676:12?

City Manager Myers explained that may be more of a legal question as it is his understanding an application with a check was received but there is still a state document that needs to come in and various department signatures are required as well as notification to the Heritage Commission. That notification to the Heritage Commission occurred this afternoon.

Planning Director Trefethen explained the process of a demolition permit. The applicant is required to get numerous signatures from various departments and usually does not have those signatures when they turn in the application.

Councilor Bownes opened the meeting up for public comment.

Tara Shore - Apologizes for being upset with the news of the demolition permit being submitted already. But she encourages the committee and Council to still move forward with the process to establish a Historic District. With the demolition permit already being submitted for the church, who is to say more demolition permits won't be submitted to demolish other buildings with a historic value to Laconia.

Jane Whitehead - J. Whitehead read the requirements of the Heritage Commission when it deals

with demolition permits. This topic can not be discussed during the regular scheduled meeting scheduled for tomorrow, June 12, 2019 due to it not being properly posted, so it won't be talked about until next month's Heritage Commission meeting being held on July 10, 2019. J. Whitehead would like legal opinion as to whether or not this demolition permit can move forward or not as it does not have all the required signatures.

Chairman Bownes stated that all necessary parties involved with a demolition permit follow every correct legal step that is required for a request such as this. Chairman Bownes also stated he is very upset with the Diocese with the lack of communication. Chairman Bownes explained that there is no reason to expedite this process as it can not stop the demolition process regarding the church and that was the reason for the expedited process.

Councilor Cheney expressed his concerned with creating this Historic District Overlay in haste, it won't be done the right way. He would like to see this done the correct way the first time and that is the reason why he feels the committee and Council should not rush to get the process done.

Jane Wood - Questioned eminent domain or an alternative of raising money to purchase the church.

Councilor Cheney responded with eminent domain, the City would need to prove a proper need for the City to take the church over.

Jane Wood responded that if the City took over that property, City Hall could move in there which would in turn save the City money by not having to fix the parking garage.

Linda Normandin - Is in favor of the committee to continuing to move forward with the establishment of a Historic District. She stated it is troubling to her to now hear that the committee is wanting to slow down the process. L. Normandin also made it known that there are other initiatives being worked on in order to save the church.

Councilor Cheney explained the reasoning for taking a step back and thoroughly working on the Historic District Overlay proposal so as to not put a burden property owners that may own older homes. Councilor Cheney wants to be sure this process is done right.

Marcia Hayward, Wildwood Road - She is concerned with how slow government can work and does not want to see this process drag out longer than necessary.

Tara Shore - Thanked the committee to still be willing to move forward with the Historic District and sees the compassion that the committee has. T. Shore proposes not putting this off another month though. She would like to see a meeting happen sooner rather than later. T. Shore made the Council aware that there is funding available for properties that are listed under a Historic District.

Chairman Bownes - Stated he would like to schedule another Government Operations and Ordinances Subcommittee sooner rather than later.

The committee members agreed to add this topic to Monday, June 17, 2019 Government Operations meeting already scheduled.

Catherine Tokarz - C. Tokarz spoke of Tom Selig, the Town Administrator of Durham. She stated if the document presented is good enough for him then it should be good enough for Laconia.

Chairman Bownes reminded everyone that Tom Selig created the Historic Overlay District for Durham, not Laconia. The proposed document has been barely tweaked and needs to be done correctly for Laconia.

City Manager Myers - Stated for the record that he agrees with the committee not acting on this tonight because legal, the Planning Director, and himself have not even seen the revised document.

City Manager Myers assured the public that staff will support every directive of making sure every I is dotted, every T is crossed. City Manager Myers hopes the Heritage Commission is to receive information, deliberate information, and making decisions on information with an opened mind and in a public setting. The Manager does not want to provide an opportunity for anyone to challenge decisions that might be made if they were done outside of the public eye or ahead of time.

Councilor Hosmer expressed that he does not want to go so fast in this committee that mistakes are made. Councilor Hosmer would like legal contacted to ask if an application is submitted and not all steps have been completed is that application in fact considered completed? Councilor Hosmer expressed his personal feelings regarding the lack of communication from the Diocese and their lack of appreciation for the people of this community.

Jane Whitehead - Would like to know if the construction company that is listed on the demolition permit be contacted to find out the cost of the demolition.

Sue Fountain - Would like confirmation if the application that was submitted by the Diocese is considered complete or not, because if it is not considered complete then the establishment of a Historic District should be moved forward as fast as possible.

Dominique Vanasquez-Damais - Thanked Councilor Hosmer for what him and his wife are working on in other areas.

Councilor Hosmer moved to continue this topic by scheduling another committee meeting of the Government Operations and Ordinations Committee on June 17, 2019 at 7:00 pm, seconded by Councilor Cheney; the ***motion passed with all in favor.***

City Manager Myers stated he will check with administrative rules regarding the cancelation of the special Council Meeting that was scheduled for Thursday, June 13, 2019.

6. Any other business that may come before the Council

7. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the committee and hearing no objection, Chairman Bownes adjourned the meeting at 7:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Chairman David Bownes