PUBLIC HEARING

O-19-038, Amended

AMENDING THE SIGN ORDINANCES RELATIVE TO ADDRESS NUMBERS OF GROUND SIGNS

ROLL CALL

TESTIMONY

REGULAR MEETING

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT

COMMUNICATIONS

From: Tim Cummings, Director, Economic Development
Re: Discussion on 14 Court Street

PRESENTATIONS

Court Street Programming Update

Information Technology Department Update

UNFINISHED BUSINESS — RESOLUTIONS — None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS — ORDINANCES

O-19-038, Amended
Endorsers: Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman Tom Lopez

AMENDING THE SIGN ORDINANCES RELATIVE TO ADDRESS NUMBERS OF GROUND SIGNS

• Also assigned to the Planning Board; Favorable Recommendation Issued 3/7/2019
• Amended & Tabled pending Additional Public Hrg — 3/19/2019
• Withdrawn from Committee, Amended & Re-Referred to PEDC & NCPB — 3/26/2019
• NCPB issued Favorable Recommendation on Amended Version – 4/11/2019

NEW BUSINESS RESOLUTIONS — None

NEW BUSINESS — ORDINANCES

O-19-042
Endorsers: Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Alderman Tom Lopez
Alderman Jan Schmidt

DESIGNATING THE SOUTHWEST CONSERVATION AREA AS CITY CONSERVATION LAND
PUBLIC COMMENT

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

POSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION

ADJOURNMENT
To: Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja, Chair of Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: T. Cummings, Economic Development Director
Cc: Members of the Planning & Economic Development Committee

Date: April 11, 2019

Re: Discussion on 14 Court Street

Background
14 Court Street sits on approximately .626 acres of land and is classified as a municipal building that contains a theater, office suites supporting non-profits and artist organizations. The property is approximately 30,000 square feet comprised of two different buildings. The 1st structure is the former downtown area firehouse and is connected to a newer 2nd structure 1960s/70s addition that houses the Janice Streeter Theater (approximately 250-ish seat venue) used for Community Theater. This building has seen many uses over the last few decades from a children’s museum, a science & technology center and home to a professional theater company. However, most of these uses have gone by the wayside and for quite some time the building laid dormant with little life.

Purpose of This Memo
The purpose of this memo is to provide the Planning & Economic Development Committee (“PEDC”) with an update since the building has been activated and put into greater use over the last year and half.

Current Program
14 Court Street is currently used in the following ways: (The newer 1960s/1970s addition) houses The Janice Streeter Theater (a 250-ish seat venue) used predominately for community theater throughout the year and to support other local artist groups. There are 2 Multipurpose Rooms, and then a couple of Office Suites that support non-profits, artists, and artist organizations. (The older firehouse structure) there is a brewery and artist studios.

Tenants – Peacock Players, Symphony NH, Liquid Therapy, Michele Henderson/William Carey (Vocal Artist).

The current rent for the office space is $250.00 a month. The Theater rental is $300.00 a day or $1,500.00 a week (with a $500 deposit). Out of 52 weeks in a year there is approximately 6 to 8 weeks when the theater sees no activity.

The old firehouse contains Liquid Therapy a new brewery that opened in space that was not used productively it was the former fire apparatus bay area and needed significant work to achieve an occupancy permit. Up until Liquid Therapy renovated the space it was not usable. The financial arrangement is unique as it is a private-public partnership. Liquid Therapy borrowed the necessary funds to build-out the space to make it useable and is paying this loan back. The city is forgoing rent for a period of time until the loan is paid back to the city then rent will be charged at a market rate.

In a similar vein, the subgrade “basement” space up until recently was not used productively and did not have an occupancy permit. It was used mainly for storage. Under the leadership of Alderman Ken Gidge and with the Support of the Mayor a concept was developed to build 9 artist studios. This project was
undertaken last fall and just within the last two weeks marketing of the space started. There are 3 artists interested in using the space already. The idea is to work collaboratively with the Nashua Area Artists Association to market and find artists to fill the remainder of the studios. The Hunt Building Administrator is assisting with the property management. The base rent for the studios has not been finalized, but is looking to be around $125.00 a month.

**Future Use(s)**
Using the building in a more intense way moving forward will prove to be difficult and most likely will be prohibited. This is until such time certain mechanical systems and public safety improvements are made. The building needs certain base building improvements for the occupancy level to increase in the building. There is a plan in place to address a majority of these code related issues.

**At this Time Current Building Improvements Occurring or Recently Occurred**

**Sprinkler/Fire Suppression System**
- One of the larger issues is that the Sprinkler/Fire Suppression systems in the building either needs to be replaced, upgraded or installed. Most significantly, the building lacks fire suppression coverage in certain areas. We are currently working to resolve this specific issue. The City’s Building Inspector issued an RFP a couple months back and received no responses. Another RFP was issued with more detail and proposals are due at the end of April. The source of funds for this project will be coming from the City’s Building Maintenance Trust Fund.

**Re-grading/Paving Walking Paths/Landscaping**
- Re-grading/paving walking path within the back of the courtyard area. This project occurred last fall in preparation for the artist studios. It was handled internally by the DPW and improved the back courtyard area, accessibility issues, and drainage issues. Most importantly it helped to clean up the overall area.

**Basement Level Improvements**
- Basement Level (sub grade improvements). As noted earlier, nine (9) artist studio spaces of approximately 100 square feet were constructed. This project occurred last fall.
- Glazing at the subgrade level occurred to compliment the work that was undertaken internally with the build-out of the basement.

**Old Firehouse Improvements**
- There was an interior buildout that occurred privately in-return for usage of that space, which allowed for an occupancy permit (Liquid Therapy space)

- A glazing project occurred at the street level (Old Firehouse) through a CDBG grant.

**Deferred Capital Maintenance Necessary**

The following is a list of deferred capital maintenance that is needed:

**Roof**
- The roof needs to be repaired throughout the entire structure, both over the old firehouse and the 1960s/1970s addition. This roof replacement project is a significant cost. There was a plan to seek assistance through CDBG funds, which would have assisted in paying some of the project cost. The City’s Capital Improvement Budget for FY’20 had $225,000 set aside for it. At this time there is an evaluation on occurring on how best to proceed, because this plan does not appear to be an option at this point, because CDBG funds are not available.
Gutters
- This project could happen in conjunction with the roof, but not prior. The gutters and drains for the entire building need to be replaced.

Brick repointing
- Throughout the entire exterior of the building brick repointing is needed. The brick exterior needs attention to ensure the building’s integrity is maintained.

General Building Improvements
- In general the building needs to be painted. The floors and ceilings need updating and general cosmetic improvements are necessary, but these improvements are not more important than addressing the code related issues as outlined.

Conclusion
14 Court Street is an asset to the community and should be thought of in a way to enhance the downtown through the creative economy and should be used as an anchor to further enrich the community’s cultural development. 14 Court Street could be enhanced as a cultural asset for the community.

It should be noted that between 14 Court Street, the future PAC, Keefe Auditorium along with all other uses in this concentrated area of the downtown the formation of an arts district is starting to take hold and Duncan Webb (consultant who performed the Performing Arts Center Feasibility Study) in his report made a recommendation that the City should look into implementing an “Arts District” moving this objective forward may be something the Planning & Economic Development Committee may want to consider.

Attachments
- Ariel Map of 14 Court Street
- Bottom Level Floor Plan
- Signage
- Photo of Bottom Level Artist Space
- Duncan Webb Recommendations
- Brewery Concept Plan
Conclusions + recommendations

The case for building a brand new, large-capacity performing arts venue in Nashua is challenged by the city’s proximity to multiple large, presenting performing arts centers, the development of a new concert hall nearby, and limited demand on the part of local users for a venue with 750 or more seats.

Additionally, the city is already home to two performance venues that are regularly used by the community but that are greatly in need of renovation.

With that said, we see tremendous opportunity in Nashua. The organizations that are currently active in the community offer a diverse product, maintain busy schedules, and have demonstrated an ability to grow and develop programs over time. If we look to Positive Street Art as an example, Nashua can be seen as the type of environment that can allow an emerging organization the time, space, and support needed to flourish.

Our recommendations, then, are focused on harnessing the city and community’s current arts-momentum and resources, directing them at three different options.
Options

1. Partner with a regional college or university on the development of a new downtown arts center
2. Develop a downtown meeting, events, and music center
3. Develop an arts district anchored by a renovated Keefe Auditorium and the Hunt Building