

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

JANUARY 19, 2021

A meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee was held Tuesday, January 19, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via teleconference.

Chairman Tencza

As Chairman of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

*To access Zoom, please refer to the agenda or the City's website for the meeting link.*

*To join by phone: 1-929-205-6099 - Meeting ID: 838 5261 0251 Passcode: 221114*

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, through public postings. Instructions have also been provided on the City of Nashua's website at [www.nashuanh.gov](http://www.nashuanh.gov) and publicly noticed at City Hall and the Nashua Public Library.

If anyone has a problem accessing the meeting via phone or Channel 16, please call 603-821-2049 and they will help you connect.

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting via the methods mentioned above, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-To-Know Law.

Alderman Laws called the roll and asked them to state the reason he or she could not attend, confirmed that they could hear the proceedings, and stated who was present with him or her.

The roll call was taken with 4 members of the Planning and Economic Development Committee present:

Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza  
Alderman Jan Schmidt  
Alderman Thomas Lopez  
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons

Members not in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large Brandon Laws

Also in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Sarah Marchant, Community Development Director  
Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

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ROLL CALLChairman Tencza

Alderman Laws will not be joining us tonight, so I will call the roll, ask you to state your reason why can't attend, confirm that you can hear the proceedings and state who is present in the room. Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza, I am present, I can hear everybody and I am alone.

Alderman Schmidt

I am present, I am in the room alone.

Alderman Lopez

I am present, I can hear and see everybody and I am home because of the stay at home order.

Alderman Clemons

I am here, I can hear everyone and I look forward to the proceedings. I am by myself by the way.

Chairman Tencza

Thank you. As I mentioned Alderman-at-Large Brandon Laws in not in attendance. Also in attendance are Alderman Dowd, President Wilshire, Alderman Klee, Director Marchant and Director Cummings. It also looks like we have Paul Shea on the line with us.

PUBLIC COMMENT - NoneDISCUSSION

- 1) Update on Imagine Nashua Master Plan

***Chairman Tencza recognized Community Development Director Sarah Marchant.***

Sarah Marchant, Director of Community Development

Good evening everybody. Thank you so much for having me. The Imagine Nashua, the City is updating the Master Plan process, is well underway. We had our second Public Meeting a couple of weeks ago and we've had close to 100 people attend, a little more than that the last one. We have actually launched on our website Imagine.NashuaNH.Gov a new survey. It's an interactive survey and if it's ok with you, I'll show my screen real quick. Here it is, can you see my screen?

Chairman Tencza

Yes.

Director Marchant

OK great. So this is what it looks like if you go to Imagine.NashuaNH.GOV. And we are looking for your feedback on this interactive map. It is really easy to add a comment and you can add your own comments or you can just check out your neighbor's comments. Simply click "add comment" and there's three different buttons; "maintain or protect" "develop or redevelop" and "improve" and you pick one and then you just move the map around in Nashua and hit place marker here and you can place the marker and add your comment in about that space. The other thing you can do – and then we will have heard you, it'll be recorded and everybody else can see. So if we click on some of them that are here we have an

idea here that somebody posted “the conservation area needs to be preserved, but public access needs to be better marked”. And you can see in the bottom left, there’s a thumbs up like button and a thumbs down dislike button. So if you look and see what your neighbors have put, you can add a thumbs up if you agree with that. And you can add a thumbs down if you don’t.

So there are quite a few comments all over the community already. There’s more and more when you zoom in a bit too. And so we are getting a lot of interesting feedback and different feedback and it seems that this is a really great method especially if you have specific ideas and specific locations. I’ll stop sharing my screen. If you have specific ideas, specific locations, if you – when we talk to people, people a lot of times have very specific things that they think we can do better with or areas of the community that they live in in their neighborhood that they’re like, you know what, this would be much better if something was here. Or we had a whole bunch of comments last time about things people want at Holman Stadium, say concerts. We had a lot of people who want concerts to come back to Homan Stadium. So by placing a point on a map and putting your comment in there, that seems like maybe a lot easier of a way to communicate to be able to us know what is important to you and why. And then also it lets your neighbors see what is important. So that’s the big step right now.

Our next meeting is scheduled for March 2<sup>nd</sup>, we haven’t actually put the press out on that yet. But we will be getting it out in the next week or so; it is a little early to do that. We are going to be taking a deep dive on the six topics at that meeting so transportation, housing, land use, arts and culture, economic vitality and mobility. And then in early April we are going to be focused on aerial planning and spatial planning. So we are going to look at Daniel Webster College for kind of a deep dive of what a future vision could be at DWC. And then we are really going to be focusing on some of those corridors; Amherst Street, Daniel Webster Highway, and some of those bigger, important kind of stretches, maybe Broad Street to Amherst Street. Some of those bigger intersections that look and feel different than they did maybe 10, 20 years ago and probably will look very different in the next 10 years. So that’s the focus of where we are right now and I am happy to answer any questions.

#### Chairman Tencza

Questions for Director Marchant? Anyone? Alderman Lopez.

#### Alderman Lopez

I just wanted to make a comment so we don’t have dead air, but I have been part of the Imagine Nashua Organizational Meetings, they are being broadcast and there’s pretty good buy-in and good participation. I think the City is doing a pretty good job of engaging people and making sure that they feel like they have a say in it. There are still people finding out about it. I mean work in marketing to 90,000 people is kind of never done. But I think we are starting to collect some really good information. It is good to see the volunteers who are on the Master Planning Committee getting to do all the work and feel invested as they are while watching the City Staff kind of give them the support that they need.

#### Chairman Tencza

Director Marchant, I was just going to mention, I was involved in the last session that you ran that the Committee ran. I was struck and that was working groups that broke into I don’t know how many, 10 or 11 working groups, to discuss the same topic. But I was impressed at how much I really thought that there was consensus around the topics, a lot of people came back to the larger group with similar ideas around the six areas that you mentioned. So I think this is on the right track, hopefully people are going to be impressed with the product that comes out after this process. We are looking forward to that. When will that be finalized the Master Plan?

#### Director Marchant

Yeah that is a great question. I think one of the lessons of learning from doing this in COVID and largely virtually that it is easier for people to react to specific things than to have these larger conversations, you know, what do you think the future is? Or what is your vision for Nashua? It is much easier to react to something. So we are building in more time when we get our first draft which should be May to then have enough time to have potential a lot of comments and edits that come in on that so that it can be, you know, understanding everything we’ve had but as people are still coming on board and as maybe there’s a lot better ability for people to react to something specific. So the final draft is due to come in probably in July, July / August time frame so we can get it to you guys for final approval. So that is the timeline there but there will be a lot of continued, lots of focus groups, lots of small group conversations and also these bigger meetings to really try and get feedback and get everybody on the same page.

Chairman Tencza

Great. Alderman Dowd?

Alderman Dowd

Just a question, at some point when you have all these ideas from that map, are you going to put a financial filter on it before it goes to the writing process? Because I've heard of a couple of ideas that are hugely expensive.

Director Marchant

At the Master Plan this is not going to be, it's not a very specific plan. For example the Riverfront Plan right was big ideas that we put financial numbers to. This will not be that specific. This is going to be higher level goals and actions and generally no there is not necessarily a financial piece to it. That comes later. But it also isn't going to say, "We shall do this" something specific, it is more going to be like, these are the important goals and actions that the community wants to achieve. And the next step would be then to update the Land Use Code to reflect those things so that both the private market and public investment moves us towards reaching those goals and action items.

Alderman Dowd

Follow-up?

Chairman Tencza

Go ahead.

Alderman Dowd

When you get into the Land Use Codes and Zoning, I know we have talked about this extensively but do you feel at any point you are going to be butting up against existing City or State Law and have to change Zoning Law.

Director Marchant

Yes. That would be the intention is after this is completed in the fall is to really start on a rewrite of the Land Use Code. So it would be and depending on what it is, it is looking at some substantial revisions to zoning and how we have our Land Use Process. In some places it will probably stay the same, there are some things that are good. But there's a whole lot of things here, the existing Code was updated and it was written, Zoning was written after the last Master Plan to reflect those goals and actions. Depending on what we get out of this, they could be very different. We are a redevelopment City now and we need to do that to the best of our ability.

So I think that there are some very significant changes that we are hearing so far, maybe they will filter through. But those will need to be reflected in a Land Use Code or else we will not meet the goals and the vision that the community is setting out.

Chairman Tencza

Alderman Lopez.

Alderman Lopez

Did you guys figure out some kind of geometric pattern that was allowed for form based code or is that just not even possible at this point?

Director Marchant

No I absolutely think that form based code is something that could be very important in the future and how this land use code comes down. I don't think it is going to work everywhere in the City. But I certainly think in our more urban corridor that a form based code would really get to some of the ideals that we are hearing from the public about what is important to them. It's important their public space, how they feel in the public space so it feels safe, that things look in a way that are as comfortable to them. And that is what a form based code is all about right? It's about forming the public space first

to make sure that it is walkable and it feels safe and that it is well lit and that there are, it has all the pieces and the character that pull together, versus focusing first on the parking and the setbacks, right. And so it is a way of looking at zoning from the public space first. So I think that will go very nicely in many parts of the community.

Chairman Tencza

Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

So with form based code being applied equally or equitably, would you tackle those same issues equally across the City or do you think some areas might be somewhat more subject to public versus people who live there needs.

Director Marchant

Maybe I stated something incorrectly. I meant the public spaces in the space where the street is and where the public goes, versus a private space which is owned by private property, right? That's what a form based code focuses on first. Because of that it is great in the urban corridor, it is great in the downtown. It maybe is more difficult to reflect values that we are hearing in the more suburban areas or it doesn't make as much sense that way. So I think that there are places that it is very useful and very applicable. I think there will be other areas that we may look a little bit more traditional, we might look at more traditional zoning. But always we are taking into account what the neighborhood wants plus the community's vision, right? And we are trying to find those balances between these things.

Alderman Lopez

OK I am glad to hear that. I mean I was thinking originally when I first learned about form based code that it was like a sort of geometric, here's the middle of the City where everybody shares, and then moving out there's different things and that kind of thing. There's definitely more like a topography in Nashua because we have several central areas that are developed more than areas around them and that's where the space usage would be. But, I mean, downtown is significantly more developed right particularly in Ward 4 and that area. So I mean it is going to be difficult to imagine, you can't move a church, you can't move a large building or anything like that. So that's the complexity that I was kind of referring to where you can't just say, This is the center of town, because there are several centers of town.

Director Marchant

Form based code is very neighborhood based and it is based on the form that exists in the neighborhood already; it is not to rewrite everything. It is to make sure that we don't have rules that actually produce something that's incongruous with the neighborhood. And so I think it is very applicable in more of our core neighborhoods that have form in character that we want to make sure it maintained and preserved.

Alderman Lopez

Thanks.

Chairman Tencza

Any other questions or comments for Director Marchant? Alderman Schmidt?

Alderman Schmidt

Thanks. I didn't catch the website name.

Director Marchant

Imagine.NashuaNH.gov

Alderman Schmidt

Imagine.Nashua. Thank you.

Director Marchant

NashuaNH. Just like the City.

Chairman Tencza

Anyone else? Alright, Director Marchant, thank you very much; appreciate the update.

- 2) City's efforts to assist businesses during COVID-19

***Chairman Tencza recognized Economic Development Director Tim Cummings.***Chairman Tencza

Next on the Agenda is a report from Economic Development Tim Cummings on the City's efforts to assist businesses during COVID. Director Cummings if you could just update us on what you have been working on and what you think is coming up in the future; what we should be thinking about.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

Absolutely, Mr. Chairman and through you to the Committee, thank you for having me. I did put together just a quick Memo more to just facilitate the conversation and remind me of some of the things that we have covered over the last 9 or 10 months or so. So I am just going to share my screen quickly and I will send this document off to you so you all have it as a frame of reference. I just put it together this afternoon. So again, this Memo is just to highlight some of the steps that my office has taken to help curb the negative impacts caused to COVID-19 here in the City. By no means is this Memo supposed to be all encompassing, it's more for illustrative purposes just to help orientate the conversation.

First and foremost, we worked very hard to continue to have a strong relationship with Great American Downtown and the Nashua Chamber of Commerce. When COVID hit, we organized daily calls and now weekly calls; we have had over 125 of them. It should go without saying, I think Nashua was very successful in our COVID-19 Pandemic reaction due to our organized efforts very early on. I can't take credit for that, that was definitely from the top down, with the Mayor and our Emergency Manager Justin Kates helping organize us. We, I think, did a great job especially compared to some of our counterparts in the State in terms of providing services and getting information out to the community. This is just one example. So we were able to set up this daily call, we were able to trade and facilitate information sharing and then provide that information out through our different networks.

Again, I took it upon myself to immediately reach out to our largest employers, we did 50 meetings or calls within the first two weeks. That represented 25,000 employees. Again, just to triage the situation, make sure that we were getting information out to the various businesses and also to hear what their issues or concerns may have been. That helped us immensely, you know, as you know Alderman Tencza, you were very involved with the next bullet which was we developed a recovery program which outlined some items that we wanted to pursue. This was a strategic document that we put together with the collaboration of some various stakeholders. That document was presented to the Board of Aldermen and has been used a guiding document for us.

The other items I should mention, the Downtown Barriers that were implemented, that was organized through my office. It started in May, it went through November. We put out 2,400 linear feet of barriers to create outdoor dining and to help reactivate our downtown. I can't say enough of what this effort took to be able to get done, but nonetheless, we were able to come together as a community to be able to do it. So I am very proud of that initiative. What some folks might not know, but it is probably good to share, my office participated twice a week, Federally organized US Homeland Security calls to better understand the supply chain issues and then we were able to provide that information back out to the community. We were getting real live time issues and very early on there were some serious supply chain issues that were being discussed as each individual states were considering shutting down, it caused some logistical challenges to say the least because of just how our economic network is all intertwined; one decision in area of the country can definitely have an effect in another area of the country. And we were trying to get that information out to the community as quickly as possible. And because of our participation, we were able to speak to some of the senior managers that we have here in Nashua with some of these larger companies and be able to provide them some information, that was very helpful.

We organized, here locally, a COVID-19 Impact Fund; this was a partnership between my office and Community Development. It was a \$1.2 million dollar program between grants and loans. I think overall we had something like 23 non-profits and 32 small businesses participate in the first round, 29 of them were grants. On average we gave about \$17,000.00 in grants and \$28,000.00 in loans. We applied for a new revolving loan fund which we are going to be getting up and running hopefully within the next 6 to 8 weeks. This will be approximately \$750,000.00 that we will be looking to redeploy out into the community again for low interest loans. I actually have a meeting, I think tomorrow, with Sarah Marchant to discuss how we can again coordinate and work with Community Development to maximize our impact where through her office and CDBG will be looking to put out grants and grant funding again, very similar to what we did last time around although I will note I think we learned that we need to focus on under relationship businesses that were not serviced by the PPP and some of the COVID-19 programs that the Federal Government instituted. So we will be focusing a lot on small businesses and particularly minority businesses. So I think that that will be a big thrust of what we will be looking to pursue this coming round, which again, we will hopefully have up and running sometime in a March type of timeframe at the latest.

Another effort that my office did, that some folks may not realize is every day we were working with the larger boxes in the City, particularly the grocery stores to get the hours of operations understood as they were changing. And in particular, that helped us get the information out to vulnerable populations who may not want to go when there would be larger crowds. So we did that, we were able to push that out through the various networks and channels like Great American Downtown and what not as a service to the community because we have the relationships, we know a lot of these folks. It was very easy for us to connect up with some of these individuals and get this information. Because of that, we were able to provide this service.

As I was mentioning just a few minutes ago, during a lull when the pandemic was not as heightened, the summer / early fall time period, we were able to start to assess how we did in the spring. One of the things we looked at was where there were gaps in the coverage and that made us focus on minorities in Nashua, minority owned businesses. And so in August we reached out to specifically 20 minority owned businesses, just to you know poll them, take their temperature, see how things were faring. We learned that almost 70% of those didn't qualify for any type of Federal Assistance and/or Local Assistance either. A lot of that was due to the fact that, you know there were some technical issues that they had, particularly record keeping and what not. So something that actually my office is now working on, is we are going to retain a consultant to help some of these small businesses if they want to get organized, we will be able to help provide some technical expertise and assistance on that front which hopefully will pay dividends for them in the future.

And that is pretty much it. We did one follow-up meeting at the end of September after we did our initial outreach, and that again, helped us focus our efforts for this time around relative to how we wanted to deploy this new revolving loan fund for COVID-19 that we will be getting up and running in the next, as I said, in the next 6 or so weeks. So I am going to stop sharing my screen now and again, Alderman Tencza, I will send this Memo around to you so you can have it for your record. But I just thought it would be good just to share some of the efforts and activities my office has undertaken. I heard some chatter a few weeks back from folks questioning or wondering if and what we were doing and I thought it would be good just to kind of memorialize it and have a meeting on it so you and others could be aware of the various things we did. So with that being said, happy to take any questions, thank you.

#### Chairman Tencza

Alderman Lopez would you mind if I just allowed Paul Shea to speak first and then take questions for both of them. Paul if you're there, I just wanted to give you an opportunity to talk about what the Great American Downtown has been doing, because I know you've been doing a lot of work to help coordinate efforts amongst the different businesses downtown.

#### Paul Shea, Great American Downtown

Yeah thank you Alderman Tencza, I am very glad to join you tonight, I appreciate the note to come and hop on this meeting with you. You know, I can't echo what Director Cummings has said enough, that kind of established relationships that we had prior to all of this unfolding and the level of coordination and communication have been essential to the success as businesses work to maintain operations as best they can and take advantage of all the Federal, State and Local programs.

Great American Downtown, it was very opportune that in January of this year, I had my staff kind of hit the pavement and go to businesses and update all of the contact information. We maintain contact information for about 125 businesses and that list is growing as we kind of continue with uproots and get more contacts for various businesses and non-profit organizations throughout the downtown. I think the most recent email that went out had a list of perhaps 390 some odd contacts that we are dispatching word of a Thursday meeting. We have a meeting and as you know, there was the most

recent recovery package passed in December. And it is kind of coming to fruition, the guidance from the SPA is starting to be published I think as of early last week. The Paycheck Protection Program has begun to roll out to all eligible businesses this week, first draw businesses and I think it's the Community Development Finance Authority or something of that nature had access early on last week. So local banks are beginning to kind of roll that out and we have been very fortunate to be connected with the New Hampshire Small Business Development Center throughout this process. I cannot thank Hollis McGuire especially but the whole team over there for their support as we have been navigating through all of these programs ourselves included such as the Paycheck Protection Program and the AIDL Program and others.

So this Thursday we will have another meeting; I think Director Cummings covered a lot of ground of kind of what we have been doing together. This week we have a meeting with Hollis, it will be at 4:00 p.m. I think the most readily accessible way that folks could find that information is by the Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page. But if anybody out there listening is looking for information on how to sit in on this meeting and have the opportunity to ask Hollis McGuire questions about these various programs that have been put out through the most recent recovery bill, they could contact me at [PaulWShea@DowntownNashua.Org](mailto:PaulWShea@DowntownNashua.Org) and I can get that information along to them. Countless meetings, as Tim said, we were meeting daily for many weeks, we still touch base every Wednesday and we will continue to do so. I recognize that this most recent bill does not cover all of the needs of the business community and other facets of our community that have been so greatly affected by this. And as the new Federal Government comes into play and new packages are brought forth, we will continue to be there to help connect folks with information.

We have worked a good bit at Great American Downtown to adjust our programming. We are so used to doing events and just fun promotional stuff, marketing for the City. This is very different territory so it has certainly been interesting to say the least. But again, just with everyone connecting, pulling together, and do what we can to keep our heads above water, I think everyone has been doing a great job. We have kind of adjusted our marketing with the times, we work with Economic Development as they would pull together the grocery list. We worked with the United Way as they would pull together information about various resources; the people that are having food insecurity issues and so forth and published a lot of that stuff early on to just help get the word out. We partnered with the Chamber of Commerce, the United Way, the City to offer access to personal protective equipment which I think was a big push. A lot of people had a lot of trouble getting access to things like hand sanitizer, sanitation wipes, gloves, thermometers, all of that stuff. So I think that that was really helpful. I think that the market has really started to kind of pick up the slack on that and people have more ready access to that type of equipment but I think early on that was especially important as businesses were working to get back open.

I won't get into all of kind of the fun little programs that we have been working on, a lot of virtual stuff. Quite important too but I know we have kind of covered a lot of ground tonight. So I will kind of leave it at that. But I appreciate you, again, asking me to join you. And hats off to Director Cummings especially and Kate Luczko over at the Chamber for all of the work that they have been doing. It's been great and I think we can be very proud of how Nashua has responded to this.

Chairman Tencza

Great, thanks Mr. Shea. Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

Yeah so I want to definitely applaud Great American Downtown and all the efforts they've done in being adaptive and versatile and really pulling together the inherent communication that happens downtown with the business owners. I think a lot of the work that they put in over the years in holding events and building that sense of community has really, really paid off when we really needed people to be able to talk to each other and share not only their need for supplies and resources but the risks that they are facing, the concerns and their strategy. So I definitely appreciate the role that Great American Downtown has played in that. As a more events driven organization, they kind of had the opportunity to sit this one out or not be as flexible as they did and Paul particularly met the challenge and realigned his organization to meet the needs that will make Nashua continue to have a great downtown.

I think we also should probably acknowledge the Downtown Improvement Committee for the roles that they have filled as well, both in enhancing communication and supporting different initiatives that we have kind of pushed forward as Aldermen with the help of Economic Development, like the parking rearrangement. I do think that that communication was invaluable as we took those first steps, communicating to the public that, yes we are taking steps to make places safe. Yes we were changing the way things were but it would be OK and having the role that Public Health played in coordinating a way to reopen safely during a time where a lot of the rest of the country was not reopening safely and they suffered for that. So I want to recognize that role.

My questions were for Director Cummings particularly. First, have you had a chance to clear out your voicemail because every time I call it is full. And second, with the approach that you are taking, with communicating to businesses about Economic Development and Payroll Protection Act and that kind of stuff, are you attentive to the needs of the employees? For example, making sure that they are aware of other City services that might be helpful to them such as rent and utility assistance?

Director Cummings

Thank you, Alderman Lopez. My voicemail gets full very quickly I have to say and I am well aware of that. So thank you; I do my best to try to keep up with it. In all seriousness....

Alderman Lopez

I am surprised that you do all that you can do.

Director Cummings

In all seriousness Alderman Lopez, what I was about to say is, yes we do try to make the City services available to the employees. We have to be very, very respectful to the dynamic. We go through the employer and so and then we ask the employers to disseminate the information on down to the employees. But yes, we absolutely want to provide all the differing type of services for everyone's use.

Alderman Lopez

So you have communicated to employers at least that we have those extra utility and rent assistance, because a lot of them are meant to be preventative so we don't have a huge surge of people who are facing evictions or you know unfortunate circumstances. So really it is important to get that word out now through whatever vectors we have. And that's just as important to a company's success as anything else, is knowing that there are additional resources in town.

Director Cummings

Yes absolutely.

Alderman Lopez

With the upcoming strategies that we are doing, do you foresee any major alterations in the downtown parking plan?

Director Cummings

If I could Mr. Chair.

Chairman Tencza

Sure, go ahead.

Director Cummings

So on the parking front I don't see any major changes. I think we will be looking – this is all subject to change.

Alderman Lopez

You know what Director Cummings, I may have misworded that. What I am referring to is the outdoor seating expansion. You don't have to pull any curtains back or anything with the parking.

Director Cummings

Sure, sure, no understood. I don't foresee the outdoor dining changing all that much either. We are still working through the details per se, but I think we are going to try to mirror as much as we did last year this time around subject to some lessons learned and some tweaks that need to happen. But that's our goal at least is to try to provide as much as we can for the restaurants and the shops in the downtown.

Alderman Lopez

OK because I know we had discussed in very broad and initial strokes in the Infrastructure Committee potentially having places confirm that they wanted things, that they would be able to maybe fill water jugs or not, trying to design spaces appropriate to the neighborhood look or their particular businesses. And I just want to make sure that any of that planning or anything is communicated well in advance so they are not trying to figure it out when they are going live.

Director Cummings

Yes, understood. Thank you.

Chairman Tencza

All set, Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

Yes, thank you.

Chairman Tencza

Alderman Dowd?

Alderman Dowd

I'd just like to point out that Manchester is following suit with what we did as far as the outdoor dining. They are considering it right now for extending it into future years. And I think other New Hampshire communities are doing it as well. So once again, I think we are leading the way on things going on in the State of New Hampshire. So kudos to all the people involved in that. And I think that we should do whatever we can to allow the outdoor dining and also make it as attractive as possible and I think we started doing that at the end of it. I think as soon as the weather is nice, we jump on it. Because the added capacity for the restaurants will help them recover a little bit from the doldrums of the winter and the things that are going on right now with COVID. I think we are doing a good job with that and we should also be looking at other areas where we can also help our businesses as you are doing right now.

Director Cummings

Alderman Tencza, if I may?

Chairman Tencza

Yes, Director Cummings.

Director Cummings

Thank you. I absolutely agree with you Alderman Dowd and we are working towards those goals. I am hopeful that we will have a piece of Legislation before the Board of Aldermen sometime in the next few weeks and we will be able to finalize these details. And to your point, making sure that we have an eye towards the aesthetics is going to be a higher priority this time around.

Chairman Tencza

President Wilshire?

Alderman Wilshire

Thank you. I appreciate Director Marchant, Director Cummings and Paul Shea for being here tonight. It just shows your commitment. I think you know the three of you are fantastic. I know you work well together, not all communities can say that, the people that they have doing these roles, performing these jobs and duties and have these visions don't always click. And Paul Shea, even though I can't see you, I mean you too. It's pretty good that we have so many dedicated people

in our City. Tim, you know, working with Paul and Sarah and everybody to keep the merchants alive and vibrant. It's a lot of work. People can look and say, well what have you done today? But it's not what have you done today, it's what have you been doing, building relationships and doing all those things that are important for everybody to be successful. Not just the merchant, not just the – you know, their employees, their neighbors, our neighbors. We are very lucky here and I appreciate all of you. Thank you.

Chairman Tencza

Thank you, President Wilshire

Alderman Clemons

Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Tencza

Yes, Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. I want to just echo what President Wilshire just said. It's not funny but it's ironic because her and I went through the, on the Board of Aldermen, the economic downturn in 2009. And at that point, it was back then it was a lot of the same that we see now but I think this time around was a lot more worse. I think it hit the hospitality industry much worse than it did back then. So the interesting thing about it is that when someone asks you your measure of success, a lot of times they look in times of a great economy. They'll say, well how many new jobs did you produce or how many new businesses opened and things like that. But in times like these, you have to look at that and say, how many businesses did we save? How many businesses are still here on the corner that wouldn't be there had it not been for the efforts that we put forward.

I can't say enough about what the City of Nashua has done to really help businesses throughout the spectrum not only just downtown but with doing different design concepts and things like that. We really put businesses first. And I think that it has been noticed across the State and across the region. You see that there are people coming here and they want to invest in Nashua. And so we need to do whatever we can to keep this going and whatever support you Tim or Sarah or Paul or anyone needs from the Board of Aldermen, you know, please come to us because we want to be, Nashua wants to be number 1. And I want Nashua to be number 1. I want us to be the one that other cities look to to say hey we've got to do what they are doing. So I just want to thank you all for everything that you've done and I look forward to working with you in the future. We've got some good stuff coming down the pike I think. And I think 2021 is going to be a lot better than 2020.

Director Cummings

Agreed, thank you.

Chairman Tencza

Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

I just wanted to point out to Alderman Clemons' point that in the midst of all this we have seen, I mean Director Cummings is fully aware I am sure that Subzero is moving in on Factory Street; Lounge 38, Dolly Shaker's basically was sold right before the COVID pandemic and they managed to open and they were doing pretty good on Sunday when I went by. And then I am trying to blank – the name of the Irish Place, Director Cummings.

Director Cummings

Magees.

Alderman Lopez

Magees. Some businesses were already in the underway and initiating their dreams, the efforts and all of that kind of stuff and they really could have just not been able to pull it off. And they did, there still have been opportunities. I know the coffee shop that was also the plant shop was one of the ones that people felt pretty sorely but that space immediately got snatched right up. So there have been changes downtown and I think a lot of people who aren't necessarily going downtown regularly because of appropriate care with regard to the pandemic or maybe for their own reasons, aren't aware that downtown is changing like it always changes and there are still people finding opportunities and figuring out how to make whatever they were trying to do work.

Chairman Tencza

Thank you Alderman Lopez. If I could just ask a question of Director Cummings and Paul Shea and Director Marchant? So it seems to me that the PPP money has kind of dried up or should have been used by now by businesses and maybe there would be more programs coming, but maybe not, we don't know. What do businesses need from the City now, what do businesses need from individuals now? Is it just increased foot traffic, or are there other things that we could be doing to make it easier on them?

Director Cummings

Well I will start things off, if I may, Mr. Chairman. I think that there is not one solution I should say, it is going to be multiple strategies that need to be undertaken. I think the big thing that we can do is keep the communication open and hear from the various business, particularly the small businesses and these small, independent businesses that don't have the cash reserves that our larger corporations do. Understanding what their needs may be, be flexible, help them how we can when their issues arise. That may be some low interest loans, that may be grants, that may be just helping promote them with some marketing and doing a marketing campaign like a "Buy Local". These are the various things we are going to need to do, really to help get people back up on their feet again.

And, of course, that all comes with the confidence. And really the confidence is not going to come until people feel comfortable venturing back out again. So really, you know, it's all interconnected and having that vaccine readily available, getting people vaccinated as quickly as possible. That is going to go hand-in-hand and doing what we can to create that safe environment so people can go back out. Those are all the different strategies we are going to need to attempt to take. It's part of the reason why when I started my comments by saying, "Under the leadership of the Mayor and the Emergency Manager". All of our various business units got on the same page very quickly and communicated with one another. Public Health, Fire, Police, Community Development, DPW, Economic Development, we all had to coordinate and work with one another and we are a massive operation. And to be able to connect with one another to align our differing service deliveries with one another so we could affect the change that we did. I know first-hand, we heard from businesses that say because of the activities that we all undertook, we have kept them in business.

I think we need to just continue doing what we have been doing and be willing to provide some additional resources or some additional flexibility as needed just until we can get through, hopefully, this last hurdle over the coming year.

Mr. Shea

Alderman Tencza, if I may.

Chairman Tencza

Please.

Mr. Shea

So in terms of just to inform on PPP and those kinds of programs, truth be told the first Paycheck Protection Program, people were exhausting their funds on that for the most part, the early applicants in mid to late summer of 2020 at the latest. So we have been quite overdue for an additional run of the Paycheck Protection Program and similarly helpful programs. The most recent recovery act does have another run that is going to operate very similarly to the first Paycheck Protection Program. There are some additional caveats that are mostly tied to performance as compared to previous quarters for newly established businesses or performance in 2019 for businesses that have been in operation

since prior to the pandemic. And it is largely tied to 25% reduction in gross receipt. That is going to be adequate funding to cover very basic overhead costs and payroll costs for a period of approximately 8 weeks or so.

The Federal Government has done a great job of kind of adapting that program in kind of relation to how it was initially set up to maximize the ability of businesses to get forgiveness. And, again, kind of communicating with businesses and connecting them with resources to ensure that they are able to leverage that to the best of their ability is going to be super important. I would echo Director Cummings sentiment regarding marketing and especially adaptability. A lot of the trajectory of things is going to be dependent upon the deployment of the vaccine; the caseload in the State and locally and in what the appropriate measures are in terms of various restrictions. Hopefully with the farer whether, we will be able to resume greater volume of business across the board in earnest.

And, again, to echo the sentiment, I think a lot of that is going to tie into confidence. So I think that highlighting the ways that people can support local businesses in the nearer months and helping to instill confidence once everyone is able to get the vaccine that is interested in it. The Department of Community Health, and Public Health & Community Services has been kind of doing the grueling work of getting the testing done and supporting vaccinations how they can and your continued support for them and their work, is going to be hugely important. Because it's really I think adequate vaccination and immunity and cut down on transmission and active cases is going to be the thing that does it for us. People's confidence will follow that so whatever we can do to get that stuff moving faster; I know a lot of it is dependent on things above and beyond Nashua's control. But how we can facilitate that whole process I think will be really essential.

Just one more thought. This most recent recovery bill had funding for Paycheck Protection Program, it had funding for shuttered Performance Venues, it had a lot of good things in it. But the State and Local aid that the Federal Government kind of sent down to New Hampshire and New Hampshire is able to dole out to cities and communities like Nashua and have the State and both the City be able to support business operations and non-profit operations, etc. and so forth. Through those programs it has been huge, you know, Paycheck Protection Program was great, but there was a lot of resources that came through that State and Local funding and that was not a part of this most recent recovery bill. So I am hoping to see and I gather that it is in the cards for that State and Local funding to come through. When the time comes, Economic Development, Community Development, working with those resources to get those out is going to be just as, if not more important than Paycheck Protection Program. Thank you.

Chairman Tencza

Thank you.

Alderman Clemons

Mr. Chairman, may I speak?

Chairman Tencza

Well, let me recognize Alderman Lopez, because I just recognized him and then Alderman Clemons you will have a chance to speak.

Alderman Lopez

I just had a quick question. I was actually just speaking to Director Bagley about the upcoming clinic that the State has approved for homeless people. And she had let me know that Public Health is working very, very hard in setting up the capacity to deliver more vaccinations and all that kind of stuff. As was mentioned, like the supply has to be there to do it but as far as all the signals coming from up above ours, is get as many people signed up and ready to go as possible and as soon as doses are coming out that process can start. I know she has reached out to some of the local churches particularly because they are basically physically designed with the space you need for large volume people moving and that kind of stuff.

My question was for Director Cummings, we talked about being flexible and using the microloan abilities, I guess you could say, that we have in a way that best benefits businesses. And as Paul was saying just before, some businesses didn't get equal access to the supports from the last round of stimulus, basically because they were new. So is that an area where would be able to as a City try to provide some kind of additional resource or like engage those brand new companies into the conversation where they may not be eligible for things that more established businesses are so they made need a different level of City support?

Director Cummings

If I may, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Tencza

Please, go ahead.

Director Cummings

Thank you. Yes, Alderman Lopez, that's exactly right. We would be looking to focus our finite, limited resources on – I referred to it before as the "gaps" but you know, essentially where we found that Federal Assistance wasn't available or couldn't be made available. So new businesses that may not have the financial records, businesses that may not have the proper paperwork in order, can we get them the proper paperwork, get them organized and then try to make a loan of some sort? Helping businesses that may not have the banking relationships that other more sophisticated businesses may have. Minority businesses in general due to language barriers that may exist; these types of businesses we know from observations from last time around, we fell a little short, not "we" being the City of Nashua but "we" as a country as a whole in terms of providing services just because of how the programs were set up. We are going to make a point to prioritize these types of industries, these types of businesses hopefully to shrink the gap that I referenced previously.

Alderman Lopez

So you mean we fell short because they fell short and we are they, like we are all part of the same community. So we were able to learn where the resources that were being fed into our community weren't necessarily aimed at what Nashua's specific needs were so we as Nashua can make sure that we are taking care of all of our businesses.

Director Cummings

That's absolutely correct, Alderman Lopez. I mean I think the difference this time around is we relied on community banks to provide the PPP and that was a strategic policy decision that the Federal Government made. And that sounds all well good in theory but as we have come to learn now, hindsight is 20/20 that a lot of those community banks have certain existing relationships and they might not have relationships that otherwise those businesses that don't have those relationships need access to those resources. So we want to make sure we kind of drill down to that level and I think that that's something that my office and the City of Nashua can do well and we are positioned to be able to do that so we can hopefully minimize this issue next time around.

Alderman Lopez

And as well if I may just if, in order to demonstrate a loss of business you have to point at least year's business revenue and you don't have a last year, then that might be somewhere you have to help a little bit too because how does a brand new business compete on those terms? So thank you, appreciate it.

Chairman Tencza

Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Yeah thank you. Actually Alderman Lopez touched on or asked a question really that I was going to ask, because great minds think alike, right Tom? But really I've been dealing in my own job that I've been processing through the Payroll Protection Program myself. These applications have been rolling in the last week or two and they are really starting to ramp up. I think we got like 5 or 6 of them today and I'm sure we will see 10, 15, 20 of them tomorrow. We are just a nationwide credit union but our membership is limited. But I would suggest is if you got a Payroll Protection Loan before I would go back to your bank to get another one. Because, again, it is limited in the time, it's just like last time you've got to get your application in and all that stuff. So if you went the process before, you've got a leg up on other folks that haven't done it and I would suggest to anyone out there listening, if you were thinking about it, stop thinking about it and go ahead and do it because when the money runs out, it runs out. Not to say that I don't have optimism that the Federal Government is going to help us. My optimism on the way the Nation is going to go is going to be significantly better come noontime tomorrow. So hopefully 2021 is going to be a much better year for everybody.

Chairman Tencza

So Alderman Clemons if I could ask you a question then based on your last comments because my understanding was that with the new round of Paycheck Protection Loans you had to actually show a loss for last year. Not everybody is eligible for them. Is that correct or am I incorrect in what I've learned about it?

Alderman Clemons

No, you do but essentially last year is 2020 so it assumes that through COVID-19, basically what they are asking you to do is get your taxes in. So for some folks, you want to get your taxes done right now and for some folks you want to use 2019's taxes. So it's a game unfortunately; they don't make it straight forward. But if you are working with a reputable bank and you are working with somebody that really knows the system, you will be ok. They will get it through for you. I would say trust your bank.

Chairman Tencza

Good to know. Any other questions for Director Cummings or Mr. Shea or Director Marchant.

Alderman Lopez

So to be clear Alderman Clemons is what the takeaway for that is.

Alderman Clemons

I wish our membership was open to everybody but unfortunately it is limited to the MIT Community.

Chairman Tencza

Alright, well thank you very much for joining us tonight. If you wouldn't mind sticking around, I think that in General Discussion some of the members might have questions about other things that are going on. And we are going to take that up now, so it won't be long.

COMMUNICATIONS - NoneUNFINISHED BUSINESS – NoneNEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS - NoneNEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - NoneTABLED IN COMMITTEE - NonePUBLIC COMMENT - NoneGENERAL DISCUSSIONChairman Tencza

Alderman Lopez, you e-mailed me, you had something you wanted to bring up?

Alderman Lopez

Yeah, is Director Marchant still here, I probably should have asked her to stay. Oh good. So I had done some exploratory conversations based on constituent requests on the topic of a Steering Committee to bolster the efforts of developing the Streeter Theater particularly with figuring out how to improve its infrastructure. But there's particular sensitivity to it right now because you have a whole bunch of partners that are going to have to figure out how to restart their programming in a space that we are in the middle of remodeling. So that was my discussion point, in the discussion point it turns out that some of the models that I was suggesting weren't

quite exactly as good as I had thought. We wouldn't be looking for example for an advisory board type of role because the City has a staked interest in that. We want to make sure that the City staff and the Mayor are able to exercise their authority over that site.

A steering committee more focused on a project where it has an opening and a closing kind of an activity sounded like it was more in line with what would be needed for re-engaging in programming after COVID-19. And then I think some of my other feedback was that in terms of leading it or steering it, a City staff member would likely be best, but which Department did that fall under and that kind of stuff. So I wanted to pass it on to the Committee with Director Marchant and Director Cummings present. If either of them wants to give us maybe an update on in general terms about things being done. I know we have made progress with the roof and things like that. We recently had conversations with Liquid Therapy about renewing their lease and that kind of stuff. So I wanted to open it up for discussion.

#### Chairman Tencza

Director Marchant or Director Cummings, would you care to comment?

#### Director Marchant

It's a good question. There have been many discussions and there's been a pretty substantial investment by the City of hundreds of thousands of dollars in the last year and a half into that building. I don't see why that would be changing going forward. I think that the Mayor has committed to as we can afford it, making substantial improvements which included the whole fire suppression system already, the roof, working on HVAC. So I think we are moving ahead with these things in a slow, steady manner as we can afford them. I am not exactly sure what your question is but I appreciate the information and am more than happy to kind of keep that going forward.

#### Director Cummings

And then if I may, Mr. Chair, just kind of tag on.

#### Chairman Tencza

Sure.

#### Director Cummings

In addition and compliment to what Director Marchant just mentioned, the building is programmed pretty well right now. First floor which I refer to as the Artist Studio Space, up until this month, we had all 9 artist studios rented out and actually used. We just learned of two studios that are going to go dark or have gone dark. And so still that's pretty good, 7 out of 9 studios full during '20 with the pandemic. I think that that's a win. We have, as you mentioned, Liquid Therapy, which is upstairs in the fire apparatus bay area. Then we have Peacock Players and a couple other groups. All of these groups tend to have arts and culture or creativity in their veins, if you will. And so what I think we will continue to do is look to use that area as a way to be a cultural resource for the downtown. Hopefully with the investments being made as Director Marchant just mentioned, we are going to be able to use that building in a lot more dynamic fashion. Previously we were limited on our occupancy due to the life safety issues. We have addressed those life safety issues now.

Now we are focusing on the mechanicals and the roof and some of these more larger capital ticket items. But these are really good investments that we will be making that will allow us and position us to be able to use the building as an asset to hopefully be a catalyst for the downtown and be that economic engine that I was just about to reference a few moments ago. So we are continuing to steward the building; I think it is a combination of Administrative Services and to be very clear that building falls under Administrative Services. It does not fall under Community Development and it doesn't fall under Economic Development.

Prior to Administrative Services, yes Court Street did by default fall under Economic Development, but that was only relative to the tenancy of the building. The building itself, the infrastructure always was run through Building Maintenance and the Risk Manager's Office. And that's still true today we just now have an Administrative Services Division back up and running. I think there's an area of the building that the Mayor and others, including this group, should start to focus on. I'd love to hear what the plan may be, because I'm not exactly sure what it is relative to what is referred to as the Black Box Theater. I know that that area was shut off and not available previously. I think as we think about what we want to see happen there, having a conversation and a plan so it gets used hopefully with the tenants that I mentioned previously; the tenants being creativity, art, culture, something that will be an economic impact for the downtown is really the next step or the evolution for that building.

Alderman Clemons

Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Tencza

Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. I wanted to actually float the idea by Director Cummings of now that we have, as we all know, or at least Alderman Lopez and I know very well, now that we have a taxpayer in that building, creating a fund where we can capture that money and dedicate it towards the building so that we can pay for maintenance and things like that and have basically an account where we can draw from to do the planning and things like that and have a reserve fund that's dedicated to that building. And so basically it would keep the money, the money that is being paid towards property taxes would be basically stay in that building for use in that building. And it would go to the greater good of anybody that's renting out that, so the art studios or the various theater companies that rent out the spaces, things like that.

And in addition to that, I didn't know along Tom's line, if a Steering Committee or some kind of an oversight board to kind of direct that money what might be appropriate. If some kind of structure like that I think might be the way forward or a way forward for that building because basically you have a lot of different interests in there and we do have a way that we can generate some revenue from that. We are already generating revenue but it is just going to the General Fund. So that would be, I just want to hear your thoughts on that.

Director Cummings

If I may, Mr. Chair?

Chairman Tencza

Please go ahead.

Director Cummings

So I do have some thoughts on this and I guess first and foremost just so we are all clear, that building runs at a deficit right now. So on average \$30,000.00 to \$80,000.00 say \$60,000.00 ish a year, it runs in the red. So first and foremost before anything like that happens we would have to make sure we have a sustainable plan in place, because right now the General Fund actually makes up the difference on the loss of revenue compared to what we bring in. I think we really need to develop that business plan further and make sure everyone is comfortable with the private enterprise that would need to happen to be able to make it sustainable.

Directing the funds back into the building I think is a good thing. Overall what you just outlined is how lots of municipalities handle these types of ventures. We could absolutely go in that direction but before we do that, some more significant capital investment is going to be necessary. And I don't know if we have the funds right now readily available to continue making as significant of an investment that we are going to need to make. The good thing that we are doing now is we are doing it over time. So we have had the ability to spread the roof cost out over a couple of years. We have had the ability to do the fire suppression. We had the ability to do some of the mechanical work. That has helped and because of the time, we've had that on our side, that time. We are going to continue needing that time to continue to make the capital investments necessary to make some of that space useable.

As I mentioned before, the Black Box is really important and there's going to be significant investment necessary for that. The Streeter Theater itself is in need of investment. And so we need to understand what those capital costs are as well. I don't have those answers for you; I can tell you we studied it a little bit during the feasibility study for the Performing Arts Center. And it is probably something like \$3 to \$8 million dollars say \$5 million dollars just for this conversation that we would need to be able to undertake and I honestly just don't know if we have the wherewithal to be able to do it right now. So I would want to answer these questions to be able to answer the strategic question that you are raising, which I think is a very good one. I just think it needs to be more of a holistic approach.

#### Alderman Clemons

Well if I may, the reason I bring up the Steering Committee is I know that for years and years the Hunt Building ran as a deficit as well but it had an oversight committee. When Mayor Lozeau came into office she really put a lot of focus into that building and turned it into a building that at least, at the very least, breaks even. So I think that it is possible and I just didn't know if you put a certain group of people together and task them with that goal of making sure that the best interest of the building is at heart, where they can focus on that and they can address those issues, if that would be the best way forward.

#### Director Cummings

I agree with a lot of what you just said, Alderman Clemons. I want to just clarify, the Hunt Building does not break even. It is a hybrid situation and it would break even if there was a way to shift the salary of the Hunt Administrator on to the Hunt Trust Fund. Right now, we actually pay and when I say "we" I mean the General Fund pay the Hunt Administrator's salary. So it's not 100% self-sufficient as you have outlined. Now a combination of the Hunt Building, the Court Street Building, that salary, part-time position, could you get some economies of scale? Yes, absolutely. And should we be looking to collect the rent and the taxes and the revenue generated, ticket sales, whatever that revenue may be from these assets, particularly the Hunt Building it is the events, and you turn it back into the building for to your point, to make it a gem and an anchor for the community? Yeah that is exactly what we should be doing. But it just is going to take time and it is going to take continued investment to get there. I think we are well on our way, we are just rounding first base and what you are talking about is a home run and we are just, we've got a little ways to go before we are there.

#### Chairman Tencza

Alderman Lopez?

#### Alderman Lopez

So a lot of what is being discussed is what constituents were asking. And by constituents I really mean the stakeholders in the building, because those performing arts companies are the ones who sort of approached with this idea. The downstairs theater is definitely a point of interest because they don't necessarily see any immediate action happening, but they can see immediate application or use for it because they are stage groups and they are performers.

So they may be invested or inspired to take steps or identify resources that the City could make a lot of effective use of in trying to see that development happen sooner. Each of these theater companies is pretty well established and their own capacity building engine for both their fans and their actors and the families of their actors and the longtime alumni of their acting companies are associated with those groups and support them. So my thinking is that a Steering Committee would be more strategic in its initial conception, maybe its idea would just be to create a vision or an idea of how things should go. But I don't think we should be constrained to looking only at City revenue as a way of solving those issues. We just did a much larger project or are doing a much larger project with the Performing Arts Center and where this is something with much more history and much less, I think, political animosity attached to it. I think it is an opportunity for stakeholders there to be able to pull the resources and contribute to the overall success of the site.

So that was my intention behind it not necessarily an oversight to replace that of the Administrative Department. Having that space become more developed will have a direct economic impact on the surrounding area. We already saw that with Liquid Therapy. And whenever you have shows coming in and people coming out of those shows, that is going to help the surrounding the businesses. And this is also a City Planning prospect in my mind because there's so much need for strategic development because we probably would have to pursue grants. But by having other entities participating as stakeholders we may have that 501(C)3 partner that we spent awhile looking for with the Performing Arts Center, but we have some sitting in the building right now. And we have a dedicated event space for meetings for fund raisers for generating awareness, so that is kind of all I was looking for in terms of discussion is to find out would it be helpful to look in that direction? I mean I am describing more of a Booster Club than anything else and I do think that Alderman Clemons has a good point with the financial, maybe a TIF model or something like that.

And to Director Cummings point, personally I see the Court Street Theater and the Library as all cultural centers that have something in common. But I also know that the Hunt Board probably doesn't want to look at the Streeter Theater right now because there's too much work involved, there's too much overhead and there has to be a development of a cost effective model. So I kind of wanted to just bring attention to that and see where we could kind of move in terms of getting ideas going because again, the Performing Arts Center is breaking ground and we are moving forward with that. But that's not necessarily geared towards local theater and local theater was hit pretty hard by COVID as well. So I don't know that they will be able to wait as long as we will have to wait. But I don't think that the City and the Performing Arts Community have to wait quite as long if they are willing to work together and collaborate on a development plan.

Director Cummings

So if I may Mr. Chair.

Chairman Tencza

Yes.

Director Cummings

First and foremost what I would suggest is we set up another meeting sometime another night to discuss this in detail. I think we need to get a few more people on the city side around the table not to mention the Mayor and Director Kleiner. I think those would be good voices to add to the conversation. But ultimately I need direction from you all in terms of what you'd like me to focus on. I would be happy to focus on the Court Street Theater and work in the direction that you are outlining. I honestly was starting to focus now that we've got the Performing Arts Center in its next phase, I had two priorities I was really focusing on; the Millyard and the Elm Street Middle School. And the Elm Street Middle School has the Keefe attached to it. So there is some time sensitivity with both of those projects in terms of you know we have the Broad Street Parkway up and running; we need to wrap that project up and close it out and dispense of all the land in that area.

We have the Elm Street Middle School with the Keefe and a new Middle School coming on-line in about three years, we really need to have a plan in place for that structure, particularly if we want to maintain the Keefe. And understanding what the costs associated with that is going to be. So I am happy to switch gears and pivot and focus on the Court Street Theater. I do think there is a lot of upfront obstacles that folks are going to need to be able to get behind. If you want to have that conversation first and foremost is having a consultant retained to do a feasibility study; to work with developing the dynamic that we have just discussed. There's money associated to that and I know I am hard pressed to even talk about art, Performing Arts Center, consultant and ask for more money. Someone else is going to need to do that. I think I've gone to the well enough on that front for a while. But in all seriousness I am happy to do it but I think we need to have that conversation so we are all aligned in what we would like to see.

Alderman Lopez

Well I agree with the conversation part but if I may, the idea behind this is to not add more to your plate but also to not necessarily backburn a project where there are people who may be shovel ready, fund raisers, developers and they could totally make the play for a feasibility study or something along those lines; that would be a fund raising goal they could come up with. But we have to get those people together in order for them to contribute, we also have to create a model where we can use those resources.

Director Cummings

So there's a couple of things that you just said there Alderman Lopez, I just want to be very clear on because I know you didn't mean this by what you just said. But the way you just framed that it sounds as though you'd want to spit it out to the private sector.

Alderman Lopez

Non-profit sector, not private sector.

Director Cummings

Well I mean not within the City's control and I can tell you that there has been a lot of resistance to that. I've had lots of conversations on that front. Could we do that? Yes. I think you know any non-profit who was to take this on, whether it is for profit or non-profit it has to be sustainable. The amount of money that you would need to put into and then want to get a return, even it is just a return to "break even" it is going to make it challenging. So I just caution....

Alderman Lopez

Right and to be clear I'm (inaudible) to nonprofit take over stewardship of the building or ownership or anything like that. I am saying that similarly between the relationship between City Arts Nashua and Nashua Arts Commission was deliberately developed in a way that the City and the non-profit community could support each other mutually and the same way that City Arts Nashua was the first fiscal agent for the fund raising if we work with either of those entities then we may be able to create fund raising or capacity building opportunities that we don't currently have. I mean maybe we will apply for State funding that isn't meant for a municipality but is meant for a non-profit.

Director Cummings

I understand. Yes.

Alderman Lopez

So yeah there's definitely more conversation to be had. I didn't want to like ambush either one of you, I just felt like it kind of went hand in hand with both the Imagine Nashua Future thinking and the COVID-19 response sustainability concept.

Chairman Tencza

All set Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

Yes.

Chairman Tencza

Director Cummings, can I just ask very quickly because we just voted within the last month on an issue not really related but similar to the Elm Street Middle School. Can you tell us where that is and when we can expect the report, the feasibility study on that?

Director Cummings

So I just started drafting an RFP which I am waiting on Director Marchant's comments on before I can submit it to the procurement office, but I digress. I am just teasing. I am working on an RFP, I am hopeful to get the RFP out sometime in the month of January; look to get proposals in in February; have a consultant on board for March; probably a contract before the Finance Committee sometime in that March timeframe. And then it would probably be about a six month exercise, you know, through the spring and summer into fall where we will a feasibility back and hopefully we will have a consensus as to what the community would like to see happen with the Elm Street Middle School.

A lot of the six months starting in March would be a lot of public outreach, a lot of differing types of engagement with the community so this body will have a comfort level in ultimately issuing an RFP in some form and we go out and look to, I'll use the term "develop the site" but I don't mean develop in a traditional sense. But, you know, put the site into productive use post it being a Middle School.

Chairman Tencza

Thank you. Any other questions, topics of conversation? OK seeing none.

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Alderman Lopez

Can I make one Aldermanic comment before we are done? It's not really a topic of discussion it's just a point. I just wanted to point out that tonight is the last night that we are going to have lived in an era where there wasn't a female Vice President. That's pretty exciting.

POSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION – None

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT TO ADJOURN BY ROLL CALL**

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman Schmidt, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Clemons,  
Chairman Tencza 4

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 8:34 p.m.

Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws  
Committee Clerk



# THE CITY OF NASHUA

*Office of Economic Development*

"The Gate City"

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**TO:** Dave Tencza, Chair PEDC  
**FROM:** Tim Cummings & Komba Lamina - Office of Economic Development  
**CC:** PEDC Committee  
**DATE:** January 19, 2021

**RE:** Highlights from Economic Development Initiatives during COVID-19

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This memo highlights steps taken by the Office of Economic Development to help curb negative impacts caused by COVID-19 in the City of Nashua. This memo covers the period of April to now and is for illustrative purposes only and by no means is it a complete index of the office undertakings, but rather a sampling:

- Strengthen partnership with other community partners. The Office of Economic Development organized daily half hour call with the Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce and Great American Downtown (GAD) starting in March. This allowed for free flow of communication between the two organizations and the City. Approx. 125 coordination calls have been conducted thus far

- In March, The Office of Economic Development began reaching out to major employers in the City to understand how they were being impacted and offered guidance wherever possible. Actions undertaken by the City were also communicated on these calls. Approximately 50 meetings/calls executed in a two week timeline at the onset of COVID-19. Representing some 25,000 employees.

- The Office of Economic Development convened a team of various City Departments, the Regional Planning Commission, the Greater Chamber of Commerce GAD, private Citizens and local law makers to put together a COVID-19 Economic Recovery and Relief Plan published in spring of 2020 (<https://www.nashuanh.gov/1442/COVID-19-Economic-Recovery-Relief-Plan>)

- The Office of Economic Development began conducting meetings internally to find out what it will take to create a road diet for Main Street. Public meetings were also conducted to gauge the interest of the community for such an endeavor. The Board of Alderman approved the narrowing of Main Street - barriers were put in place in May and lasted till November 15, 2020 – some 2,400 linear feet.

- The officer of Economic Development joined twice a week U.S Department of Homeland Security Calls to better understand the global supply chain issues. This information gave us a better idea of how strategic employers were affected and how we can advocate/advise local folks in Nashua and with our partners at the State level

- In May 2020, the Office of Economic Development and the Community Development Department launched the City's COVID-19 Impact Fund. This was a \$1.2 million grant and low interest loan program to benefit small businesses and nonprofit organizations in Nashua. 32 small businesses and 23 nonprofit organizations participated in the program. 29 grants were given to small businesses and non-profit organizations at an average of \$17,000. The average size of low interest loan was \$28,000.

- In July, 2020, the Office of Economic Development applied and was awarded \$825,000 U.S. Department of Commerce COVID-19 Revolving Loan Fund. The fund is to be used for alleviation of sudden and severe economic dislocation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to support economic resiliency, and to further the long-term economic adjustment objectives of the City and the region. A second round of the City's COVID-19 grant and low interest loan program is scheduled to launch in February 2021

- As the virus spread and supermarkets began to close, the Office of Economic Development began publishing weekly supermarket and pharmacy hours of operations to the general public. An instrumental tool that was widely cited for helping the larger community.

- In August 2020, the Office of Economic Development conducted a face-to-face outreach to 20 minority small businesses. It was determined that over 70% of the businesses did not apply for City assistance, PPP or EIDL. It was also determined that majority of the businesses lacked proper financial records to achieve the necessary support.

- In September 2020, the Office of Economic Development convened a local book keeping firm, the Chamber of Commerce, a volunteer from the Federal Reserve Bank, the Regional Economic Development Center (REDC) and New Hampshire's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to assess the needs of the small businesses. One early observation is the need for technical assistance and establishment of a small business network. Five small businesses were paired with REDC and the SBDC for mentorship