

FINAL

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2025 – 4:00PM
Council Chambers – City Hall – or remote via Virtual Platform
MINUTES**

EDC MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrew Key, Dean Cashman, Councilor Tim McNamara (City Council Rep), Dan Nash (Chair), Eric Stacy, Chip Brown, Councilor Chris Simon (City Council Rep)

EDC MEMBERS ABSENT: Brendan Callahan

STAFF PRESENT: Deputy City Manager David Brooks

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The August 13, 2025, Economic Development Commission meeting was called to order at 4:00pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. July 9, 2025

Motion by Councilor McNamara to approve the meeting minutes of July 9, 2025, as presented.

Second by Mr. Key.

**The Vote on the MOTION was approved (7-0).*

Mr. Key entered the meeting at 4:05pm.

3. NEW BUSINESS:

B. Discussion with Arts and Culture Commission

Nick Gaffney, Education Manager at AVA Gallery and Vice Chair of the Arts and Culture Commission, stated that the Commission is seeking new members. A member from the EDC would be a great asset.

Mr. Brooks explained that there will be a public hearing next Wednesday to consider some changes to Chapter 31. The Arts and Culture Commission was not originally part of that hearing but has been added.

Mr. Nash suggested that this is considered by the Commission as a future agenda item.

A. Discuss Potential Zoning Amendments for Fall 2025

1. Proposed Amendments to Section 607.8, Electric Vehicles

Mr. Brooks explained that, since the Commission's last meeting, the City Council took action to state that all three of the competing amendments for this section will be rolled into the Planning Department's annual zoning amendment process.

Mr. Nash suggested that the Commission hear each of the proposals and make a recommendation at its next meeting.

Sherry Boschert, Lebanon Energy Advisory Committee (LEAC), noted that Jon Livadas' proposal is to take these regulations out of the Zoning Ordinance entirely and put them in the site plan regulations. This is usually done so that developers can obtain exemptions. She explained that LEAC's request is that the Commission ask the City Council to support LEAC's amendments for home charging and to dedicate tax increment financing funds toward public chargers. LEAC's proposal will drastically lower costs for housing developers, reduce the electrical demand on the grid, allow drivers more access to EV charging at home, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and simplify the Zoning Ordinance. The current Zoning Ordinance requires that 5% of required parking for new multi-unit housing needs to be Level 2 installed, 20% of required parking needs to be Level 2 ready, and 60% of required parking needs to be Level 2 capable. The LEAC proposal is to simplify this and require Low Power Level 2 be ready for half the units with parking. The other 50% would be Low Power Level 2 capable and a quarter of any extra off-street parking. Completing the infrastructure during new construction is 3-18 times less expensive than trying to retrofit it later. As of December 2024, approximately 3.5% of cars in Lebanon were EVs. This was approximately a 50%

increase from the year before. This is a public health crisis. People will not move toward EVs if there is no easy way to charge them. There is no public charging available in much of Lebanon. Home charging is the cheapest and easiest way.

Ms. Boschert explained that under the existing regulations, the Woolen Mill project would need to install 5,920 amps of power and still 5% of units would have no access to EV charging, now or in the future. The Low Power Level 2 EV ready proposed would require 3,360 amps and 100% of units would have access to EV charging. Studies from other states show that adding Low Power Level 2 EV ready adds approximately 0.3%-0.5% to construction costs which is much less than the existing ordinance requires. This is partly because it reduces the electrical infrastructure, but also because it installs the EV-ready outlet instead of the EV-installed entire charging station.

Councilor McNamara asked how revenue would go from the outlets to the landlords. Ms. Boschert stated that there are options for developers, including wrapping the costs into the rent amount, or installing smart outlets. The developer could also include assigned parking, with the outlets running to the assigned unit and that unit then being billed directly. A charge point network could also be installed.

Regarding public charging, Ms. Boschert explained that she completed an analysis with data from the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission. Low Power Level 2 stations would cover the daily commute needs for more than 90% of residents in Lebanon. Ten Level 2 installed EV chargers are proposed at four Downtown sites. An RFP was put out for bids on this project and the EV Subcommittee will likely make a recommendation on the proposed contractor at its next meeting. The bids came in around \$208,000-\$214,000 for the project. At a 10% usage per port per year, this would lead to approximately \$5,000-\$20,000 a year in revenue. Hanover experienced \$8,388/year in net revenue from four Level 2 ports and plans to expand this soon to eight ports.

Ms. Boschert stated that nearly half of Lebanon residents are renters. Renters tend to not have access to home charging which is why the proposal is for new developments of rentals to have chargers. Public chargers would then supplement home chargers. Studies have shown that when EV charging is installed, it boosts the economy. The first study showed that nearby businesses within 100 meters increased revenues by 13% over four years. A second study in California saw a boost of 3% in revenues. LEAC's request is that the EDC ask the Planning Department staff to recommend LEAC's proposed amendments for adoption and to ask the City Manager to earmark an estimate of \$215,000 to install public Level 2 charging stations. The public chargers need to be in service by next June in order for the City to qualify for rebates from the IRS of between 6%-30%.

Mr. Stacy advocated for Level 3 for public spaces. It is yet unclear where this technology is headed and it can be difficult to remove things from the Zoning Ordinance once included. This would mandate developers to spend funding on this, even if they do not wish to and it may not make sense to.

Jon Livadas stated that he is trying to build a development in Downtown Lebanon and the City's focus should be on housing. New Hampshire is a much different place than California, and Lebanon has different issues in terms of housing. The current Zoning regulations make it difficult to focus on building housing. He asked how an EV mandate would impact homeowners or developers. He asked how this would incentivize bringing people into the community. California is currently at 25% which probably took them approximately ten years to reach and has plateaued significantly. He asked how realistic it is to think that Lebanon will ever reach 50%. While the cost upfront is less than retrofitting, it is still significant. The 3,000 amp power needed for the Woolen Mill site just to charge the EVs is three times as much as the 60 unit building where 60 people could be living. The intention is to move the section to the site plan process in order to allow flexibility for each site. The data provided for the other proposal has been wrong and has not been consistent. There is a large contingent of people in Lebanon who are more concerned about the budget and focused on lowering the budget so that there are not continual tax increases. The current structure of the EV systems is making development not economically viable as it adds additional costs above and beyond what the Community needs, from an EV standpoint.

Travis Stockman, electrician, explained that the cost of switch gears for EV chargers is expensive and the lead time for them can add significant delays to a project. Mr. Livadas noted that for an affordable housing project in Newport, NH, switch gears were ordered in December 2023 and arrived in April 2025. Utility companies can require the switch gears to be replaced at any time. If the Spencer Street project wants to include affordable housing and stick to the proposed EV mandates, it will make the project very difficult to complete.

Mr. Stacy asked about the cost difference for EV-capable infrastructure with the ability for this to be scaled up based on demand, so that massive infrastructure does not have to be installed at the front end of the project. Jeremy Mains,

electrician, stated that this would only shave off a minimal amount of the cost. Running the conduit is the majority of the cost.

The Commission discussed continuing this discussion to the next meeting and considering potential cost savings.

4. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

The Commission discussed continuing conversations on the discussion with the Arts and Culture Commission and the proposed amendments to Section 607.8, Electric Vehicles. Councilor Simon suggested an additional agenda item regarding social districting that is now available, allowing for certain businesses and designated areas to sell alcohol, which can be consumed outside of the business. The Commission also discussed a future agenda item regarding extending the allowable time for the meetings to 1.5 hours.

5. NEXT MEETING DATE:

A. September 10, 2025

The Commission agreed to meet on September 10, 2025.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

None at this time.

7. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion by Mr. Brown to adjourn the meeting.

Second by Mr. Key.

** The Vote on the MOTION was approved (7-0).*

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude