

FINAL

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026 – 3:30PM
Council Chambers – City Hall – or remote via Virtual Platform
MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dan Nash (Chair), Andrew Key, Lori Key, Chip Brown, Dean Cashman, Councilor Tim McNamara (Council Rep)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brendan Callahan, Morgan Brophy

STAFF PRESENT: Deputy City Manager David Brooks

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The May 13, 2026, Economic Development Commission meeting was called to order at 3:35pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. January 13, 2026

Motion by Mr. Key to approve the meeting minutes of January 13, 2026, as presented.

Second by Mr. Cashman.

**The Vote on the MOTION was approved (4-0-2, with Mr. McNamara and Ms. Key abstaining).*

3. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Update on Proposed Child Care Facility

Mr. Brooks stated that there was a joint School Board and City Council Task Force meeting last night to discuss the proposed childcare facility. The School Board expressed a desire to get more public feedback and input about both the location and the overall proposal. The City Manager has obtained the authorization needed from the Council.

Councilor McNamara explained that tonight and Tuesday of next week there will be open meetings at Seminary Hill for the public to discuss this. There has been concern expressed that there are occasionally events at the Seminary Hills School and there not being enough space to park those cars on the grass. There will likely be an answer to this concern. The second item is that members of the public have expressed concern regarding the loss of green space. Although there are huge fields behind the School, along with basketball and tennis courts and a playground, which will all remain in place. The architect has completed a sketch for a two-story building, rather than one-story building, with a smaller footprint. There was discussion regarding whether this facility could conceivably go on the land by the Dana House. The School owns the land underlying the Dana House, and there is vacant land next to it. This is not an unreasonable question and should be answered before anything is settled. The intention is for the Planning Department to take the two-story footprint and set it on the topography to see if it works and if the parking can be designed for the right number of spaces. Once he has a map in hand, he will report back to the City Manager, who will report back to the Superintendent regarding if there is a reasonable fit on the other site. If there is inadequate parking from a construction standpoint on those two lots, there may be consideration for a small lot for staff where there is currently a vacant lot on the other side of the road. The advantage is that it would not tie up any of the school land on the east side of the school. This would not connect to Eldridge St., which is a dead end street that serves the playing fields and the playground. Access would be from Elm Street. The goal is to make sure the School Board does not feel this is being rammed this down their throats because this is their property ultimately.

There was discussion that the old Seminary Hill School building is not currently being occupied. There is a federal grant which runs out next year that covers 40% of the construction costs. The other 60% would be paid for by the Boys and Girls Club in New Hampshire. They will lease the land from the district. The Fire Department moved out of the Seminary Hill building into their own space. There could not likely be a daycare in the school due to the peculiarities of daycare restrictions. The Boys & Girls Club has discussed leasing a portion of the school for after school programs for elementary school children. Unfortunately, the lower level of the school is not handicap accessible, but the rest of the building is. There have also been discussions about consolidating some City departments and moving over to the space. Part of the challenge is that the current lease for the IT department and Cyber Services still have time remaining. The previous administration under the old Superintendent felt that the whole building was needed but the current Superintendent believes the space can be shared.

Ms. Key explained that she has heard feedback from people who are concerned that while the daycare is in session, some of the playground would not be able to be used by the public. Councilor McNamara stated that this is a misperception. Ms. Key stated that she also heard from one citizen who has gone to a number of daycares in West Lebanon and Lebanon which still have openings but not enough staff. There is concern that some of the remaining staff would move to the Boys & Girls Club if it moved in. This could impact small businesses. Councilor McNamara noted that the Boys & Girls Club could bring more workers into the City system.

B. Barrows Street Development Project Progress

Councilor McNamara explained that he met with the Council at its second meeting in February to report that the numbers were not looking great for this project. This was reported by the Valley News and there was then some activity. A company in Windsor stated that it would submit a bid for the housing. The company has already built two of these small homes in Windsor, VT using a modular manufacturer in upstate New York. He has toured the houses and they are very impressive. The company also does the site work and foundations. The project was previously receiving bids in excess of \$500,000 for the site work alone. He drew up a version using the pattern zoning and creating individual 4,000 s.f. lots. The Windsor company gave a price that was half of what was previously received. The cost would be well below \$400,000 for a two-bedroom, 1.5 bath, two-story house with a full basement. Each house would have their own 4,000 s.f. lot. Virtually every house in that neighborhood has at least a 4,000 s.f. lot. The goal is to create five homes. He will work to get finalized numbers and bring them to the Council. This would be a pilot project for the City.

Mr. Brooks explained that the original thought was to make the homes available to employees of the City, the School District, and the Housing Authority first. If these are not sold to those groups, they will be opened up to a broader pool. An electronic survey will be sent out to gauge interest amongst City employees, School District employees, and Housing Authority employees, in terms of the marketability of these units.

C. West Lebanon Main Street Properties Update

Mr. Brooks explained that members of the DPW presented a proposal to the City Council as a concept sketch. They were proposing to partner with Twin Pines Housing on a low-income housing tax credit project for at least 32 units, possibly 40 depending on if there is room for an extra story. There could be between 4,000-5,000 s.f. of ground floor commercial space, although a prospective tenant has not been identified yet. The intention is to add vitality and vibrancy to the streetscape. There was a proposed option to purchase presented, which is the next step to move forward with the project and formalize the arrangement so that Twin Pines could start pursuing grants and other funding sources. The City Council, for the most part, said no thank you but it was agreed this could come back as a discussion item at the second meeting in June.

Ms. Key explained that intention is to look for property tax stabilization types of projects. Many businesses have stated that what people need is to own a home with some longevity instead of a constant cycle of people moving in and out. There was some sentiment that there are a number of neighborhoods or buildings in the City that are already geared towards the low-income population. There is a need to maintain some stability and property taxes for the rest of the residents of the City.

Councilor McNamara stated that there does not seem to be an appetite for a market-rate large housing project. An alternative may be to polish the buildings and get them leased.

D. Spencer Street Redevelopment Progress

Mr. Brooks explained that Jake Tamposi's project received a commitment from New Hampshire Housing Finance for the capital subsidy and 4% on the LIHTC program. The developer feels pretty comfortable that the rest of the funding will fall into place and he is moving ahead with the development. Geotechnical borings will be done on the site. The developer is working with the City Engineer on any floodplain issue. The developer will have to come back to the Planning Board due to the EV requirements and parking requirements that have changed. Also, for the Downtown District, there is a requirement for a 12' minimum story on the first floor to provide greater flexibility for different types of uses. The developer either needs to meet the 12' or come back for a waiver. A building permit for the proposed 80 units could be in hand late this year or early next year.

E. Discussion on City Council goals for the Economic Development Commission

Mr. Nash asked if the City Council has any input for the EDC, in terms of things it can work toward. Ms. Key stated that she would like the EDC to consider other ideas for Main Street West Lebanon. This may not be a place where housing is going to work, but there could be other options. Councilor McNamara stated that he would ask the Council for other items for the EDC.

4. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

As discussed during the meeting.

5. NEXT MEETING DATE:

A. June 24, 2026

The Commission agreed to tentatively meet on June 24, 2026.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee agreed to meet on the fourth Wednesday of the month moving forward at 3:30pm.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Brown to adjourn the meeting.

Second by Mr. Key.

** The Vote on the MOTION was approved (6-0).*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude