

Keene City Council Public Forum Hosted by Keene State College Dec. 2, 2014

Information Sheet: City & College Actions

We thank you for your attendance this evening. The City and College have taken many steps together and individually to positively impact our community. To help answer questions about these efforts for the conversation this evening, this sheet provides a summary of the steps that the City and College have taken.

City/College Collaborative Efforts:

- Created a “Community Coalition,” which includes the Relations Coordinator and Student Conduct Director personnel, as well as the College Liaison Officer and City Housing Inspectors;
 - ❖ This group meets monthly and discusses problems or complaints related to community issues, with the minutes of these meetings being shared with College and City officials;
- Expanded relationship between the City and College to identify “problem houses” and related issues;
 - ❖ Keene Police, Fire, and Code Enforcement Departments, along with College officials and landlords, have created a voluntary inspection program for rental units targeting students, and provide education for tenants on their rights as well as acceptable behaviors;
- Created a City/College Commission, with representatives appointed by the Mayor and the College President to provide a framework to address issues of mutual concern and identify recommendations and solutions for consideration by College and City leadership;
- Adopt-A-Street trash pickup program created as part of the City’s *Building a Spirit of Place* Program
 - ❖ Student groups adopt a street and perform cleanup activities 4 times a year with assistance from the City’s Code Enforcement Department;
- Student Conduct officials work closely with Keene Police and Code Enforcement Departments to identify those involved in off-campus violations and provide on-going communication about safety.

City Actions:

- City Council is aware that the Pumpkin Festival is a critically important community issue. For this reason an annual review of the event takes place by City Council. A breakdown of costs associated with the festival over the last few years can be seen below:

Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30)	How much of the City budget was given to the festival?	What was the cost for law enforcement?
2010 (2009 Festival)	\$25,000	\$76,246
2011 (2010 Festival)	\$45,000	\$72,794
2012 (2011 Festival)	\$25,000	\$89,303
2013 (2012 Festival)	\$35,000	\$80,217
2014 (2013 Festival)	\$52,000	\$94,557
2015 (2014 Festival)	\$52,000	To be determined

- A Keene Police Department College Liaison Officer engages in numerous college activities which include counsel to students/staff, orientation and education efforts, classroom participation for speaking engagements, and enforcement;
- Keene Police and Code Enforcement Departments attend neighborhood meetings to address problems affecting quality of life and determine the locations of where these problems are occurring;

City Council will also be accepting additional written comments after the event tonight until December 12, 2014. Please direct comments to the City Clerk’s office at 3 Washington Street in Keene, NH 03431.

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- City Council has amended City Code to create property standards and modified the housing code;
- Keene Police Department has increased patrols for alcohol and drug violations through a Keene State College / Franklin Pierce University Community Coalition grant;
- Keene Fire Department conducts annual training for fire safety and prevention with Keene State Resident Assistants;
- City Council has funded a second, part-time, building inspector to be more responsive to neighbor concerns regarding student residences;
- City Council amended the Zoning Code to create the SEED District which has allowed the location of new, college-oriented housing such as The Mills, which is under construction and immediately adjacent to campus.

College Actions:

- Promotes student volunteer efforts in community, which totals 75,000 hours per year;
- Hired a Coordinator of Student and Community Relations position prior to 2010-2011 school year, who reports to the Associate Dean of Students/Director of Residential Life and attends neighborhood group meetings to strengthen relationships with permanent residents;
- Holds housing fairs for off campus apartments and created a voluntary tenant education program;
- Financial support for one full-time police officer (Campus Liaison Officer) in the Keene Police Department who works closely with Public Safety and is generally on duty Thursday through Saturday;
- Hosts an annual meeting of landlords with College and City officials, with an on-going email network;
- Campus Safety officers are on duty 24 hours a day 7 days a week during school year;
- Hired a Director of Student Conduct in Fall 2014 to increase focus on off-campus student compliance with the Student Code of Conduct;
- Implemented a program that requires all students who receive an alcohol violation off campus to see an Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) counselor;
- Provides education on the Code of Conduct and what it means to be a good neighbor during Orientation for first year students;
- Implemented restricted guest policy in on-campus housing when major events are being held on campus or in the City;
- Ongoing communication with students and parents regarding behavioral expectations.

New College Initiatives:

- Increase Coordinator of Student and Community Relations position to full-time
- Hired a Coordinator for Student Conduct to increase capacity of the Student Conduct Office
- Conduct review of the Code of Student Conduct, practices and educational programs
- Institute a new policy implementing fines for violations of the Code of Conduct

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Keene State doing its part for community

By Anne Huot | Posted: Tuesday, November 18, 2014 12:00 pm Taken from the Keene Sentinel

When I took office as president at Keene State, one of my top priorities was to reinforce throughout our community, the strong value of citizenship held by the College. That commitment continues to this day.

I speak often about the unique and special relationship our campus and the city of Keene have because we share the Main Street address. The hurt and anger in our community that followed the riots during the Keene Pumpkin Festival demonstrate how complex this relationship is — and also how critical it is for all of us to work together, so that we all thrive in our shared community.

It is with this genuine care and concern that I am reaching out to our community through this message to demonstrate how the college has been delivering on its part of the responsibility around the riots that took place on Oct. 18. I also want to outline our intentions, going forward, for nurturing the relationship between the city and the college year-round.

First, I want you to know that Keene State is holding accountable our students who were identified as participating in the riots. At this time, 75 students have been processed through the student conduct system. Charges against our students range from alcohol possession to disorderly conduct. Sanctions are being determined, and may include suspension to expulsion. Suspension is a very serious sanction that includes loss of credit and tuition and fees. We will provide more detail on the sanctions when all of the students who were identified have had their judicial hearings in accordance with due process.

Our efforts have facilitated those of Keene police following the riots. Keene State faculty, staff and students have all been working hard to help identify the people who participated in the riots. More than 300 photos and videos were investigated by Keene State's Campus Safety department and provided to Keene police. Staff helped to enhance the quality of images and videos in order to more easily identify individuals. Close to 200 students, faculty and staff reviewed images in an effort to provide more details to Keene police. Keene State's Campus Safety department continues steady communication with Keene Police Department, and Campus Safety has established a task force to continue efforts to identify responsible individuals on an ongoing basis. Importantly, these efforts on our campus have also identified students who violated our code of conduct, allowing us to hold those students accountable even though they were not charged with a crime.

We have all been impacted by the riotous behavior exhibited on Oct. 18 and we are in this together. Our students care deeply. They are working to demonstrate that they, too, are appalled by what happened. Students have made it clear to me and their peers that they want to drive a positive change in their interactions with citizens of Keene. They are leading several initiatives, including hosting a dinner to thank our first responders, during which "thank you" banners with student messages will be presented, organizing weekly Keene State spirit Fridays to build up student pride in our college and leading fund drives to provide financial assistance for repairs in our neighborhoods.

Longer-term efforts have been underway for some time and continue to be developed by our Student Affairs staff in coordination with students. We are reaching out to community members to find even more ways to infuse the positive energy of our students into the Keene community. These longer-term efforts build on the thousands of hours of community service our students already provide each year, and the many ways in which our students contribute to the vibrancy and success of the organizations in our community.

Finally, I have been meeting with our neighbors directly to talk about our efforts to positively impact the relationship between them and the students living off campus. This and other issues of common concern were the impetus behind establishing the College/City Commission last year.

On Dec. 2, in the Mabel Brown Room at Keene State's L.P. Young Student Center, the city will hold a public forum. I encourage you to attend and to bring constructive ideas on how we will move forward together. These ideas will help inform the longer-term work of the College/City Commission and have the potential to make significant positive steps forward in shaping our collective future. I look forward to talking more with you.

Mayor Kendall Lane's Comments from the Press Conference held October 20, 2014

First, I would like to express my appreciation to those who responded to the incident in Keene on Friday and Saturday. That includes the Keene Police Department, the Keene Fire Department, all the regional fire departments, ambulance services, the New Hampshire State Police, and Tactical Units from Concord, Manchester & Nashua, as well as the many small departments and individual police who responded to assist in resolving the incident. Their assistance controlled and disbursed this mob and kept the 55-60,000 people in Keene for the Pumpkin Fest safe and out of harm's way.

Secondly the question that has been asked most frequently is "what is the future of the Pumpkin Festival?" This community event has been held for 24 years; however for the past several years there has been increased difficulty in Keene from those who organize their own gatherings. It is too early to determine what the future of the Pumpkin Fest will be. It will be the responsibility of the organizers and the City Council to assess the Festival and determine whether it should continue. A Public Forum will be held this December to hear from the public as to their thoughts and allow the City Council to assess the future of the Pumpkin Fest.

Finally, I want to thank Keene State College which has closely worked with the City in controlling the incident that took place near their campus. We will continue to work with them to resolve this matter and will continue to collaborate with them on other issues of mutual concern.

Thank you,

Kendall W. Lane, Mayor