

**City Council Workshop
September 20, 2022
Council Chambers
6:01 PM**

COUNCILORS PRESENT

Councilor Beaudoin
Councilor Berlin
Councilor de Geofroy
Councilor Desrochers
Councilor Fontneau
Councilor Gilman
Councilor Gray
Councilor Haينه
Councilor Hamann
Councilor Larochelle
Councilor Malone
Deputy Mayor Lachapelle
Mayor Callaghan

OTHERS PRESENT

Blaine Cox, City Manager
Katie Ambrose, Deputy City Manager
Mike Kirouac, resident
Tom Kaczynski, resident
Susan Rice, resident
Josh Levy, Waterstone
Jennifer Murphy-Aubin, Waterstone
Chief Gary Boudreau, Rochester Police

COUNCILORS EXCUSED

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Mayor Callaghan called the City Council Workshop meeting to order at 6:01 PM. All Councilors were present except for Councilor Berlin, who arrived at 6:10 PM.

The Council stood and Councilor Beaudoin led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Input

Mike Kirouac, Gonic resident, addressed the Council regarding the proposed development at the Gonic brickyard, to which he is a direct abutter. He spoke about the role of City Councilors as well as the role and purpose of zoning within a community.

Susan Rice, resident, spoke about the Thursday 9/22 Rochester Listens session at Gonic School and how it will be structured. Ms. Rice also spoke about a right-to-know request she had submitted for Conservation Commission business.

Tom Kaczynski, resident, inquired why there was a “pending” notation next to the undesignated fund balance in the finance report. Mr. Kaczynski also spoke about the proposed project at the Gonic brickyard as well as the Rochester Listens facilitated meeting on said project.

3. Communications from the City Manager

City Manager Blaine Cox reported that there had been two online public input submissions for this meeting: The first from Gary Barnes regarding banning library books and the second from Gerald Dudley titled “Water Main extension project.”

City Manager Cox passed along that the Department of Public Works is conducting their semi-annual hydrant flushing operations. This will occur in late evening/early morning hours and will be complete by mid-October. He asked that constituents with concerns about their water color/odor/quality please call the Department of Public Works at 603-332-4096.

4. Communications from the Mayor

Mayor Callaghan read a proclamation declaring September 25 through October 1 “Childhood Cancer Awareness Week.”

Mayor Callaghan announced that Spaulding High School football would be playing Dover this coming Friday, September 23. He invited community members to come to the game and support the home team. Councilor Lachapelle clarified that there would be a donation of two canned goods required to gain entry to the game.

5. Waterstone Phase II presentation

Josh Levy, Waterstone Principal, gave a brief overview of Waterstone’s development history at the Granite Ridge, with Phase I being started in 2014 and completed in 2016. Jennifer Murphy-Aubin, Waterstone Community Engagement Manager, gave Council a summary of several community events that Waterstone has organized at the Ridge and additional opportunities being taken by the organization to give back to the community.

Mr. Levy reported that the Walmart adjacent to the Granite Ridge development is anecdotally the number one Walmart in the State of NH by sales performance, with the Ridge Development being in the top three open air community shopping centers in the State based on foot traffic and total sales volume. He gave statistics on where tourists and shoppers are coming from and discussed potential ways to draw in shoppers to the area.

Mr. Levy explained how the original plan for Phase II of the Ridge had been retail-centered; however, that plan was put on hold when COVID hit. Due to changes in the industry and these delays, the plans needed to be reimaged to ensure success by allowing residential development at the Ridge along with retail. Mr. Levy presented several representations of the mixed-use development Waterstone is proposing with residential, restaurants, entertainment, as well as office space. Additionally he summarized Waterstone’s plans for trail networks to be utilized for outdoor activities and connections to the downtown area. He further detailed ways in which the Ridge could become a destination and keep the location interesting.

Councilor Beaudoin asked what the plan would be for the intersections in this area along Route 11, which tend to be busy with traffic heading north on weekends, and the increased traffic this development would cause. Mr. Levy stated that there were significant highway improvements being made with additional turning and deceleration lanes, as well as a new traffic light prior to the

development. He indicated that Waterstone had looked at the traffic impact of 160,000 square feet of residential development at the peak time of 7:00 PM, versus this same square footage criteria for mixed-use development which would cause the traffic to be spread throughout the day. He stated that they believed there could be less of an impact with the traffic spread out this way, even if the volume was actually higher overall.

Councilor de Geofroy asked if the proposed green spaces would be for resident-use only or if they would be accessible to the public. Mr. Levy stated that all these areas in the mixed-use portion would be publicly accessible. He spoke about the large number of dollars traveling along this particular corridor and the potential ways to draw in this demographic and encourage them to spend time, and in turn money, in the area. Mayor Callaghan asked to see a representation of the proposed design for this mixed-use area. Mr. Levy clarified that there are no definitive plans yet and what is being presented is conceptual. He explained several ideas that could be included in the final design and the criteria to be considered when deciding which businesses and services are included.

Councilor Larochelle asked if Waterstone intended to install electric vehicle charging stations in Phase II. Mr. Levy confirmed that there would be electric vehicle charging stations along with several other sustainability features throughout the development.

Mr. Levy presented numbers showing the difference between the original plan versus the mixed-use with residential proposal and the potential tax revenue generated with each plan. He explained some potential options for residential development over commercial establishments.

Councilor Berlin asked where Waterstone envisioned placing the dog park referenced earlier in the presentation. He also asked if this dog park would be public or for residents only. Mr. Levy stated that the intention is to have this dog park open to the public; there is no decision on exact placement, but they intend for the dog park to tie in with the walking paths.

Mr. Levy reported that Waterstone is ready to start development on Phase II. He gave a tentative timeline of the infrastructure improvements to be completed by the City followed by development beginning at the end of 2023 and an opening at the end on 2024.

6. Department Reports

Councilor Beaudoin pointed out that in the Police Comp Stat report, most of the data is in a year-to-date format; however the paragraph regarding overdoses seems to not follow the same year-to-date format. He inquired if the figure of 80 overdoses was, in fact, year-to-date and not a monthly statistic. Chief Boudreau referred to his most recent Comp Stat report and stated that from the end of August, there have been 80 overdoses with 12 of those being fatal. He reported that this number is slightly higher than in past years.

Councilor Beaudoin praised the Police Department for identifying 3 of the 4 perpetrators who have been defacing property with graffiti throughout Rochester.

Councilor Desrochers inquired if there was any further demographic information collected in regards to the overdose cases, whether for internal use or public dissemination. Chief Boudreau stated that he would be able to pull some statistics from the call report, such as age, however not all statistics (such as veteran status) are gathered at the time of a call and may just be personal

knowledge of the responding officer.

Councilors Fontneau asked if there were known statistics from other communities that indicate that overdoses are on an upward trend throughout the State or if this is Rochester-specific. Chief Boudreau referenced a recent news article which indicated that in Nashua and Manchester, there were significant increases in overdoses. He stated that he would inquire if other communities were experiencing these increases when he meets with the Stafford County Chiefs the following day.

Councilor Larochelle referenced an excerpt from the Department of Public Works report which states that a “mystery substance continues to appear in the sewer mains along Gonic Road in the area of Loring Drive.” He inquired what form this substance is taking (e.g. solid, gaseous) and if it was dissolving in the water. City Manager Cox stated that he would follow up with the Director of City Services and obtain more information.

7. **Adjournment**

Mayor Callaghan **ADJOURNED** the City Council Workshop at 6:56 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk