

Town of Newmarket, NH
Town Council Goal Setting Session

Date: June 25, 2025

Location: Town Hall Auditorium

Councilors Present: Council Chair Katanna Conley, Council Vice-chair Brian Ward, Councilor Scott Blackstone, Councilor Joe Lamattina, Councilor Colin White, Councilor Sonke Dornblut, Councilor Justin Glazebrook.

Staff Present: Town Manager Steve Fournier

Facilitator: Rick Alpers, Primex Management Consulting

1. Call to Order

Council Chair Conley called the meeting to order and welcomed Council members to the informal goal-setting session. Town Manager Steve Fournier introduced Rick Alpers from Primex, who facilitated the session.

2. Overview and Purpose

Rick Alpers provided an overview of the session, emphasizing the importance of annual goal setting for organizational efficiency and strategic direction. The session aimed to review progress on FY25 goals and develop/refine objectives for FY25–26.

3. Review of FY25 Goals

Goal 1: Improve Government Process

- **Progress:**
 - Charter Commission was established and is actively meeting.
 - Additional communications staff were hired; media consulting firm contracted.
 - Citizens Academy is still under research.
- **FY26 Considerations:**
 - Strengthen communication with committees.
 - Explore youth civic engagement initiatives.
 - Discussed potential partnerships with UNH and local colleges.
 - Website improvement suggestions and navigation review.

- Citizens Academy could be developed using video and in-person formats.
- Emphasis on two-way communication with residents.

Goal 2: Transportation Improvements

- **Progress:**

- Active Transportation Committee.
- Parking study; completed.
- Transportation chapter included in Master Plan.
- Sidewalk extensions; completed.
- COAST on-demand service expansion is underway.
- Urban compact agreement and \$375K grant secured for Packers Falls Road improvements.

- **FY26 Considerations:**

- Maintain momentum in transportation action planning.
- Develop implementation strategy based on Exeter Street Safety Study.

Goal 3: Clean & Renewable Energy

- **Progress:**

- Community Power implemented (rates subject to change).
- Solar array project in design phase.

- **Challenges:**

- Hybrid police vehicles underperformed and are not viable at this time.

- **FY26 Objectives:**

- Conduct a feasibility study on municipal energy production, storage, and distribution (including battery storage).
- Prioritize behind-the-meter solutions and potential UNH collaboration.

Goal 4: Housing

- **Progress:**

- Zoning changes passed to enable mixed-use development and infill.

- Planning Board collaboration increased.
- **FY26 Considerations:**
 - Recognize limited local tools to incentivize affordable housing.
 - Consider continuing Planning Board engagement and reviewing external incentives or grant opportunities.

Goal 5: Gateway Zoning / Smart Growth (Merged with Housing)

- Zoning reform (form-based code); achieved.
- Recognized as a foundational step toward housing goals.

Goal 6: Facilities Investment

- Facility study completed.
- FY25 Goal: Evaluate funding strategies and phasing options for implementation.

4. Additional Councilor Input

- Council expressed interest in improving coordination with town committees through periodic joint meetings.
- Noted need for clearer Council direction and policy guidance to advisory boards and commissions.
- General support for reevaluating goals periodically throughout the year.
- Emphasis on connecting town goals to recent Master Plan chapters.

5. Goal Setting Process for FY25–26

- Councilors agreed to a hybrid approach:
 - Continue unfinished goals with updated strategic objectives.
 - Add new priorities and goals as needed.
- Strategic themes to carry forward: communication, transportation, energy, housing, and facilities.
- Proposed revisiting progress quarterly or biannually.

Meeting Adjourned at: 8:07PM

Minutes Prepared By: Steve Fournier, Town Manager