



**City Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 26, 2024 - 6:00 p.m.
Franklin Lodge of Elks**

Council in attendance: Mayor Desiree McLaughlin, Councilor Susan Hallett-Cook (by phone), Councilor Leigh Webb, Councilor George Dzujna, Councilor Ted Starkweather, Councilor Ed Prive, Councilor Valerie Blake, Councilor Vince Ribas, Councilor Olivia Zink (by phone) and Councilor Timothy Johnston

Absent: None

Others in attendance: City Manager Judie Milner, City Department Heads, and members of the public.

Mayor McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and the Salute to the Flag was led by Councilor Webb.

City Manager Milner stated that Councilor Zink and Councilor Hallett-Cook were both home sick so they called in. All votes are to be a roll call for this meeting.

The mayor stated that they first needed to enter into a nonpublic session.

Motion – Councilor Ribas moved that there is a need for a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to include any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant. Motion seconded by Councilor Dzujna.

By a roll call vote.

Roll Call:

Councilor Blake	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Hallett-Cook	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Starkweather	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Webb	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Dzujna	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Prive	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Johnston	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Ribas	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>yes</u>

All in favor. Motion PASSED

Entered into nonpublic at 6:04 p.m.

Motion – Councilor Ribas moved to leave nonpublic session and return to public session. Seconded by Councilor Webb.

By a roll call vote.

Roll Call:

Councilor Blake yes Councilor Hallett-Cook yes Councilor Starkweather yes

Councilor Webb yes Councilor Dzujna yes Councilor Prive yes

Councilor Johnston yes Councilor Ribas yes Councilor Zink yes

All in favor. Motion PASSED

Public Session reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

Motion — Councilor Dzujna moved to seal the minutes. Seconded by Councilor Ribas.

By a roll call vote.

Roll Call:

Councilor Blake yes Councilor Hallett-Cook yes Councilor Starkweather yes

Councilor Webb yes Councilor Dzujna yes Councilor Prive yes

Councilor Johnston yes Councilor Ribas yes Councilor Zink yes

All in favor. Motion PASSED

PUBLIC HEARING

Resolution 13-24 authorizing the City Manager to file an application not to exceed \$625,000 with Community Development Finance Authority Tax Credit Program for the purposes of partially funding white water feature #2 and to sign all the necessary paperwork thereof.

Councilor Johnston called for a point of order and stated that he thinks that Councilor Blake should recuse herself from voting on Resolution 13-24 due to her being a board member on the Mill City Park board. He mentioned that he did not believe she has resigned and considers this to be against the code of conduct.

Councilor Blake stated that she refuses to recuse herself, as she resigned from the Mill City Park board in August of 2023. She added that she was very disturbed by the fact that he was attacking her about this and doesn't understand why he doesn't believe that she is no longer on the board, as it was made public. She also mentioned that there are other councilors that have sat on other boards and also voted in similar situations.

Motion – Councilor Johnston moved that the Franklin City Council vote on whether they believe Councilor Blake has broken the code of conduct of the city charter in her oath of office. Seconded by Councilor Prive.

The mayor asked if there was any discussion.

Jeremy Laucks, President of Mill City Park, was asked to state the status of Councilor Blake’s membership. He stated that she had resigned from the board on August 22, 2023 and had been on the MCP board for 3 years. He sent her letter of resignation to the council in December of 2023.

The majority of the council discussed that this did not seem necessary. Being on the board at any time does not mean that she would get any financial benefit by voting in favor of MCP, which is what the charter refers to being a code of conduct issue.

By a roll call vote.

Roll Call:

Councilor Blake	<u>abstained</u>	Councilor Hallett-Cook	<u>no</u>	Councilor Starkweather	<u>no</u>
Councilor Webb	<u>no</u>	Councilor Dzujna	<u>no</u>	Councilor Prive	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Johnston	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Ribas	<u>no</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>abstained</u>

5 opposed; 2 abstentions; 2 in favor. Motion FAILED

Public comments opened at 7:19 p.m.

Many residents approached the council with letters that they read to the council and the council also read all letters/emails that were received by them to be read into the record. These letters can all be found at the end of the minutes.

Public comments closed at 8:45 p.m.

Agenda Item I.

Council to consider Resolution 13-24 authorizing the City Manager to file an application not to exceed \$625,000 with Community Development Finance Authority Tax Credit Program for the purposes of partially funding white water feature #2 and to sign all the necessary paperwork thereof.

Motion – Councilor Dzujna moved that the Franklin City Council adopt Resolution 13-24 authorizing the City Manager to file an application not to exceed \$625,000 with Community Development Finance Authority Tax Credit Program for the purposes of partially funding white

water feature #2 and to sign all the necessary paperwork thereof. Seconded by Councilor Blake.

Mayor McLaughlin asked if there was any discussion.

The council had a lengthy discussion on this matter and took into account the majority of letters received were in support of resolution 13-24.

By a roll call vote.

Roll Call:

Councilor Blake yes Councilor Hallett-Cook yes Councilor Starkweather yes

Councilor Webb yes Councilor Dzujna yes Councilor Prive no

Councilor Johnston no Councilor Ribas yes Councilor Zink yes

7 in favor; 2 opposed. Motion PASSED

RESOLUTION #13-24

A Resolution Relating to an application to Community Development Finance Authority's Tax Credit Program.

In the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Twenty-Four,

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Franklin authorized the city manager, at its regularly scheduled city council meeting on December 4, 2023, to apply for a grant in the amount of \$500,000 through Land & Water Conservation Fund for the purposed of partially funding feature #2 of the white-water park, **and**;

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Franklin recognizes the Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant requires matching funds in the amount of \$500,000, **and**;

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Franklin recognizes that the Tax Credit Program administered by the Community Development Finance Authority is an effective tool that helped fund the construction of the white-water park feature #3, **and**;

WHEREAS, the City wishes to utilize the Tax Credit Program administered by the Community Development Finance Authority again to match Land & Water Funding and partially fund the construction of white-water park feature #2 upstream of the newly constructed feature #3, **Now**;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that at their regularly scheduled meeting of the City Council on Monday, February 26, 2024, the City Council of Franklin New Hampshire does hereby adopt resolution 13-24, authorizing the City Manager to apply for up to \$625,000 in Tax Credits under

the Tax Credit Program administered by the Community Development Finance Authority and sign and take action on all relevant documents pertaining to the application for tax credits.

Agenda Item II.

Council to consider proposed easement and maintenance agreement regarding Holy Cross Road.

Motion – Councilor Webb moved that the Franklin City Council permit, upon final review by the City Attorney, the granting of easements to Easterseals NH, acceptance of easements from Easterseals NH, and acceptance of a road maintenance agreement from Easterseals NH. Seconded by Councilor Ribas.

Mayor McLaughlin asked if there was any discussion.

The council discussed the fact that the city has been working with Easterseals NH to create a "Veterans Center" at Holy Cross Rd. Since the city road (Holy Cross Rd) runs between the Easterseals lots, and Easterseals proposes to connect the lots via shared utilities, and other improvements, said utilities and improvements will run under/over/in the city's road. In exchange for allowing the use of the area under the public road, Easterseals has agreed to grant an easement to allow the public road to extend onto their private property so that a cul-de-sac turnaround can be built. Easterseals NH is also proposing to take over maintenance of Holy Cross Rd via a maintenance agreement.

By a roll call vote.

Roll Call:

Councilor Blake	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Hallett-Cook	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Starkweather	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Webb	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Dzujna	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Prive	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Johnston	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Ribas	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>yes</u>

All in favor. Motion PASSED

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Ribas and seconded by Councilor Blake.

By a roll call vote.

Roll Call:

Councilor Blake	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Hallett-Cook	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Starkweather	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Webb	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Dzujna	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Prive	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Johnston	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Ribas	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>yes</u>

All in favor. Motion PASSED

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa A. Jones
Executive Secretary

To: Mayor and Council

From: Kenneth Ackerson

Re: Resolution 13-24

Date: February 26, 2024 City Council Workshop Meeting

Thank you Madame Mayor, and good evening to the City Council. I am here to speak in support of Resolution 13-24, allowing the city to apply for CDFA tax credits to partially fund the whitewater feature #2.

If I recall correctly, the concept of Mill City Park/White Water Park was first introduced in 2014 when Ken Merrifield was our mayor and Elizabeth Dragon was City Manager. This concept was embraced and promoted by that administration, then Mayor Tony Giunta and Finance Directory, Judie Milner. Community support continued through Mayor Jo Brown. Every mayor and city manager has heard the accolades for our community and the great photo ops this has afforded them.

For the past 10 years or so enormous strides have been made to see this project come to fruition. It has a great deal of community support with a small but vocal group of opponents. Having made so much progress in seeing this project through, it would be a shame to not finish the journey. I believe it would also be a black eye for our community to abandon this project and an affront to those businesses and financial supporters who have already invested heavily in Mill City Park.

The people of Franklin are watching, communities around the state are watching and others from around the country are watching to see if we will finish what we have started.

Mill City Park, along with other efforts in improving our city, has brought new life to our community. New residents and new businesses have already had an impact on broadening our tax base and creating a sense of excitement and pride.

I believe you have all received supportive letters from local businesses that are ready to apply for the required tax credits. They are to be commended for their ongoing support of our community. Please do not disappoint them.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Ackerson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the left of the name.

February 24, 2024

I am Maureen D. Aube and reside in Ward 3 at 19 Mountain View Drive. My purpose in contacting you is two-fold.

The first is that **I am in favor of Resolution 13-24** that the Council will discuss and vote on at the City Council Workshop Meeting on February 26, 2024.

Franklin is at a crossroad. Do we wish to continue with the current revitalization progress of the city? Do we wish to halt it and then what? Your packet contains an abundance of information about Whitewater Park which you have no doubt read and given thoughtful consideration. Also, there are the emails and calls that you have received regarding the pros/cons for Resolution 13-24.

All is so very current and yet there is a history of Franklin's economic revitalization that stems back to 2014. This should not be forgotten. I have created a timeline from 2016 through 2020 **using only the** resources located on franklinnh.org, Franklin City website. These are as follows: The Franklin Newsletter, the former mayors' inaugural addresses, and other documents. I have included hyperlinks (hopefully they will work) for you to read further if you so desire.

My second reason is for you to peruse how our former mayors and City Manager Elizabeth Dragon perceived the ongoing economic development of Franklin which included Mill City Park and the Whitewater Park. I hope that this will enable you to make a more informed decision when you vote on Resolution 13-24.

Excerpt from Mayor Merrifield's State of the City Address on January 5, 2017

A brilliant transformation is taking place in our downtown, and will even accelerate this spring. The largest investment in the history of downtown Franklin has begun at Riverbend Mill, and I believe this will spark further growth and development. Todd Workman, PermaCity Life, Marty Parichand, Jo Brown, your city government, and a host of other community boosters are making downtown Franklin an even greater destination.

https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/mayors_2017_state_of_the_city_address.pdf

At the completion of **Review of Economic Development Impact on Proposed "Mill City Park" and associated recreation activities** (followed by the name of City Manager Elizabeth Dragon) There is a brief overview of the events entitled **City and Business Leaders Collaborate on City's Economic Development.**

Behind the scenes the City and business leaders have been working diligently on Franklin's revitalization. City Manager Elizabeth Dragon meets bi-weekly with local developer and Executive Director of PermaCity life (PCL) Todd Workman; owner of Outdoor New England Marty Parichand; Planning Director Dick Lewis; Finance and Development Consultant Neil Cannon; and Executive Director of the City's Business and Industrial Development Corporation Jim Aberg. The meetings are held to discuss various City projects in process on and to discuss the stumbling blocks moving forward.

At a recent Council Special Workshop Meeting all were in attendance to discuss the attraction, retention and expansion of businesses to promote jobs and economic growth in Franklin. City Manager Dragon said, "This City is involved with projects that seemingly are not related to the City but are related to City development. Tourism is an effective development strategy and Franklin is unique as the river runs through downtown. If the City is successful bringing Whitewater Park and tourism to Franklin then PermaCitylife and other businesses will all be successful and need less assistance from the City."

Dragon joined Franklin Business & Industry Development Corporation's (FBIDC) board so the City is now actively involved with what has been happening with the FBIDC, as the City's economic development corporation. They have been able to leverage the City's assets with FBIDC making the City more impactful. Dragon said, "With Downtown Coordinator Neil Cannon coming on board and the efforts of Planning Director Lewis who put together the grant to make that possible we are able to further leverage City and FBIDC's assets and leverage the relationships we have with PCL and ONE to work on some projects. Some of the things that are being done are complex and require TIF plans, CDFA tax credits and other things that are available to them. It has made a difference, as we were awarded a tax credit of \$400K for business improvements in the downtown."

Workman said PCL brought in 10 businesses resulting in 48 jobs to Franklin in the first year. "These things happened because of the team work with the City. Franklin has a great toolbox and without it things won't come to Franklin. So much is happening in Franklin that NH Business Magazine last year rated Franklin as where things are happening."

Parichand spoke about the Whitewater Park and the economic development available from "marketing the City as a destination and capitalizing on capital and tourism resulting in employment opportunities." The City and business leaders will continue to meet regularly to work out obstacles and often complex issues for the future economic development of Franklin.

Franklin Newsletter Volume 3, Issue 2, page 4, February 2017

https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/2017-02_franklin_newsletter.pdf

City Manager Elizabeth Dragon Farewell

Franklin Newsletter Volume 3, Issue 7, pages 1-2, August/September 2017

franklinnh/sites/g/files/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/augsep_2017_franklin_newsletter.pdf

New Partnership with Central Street Media (City Manager Elizabeth Dragon)

I have been winding down my final weeks, now days, as your City Manager working on a new project! I teamed up with Christopher Kontoes of Central Street Media centralstreetmedia.com (603-671-3339) to inform/educate and market many of the initiatives in the city through video. There are so many great things happening in the City that people often aren't aware of. Christopher has donated a great deal of his time and resources to this project to make it a reality.

I am excited to have some finish product up on our website. Please check out the front page of our website www.franklinnh.org and click on the three videos about economic re-development in the city. Soon there will also be videos about the whitewater park concept planned for downtown.

Spread the word--The City of Franklin is open for business!

Elizabeth Dragon

Franklin Newsletter Volume 3, Issue 7, page 5, August/September

2017 [franklinnh/sites/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/augsep_2017_franklin_newsletter.pdf](http://www.franklinnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/augsep_2017_franklin_newsletter.pdf)

Mill City Park Receives \$250,00 From FSB: Donation Will support Project to Develop Whitewater Park in Franklin (Nov. 2017)

(Scott Clarenbach, Interim Mayor and Julie Milner, Acting City Manager)

Franklin Newsletter Volume 3, Issue 9, page 1, November 2017

https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/nov_2017_franklin_newsletter.pdf

Excerpt from Mayor Giunta Speech: Rebirth of Franklin on January 8, 2018 (former mayor and city councilor)

Let's move forward to today. Wow, the City is "on fire"! And what it took were some champions to step forward, to take some risk have, and have a vision. It also took a collaborate effort on the part of the city to team with these great champions and work together to get projects moving. As a result, we had the largest downtown infrastructure investment in modern times with a CATCH Housing 12 million dollar investment in the former Riverbend Mill complex now aptly renamed the Franklin Light and Power complex. We've had a major investment by PermaCity Life breathing new life into our most visible downtown Central Street structures... and they've only just begun. Then we have Mill City Park and their plans moving forward to create a premiere whitewater kayaking destination. Then, for those of you who may not know, we had a premiere mill developer purchase the JP Stevens mill-the largest mill building in our downtown. This is more spectacular news for our downtown businesses as revitalization of the Stevens Mill will mean more people working, eating, entertaining, and buying products in our downtown. We are also building a 1MW solar project up on Industrial Park Drive. This project will provide clean renewable solar power to 100 homes.

And now, the most exciting part of the night... the future of our City. The Whitewater Park is coming and with it nearly 6.5 million dollars of economic activity. The Stevens Mill restoration will be spectacular and with it significant economic activity and business creation. Franklin Light and Power will bring nearly 50 families to our downtown. With all of this activity, downtown businesses will flourish resulting in continued upgrades and improvements to buildings along Central Street.

https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/inaugural_2018.pdf

Excerpt from **Franklin Gearing Up for the Whitewater Park** by Julie Milner, City Manager

The Three Rivers City is poised for an economic revival through two major projects that will answer a longstanding need: attracting outsiders. PermaCity Life and Mill City Park have generated excitement and, more importantly, investment in the state's smallest city. "The city a while ago recognized that we need to increase our tax base in some way, through economic development," said City Manager Judie Milner. "But our economic base can't support a business on its own. We need to have something that will bring people in and I believe we've got the right group of passionate people to make this vision our new reality." Franklin will be a new destination for many who might have just driven straight through in the past and we can't be more excited for our city's future.

Franklin Newsletter Volume 4, Issue 5, pages 1-3, May/June 2018

https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/mayjune_2018_franklin_newsletter.pdf

Excerpt from **Two Franklin Projects Win CRDC Grants: Downtown Revitalization is goal of Mill City Park , PermaCity Life** by NHBR

The Capital Regional Development Council, recently awarded a total of \$10,000 to two separate initiatives aimed at reviving downtown Franklin. Through its Community Grant Program, CRDC awarded Mill City Park at Franklin Falls \$5,000 to help fund the development of a master plan for 9.32 acres of land surrounding the Winnepesaukee River that would the park, which is part of a larger development project in the city that involves creation of New England's first whitewater park. Initial plans for Mill City Park include a community garden, event space, picnic area, historic mill run trail, interconnection to the Winnepesaukee River Trail, mountain bike pump track system and an eco-village area.

Franklin Newsletter Volume 4, Issue 6, page 3, Summer 2018

https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/summer_franklin_newsletter.pdf

Franklin Receives 400K in Grants and Matching Funds for the Mill City Park

(Mayor Giunta and City Manager Julie Milner)

Franklin Newsletter Volume 4, Issue 7, pages 1-2, Fall 2018

https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/fall_2018_franklin_newsletter_0.pdf

Another Win for Franklin and Mill City Park (by Marty Parichand, Executive Director of Mill City Park)

(Mayor Giunta and City Manager Julie Milner)

Franklin Newsletter Volume 6, Issue 1, page 1, Winter 2020

https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf601/f/uploads/winter_2020_franklin_newsletter.pdf

Excerpt from Mayor Giunta's Inaugural Speech January 2021

Let this be our moment to brush ourselves off of 2020 and looking forward to 2021. Let's remember, that even though 2020 gave us great challenges, we accomplished incredible things.

- We received permits to create our Whitewater Park. A huge accomplishment and first of its kind in all New England. This will change everything!
- Moving forward with Mill City Park to further compliment the Whitewater park.
- Peabody Home will have its largest expansion in its history.
- The JP Stevens Mill project received final approval and will mark the largest single investment in our downtown's history.
- We finally completed a very complex deal clearing the way for Cumberland Farms to build one of their largest stores in all New England.
- Investments in our Central Street properties continue.
- Major investments in properties throughout the City continue.
- Franklin properties are selling in 5 days and for above asking price.
- People are moving here from all across the country and when you can attract people from Massachusetts and Texas, well we must be doing something right!

https://www.franklinnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif601f/uploads/inaugural_2021.pdf

The Honorable Resigns as of January 15, 2021

In the past three years we've achieved incredible success. The Whitewater Park, Mill City Park, Stevens Mill, Peabody Home, Cumberland Farms, Central Street expansion, a booming real estate market, and the list goes on. Franklin is poised The Honorable Mayor Giunta Resigns

to regain its prestigious status that it occupied not so many years ago. We've all played a significant part in this success and we should be proud of our achievements together.

<https://www.franklinnh.org/home/news/honorable-mayor-giunta-resigns>

Thus concludes the earlier history of the economic revitalization of Franklin that relates to the initiatives of PermaCity Life, Mill City Park, and Whitewater Park. As you will note during this span of time, there were other city officials who were instrumental in spearheading us to where we are currently -- to continue the forward progress with the passage of Resolution 13-24 or halt and then what? Know that I am in favor of Resolution 13-24.

Please do not lose sight of the progress that has occurred thus far. Seeing Franklin become a vibrant community is my dream come true.

Sincerely, Maureen D, Aube (Ward 3)

LeAnne Fifield Ward 2

After the February 5th meeting, I emailed the 3 councilors who voted (in my opinion) to waste tax payer money by having the grant application we are discussing tonight completely filled out prior to the council's vote. Two of the councilors responded, Mr. Prive, even though I am not in your ward, you still represent all of Franklin, I would have appreciated a response. I did not agree with the 2 I did get, but I do appreciate that you responded. I encouraged you both to investigate how grants work within a municipality and to reach out to other communities to see how they fund economic development. I hope you both did your homework.

Let me see if I have this straight. We have applied for a Land & Water Conservation Grant for Mill City Park in the amount of \$500,000. Part of the terms of this grant is to have matching funds. We have a tool where we can apply for another grant to allow us to sell \$625,000 worth of tax credits which come from businesses throughout the state of NH. This money will be considered the match to the Land & Water grant. If my memory serves me correct this has been done before and there was no issue is selling those tax credits. The tax credits help Mill City Park as well as the businesses that purchase them!! These are available for "shovel ready" projects only. Sadly, the Opera House is not "shovel ready" yet. So why would we NOT use tax credits to match the Land and water Conservation Grant? If we don't use this tool what are our other options to match this grant? How will we raise the money?

Creating a larger business tax base in Franklin is how we ease the tax burden on homeowners. Can I repeat that? Creating a larger business tax base in Franklin is how we ease the tax burden on homeowners. How do you do this? We entice businesses to come to the city. We've had many new businesses move in, several of them are also homeowners and vested in Franklin. Why would we stifle this? Why would we move backwards?? What is your plan if we don't continue the economic development that has seen many improvements to this city? I want to hear YOUR Plan? How do you propose to pay for education, roads, the Soldiers Memorial Hall??? I've heard NOTHING... except for the Keyboard Warriors continued half-truths & twisted facts. Oh, and a call for a boycott of a local business where our mayor applauded them, or in her words I quote: "I leave you all alone for one day during a busy meeting day and you burned a city down in my defense. I returned home to rubble LOL. Very grateful for friends".

Dividing this community is not the answer! It is time to set a social media polity for all elected and appointed officials in this community!

But back to the subject, I am in favor of moving forward and continue the outdoor recreation movement of this community. I am in favor of utilizing the natural resources in this community to encourage the growth of our business sector to ease the tax burden on property owners and I am in favor of applying for this grant to match the Land & Water Grant for Mill City Park. *Resolution 1310*



MILL CITY PARK

AT FRANKLIN FALLS

February 26, 2024

Members of City Council;

One of the major criticisms I hear about this project is about funding. The argument is that Franklin shouldn't be spending its resources on a park when those resources are limited and the city faces some serious challenges- roads, schools, the fact that we can't even hold this meeting in City Hall. As polarized as the world is today, I think we can all find a small plot of common ground in agreeing Franklin does face serious challenges; but then we need to try to come up with solutions. When asked in a recent City Council workshop what needed to be done to prioritize road funding, the Director of Municipal services replied simply, "Increase the tax base." How do you do that? You could repeal the tax cap, or issue a bond. I think we all know how that would go over. Under the tax cap, the only other option to grow the tax base is to encourage investment in Franklin's buildings. Gains to valuation do to construction and renovation don't fall under the limits of the tax cap, and there are certainly a lot of beautiful old buildings that could use some investment.

Of course, that investment doesn't exist if there aren't tenants: both residents and businesses, and businesses don't exist if there aren't customers. To this end, the City has taken on a strategy of marketing Franklin as an outdoor recreation destination with Mill City Park as the centerpiece. Looking around the city, it seems this plan is working. We're seeing buildings being renovated and businesses moving in. Even though we've only realized a small portion of



MILL CITY PARK

AT FRANKLIN FALLS

the vision for Mill City Park, we are seeing a return on the efforts made by the City and our organization. It's important to realize that the goal is long term growth; it's not a quick patch, it will take time, but if we continue these efforts, we'll keep Franklin moving upward and keep seeing more return on investment. It only makes sense to utilize a small amount of the City's resources to apply for a grant to keep moving forward. What message does it send to people looking to invest here if Franklin isn't even willing to make that small investment in itself by applying for a grant? What does it say to leave a project half finished?

Some people will also question if the river park is really driving the investment we've seen over the past few years. Perhaps it's a coincidence that it's happening in the same time period we've been working on this project. Perhaps it was also a coincidence that one of the restaurants that opened in recent years chose the weekend of Winni River Days for their grand opening. The Steven's mill project is being marketed as being in the heart of Franklin's "riverside downtown." The condos in the IOOF building were sold under the name "The Lofts at Mill City Park." Vulgar Brewing Company serves a "Mill City IPA." When you talk to the people investing and opening businesses here, they will tell you the movement happening around Mill City Park is a significant part of the reason they're choosing Franklin. Maybe it's also a coincidence that I have personally seen the same changes that are currently happening in Franklin happen in other river towns that have taken on these park projects over the past 20 years. I've seen them grow and flourish over time, and while it does take time, it gives me faith that Franklin has a very bright future..



MILL CITY PARK

AT FRANKLIN FALLS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Laucks', written in a cursive style.

Jeremy Laucks

President of the Board

E Prive

From: LYNNE STEVENS <z3mama@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 17:49
To: City Manager; Mayor; Ted Starkweather; SH Cook; Olivia Zink; George Dzujna; Vince Ribas; Valerie Blake; T Johnston; Leigh Webb; E Prive
Subject: Tax dollars

You don't often get email from z3mama@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

To whom it may concern,

We are residents and taxpayers of Franklin and we do not want our tax dollars to be used for the water park or the opera house. These two entities should be raising their own funds and those involved should be volunteering their time and efforts to do so. Tax dollars should be used for schools, improving our deplorable roads and bringing the city hall up to code.

Sincerely,

Gary & Lynne Stevens

Ward 3



February 20, 2024

Franklin City Council
316 Central St
Franklin, NH 03235

Dear Council Members and Mayor,

We are writing to express our support of this grant application for the CDFA submitted by the City of Franklin. We believe it is imperative to our success in Franklin and the continued forward progress of our city.

We have seen positive changes since Mill City Park completed the first feature. In fact, the vast majority of our tourism last summer revolved around the water feature and river, as the rain seemed to deter the larger group of visitors we would normally have seen during the summer months. Not a week goes by where we don't speak with someone about the park, whether they are visiting our city because of the river and water feature, or just inquiring about how much the city has already changed for the better. We also see locals becoming more connected to the river at Trestle View Park. We've seen locals reading, sunning themselves, hanging out with friends, and just generally enjoying a beautiful park by the river. We are so proud of the progress we've seen so far.

Once again we would like to reiterate that we literally chose to open our business in Franklin because of the revitalization efforts, including Mill City Park. We employ a dozen people, two of whom recently moved into the Stevens Mill building, which also exists here because of the revitalization efforts. We pay taxes through our business. Our family owns a home in Franklin, which we also pay taxes on. We volunteer, raise money for causes, and donate to support several local organizations. We are invested in this community. We may be relative newcomers, but this is our home and we truly believe we can all continue to work together to build on the momentum we have.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Damon and Megan Lewis (ward 3)
Jason and Shelly Harrington
Vulgar Brewing Company

E Prive

From: J Johnston <musseyj75@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 18:35
To: Mayor; Councilor George Dzujna; Ted Starkweather; Leigh Webb; Olivia Zink; Valerie Blake; Vince Ribas; E Prive; SH Cook; T Johnston
Subject: CDFA tax credit app

Some people who received this message don't often get email from musseyj75@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello, my name is Janet Johnston and I am a ward one resident and tax payer. My husband and I alone pay over \$400 per month to the city of Franklin, to contribute to the cost of keeping the city running. This includes money's for city employees pay and benefits at municipal services, the fire department, the police department, City hall, the recreation department, the library, transfer station, and the schools. I'm sorry for those I missed, as I know there are 22 separate departments. These employees are paid to work for the city residents and taxpayers. What is the work they are supposed to perform? Keeping our roads safe, responding in emergency situations, teaching our children, balancing our budget, picking up our trash, collecting additional taxes for motor vehicle, dog, and other registrations, building and yard sale permits, etc. Among many other responsibilities. We also seperately pay (a lot) for our water and sewer, but to my knowledge our municipal services and city hall employees perform a majority of the duties for the water and sewer department. Within Franklin there are two areas known as "TIF districts", where any tax dollars collected are kept out of the general taxpayer fund and are not contributing toward keeping the city running, instead those money's are to be used to grow those particular areas by helping to bring in more businesses. However, from what I have learned there are board members for the TIF districts that have not met since 2017, possibly 2019. There are supposed to be thorough annual reports, that have been requested multiple times by different taxpayers and a city councilor, but they have not been provided.

How are we supposed to support taxpayer's money being spent on the time and resources it takes for applying for grants and tax credits when we have no knowledge of or accountability for where the TIF stands?

I grew up in Franklin, and have multiple family members who live in or have lived in Franklin. When we bought our home here in 2010 it was because we wanted to raise our sons in a small, safe, affordable community. Our youngest son graduated in 2023 from FHS, and I can tell you with personal experience that over the last nine or so years, things have drastically changed in this city, and not for the better. We need to correct the course we're on, and get back to the basics of city employees working for the taxpayers, keeping the city safe and run with an honest, transparent government.

It appears there are many conflicts of interest within all these boards and committees, and residents are losing confidence in the decisions being made or attempting to be made.

I do not support more city employøes time being spent doing any form of work for private businesses or charities, to research or apply for grants or tax credits.

I believe our city government and the TIF district needs a thorough, outside, forensic audit and/or investigation.

Thank you & have a good night,

Janet Johnston

Ward 1

E Prive

From: Scott Godbois <sgodbois74@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 10:16
To: T Johnston; Ted Starkweather; Valerie Blake; Vince Ribas; SH Cook; Olivia Zink; George Dzujna; E Prive; Leigh Webb; Mayor
Subject: Council workshop 2/24/2024

Some people who received this message don't often get email from sgodbois74@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello Mayor and councilors

Please read and submit into public comment

First I would like to express my concerns for the CDFA. I do understand that they are a part of any means to help a city/town to move forward by using non local tax money. Part of the process requires that the community should also overwhelming support any said projects, how is this achieved when the city manager send out an email saying that we need to get all pro-MCP to a meeting that was held in December to persuade you as a council to vote for the MOU for MCP?

If she did that then what's to say she will not do it again for this meeting on Monday night?

At the last council meeting the city manager balked at your request to see the final application for the CDFA her response was do we really want to go throw all that work to fill it out and then have the council vote against applying, that's a waste of taxpayers money and her staffs time, didn't she apply for CDFA for the OPERA HOUSE and got the grant just to turn it down? How is that not a waste of her staffs time and taxpayers money?

Franklin resident taxpayers have been called "idiots, Trolls", granting agencies have been called "dumb as sticks" "friggen bureaucrats" and our past mayor was called "useless" and should be scripted to follow the city manager leadership". All buy the city manager, Neil Cannon and Marty

The very same people who are asking for our tax money to fund a project that will only benefit a few and not many.

As a resident and taxpayer it is concerning that the city manager primary focus is on MCP and that White waterpark, as our roads are deteriorating, our school are failing, shoulder memorial and the proulx center are in much needed life safety repairs all of which are not new issues they have been known for years and still nothing was done to be proactive.

And yet the city manager and her self appointed ED team continue to prioritize a project that has a ROI for a select few business and not the taxpayers.

In conclusion as a taxpayer and resident I ask that the council to reconsider thier position and vote against this submission and any future grants untill all documents are current and up to date, and Mcp provides a through breakdown of any and all funds that were granted and distributed since conception and to whom they were distributed to.

And is provided to all city councilors and the mayor to be view.

Thank you for your time and service
Scott and Samantha Godbois

I am away on vacation and cannot be present to read this myself, with my own emotions regarding the issue at hand. However I am grateful for the person reading it for me and the attention of those who are hearing my hearing words.

After the last City Council meeting I was disheartened at the clear and intended direction apparent with some elected officials. I can't fathom the desire to shut down the economic forward movement that this city has seen in the past few years. Clearly on social media it is a personal attack on those people and entities working tirelessly to move the city forward with the attraction and growth of business and downtown housing development. This personal attack is so blatant and obvious and most disturbing of all if fueled and fanned by inaccurate, incomplete, twisted half facts often perpetuated by our own Mayor. With blinders on a crusade is waged without consideration of the economic impact of the city. It's like cutting off your nose to spite your face. Setting aside personal animosity towards others and leaving personal agendas at the door is how we work together for the common good of ourselves as a community. Stop the negative narrative and division! We all want to have better roads, schools and public spaces. We can't have those things without paying for them and the growth of our outdoor recreational opportunities are already proving to be fruitful in achievement of our goals. Without the growth and development we've seen we would not have most of our downtown businesses, as almost all have said they would not be here but for the revitalization of Franklin as an outdoor recreational destination. I personally would not be here either, as I would not have invested myself in downtown housing if the appeal of the bike trails, city parks, Opera House, VMRA and Mill City Park and downtown growth they attract were not here. I wrote a letter to each of you after the last City council meeting asking specifically for each of you to provide me your opinion on what actual harm Mill City Park would have on the city of Franklin. Sadly our newly elected council members and one incumbent chose not to respond. For the ones that did, I'm grateful. However not one person was able to provide me with any context of actual harm that would be caused to Franklin by the existence of Mill City Park. Not even our Mayor.

I'm voicing my concern about the negative narrative and direction and I want to confirm as I've stated before that the path forward for this city is in fact FORWARD. The grant opportunities before us to fund and provide matching funds for ready projects is not an opportunity to be turned down. The only projects ready to go right now that would be eligible for these funds is Mill City Park and I urge the council to move forward with the applications. Growth in the downtown sector provides an opportunity for a higher downtown tax base and ease of the property tax burdens on residential properties elsewhere in the city. Once upon a time many in the town of Loudon were opposed to Mr Baer selling his dirt race track to be developed into a speedway. They took a leap and looked beyond and permitted the speedway and today those residential taxes are lower and more appealing. As a result property resale is higher than many neighboring communities having great benefits to those homeowners.

*For: Christy Goodhue
Ward II Taxpayer & Property Owner*



February 16, 2024

Judie Milner
City Manager
316 Central Street
Franklin, NH 03135

RE: CDFA Grant

Dear Ms. Milner:

On behalf of the entire team at Chinburg, I am writing to express our strong support for the City of Franklin's application to the Community Development Finance Authority Tax Credit Program for a \$625,000 grant for the purposes of partially funding feature #2 in the whitewater park. We have witnessed the positive economic impact of the completion of the first feature which is already attracting enthusiasts from all parts of New England. Our lease-up at Stevens Mill is in full swing and the Whitewater Park is a key amenity that our new residents look forward to.

Franklin is on the cusp of a renaissance and transformation into a mecca for outdoor recreation. The kayaking venue at Mill City Park is the capstone of this new economy and will continue to drive the growth and redevelopment of downtown Franklin. From the inception of the whitewater park, we have been an enthusiastic supporter of this project and will continue to be a champion for its completion.

We applaud the hard work and dedication of the City's leaders for their dedication and commitment to complete this transformative project and for investing in this crucial economic development opportunity. Chinburg can also be counted on as an investor in the CDFA credits should the city receive them.

Sincerely,

Eric J Chinburg

President of Chinburg Properties and Manager of Stevens Mill LLC

"February 23, 2024

Dear Councilors and Mayor McLaughlin:

I am writing to express my support for Resolution #13-24 to fund Mill City Park.

When my husband and I first thought about moving our family from out of state, I had a vision of the little New England town (or, in this case, city) that I hoped to discover. We had no idea yet that Franklin was such a place, but as we searched the state no other town quite fit. And when we briefly looked into buying in Franklin, what we heard wasn't great, so initially we didn't even come to visit. Fortunately, we did have a friend who knows a developer in this area and the state. This developer assured us that with all the investment and work going into Franklin, including the waterpark, it would be a great place for us to move.

After reading the Waterpark plans, I became certain we had to move to Franklin. The appeal of a free to all community mountain bike pump track, safe river play areas for children, parkour course, amphitheater for concerts and events, pavilion for parties, nature-scaped playground, a standing wave, and access to white water kayaking and rafting classes for my children was tremendous. I simply cannot wait for my children to have access to all these wholesome, health-giving, joyful activities. They've already loved kayaking and the standing wave. I, also, immediately knew this park would draw in other young families who care about their community, their schools, and their downtown, and that Franklin would then have the number of engaged people it needs to thrive and support a full and bustling business district.

I'm not the only one who sees this. I've personally talked to a number of business owners and families about why they started their business here in the last few years, making Franklin already such a wonderful place for my family to grow and thrive. Every single one that I have personally talked to cited the Waterpark as one of the principal reasons they invested in Franklin.

Franklin was already beautiful. It is indeed everything I dreamed before I had even come to Franklin. So much so, that out of the many, many towns and cities we visited, it was only this one that brought me to tears when we drove onto Central Street. The mountains in the background, a historic steeple crowning a unique and attractive cityscape, woods all around, three rivers, a beautiful lake, a ski area, the Winni trail, the Opera House, and walkable neighborhoods with gorgeous historic homes. This city is indeed one worth preserving, reviving, and growing. I feel truly blessed to be here. With the businesses already here and even bustling at times and the INCREDIBLE community fighting to grow and revive the community in a myriad of ways, Franklin is already my favorite place I've ever lived (competing with such places as Princeton, the Mediterranean coast, and Philadelphia). But, it is clear, the Waterpark is a vital and integral part of making it the place that it is even now for me and my family, for filling out the empty storefronts with businesses that bring value, and for bringing more engaged and involved people and families to help Franklin thrive. Please allow and support the Waterpark's work and growth to continue.

Please read this letter into the record at the meeting and include it in the meeting minutes.

Jennie Genus
Ward 3"

February 23, 2024

Dear Councilors and Mayor McLaughlin:

I am unable to attend the February 26th City Council meeting in person due to a previously scheduled engagement. However, I'd like to express my enthusiastic support for Resolution #13-24 authorizing the City Manager to file an application with the Community Development Authority Tax Credit Program to fund Mill City Park.

I strongly believe Mill City Park is a critical cornerstone project that is essential to Franklin's revitalization and growth. In the three years since I moved my law practice from Philadelphia to Franklin, I've watched as investment and interest in our city has skyrocketed; I've watched new businesses open; I've seen long-established businesses increase their customer base and sales; I've seen renewed excitement, purpose, and community involvement from residents old and new; and I've seen friends from New Hampshire who laughed at me for moving to Franklin three years ago beg me to keep my eyes open for new real estate listings so they can move here and get in on the action.

The overwhelming majority of those I've spoken to who are involved in this renewal and investment in Franklin have acknowledged publicly or privately that Mill City Park was and remains the driving force behind it all.

In other words, Mill City Park has proved to be a domino of sorts, unleashing an inevitable sequence of events that will continue to propel Franklin forward, if only we'll come together as a city and let it happen.

Me, my wife, and my six children are looking forward to the park's completion and hope the council will fully support this opportunity to continue moving forward.

Kindly read this letter into the record at the meeting and include it in the official minutes of the meeting.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Genus", with a horizontal line underneath it.

Frank Genus
Ward 3

George Dzujna

From: kaitlyncampbellshaw@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:51 AM
To: George Dzujna; Ted Starkweather; T Johnston; Mayor
Subject: Comments for public hearing on resolution 13-24

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kaitlyncampbellshaw@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

As my distinguished councilors of ward 1, I formally request that one of you please read these comments into the record of the public hearing on resolution 13-24- to consider the use of the CDFA tax credits as match for federal grants for the continued development of Mill City Park.

“It is my understanding that in a tax cap city, there are two primary ways to increase revenue; 1. Decrease spending by cutting budgets. Or 2. Broaden the tax base.

From the bond discussions it is clear that some taxpayers do not want their taxes to be put towards non-profit efforts or towards supporting public-private partnerships. It was clear they also did not want to support maintenance of roads or public infrastructure since the bond was primarily for that (only 8% of that bond had anything to do with MCP).

Non-profits therefore raise money and with the support of the city apply to grants to try to bring people to the city to increase the tax base, thereby distributing the costs of running a city.

As taxfoundation.org explains, “A broad tax base reduces tax administration costs and allows more revenue to be raised at lower rates”.

CDFA tax credits are **voluntary**. This means that no Franklin business or taxpayer will be required to pay into this program. Only those who wish to participate will pledge their taxes towards the program.

If you, as a councilor of ward 1 vote against resolution 13-24, my question for you is what is your plan to bring \$ to the city to fix our degraded infrastructure? Where is your plan written down and when do you plan to enact it?

Thanks so much for your time!

Sincerely,
Kaitlyn Shaw (tax payer, ward 1)

George Dzujna

From: Eliza Conde <econde@metrocast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2024 4:18 PM
To: Ted Starkweather; George Dzujna; T Johnston; Olivia Zink; Vince Ribas; SH Cook; Councilman Webb; Valerie Blake; E Prive
Subject: Tax credit

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from econde@metrocast.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

I am very much in favor of the city's applications for tax credits for both the Opera House and the 2nd water feature.

Thank you

Eliza Conde
385 Prospect Street

Sent from my iPhone

George Dzujna

From: Ray Yonaitis <the59ray@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 5:58 PM
To: Olivia Zink; Vince Ribas; SH Cook; Ted Starkweather; George Dzujna; T Johnston; Leigh Webb; Valerie Blake; E Prive; Mayor; City Manager
Subject: City Council Workshop Meeting Monday February 26 2024 6 pm

You don't often get email from the59ray@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mayor, City Councilors, and City Manager of Franklin,

Because of my physical limitations, I am unable to attend your City Council Workshop Meeting taking place this Monday February 26, 2024 at 6 p.m.

If there is a Public Participation period, I would appreciate this letter to be read by one of you into record. If not, please add this letter to the minutes of this workshop.

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the upcoming Public Hearing on Resolution 13-24, which authorizes the City Manager to file an application not to exceed \$625,000.00 with the Community Development Finance Authority Tax Credit Program funds for the purpose of partially funding white water feature #2.

My foremost concern is the consideration of using public tax dollars to fund a **private endeavor** while our city's infrastructure continues to deteriorate after years neglect.

Before delving into such initiatives, it is imperative that we prioritize addressing critical infrastructure such as the Soldiers Memorial Hall and our roads.

The current state of Soldiers Memorial Hall, formally utilized for city council meetings and community events, is concerning due to numerous code violations rendering it unsafe for use. It is essential to allocate resources towards bringing this building up to code to ensure its safe utilization again.

I question the decision to forego accessing the resources secured by our city employees through grant applications approved by the CDFR for the City Hall/Opera House work. It is crucial to assess the amount of city employee hours invested in securing these grants, only to let them expire, allowing our infrastructure to further deteriorate. Proactive measures could have prevented the current state of disrepair.

Furthermore, I seek clarification on the number of grants applied for and subsequently ignored over the past two, four, and six years.

In addition, I am concerned about the council's neglect of our roads and urge prioritization of road maintenance and repair.

Upon reviewing the materials for this hearing, I observed the use of outdated letters from businesses, which raises questions about the relevance of the information provided. I also seek access to studies supporting Resolution 13-24 and request the Public Hearing Minutes on this resolution, as they should be available before Resolution 13-24 is voted upon.

In conclusion, I urge the council to reconsider the allocation of any funds for Resolution 13-24 and prioritize addressing pressing infrastructure needs that directly impact our community's safety and well-being.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Raymond Yonaitis

Ward 2

George Dzujna

From: Kirk Weyant <kirk@3rwc.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 7:18 AM
To: George Dzujna
Subject: water park

You don't often get email from kirk@3rwc.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I fully support the water park

Kirk Weyant, Owner
PO Box 428, Franklin NH 03235
603-934-1995 | Mobile 603-440-9068
kirk@3rwc.com
kirk@turfinstaller.net



E Prive

From: tammy COLE <dannytammy@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 15:20
To: E Prive
Subject: Next meeting

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Please read for me

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

— Forwarded Message —

From: "tammy COLE" <dannytammy@yahoo.com>
To:
Sent: Thu, Feb 22, 2024 at 2:45 PM
Subject:

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

— Forwarded Message

To: "tammy cole" <dannytammy@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thu, Feb 22, 2024 at 1:55 PM
Subject:

Dear council And Representatives of the people, I find Myself out of my comfort zone that I have to complain and feeling that I'm Really not a complainer, but have to voice my concerns. I know that you all have an extremely difficult job. And Belive you all are doing the best you can at it. I commend you for your services. However, I have noticed the City's prioritys Seem to be influenced by a select few- I'm referring to the water park. Yes, it would have been great to have it completed. No cost to the taxpayer as it was supposed to be from the beginning. And I get things don't go as planned. However, it can't be taken out on the backs of the taxpayers, Perhaps The people Who will most benefit by this? Should be Covering more of the costs & time in effort. I Cearly Agree that it would have been had Everything gone as planned and not come off the backs of taxpayers. We need more transparency in this city, I feel there are many other needs that go ahead of this- Here we have a tax cap. But taxes for many have risen off the chart ! Everyone understands assessments went up due to the market value Going way up. However, what we can't understand is why the tax rate only dropped a little And not near enough to balance- so that some People's taxes increased 1500 to \$4000 more a year. That's just wrong

On Every level ! I've noticed this city seems to have a serious problem with maintenance For example, the opera house. It looks like the roof recently leaked. How long has the inside ceiling been like that? Why hasn't that building had Regular maintenance and upgrades ? and now it's going to cost over 5 million dollars to the taxpayer, and it's been shut down condemned really. The beautiful railroad trestle that we all love to look at - no maintenance. There for 50 years 60 years and now it needs complete tear down or millions of dollars put into it. Also on a lesser scale, look at the skate park for the kids not even Useable now. That's Really Sad, Yes, also the roads they are Also showing a great deal of lack of maintenance . This is something that Effects most all Of us ,There's Something wrong when I feel like I need to purchase a four wheel drive just to get home . Then there is the schools we know all across the country. The school system is having a great deal of problems. Many of them have become More about Agenda related or political? Sadly, the children suffer for this.

Good evening , I am Danielle Lamanuzzi, the owner of the Franklin Cafe. I am asking for this letter to be read tonight (2/26/2024) at this council meeting in support of applying for the additional funding needed for Mill City Park. I have been raised in the local area for almost 35 years. In my younger years , Franklin wasn't the place to go. It wasn't the place you took your family on vacation , or out to dinner , it wasn't the place to own a business and in turn it certainly didn't have the amount of thriving businesses that it does now. I our purchased the cafe in late fall of 2022 , and I was confident in doing so because I could see the potential and growth that is occurring here. If someone asked me 5-10 years ago if I would have bought a business in Franklin, my answer would have been no... Franklin is a completely different place now than it was 10+ years ago. It is becoming a destination that people are searching out , and looking to come to with their families . Many new people are even moving here. Each and every time there is an event in the downtown, my business is extremely busy . This could be any of the wonderful seasonal events , or any of the events taking place at the whitewater park.