RESOLUTION #2014-07 OF DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

CONVEYING TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE THE TOWN OF DURHAM’S ENDORSEMENT OF THE MARCH 17, 2014 PROPOSAL BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE TO BUILD A REPLACEMENT UNH-DURHAM POOL.

WHEREAS, In 2013 the University of New Hampshire (“UNH”) terminated the longstanding “University of New Hampshire Outdoor Swimming Pool Use Agreement” (“the Agreement”) between UNH and the Town of Durham regarding the outdoor pool (“the pool”); and

WHEREAS, UNH has permanently closed the pool, notwithstanding that for 75 years this unique outdoor pool has played an integral and irreplaceable role in the recreational and social fabric of the community and has been valued for its historic significance as one of the few remaining New Hampshire pools built by the federal Works Progress Administration, as recognized in 2013 by its acceptance into the “Seven to Save” program of the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, and the loss of which will therefore be felt deeply; and

WHEREAS, access to a pool enhances a community’s resiliency to periods of extreme heat (predicted by climate scientists to continue to increase in frequency, intensity, and duration); and

WHEREAS, many Durham taxpayers, the Town Council, UNH administrators, and the UNH student body have made it clear that, while they respect the concerns of those who will feel this loss most deeply, given economic realities, they do not wish to incur the financial burden of updating the existing pool; and

WHEREAS, reflecting the Agreement’s recognition of the intertwined interests of UNH and Durham to work cooperatively for their collective well-being and future, over the past six months an ad hoc working group consisting of the Durham Town Administrator, UNH representatives, members of the Town Council, and interested citizens considered various options (including a 10,000 square foot pool adequate for UNH programs, a 14,000-16,000 square foot compromise pool, and a 32,000 square foot pool preferred by many Durham residents) for ensuring a safe and welcoming replacement outdoor pool for the UNH-Durham community; and
WHEREAS, As a result of the efforts of the working group, advocacy groups, municipal leaders, and UNH administrators, UNH proposed on March 17, 2014 to absorb the full cost of replacing the existing pool with a midsize (14,000- to 16,000-square-foot) outdoor pool, currently estimated at $4.4 million, that will meet modern standards, open in the summer of 2015, and be accessible to UNH-Durham community members of all ages ("the proposal"); and

WHEREAS, The Town Council, having listened to many voices in the community (including residents who embrace the prospect of a replacement pool and residents who remain reluctant to do so) and having weighed the options, considering the overall future good for the community, acknowledges that this offer represents an opportunity to meet many competing needs;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Durham Town Council, the governing body of the Town of Durham, New Hampshire, hereby approves Resolution #2014-07 conveying to the USNH Board of Trustees its endorsement of the University of New Hampshire's proposal, as outlined above, to resolve this shared challenge. Furthermore, the Council hereby commends the working group for its success in advancing various stakeholder interests and directs the Town Administrator to continue advisory dialogue with UNH relative to efforts to ensure that planning for a replacement pool overtly honors the existing pool's historical significance and is informed by collaboration with representatives of the Durham community on design features.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 7th day of April, 2014 by a majority vote of the Durham Town Council with Five (5) voting in favor, One (1) voting against, and Two (2) abstaining.

Jay B. Gooze, Chairman
Durham Town Council

ATTEST:

Lorrie Pitt, Town Clerk-Tax Collector