

Hamilton Development Corporation
November 5, 2014

The Hamilton Development Corporation met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, November 5, 2014 with Brian Stein, Rick Mitchell, Anthony Nickas, Dave Carey, Bill Gisness present. Fire Chief Phil Stevens also present.

Call to order

Brian Stein called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Finalize fall planning session for the Hamilton/Wenham Village for November 8

The first of three planning sessions will be held from 2-4 p.m. at the Senior Center. HDC will bring laptop, projector, easel, flip chart and markers. HWCAM is not available to video tape the meeting. Discussion ensued about if Town's Facebook page had capability to capture user email addresses as a mechanism for HDC to communicate about what actions it is taking (i.e., planning sessions).

The HDC reviewed presentation for planning session including development of and input on village design guidelines, highlighting of business zone and Willow Street overlay district, description of uses in business zoning by-laws for Hamilton and Wenham, lot size minimum and coverage, setbacks, parking, special permit reference, multi-family and mixed use, height, images of both communities, sample site plan with three or four shots for village, Cecil Group site plan - information on what has been done previously and recommended vision, groups interested in renting shoe repair space, and tax potential for Hamilton and Wenham including tax rate and example of 10 apartments on 59 Willow Street land = \$34,000 in tax value. Also noted was if more restaurants and/or catering businesses are brought into the village area as well as residents this would increase the Meals Tax revenue.

At the planning session, discussion will address whether or not development in the downtown would impact the property values of the existing residential village properties. The session will also review rental interest in 59 Willow Street. Discussion was on how a RFP would be crafted to give developers an opportunity to present a design that is acceptable to the HDC and abutters (i.e., 1.5 stories and maximum height of 35' with 63 Willow staying the same height). Barbara Lawrence weighed in about potential 20-unit apartment building on the HDC's Willow Street property and location near parking lot behind Bay Road properties rather than closer to Willow Street.

Discussion was on how certain areas of HDC's Willow Street site could be restricted relative to a potential building (i.e., retail component should be close to the parking lot). Discussion addressed deliverables for the meeting include getting public input on potential zoning change - either Willow Street overlay district throughout the business district or modify the current zoning by-law for the business district – to allow multi-family use in the business district, propose design standards (i.e., materials such as clapboards and shingles) which can be used to control development in the downtown, and the three meetings will have a road map and defined end point. Also an update will be given to the attendees about where the HDC is in the process and its interest in taking action soon (i.e., April Town Meeting).

The subsequent planning session will focus on infrastructure (i.e., sidewalks) and continue to foster consensus which will be sought at the first session. The third session will be a wrap up of the prior two meetings and result in a direction that HDC will pursue. Discussion with the public will focus on what HDC has heard in the past from them such as interest in mixed use in the downtown and what a by-law would consist of that includes mixed use to understand if there is or remains consensus. The HDC will emphasize to the public importance of their awareness of business district because the uses coming in there are not conducive to a pedestrian downtown (i.e., Hansbury site, and T&M turf scape). The HDC wants to hear from the public what they consider important for the downtown. Discussion noted what creates a pedestrian friendly downtown including walkways, trees, lights, paving Railroad Ave. with cobblestone.

The purpose of the planning meetings is to shape the future of the downtown including bringing in complementary businesses and uses that residents can enjoy. Discussion ensued about how after the HDC holds its third planning session goals include: present a by-law recommendation to the Planning Board for April Town Meeting approval, what to do with HDC's Willow Street house and rental potential, develop village area design guidelines, and bring in more pedestrian-friendly uses.

Discussion was on how the public has to work in concert with municipal officials to mutually decide the future of the Town. Once a consensus is reached then HDC would provide the public with cost/benefit analysis information from ULI relative to downtown development. When the HDC gets feedback from stakeholders that they will support change (i.e., design guidelines and zoning by-law) then ULI can provide information and decisions can be made on what type of septic system would be needed to support the change.

Fire Chief Phil Stevens suggested that an anchor pedestrian-friendly business rather than predominant business presence is needed to draw pedestrians to the downtown, and the parking situation has to be addressed. Discussion was on how a wastewater treatment system is needed to attract businesses that the public has said it wanted downtown such as coffee shop, family restaurant, bakery, book or antique stores. A key piece that will drive the zoning change is if the Town is supportive of mixed use that includes rental housing downtown with sufficient parking. Discussion addressed if potential residential tenant demographic would shop in Hamilton.

A discussion needs to occur between HDC and proprietors of 300 Main Street in Wenham as well as with other property owners in that community's business district who have property that may be for sale in not too distant future to foster uniform zoning and development between two communities' downtowns. Discussion was on how it is likely that the special permit process would continue for development in the Willow Street overlay district if there was an expansion of the district. Also whether or not discussion should address special permit versus site plan review for development in the village area.

59/63 Willow Street property update

Gisness updated the Corporation on potential tenants for shoe shop property including an artist who has been asked to make a rental offer. The HDC will save the Mac's shoe sign. Discussion addressed how there is interest in renting the Willow Street house.

Mitchell moved at 8:35 a.m. to adjourn. Carey seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Clerk