

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

March 19, 2014 Minutes

Welcome – At 7:30 AM President Brian Stein opened the meeting of the Hamilton Development Corporation. Board members David Carey, Rick Mitchell and Bill Gisness were present. Also in attendance were Emilie Cademartori and David Geikie of Wenham and Kristine Cheetham, Hamilton Planning Coordinator. A few residents were present.

Agenda Items

1. Budget – Deborah Nippes-Mena, Hamilton Finance Director submitted a memo requesting that the Board take a few votes on budgetary matters.

ACTION: R. Mitchell made a motion to transfer funds, in the amount of \$60,000, from the Fund Balance UnReserve for the purchase of the property at 59 & 63 Willow Street. B. Gisness seconded. All voted in favor.

ACTION: R. Mitchell voted to approve payment of the town services bill for \$6,063.00. D. Carey seconded. All voted in favor.

2. Willow Street Property

B. Stein updated the Board on the remaining steps before the purchase of the property at 59 & 63 Willow Street is complete. He informed the Board that the Bank was scheduling the appraisal for the first week of April and the environmental review should be complete around the same time. A few members questioned what would happen if the appraisal came in below what the offer was to purchase the property. B. Stein noted that there is language in the agreement to address a contingency such as this.

The Board also discussed completing the removal of the shoe and other commercial equipment. The topic of property management was addressed. A few members have made inquiries relative to property management but nothing conclusive so far.

K. Cheetham asked the Board to take a few minutes to discuss short term and long term plans for the property. The key milestones identified were as follows:

- Secure ownership
- Secure a property manager
- Clean/ rent/renovate the commercial building
- Continue the planning work for the downtown to identify visions for the area and priorities.

3. HDC & Planning

The meeting included a discussion of the annual plan (short term) and long term planning Elements of the HDC annual work plan include:

- Zoning Amendment for Village Overlay District
- Downtown Endowment Commitment
- Identify Town Role & HDC Role
- Connectivity in HW Plan & Priorities
- Property at Willow Street
- Wastewater Treatment System

Downtown Endowment – The Board made a commitment about a year ago with their budget to set aside roughly 10% of the meals tax funds for a small scale project(s) for the downtown. This commitment was recently addressed at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting. Therefore, the Board took up a quick discussion about what this might involve.

A member of the Board of Selectmen would like for the HDC to purchase flower boxes for the downtown. One member noted that some investments are better suited for the town to implement. For example, if the HDC invested in flower boxes, someone else would have to water them (provide maintenance) and store the boxes in the winter months. Although a desired project, this may not be the type of activity the HDC was designed to support.

K. Cheetham reminded the group that many ideas have been floated over the years about what to do with the meals tax funds and what types of improvements are desired in the downtown from wayfinding signs, banners, period lighting, pocket parks and benches, improved sidewalks, crosswalks, and others. The proposed sign design for the MBTA station is already out of date and doesn’t reflect a cohesive image for the downtown. She asked if the group could revisit the ideas and prioritize them prior to spending. She also noted that often with grant applications, the ability to provide a hard cash match is required to leverage additional funds. The 10% might be of more value to a grant application for an improvement to the downtown.

D. Geikie offered that for some groups like the HDC a short term investment in a local infrastructure item creates good will. Many in communities worry about plans that plan for more plans. The Board agreed with the desire to address the commitment to the endowment; however a full discussion of projects and priorities has yet to occur. The Board agreed to put this on the April 2, 2014 agenda.

4. Town Meeting Presentation – R. Mitchell drafted a memo for B. Stein to use at the Town Meeting for a discussion about the HDC if requested. The Board discussed the potential to announce the purchase of the property at 59 & 63 Willow Street. Although it demonstrates the actions of the HDC it also will not be finalized at the time of the town meeting. The Board agreed that it was not ready for a public presentation. A few members of the Board offered minor edits to the document.

5. HDC Organizational Matters

ACTION: R. Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes of the following meetings: 1/22/14, 2/12/14, 2/19/14, and 3/5/14. B. Gisness seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Adjourn: R. Mitchell made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 AM. B. Gisness seconded. All voted in favor.