

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

September 27, 2017

Members Present: Bill Gisness, Tom Goodwin, Rick Mitchell (7:40), and President, Brian Stein

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Others Present: Andrew DeFranza, Bergen Daley, and Stacy Verge (Accord)

This meeting was called to order by Brian Stein at 7:30 am with a quorum established

**Warrant**

Brian Stein made motion to approve Warrant HDC-1806 for a total of \$3,029.99

Tom Goodwin seconded.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

**Minutes**

Bill Gisness made motion to approve the minutes of September 13, 2017.

Tom Goodwin seconded.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

**59/63 Willow St**

Andrew DeFranza updated the Corporation regarding Harborlight's proposal. The Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) met the previous week and voted to recommend \$300,000 for the 20 senior units at Willow St. and another \$300,000 for 20 to 40 units at a second location to be determined. The Selectmen met the previous Monday, discussed the topic, and were planning on having a meeting inviting various Boards, Trusts, Committees, and the Corporation. Mr. DeFranza noted the timing challenge. Both Towns wanted to allow the Longmeadow Study Group time to study the property but the HDC and Harborlight's time was tighter. If there were a user, it would be the School who would need more time to study the issue.

Accord Food Pantry had an interest relocating into the proposed building at Willow St. By right zoning would allow for one commercial tenant, a requirement the Accord Group would satisfy. Harborlight would then rent the existing Accord site, probably as a commercial use.

Harborlight's Board was prepared to wait for Special Town Meeting. If a decision wasn't made by the School or Trust by Town Meeting, Harborlight would probably pull out from Longmeadow and not control the two sites, according to Brian Stein. Mr. Stein added that if the School wanted to have time to study the property, the Town should allow Harborlight to build on the front four acres, letting them control the back parcels. Andrew DeFranza was looking for a

signal to determine if Harborlight should move forward with Longmeadow. Mr. DeFranza noted there were a lot of wins if both projects were to go through.

The Longmeadow Study Committee was to give an update regarding their work. Rick Mitchell said neither Towns were interested in the site. The Superintendent of Schools and the Recreation Department said they did not see the need for playing fields at the site. The only piece that was missing was if the School Committee needed all or a portion of the site. According to Mr. Mitchell, the School Committee did not have a perspective on what was going on with the affordable housing aspect of Longmeadow and the School Committee needed to declare their interest in the land. Bill Wilson reportedly expressed that April would be a better time for a report. Mr. Mitchell said all the School needed to say was that they were interested in a portion of the property and Harborlight could build on a portion while the School studied their due diligence. The School would meet on the following Thursday.

Andrew DeFranza was waiting for three actions, the HDC action, the clarification of the AHT vote regarding the funding recommendation and whether it was binding and actual, and an affirmation of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. DeFranza said once those items were clear, the Harborlight Board would affirm it. Harborlight would then permit the two sites. Harborlight would arrange for a transaction with the HDC.

Bill Gisness said he would prefer the Accord space remain commercial once Accord moved to the new Willow St. location. Andrew DeFranza said the permitting for Willow St. would be by right, but the financing would be in combination with the other site. Harborlight would be open to having the HDC as a partner but thought it would only have a downside for the HDC. Mr. DeFranza said he wanted to have a desire to have cohesive support or he would need do a 40B without their approval, but Harborlight would rather take a longer road with Town support. If projects were financed with tax credits, it was useful to have the community involved financially.

Accord had 600 sf currently and more would be available at the new location, according to Bergen Daley. Brian Stein said if the proposal fell through, the HDC would develop the parcel by themselves and would have a commercial space for Accord. Accord had a five or ten year lease with Harborlight and would not be able to relocate without them owning the parcel, according to Ms. Daley.

Rick Mitchell noted that if the two properties were successfully linked without appeal, Harborlight would offer 70% local preference. Dorr Fox added that 70% was the highest amount of local preference allowable by State Regulations and that when Habitat for Humanity had its lottery, there was more than 70% local interest.

Rick Mitchell offered his financial analysis, which he had shared with the School Committee. The analysis showed a consolidation of all elementary schools with 803 students and a cost of \$60M. If only two elementary schools were combined, the building would cost \$40 - \$50M.

The costs did not include acquisition costs and construction would be ten years out. Mr. Mitchell referred to the capital improvement costs including \$4M for playing fields, capital asks for \$2M, and \$5M for improvements to the schools as well as potential acquisition costs between \$2M and \$4M. Mr. Mitchell recalled that Wenham was required to have a school in their Town and the political point was a concern. Bill Gisness responded that the sale of Winthrop and Cutler Schools would defray the costs and create potential sites for affordable housing. The MSBA process would take 18 to 24 months. Mr. Gisness reconsidered a partnership with Harborlight who would be paying \$600,000 into the HDC account, but being a partner might defray costs and create a payment over time situation. The HDC would have \$120,000 left over from the sale after paying the mortgage.

Bill Gisness wanted to consider what would be done with the funds, such as improving sidewalks or installing sewer. An abutter to Longmeadow said the owner intended to develop a 140 unit 40B with 25% affordable units and 75 market rate units. Rick Mitchell said the property would be back in play if the Harborlight proposal did not go through.

If Harborlight developed the front parcel, the Town would have four years of safe harbor stopping the back parcel from filing a 40B on the back parcel. If someone appealed the 60 units, the other 40B would be a possibility, if Harborlight relinquished the back parcel. If Harborlight couldn't maintain control during the two years, the back parcel could come into play.

The Longmeadow Study Committee had met twice and would offer a report at Town Meeting. Rick Mitchell said the School Master Plan did not indicate the need for a new school. The MSBA granted \$4M for renovations and if the School applied for new funding, there might be a requirement to pay back the renovation money. Tom Goodwin asked if the five acres would be crucial for access. Brian Stein said the Harborlight piece could be constructed anywhere. Rick Mitchell suggested placing housing in the back and having the School needs up front for access to Bay Road.

### **Downtown Improvements**

Bill Gisness suggested talking to downtown businesses about needs. Brian Stein said he wanted to talk to banks regarding donating Christmas lights. Rick Mitchell added that once Harborlight bought the property, the HDC could go back to focusing on downtown improvements.

Tom Goodwin made motion to adjourn.  
Seconded by Bill Gisness.  
Vote Unanimous to adjourn at 8:28 am.

Prepared by:

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Marcie Ricker

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Attest

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Date