

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

April 4, 2018

Members Present: Bill Gisness, Tom Goodwin, Rick Mitchell, Anthony Nickas, and President, Brian Stein

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

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

Warrant

Motion made by Bill Gisness to approve Warrant HDC-1818 in the amount of \$6,366.89 to include Dorr Fox's time, returning a security deposit (\$600 plus interest), real estate taxes on both properties, and mortgage.

Seconded.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Minutes

Bill Gisness made motion to approve the minutes of February 28, 2018 (as amended) and March 21, 2018.

Seconded.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

59/63 Willow St. Update.

Brian Stein described the Warrant Article brought forward by Rosemary Kennedy to repeal the mixed use By-law that the HDC helped foster in 2015 and 2016. The language proposed to be removed, allowed two or more apartments above commercial. Mr. Stein said it would take out mixed use in general. According to Mr. Stein, the Planning Board had a public hearing on the topic the previous night. Mr. Stein noted that accusations were made that the Planning Board had inappropriately placed it into the By-law, while the Planning Board had thought it was the implication of the By-law to begin with as it was never about one unit.

Part of the argument in the article was a complaint about the process, but Brian Stein said a Citizen's Petition was not the right process either. There was not much time at Town Meeting to explain the issues and the change might confuse residents. Rushing it through Town Meeting would be similar to the complaint that the Planning Board rushed it through. It was discussed that anyone could bring a Zoning By-law change to the Planning Board. Rosemary Kennedy would recommend no action at Town Meeting as a trade off with the Planning Board and HDC agreeing to discuss modifications to the By-law. Ms. Kennedy did not want to delete mixed use, but did want to limit residential to one unit, according to Mr. Stein.

In response to Bill Gisness' question as to how it would affect the development at Willow St., Brian Stein responded that it was the Board's intent to allow Harborlight at Willow St. as one benefactor but would not be exclusive to one developer or parcel. Once the Planning Board had determined that Rosemary Kennedy did not want to see many units at Willow St., she was informed that Harborlight would propose a 40B development. Ms. Kennedy reportedly wondered what would happen in the interim while discussion was ongoing as to the By-law changes. Ms. Kennedy was told another development might come along. It was noted that the package store would be able to permit the additional apartment under the current By-law.

Rick Mitchell said that during the Warrant Hearing, Rosemary Kennedy suggested underhanded behavior of slipping the modification of the By-law into the Warrant and Town Meeting, stating that residents had no idea at the time what they were approving, which Ms. Kennedy thought was deceitful. Ms. Kennedy reportedly thought the situation was worthy of the By-law's repeal. Ms. Kennedy was described as being very passionate that the By-law would destroy the downtown.

Rick Mitchell stated that if something were to come forward, the current By-law would still be in effect until a change was made. Brian Stein suggested getting people out in favor and using the Willow St. abutters' letter as support. Bill Gisness wondered if the abutters would agree that they agreed to the compromise. Rosemary Kennedy's argument included that the By-law would allow for unlimited units. Brian Stein said someone could currently come in with a three story building.

Rick Mitchell said there should be a town wide discussion about housing and commercial development throughout the community, which had been generated by the affordable housing discussion in town. Mr. Mitchell said everything discussed had been tinged with an emotional aura but was lacking long term perspective. 97% of revenue in Hamilton was from residential use. Mr. Mitchell noted the upcoming costs including infrastructure, regular increases in operating costs, and schools. Mr. Mitchell added that if someone wanted to live in a town with high quality services and education, the Town needed to figure out a way to pay for that.

Anthony Nickas suggested that someone draw a line between taxes and housing, which would give greater way to the housing issue. Rick Mitchell referred to Bill Wheaton advocating to build houses at the top of the scale because they generated the most revenue and that a lower priced home would not carry the cost of education. Mr. Mitchell considered that the school enrollment had decline 15% and would decline another 4% in ten years. Mr. Mitchell said the Town needed more students to come into the system to spread costs. Bill Gisness added that the decline was also a college trend. Mr. Gisness said to make a business work in town, a business owner would need the alternate income of the mixed use development.

Brian Stein said the Planning Board would be granted funding for a housing study and had an agreement to have a public hearing for mixed use before Fall Town Meeting. Members agreed to have downtown property owners represent themselves. Rick Mitchell referred to the issue of

not in my neighborhood. Mr. Stein added that some residents wanted the town to appear as it had years ago. Mr. Mitchell added that some believed that if someone could not afford to live here, they should leave. Anthony Nickas wondered if more people were taking that view versus not wanting their taxes increased. Debate ensued regarding who would be available to vote.

59-63 Willow St.

Brian Stein said Dodge Tree would be removing the fallen tree with off hour access to Salem 5, but had not heard back from Dodge Tree regarding availability. Dorr Fox reported that he had received two bids for painting at 63 Willow St. and was waiting for the third. There was a hole in the 63 Willow St. building. Harborlight would contact someone to fix it. Mr. Stein had not heard back from Accord regarding their use of the office. Mr. Stein showed it to a friend, who might use it for an auxiliary space.

Downtown Improvements

MAPC had not submitted a bid to date as they had a lot of work to finish this summer. Their estimate was \$1,500 to \$2,000 per drawing. Two prices had been received, one from Carol Johnson and one from Copley Wolfe. Carol Johnson would cost \$8,500 for a conceptual site plan, a perspective view down Railroad Ave. a perspective view down Bay Road, and two to three meetings. Copley Wolfe's bid was just under \$19,000 to include two site visits, site plan from google earth and two street scape perspectives. Bill Gisness noted that Copley Wolfe was more planning oriented while Carol Johnson was more detail oriented. Mr. Gisness thought Copley Wolfe might be a better choice but Carol Johnson was a better price. The objective was to sell the concept and Carol Johnson might deliver a product that was more saleable. Mr. Gisness said the concepts would include angle parking, islands, narrow streets, trees, illumination, and Carol Johnson's ideas, which the Town could response yes or no to. A draft site plan would be provided, which would be critiqued and then a final site plan would be completed and presented.

Tom Goodwin wondered if fund raising from individual sources might be considered, such as a Go Fund Me page. Rick Mitchell suggested going to the banks and describing the downtown business improvements in the hopes they would offer funding. The Corporation discussed selling the concept of burying utilities, electrical infrastructure to light the trees, new sidewalks, and curbs. Bill Gisness said Meal's Tax money could fund those items. Mr. Mitchell suggested using the money from the 59 Willow St. sale to fund a bond for a couple of million dollars paid for by Meal's Tax revenue. Mr. Mitchell noted the Town budget was down to pennies and that the funding needed to be derived from another source. Anthony Nickas noted that the HDC was not guaranteed to receive the \$65,000 each year and that bond language was subject to annual appropriations of the Town.

Brian Stein said he had discussed the purchase of 63 Willow St. with a friend. Members wondered why Harborlight was not interested in it. Bill Gisness suggested that the potential buyer make an offer.

Bill Gisness and Rick Mitchell agreed that an incremental plan of sidewalks and curbs with conduit underground at Railroad Ave., then Willow St., and finally Bay Road be considered so as not to propose such a large project that it would not come to fruition. It was agreed that people who benefited from the proposal should speak up to have people become excited about the potential project. Brian Stein noted that the proposal would not increase traffic or noise, but would have minimal disruption. There would be no cost as the construction would be covered through the Meal's Tax. Brian Stein added that the key was selling 59 Willow St. Dorr Fox said there was a draft agreement that Andrew DeFranza had commented on, but noted that the AHT's finalization of the agreement might be disturbed for four weeks due to the addition of two new members. A quorum was four out of five members.

Discussion ensued regarding the timing of concept plan work and presentation. Anthony Nickas would investigate how much money was left for consulting.

New Old Business

Brian Stein discussed his speech for Town Meeting. Anthony Nickas added the coordination with the AHT, Schools, and Longmeadow Committee. Rick Mitchell suggested only referring to a potential partner site.

The next meeting would discuss the concept of where the Corporation was going, laying out the timeline for the consultant, and voting on it. Painting bids for Willow St. and the Budget would be discussed. Brian Stein would have his downtown friends talk about the potential improvements. Someone would interact with the business owners.

Brian Stein made motion to adjourn.

Seconded by Tom Goodwin.

Vote Unanimous to adjourn at 8:29 am.

Prepared by:

Marcie Ricker

Attest

Date