

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

May 30, 2018

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

Members Absent: President Brian Stein

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Rick Mitchell called the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC) meeting to order at 7:32 a.m. with a quorum present.

Warrant for Bills

Mr. Mitchell presented a warrant for \$7,191.22 for mortgage, Harborlight Community Partners' maintenance, florists, and other items.

Bill Gisness made a motion to approve payment of Warrant HDC-1822 in the amount of \$7,191.22. Tom Goodwin seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the payment.

Approve Minutes

Mr. Gisness made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 16, 18, 2018 with one correction of a misspelled name. Mr. Goodwin seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the minutes as corrected.

Discussion with Andrew DeFranza, Harborlight Community Partners

Andrew DeFranza of Harborlight gave an update on the Longmeadow Way project. He said it was not likely to go through as previously proposed. Harborlight has pivoted off with a few different options. The first is to construct 40 units on the back piece of property with another use for the remainder of the land. The second and preferred option by Harborlight—and the only one that seems viable in Mr. DeFranza's opinion—is to do a sizable project of 100 or more units on the whole property (both parcels) with the Town purchasing the land for \$3 million. The third option is that a for-profit company will develop a straight 40B project. Mr. Mitchell asked if the third option would involve rental units and if that was the most likely option. Mr. DeFranza said yes.

Mr. Gisness asked about Harborlight's proposal to develop 6-8 units at Willow Street. Mr. DeFranza said Harborlight is still willing. Mr. Mitchell clarified the cost would be \$800K. Mr. DeFranza said yes and noted the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) seemed willing to spend \$600K, but would have to go back to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to ask for the additional \$200K. The group went over some State funding options. Mr. DeFranza said they'd be looking at funds being allocated in July 2019 with construction starting after that, in the fall, but delays can happen that could push the project out to the following spring. Mr. Mitchell asked for further clarification on the time frame and Mr. DeFranza proposed they could potentially proceed with construction and just the \$600K and wait on the additional \$200K.

Dorr Fox mentioned the current deadline for the Willow Street project (6-8 units) is June 30 and will likely need to be extended. Mr. DeFranza commented they would have the ability to pivot back to constructing 20 units if something were to change regarding Longmeadow.

Decision:

Mr. Goodwin made a motion to extend the deadline for the Willow Street project to September 30, 2018. Mr. Gisness seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to extend the deadline.

Julia Maycock, 62 Willow St., said she didn't understand why they were looking at possible litigation if they don't do more units at Longmeadow. Mr. DeFranza explained everyone was comfortable with the 40 units being built on the front parcel, he said. However, the people who owned the rear parcel were saying unless you acquire our parcels, too, we will take legal action. So he said he was facing a lawsuit for doing anything in the front, as well as a potential suit on the back. Ms. Maycock confirmed with Mr. DeFranza the only way to preserve the previous plan to construct 20 senior housing units at Willow Street was to find another sister project.

The HDC discussed a property on Essex Street—Meadowbrook Farm, an active farm, and suggested getting a meeting with the owners. Mr. Fox will set it up. Word is that a group would like the Town to purchase the property for preserving open space, protecting the well head, and for some affordable housing use. The price would likely be about \$3 million, necessitating bonding. Mr. Fox was uncertain whether a developer was involved at this point. The HDC speculated it would most likely be a for-profit developer constructing a cluster of condos. A percentage (anything over 11 units) would have to be affordable.

Mr. Mitchell said he doesn't see the Town coming up with the \$3 million. He brought up an option of the Town pursuing a market-rate, 20-unit project at Willow Street, based on a conversation he'd had with Marc Johnson of the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT), which was discussed at the previous meeting and might be worth looking at.

HDC members also talked about putting Willow Street back on the market as a single-family house or for a business use. Or perhaps keeping the front piece (the barbershop) and selling the rest of it for condos. They need to wait for the HAHT to make a decision if it is willing to allocate the \$600K to the 6-8 unit project. The HAHT meeting to discuss that is set for June 11 at 6 p.m. That is a Monday night, two days prior to the HDC meeting June 13. Mr. Mitchell asked if the HDC wanted to think about having the Willow Street property appraised on their own. Mr. Gisness said no, since the appraisal wouldn't "hold water." The HDC discussed the price per unit if they did the 6-8 units at \$800K was expensive.

HDC Budget

The HDC discussed repairs and maintenance at 63 Willow St. and whether the painting costs should fall under this fiscal year or the next one. They decided having it in this fiscal year (prior to July 1) would be better. The funds were already voted on. Next year's budget for repairs and maintenance is less than this year's, Mr. Nickas commented.

Decision:

Mr. Goodwin made a motion that the HDC approve up to \$2,000 for the repair of the roof at 63 Willow St. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the motion.

They discussed the repair of the bathroom and whether it must be brought up to code, building permit, etc. If they changed the bathroom, it might affect handicap requirements for the front door, as well. Mr. Gisness said that is why many prospective tenants have walked away. They talked about whether they might want to sell #63 once they've paid off the loan. An idea was proposed to add rental units to the back of it for an income stream. If they do sell it, they would need to figure out what their next project might be. Perhaps the money from the sale could be used for downtown improvements. They need to wait for Mr. Stein to give them some guidance about whether to bring the bathroom up to code (since it's not open up to the public) or leave it as is. Mr. Fox asked if they want to put the ad back up on Craig's list in case things fall through. The potential tenant has not signed a lease yet. The draft lease said June 1, but it probably won't be until July 1 or until the bathroom issue is resolved. Mr. Fox is going to ask Mr. Stein about it.

In light of this discussion, Mr. Nickas said he will increase the repairs and maintenance category for this year's budget. (Previously, he had reduced it.) He'll bring the revised budget in its final version to the next meeting for a vote.

The HDC also discussed where the fee for Carol Johnson's drawings (the landscape architect CRJA-IBI Group) would come from. Mr. Nickas said it would come under consulting. There is \$15K in consulting for this year and another \$15K will come next year.

Also they discussed that the \$10K they give each year to the Town might be earmarked to the downtown improvements.

Meeting with representatives from Carol Johnson, Landscape Architects

The representatives from Carol Johnson (CRJA-IBI Group) did not show.

Downtown Improvements

The HDC discussed what would be expected of the landscape architects at the public meeting on June 20 at the library—to come with a scope of work and push forward for design after gathering input from the community.

Discussion on upcoming June 20th evening meeting

Mr. Fox said he and Minutes Secretary Mary Alice Cookson will set up a time to go door-to-door to hand out flyers about the meeting to downtown business owners/manager. He will talk with Tim McCarthy about getting a story in The Chronicle, as well as calling people, including those across the line into Wenham to alert them to the meeting. They discussed doing a mailing to target the abutters to downtown and posting notices on the Town website and Facebook page.

Possible Summer Intern

Mr. Fox said a Gordon College student with a background in Economic Development had contacted Mr. Stein about an unpaid summer internship. The HDC discussed potential projects—for example, assembling a contact list of businesses and addresses, helping with the June 20th meeting, listening in on the meetings, doing some grant research, sending out consolidated information to the abutters, and other tasks. Mr. Fox will send a note back to Mr. Stein saying the HDC is interested in having the intern. He will also talk with Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett to see if there's a desk and computer available.

New/Old Business

None.

Adjournment

Mr. Goodwin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 a.m. Mr. Gisness seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to adjourn the meeting.

Prepared by:

Mary Alice Cookson

Attest

Date