

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
MINUTES OF MEETING
MEMORIAL ROOM, HAMILTON TOWN HALL

September 5, 2018

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

Members Absent: Tom Goodwin

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Brian Stein called the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC) meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. with a quorum present.

Warrant for Bills

Mr. Stein presented a warrant in the amount of \$3,692.79, which included Minutes Secretary Mary Alice Cookson's time, Coordinator Dorr Fox's time, and Harborlight Community Partners' maintenance fee.

Bill Gisness made a motion to approve payment of Warrant HDC-1905 in the amount of \$3,692.79. Anthony Nickas seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve payment of the warrant.

Approve Minutes for August 22

Mr. Gisness made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of Aug. 22 as presented. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. The HDC voted (*3-0) to approve the minutes. Mr. Stein did not vote because he was not present at the Aug. 22 meeting.

Downtown Improvements

Mr. Gisness had sent out a proposal to the landscape architectural firm Carol Johnson Associates for having the firm provide cost estimates on the work required for the proposed downtown improvements. The firm also said they could provide a list of some potential funding sources that the HDC could contact.

Mr. Mitchell asked what level of detail would be on the cost estimates and how they would arrive at them. Mr. Stein said the plans would be fairly detailed and the firm would price

the work based on their own past projects. He clarified this meant past *public* projects, using the prevailing wage.

The amount previously paid to Carol Johnson came from last year's budget. The fee for this work will come from this year's budget, specifically out of the Consulting Fees category. This line item was increased from \$10K to \$15K, according to Mr. Nickas.

Mr. Gisness said Carol Johnson would be pricing the "light version" of the plan, as well as the "heavier version" that includes burying the utility wires. Both versions would incorporate the parallel parking plan (as opposed to angled parking plan). Mr. Stein asked why. Mr. Gisness said the parallel parking option provided more parking spots, kept things relatively the same, and would allow the handicapped space to remain in front of the veterinary clinic.

The HDC decided the timeline for completion of the cost estimates should be mid-October. Next steps include gathering input on potential funding sources and applying. Mr. Fox is sending letters of inquiry to State Representative Brad Hill and State Senator Bruce Tarr.

59/63 Willow Street

Mr. Mitchell said in theory if they sell the Willow Street property, the HDC would have a revenue stream for bonding. The Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust is negotiating with the BOS to gain their support for a warrant article request for \$1M to "buy down" the density of the Longmeadow project to 40 units. At the same time, Andrew DeFranza of Harborlight Community Partners is also talking to for-profit developers, who could develop up to about 200 units there. [Mr. DeFranza has said his preference is to work with the Town, but he is also looking at other options.] If the Longmeadow project with the Town doesn't go through, it is unlikely Mr. DeFranza would still do 20 units of senior housing at Willow Street. He has said that instead, he could do seven units of family housing there [at a much higher cost per unit].

Mr. Mitchell said although he is advocating for the 40-unit project, because taking control and putting 40 units (vs. a potential 200 units) on that site is the "smart thing to do," he doesn't see it passing. However, nobody will know the results until Special Town Meeting on Oct. 13. When asked whether there was still a matrix for varying sizes of the project, Mr. Fox said if the Town gives the \$1M, Mr. DeFranza would do the 40 affordable units. Otherwise, developers could do 160 at market rate with 40 affordable. Mr. DeFranza is no longer talking about developing 100 units.

Mr. Mitchell said the BOS had listened and said they would support the Trust, but it was the Trust's proposal being presented at Town Meeting. He said he didn't think the abutters think the plan is real but rather just a threat. He said if the abutters at Longmeadow object, it will be tied up in court and the Willow Street project would be tied up also.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the HDC wanted to go out to bid one more time or put the property on the market. They decided first they should wait and see what happens at Town Meeting.

They discussed how they might frame another RFP—for example, by giving information on the zoning bylaw and spelling out the process or by taking prior drawings and noting the potential for a 20-unit property.

The HDC discussed that the deadline on the RFP is Sept. 30, 2018. Mr. Fox said he had asked HDC Counsel Kathleen O'Donnell about extending it through Town Meeting, but she was hesitant. He said he will talk to her again. He explained the reason for the hesitancy is that other potential bidders would have expected that by now everything would be resolved.

Some potential uses discussed were a commercial venture or multi-family rentals. The HDC discussed putting an RFP out for just 30 days or 45 days.

The HDC also talked about whether to try and develop something at Willow Street themselves. The drawback is that it would take resources away from the downtown improvements. They want to continue with the improvements, first on Railroad Ave., then Willow Street and Bay Road.

Decision as a result of Downtown Improvement discussion

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to award Carol Johnson the project to take the next step in providing a schematic in pricing for Railroad Avenue improvements. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the motion.

Further Discussion:

The HDC discussed that while it was the will of the board to wait and see what happens at Town Meeting, they wanted to informally start approaching some people who have expressed an interest in perhaps developing a project there. They listed some potential interested parties, including Mike Pallazola.

Mr. Nickas said they have the financial model that Harborlight has done and could mirror that.

Mr. Stein noted the senior housing development at the Canter Brook Equestrian Center is going to be developed. Because the developers can't by law restrict the two affordable units they are required to offer to persons over age 44, they have an option to develop them off-site or to offer land or a payment in lieu of. The HDC discussed the idea of approaching Larry Smith [of Canter Brook Capital] for a potential joint venture. Their minimum requirement (payment in lieu of providing affordable units) is \$292K. The HDC discussed that potentially this could be their fee for working with the HDC as a development partner. Mr. Mitchell thought it was worth having the discussion. Mr. Gisness said he would call Mr. Smith. Mr. Mitchell will send him the contact info. Mr. Gisness said he will also talk with Mr. Pallazola and report back.

New/Old Business

The next meeting is set for Sept. 19.

Adjournment

Mr. Stein made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:22 a.m. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to adjourn the meeting.

Prepared by:

Mary Alice Cookson

Attest

Date