

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

October 3, 2018

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

Members Absent: Anthony Nickas

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

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

Warrant for Bills

Mr. Stein presented a warrant in the amount of \$6,168.28. He said it was for the mortgage, Harborlight Community Partners' monthly bill, real estate taxes, Dorr Fox and Mary Alice Cookson's time, and the fee for the P.O. Box.

Bill Gisness made a motion to approve payment of Warrant HDC-1907 for \$6,168.28. Rick Mitchell seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve payment.

Approve Minutes for September 19

Mr. Stein said he should have abstained on the vote regarding the Extension Agreement for 59 Willow St. (rather than voting yes as was recorded in the Minutes).

Mr. Fox asked if the Minutes should also state that three HDC members signed the agreement (rather than four). He said yes.

Mr. Stein made a motion to approve the Sept. 19 meeting minutes as amended. Tom Goodwin seconded the motion. The HDC voted (*3-0) to approve the minutes. *Mr. Gisness did not vote as he was not present at the Sept. 19 meeting.

59/63 Willow Street

Anthony Passaretti, 85 Linden St., addressed the HDC regarding a "nuisance" tree on 59 Willow St.'s southwest corner. At the last HDC meeting it was agreed Mr. Passaretti could

“limb up” the tree. Mr. Passaretti reported tree service professionals said if he “limbs up” three sides of the tree, it will die and fall. Removing the tree will cost about \$5K. Mr. Mitchell said if it is a walnut tree, it would be worth \$5K for the wood. Mr. Passaretti wasn’t sure the type of wood, but said he would like for the HDC to take it down or assist with the cost. Another tree service said they could do it for \$3,200.

The HDC members said they are willing to allow a tree service access to the property. Mr. Stein said he had looked at the survey map and found it clear the tree is on HDC property. Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Goodwin volunteered to take a look at the tree today and give their opinions. Mr. Passaretti thanked them. He left the meeting.

Mr. Fox said he sent around for estimates for site plan review and permitting of 59 Willow St. He listed the firms he had contacted and gave their responses. Some of them he has worked with before and it had been suggested he should go with a local company. Mr. Mitchell asked him to call Meridian Associates, who did the perc test for the HDC. Both Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Stein have previous experience with that firm. The contact there is Charlie Wear. The thought of the HDC members is that they could spend about \$75K-\$100K to do a site plan review, permitting, and design and then put the project on the market.

Mr. Fox said he had been telling people the permitting would be through site plan review and through the Board of Health. He wasn’t sure if it would be a package treatment plant or a septic system. Mr. Stein replied it was septic. One estimate Mr. Fox received [from W.C. Cammett Engineering, Inc.] was for \$56K. The HDC would be required to have three bids.

Mr. Gisness said he spoke with Larry Smith, who is currently working on the Canter Brook Estates development, to gauge interest in working with the HDC. He will reach out to him again since he hasn’t heard back from him. HDC members discussed that the Canter Brook project is likely to be signed off on by Oct. 16 with a payment in lieu of creating affordable units issued to the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) in the amount of \$435K.

Mr. Goodwin asked the other members if they felt that the deal with Harborlight was unlikely to happen. They said yes. Mr. Fox noted Harborlight has said that if the 20 units of senior housing isn’t done at Willow Street (because the Longmeadow Way project falls through), they could still do a seven-unit project there. The consensus of the HDC is that they wouldn’t be interested in that.

Mr. Gisness asked if they should contact other developers—people interested in positive development for the downtown. Mr. Stein said that would be good. The HDC will be waiting to see what happens at Special Town Meeting (STM) but decided it best to work on “parallel tracks” in pursuing other options. Regarding those options, they discussed: 1) permitting the project and then selling it to a developer or 2) investing in the project by themselves or as a partner in a joint venture so as to create an income stream. In the end,

they decided the second option was too large for them to take on. They are willing to look at doing the site plan approval, but thought a construction project would be too complex.

Regarding raising capital for the permitting process (about \$100K), Mr. Goodwin volunteered to sit down with Salem Five bank and have a preliminary conversation. Although the idea is speculative, the HDC talked about what information might be needed for the bank—for example, a certified appraisal. Mr. Goodwin estimated an appraisal would cost about \$3K-\$5K.

Mr. Goodwin said doing the permitting up front would reduce risk for a developer. Sites like this in the area are sought after, he said, and he also thinks a project would be well-received by the neighbors as long as it kept to two stories. Mr. Stein brought up that the Accord Food Pantry might want to lease space in the building and would be considered the commercial element for the project.

Downtown Improvements

Mr. Stein said regarding the budget estimates/line item costs for downtown improvements received from Carol Johnson Associates, he wanted to find out what were real costs vs. just place holders. Mr. Gisness said he will ask them to finalize the document, which is currently only a draft.

The HDC decided the next step was to hold another public meeting and present the costs for the downtown improvements. Mr. Stein mentioned Town Manager Joe Domelowicz was onboard with helping them with the improvement project and its buy-in.

Mr. Gisness mentioned they should also present funding options at the public meeting. Mr. Fox suggested inviting State Representative Brad Hill and seeking his support. The HDC liked that idea. After the public weighs in, they would also like to invite Jay Ash, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development for the Commonwealth, to a meeting/site visit.

Mr. Fox discussed potential grants, including the Complete Streets program. He said a committee is being put together within Town Hall to look at that. Also, there is the Mass Works grant, although they can't apply for that until next August.

Mr. Mitchell said several years ago, Selectman Jeff Hubbard had pursued an earmark for \$50K. It was special legislation approved by the State Legislature and then vetoed by the Governor because the State had a deficit. Now there's a surplus. Perhaps they can request another earmark.

The HDC decided the date for the public meeting regarding downtown improvements should be in November before Thanksgiving but after the election. Carol Johnson should be present.

New/Old Business

Mr. Gisness asked when Nunans would be pulling down the flower baskets, which he said still look good. Mr. Fox said they would be taking them down and putting the holiday wreaths up the weekend after Thanksgiving. Mr. Mitchell mentioned there is a nice tree in front of the Public Safety Building that would be nice to light up for the holidays. He will discuss it with Chief Stevens. It was noted the Public Safety Building is outside of the downtown district.

Mr. Fox noted early voting would be taking place the day of the HDC's next meeting and they cannot have the Memorial Room after 8 a.m. They said that was OK; they'll just have a short meeting.

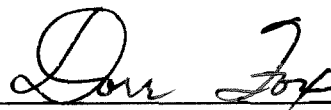
Adjournment

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 a.m. Mr. Goodwin seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to adjourn the meeting.

Prepared by:



Mary Alice Cookson



Attest

10/17/18
Date