

**Hamilton Development Corporation**  
**April 27, 2016**

The Hamilton Development Corporation met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 27, 2016 with Bill Gisness, Brian Stein, Rick Mitchell, David Carey present. Community Projects Coordinator Dorr Fox, and DPW Director Bill Redford also present.

**Call to order**

Brian Stein called the HDC meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

**Approve warrant #1619**

The HDC reviewed for approval the HDC warrant #1619 in the amount of \$1,788.00 which included the mortgage.

David Carey moved to approve HDC warrant #1619 for \$1,788.00. Rick Mitchell seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

**Minutes approval – March 16, 2016**

The Corporation will approve these minutes at its next meeting.

**59/63 Willow Street**

Discussion was on need to renew property insurance for \$2,662 per year. Stein entertained a motion to approve insurance for 2016-2017. Bill Gisness moved to approve the insurance. Carey seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

The HDC noted that it had received no response to its RFP. Potential developers had said it is a small site which can be challenging regarding septic, stormwater, number of units. Anthony Nickas is going to create an economic model for the site regarding what is needed in terms of units/revenue to be commercially viable relative to if the HDC is going to try to develop the site itself or in partnership with another entity.

The Corporation reviewed its potential options for the site including the HDC develops the site on its own, or with a co-developer (i.e., Patton Ridge) taking the property through the permitting process and selling it. Gisness and Stein offered to create

schematic designs and layout for what could be structured and sited on the property with mixed use (multi-family and business/retail component).

There is potential for grant money from the state for a development project at the site. Gisness reported that he spoke to Sam Cleeves of MAPC who stated that there are avenues for funding (i.e., TOD) for the HDC and Cleeves will compile information for the Corporation. This is being done as well by ULI. In addition, Nordbloom is interested in developing the site if the HDC goes through the site plan review process. Gisness's contact at Nordbloom will describe how they would co-develop. The YMCA board is going to discuss the project and report back to the HDC. The YMCA wants to be a tenant (i.e., daycare center) at the site.

Discussion was on how public housing could be sold to a non-profit developer for a minimal cost to rebuild with grants for public housing. The non-profit board would have control of the housing. Also, if the HDC were going to do development or co-development it would have to comply with prevailing wage requirements and manage site plan review process.

Marc Johnson suggested the 59/63 Willow Street land could be contributed to bring the cost down with the HDC as a co-partner depending upon Mass. purchasing laws. The Affordable Housing Trust just spent \$250,000 for two affordable housing units. Another consideration could be to leave \$200,000 in the project to improve site lines and allow for less density on the site to get the project that the Town wants.

Stein reiterated that he would contact an engineer to see if time could be donated to understand what is feasible at the site with a big picture view. Gisness will be involved in this conversation. Discussion was on possibility of 25 units with 5,000 square feet of business/retail space. The units would have one to two bedrooms. It was noted that the bank has extended the terms of the HDC's mortgage for the property.

Next steps are to talk to the developers (i.e., Nordbloom, Lappin, Cutter, YMCA), and Stein and Gisness will develop a rough plan to understand what can actually be located on the 59/63 Willow Street site. The HDC has a proposal from Peter Kane to get a survey done of the site for \$1,500. This activity will be done in conjunction with the economic model and after discussion with an engineer.

Discussion was on when the HDC should communicate with other entities such as the Affordable Housing Trust to understand if the HDC could get the same deal as Habitat for Humanity for a portion of affordable units. Also mentioned was the possibility of adding a unit above the existing commercial building at the HDC site. Discussion

addressed possibility for low income housing tax credits (80 cents for every \$1 spent) as part of developer investment, community involvement and state grants.

### **Hamilton Downtown Improvements**

Discussion ensued about table of reasonable projects that were rank ordered by priority with responsibility defined (i.e., HDC, Town DPW or a combination of HDC/DPW). Any decisions to spend funds on improvements has to be approved by the Town manager, Board of Selectmen and HDC.

The HDC could potentially fund some improvements directly (i.e., seed money for the merchants association, holiday lights – some remain on downtown trees, and funding for fireworks supporting the Recreation Department and HW Community House). Stein will check with the HDC's attorney as to whether or not the HDC can contribute to the fireworks event.

Discussion was on low cost and high priorities in the table such as repainting lines downtown - DPW, install crosswalk – state, install brick sidewalks – plan would be needed, install planters – HDC would fund and resolve issues (i.e., winter storage), install flags and banners, install lights on trees, energize merchants group, fund merchants' insurance for events, fund HW Garden Club flowers. Also reviewed that involves more cost or complexity are install more benches, perform branding study, increase landscaping, install trash bins and period lighting (this would have to be hardwired so could be prohibitively expensive), plant more trees, remove sandwich board signs.

The HDC will work towards re-establishing the merchants group. As well as developing a one to two year comprehensive budget to be presented during Hamilton's budget cycle for consideration by the Selectmen in the Town's general budget. Discussion addressed how the HDC has given the Town \$6,500 which has not been spent. The HDC has voted to increase its contribution to more than 10%. The Town wants suggestions from the HDC attached to its check about how the funds can be spent (i.e., re-establish merchants group). Recommendations would be based upon a similar vision for the downtown with the Town manager and Selectmen.

Discussion was on how the HDC members could approach the merchants individually in their retail establishments, or during an evening meeting (5 p.m.) organized by the Corporation. Stein noted that historically the merchants were interested in having a website, and financial support for their event insurance. The HDC needs to understand process for the merchants group to request or be provided funds via a check from the

HDC, and if a non-profit organization needs to be established. This will be researched by Community Projects Coordinator Dorr Fox. The HDC will develop a list of key merchants (i.e., Tom Anthony, Marybeth, Timeless Interiors, and Steve Budreau).

**New/old business**

Discussion was about how the HDC needs to follow up contacting possible candidates to fill the seat to be vacated on the Corporation by Carey. Identified candidates with a background in real estate, development, or Town government are being considered.

The 59/63 Willow Street property is receiving interest in rental (i.e., art studio, office use) of commercial space vacated by plumber. The commercial space is available for one year for \$700 a month starting with the timing of the lease agreement.

The HDC's next meeting is on May 11.

Mitchell moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 a.m. Carey seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Stein, President