

Hamilton Development Corporation
April 29, 2015

The Hamilton Development Corporation met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 29, 2015 with Brian Stein, Bill Gisness, Rick Mitchell, Dave Carey, Anthony Nickas present. Consultant Rachel Meketon, DPW Director Bill Redford also present.

Call to order

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

Warrant for Bills

The warrant was for mortgage and Harborlight monthly bill for a total of \$1,988.00. Stein moved that the HDC approve warrant #1515 in the amount of \$1,988.00. David Carey seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Harborlight is acting as the HDC's property manager if there are any issues.

Meeting with Marlborough Economic Development Corporation

Stein updated the HDC on the visit that he and Consultant Rachel Meketon had with the Marlborough EDC. That corporation is funded by the hotels tax (i.e., \$500,000 a year), has paid staff, broader scope and area to cover compared to HDC. The meeting's discussion had included EDC's process with ULI, what was done in community and plans for future as well as how the EDC has dealt with developers and people in city. The EDC had suggested the HDC meet with as many people as possible including developers and businesses. This includes education sessions such as the visioning meetings held recently by HDC.

The EDC has not purchased any property and is tasked by city council with planning commercial area to facilitate projects with developers. Meketon noted that EDC's work with a developer converted an industrial site to mixed use (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial). The EDC spends \$50,000 a year on downtown improvements including lighting and other visual improvements. Zoning changes have occurred in Marlborough to allow mixed use in the city's downtown.

Also noted by EDC was the importance of HDC meeting with business and land owners to get ideas and input as well as to provide information about ULI and HDC's ideas. In addition there are resources available in the state for housing and development that could help HDC with the former McRae property. There is a planning director from Burlington that worked with EDC. The EDC offered to help HDC with rental data that could be modeled in a CoStar database. Discussion addressed how there is a range of annual rents per square foot in Hamilton's downtown and how HDC could get real estate brokers involved (i.e., Jay Burnham, Deb Evans, Peggy McNamara and Tim Berry) to understand the rents relative to commercial and residential. Also noted was how David Cutter, commercial property owner in Town, could have comparable rental information. The HDC is also interested in understanding the rental rates at Hamilton Shopping Center owned by Richard Lappin. The EDC is a 501c 6 organization that does not have to comply with M.G.L. Chapter 30 procurement law while HDC is more of a municipal versus private corporation.

Discussion ensued about League of Women Voters interest in presenting information to the public about HDC and whether or not they could do a newspaper article before ULI comes to Town (the HDC has submitted TAP to ULI). Also, the EDC held forums, and worked with MAPC consultant for outreach. In addition, the town of Bedford has recently rezoned its downtown for mixed use so the HDC could consult with this community. Discussion with EDC included Hamilton's wastewater treatment needs in the downtown, how Mass. Development could be useful, and ULI has contacts there.

Old/New Business

Discussion was on septic system article that Corporation had reviewed where the cost of running a system had increased for the host community, the system was not built to be easily expandable, it was built below economies of scale, and seasonal business cycle impacts usage of system and user cost. Also mentioned was that Town's water bill has just doubled and how much a wastewater system in Hamilton's downtown would cost taxpayers to be practical and what would be the benefits (i.e., resident owning a small piece of land could add a bedroom or apartment). Mass. Development could help the HDC understand what are viable economics associated with wastewater proposal including capital costs, and there are sources which could be investigated to offset some of these costs. Discussion identified whether or not the HDC should wait until ULI does its evaluation before moving forward investigating wastewater system information for a system that is similar to HWRSD system at high school. HDC could contact Mass. Development via website, telephone calls and emails since this type of wastewater system is considered to be a potential driver to development.

The HDC agreed that once it hears from ULI about its plans, the Corporation can determine its focus for moving forward to address clear definition of mixed use by-law and process with Selectmen, Planning Board, and public hearings to get this to a Town Meeting vote. The HDC is currently focused on design guidelines, mixed use by-law, ULI, business contacts, parking conversation with police, discussion with real estate brokers (i.e., current rental rates for business and housing, market demand for rental housing and business space, expansion potential).

Discussion ensued about how mixed use by-law's intent is for residential and commercial and it would likely not include a solely multi-family building. Business use would be on ground level not residential. Research will be done on mixed use residential for up to five family units.

Discussion was on HDC renewing insurance and that this could include umbrella (\$1,500 additional cost) but terrorism was waived for the HDC's Willow Street property. The Corporation will work on its budget to understand where it is operationally and begin process for 2016 budget. It was noted that the HDC needs to understand timing of when it would receive \$65,000 from Town since it has not received those funds in 2015 and budget will reflect when funds go up and down. Meketon will research with Finance Department. Also mentioned was when \$6,500 (10% of \$65,000) is given to Town for downtown improvements the HDC will suggest how the funds could be used. These funds were earmarked for the Town and need to be transferred out of HDC budget or via warrant with check issued.

The HDC members will be reappointed in June and Corporation can have a minimum of five members and if there are people interested in serving (i.e., commercial realtor/developer, downtown merchant) two more for a seven member board could be added. A conversation will occur on the matter with Selectmen.

Gisness 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