

# Hamilton Development Corporation

## Minutes

Dec. 4, 2013

**Welcome** – B. Stein, HDC President, opened the meeting at 7:35 AM. Board members Anthony Nickas, Rick Mitchell, David Carey, and Bill Gisness were present. Also present were David Geikie, Andrew Mente, Kristine Cheetham and Deborah Nippes-Mena.

### Agenda Items

**Approval of Minutes** – K. Cheetham asked the Board members to review the minutes of the last two meetings. She reminded the Board that they should review and vote on the minutes of the previous meeting at each following meeting. This is required for all votes that involve expenditures of public funds.

**ACTION:** D. Carey made a motion to adopt the review and approval of minutes as the first order of business at all future meetings. B. Gisness seconded. All voted in favor.

B. Gisness made a motion to approve the HDC minutes of Nov. 20, 2013. D. Carey seconded. All voted in favor.

### **Development Opportunities: Option to Purchase Land on Willow Street**

The HDC took a vote outside of a meeting on Tuesday Nov. 26, 2013, to approve the option to purchase the properties at 63 and 59 Willow Street. K. Cheetham asked the Board members to discuss the option and vote in an open session for the public record. The HDC attorney also asked that the Board members formally declare a rationale for the vote.

Several members of the Board offered reasons why they were supporting the vote for an option to purchase the land at 59 & 63 Willow Street. The members agreed that control of this particular site in the downtown was valuable because of the potential for re-development at the site. They felt that the free market might not recognize the needs of the downtown because this is a unique parcel in size and location. The potential(s) for reuse of the site was identified as follows: housing, mixed-use commercial and housing, waste water treatment system, parking lot, park area, and potentially address high water table issues at the site. A few members also noted that ownership of this land would provide the HDC with an economic asset.

A Mente asked, what role did the citizens have in this decision? R. Mitchell responded that any action of the HDC was subject to the same permit scrutiny as other projects. He also thanked Andrew for attending the HDC meetings and noted that his input was a valuable role as a citizen. Finally, he suggested that, unlike a situation where a developer would propose a project and seek permits, the HDC is more likely to issue a request for proposals to a developer to design a project that the community wants based on recent plans.

D. Carey added that the HDC has to request funding on an annual basis from town meeting. So he felt that the town residents would have a direct check/balance on the actions of the HDC. Also the entity is a 501-C3 and held to many rules.

A Mente also had concerns that the public perception of the process may not be on target. He reminded the Board that mixed sentiment exists in town between the people who live in the village area and those who live in the more rural parts of town. He wanted assurance that the development for the downtown would not be out of character with the village concept. D. Carey noted that all members of the HDC were residents who have dedicated time to working for the town to ensure the quality of life for the entire community and not just a few neighborhoods.

**ACTION:** B. Gisness made a motion to approve the option to purchase the land at 59 & 63 Willow Street. D. Carey seconded. All voted in favor.

### **Waste Water Treatment Planning**

At the previous meeting, the HDC reviewed and voted to hire Wright Pierce to conduct preliminary review and outreach for waste water treatment planning. K. Cheetham informed the Board that she contacted Wright Pierce about the vote and the firm responded that they most likely could not begin until January. The Board asked that a contract for services be prepared with the scope of work and budget in the request as parameters. They asked for K. Cheetham and D. Nippes-Mena to do the initial work and then submit it for review by the HDC attorney. The Board would like to schedule Wright Pierce to attend the first meeting of the HDC in January if the paperwork is in order.

### **HDC Organizational Matters**

- Annual Plan – D. Carey agreed to work on an annual plan for the HDC. The Board members agreed that the HDC had several projects moving forward but would benefit from a guided plan and task management. Some items for the plan were identified: Waste Water Treatment Planning, Zoning Amendments, Development Opportunities, Financial Strategies, and Organizational Matters. K. Cheetham asked the Board to consider adopting a procedure or role for working with the town management and political bodies. At the current time, there is not a formal relationship between these entities for communication and decision making. The Board agreed that this topic should be included in discussions of the operating procedures.

- **Membership and Wenham Role** – The topic of an official role or inclusion of a representative from Wenham as a voting member was addressed. D. Geikie did not realize that his participation on the HDC was not officially a voting position. The Board members agreed that Wenham should have a voting member on the board. However a few different strategies were discussed. The Board needs to have an odd numbered membership; either 5 or 7 members. At the next meeting, the Board agreed to vote on one of two membership strategies:
  - A. Keep a five member board – One voting member would be from Wenham and the President would not be a voting member.
  - B. Create a seven member board – There would be five members from Hamilton and two from Wenham: preferably one planner and one business representative.

**ACTION:** In response to D. Geikie’s concerns about communications, R. Mitchell made a motion to officially include D. Geikie in all communications of the HDC. D. Carey seconded. All voted in favor.

**Finances** – B. Stein informed the Board that he, A. Nickas and D. Nippes-Mena had a meeting later that day with the Salem Five Bank. The anticipated needing a business plan and revenue stream for future negotiations.

The Board inquired about the upcoming town meeting process. K. Cheetham agreed to put together a letter to the Board of Selectmen requesting that an article be placed on the warrant to dedicate the meals tax revenue to the HDC. The warrant is due to be opened at the Dec. 16, 2013 meeting. This language was prepared for the fall town meeting but withdrawn.

**Adjourn** – At 8:35 AM R. Mitchell made a motion to adjourn. B. Gisness seconded. All voted in favor.

Next HDC Meeting - Wed. December 18, 2013