

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

February 1, 2017

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

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Others Present: Peter Britton

This meeting was called to order by Brian Stein at 7:33 am with a quorum established.

Warrant

Brian Stein described the Warrant HDC17-15 to include funds of \$2,302.12 for mortgage, Harborlight, and Dorr Fox's time.

Motion made by Bill Gisness to approve Warrant HDC17-15 for \$2,302.12.

Seconded by Rick Mitchell

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

Minutes

Bill Gisness made motion to approve the minutes of January 18, 2016.

Rick Mitchell seconded.

Vote: Unanimous to approve.

59/63 Willow Street

Brian Stein described the Meridian Engineering plan. Meridian Engineering had conducted soil testing and provided quick numbers for septic and drainage. Groundwater was found at 3' below the ground. Mr. Stein said the plan removed the building at 63 Willow, which Mr. Stein did not want. There were two circles with infiltration basins. The basins included several infiltrators under the ground.

According to Title V Regulations, a 25' setback was required between the leaching field and the drainage system. The State Stormwater Handbook suggested the setback should be 50'. Given that the site, not including 63 Willow, was under an acre, the Stormwater Handbook did not technically need to be followed because the project would not be disturbing more than an acre of land. Brian Stein wanted to keep 63 Willow if it was possible to maintain the 25' setback.

The proposed remaining area would be able to allow a septic that would provide for 30 bedrooms. As the septic system for 63 Willow St. was currently on 59 Willow St. land, there was a need to accommodate for that system as well. Bill Gisness wondered if groundwater was located at 3', would grades need to be brought up. Brian Stein responded that the elevation would be increased but water could not be discharged off the site onto neighbors' properties, but there was a requirement to continue to take on neighbors' water because the proposal could not

change pre-existing conditions. Whatever water was being accommodated currently needed to be accounted for. The proposed building would be 60' x 140' with three floors comprised of 20, one and two bedroom units, totaling 30 bedrooms. There may be minimal commercial use.

Peter Britton presented a concept plan created by Chris Doktor for the COA and Public Safety Building property, featuring a scenic easement and eight units of senior housing. When combined with the 20 units that would be built at the Willow St. site, the two sites would create the required 28 units that would make a combined project acceptable to Andrew DeFranza. Peter Britton said the property was still on the table. Reportedly, Scott Maddern said he was very clear when speaking with the neighborhood that it had not disappeared but was only put on hold as there was more information needed.

Peter Britton said he would work with Dave Thompson to solve the serious drainage problem that existed in the neighborhood. Dr. Harvey had reportedly thought the proposed concept for the COA site was crowded but in no way would the proposal impact the Winthrop School. The building would be sited on Town owned land not encumbered by the lease. Mr. Britton noted that public safety officials would not respond to anything without a plan and that they had not yet seen this one.

According to Peter Britton, he would need to talk to Andrew DeFranza about the phasing and funding piece if family housing was not provided as the project may go to the end of the line. Reportedly, for Mr. DeFranza, the target was the tax credit money. Town Meeting would need to approve the Public Safety Building land. Mr. Britton recalled that part of the action was propelled by the threat of Longmeadow and its potential to file a competitive PEL. Mr. Britton wanted to see how many citizens wanted to step forward and be part of the solution. While Mr. DeFranza's threshold would be 28 to 30 units, a combination of two single projects would work. The State wanted more family housing but Mr. Britton said the Town was in the zone where senior housing was important.

The AHT had considerable powers for funding. In the past, the AHT lacked sufficient money to subsidize buying properties for smart growth in the center of Hamilton, which needed to be subsidized due to increased prices. The AHT was currently looking at Dodge Tree and Peter Britton said the owner was amenable to sell the property for \$900,000. The property was noted as having great potential.

Rick Mitchell asked if Longmeadow was the ghost in the background driving this to which Peter Britton responded that public awareness was moving political will. Mr. Mitchell thought it was a wonderful strategy which not only upset, but engaged the public. Dorr Fox said he needed to notify about 50 people of AHT activity.

The Selectmen had delayed the Joint BOS/AHT meeting so they could have Andrew DeFranza determine where he rated sites and where Harborlight was in the process. Mr. Britton thought

the COA project was far enough along that he thought it could be put in the basket. Mr. Britton wanted to move towards all the reasons why instead of why not but was detecting resistance from town officials who should be looking to help the AHT. The Town needed to have a wider vision that was not upsetting the public safety department or seniors and their activities. Mr. Britton invited Brian Stein to the next AHT meeting when it might be decided if it was time to move the site onto the table or wait.

Peter Britton would talk to Andrew about the timing. Anthony Nickas said the timing was important because the cost of maintaining the property was \$1,850 per month for an interest only mortgage. There may be a need to negotiate with the bank. If Andrew DeFranza put an offer in, it would be even better. In response to Bill Gisness' question if the HDC sold the property to a market rate developer would the Town kick themselves for not grabbing it for affordable housing, Peter Britton answered yes and he was currently kicking himself for losing the Anthony and Dodge property on Railroad Ave.

Anthony Nikas suggested Peter Britton have a discussion with Andrew DeFranza to see what he needed to make the proposal float. Mr. Britton suggested that there may be a chance to combine Willow St. with Kinsman Lane. Mr. Britton wanted a bit more time to show the neighborhood the new plan with drainage benefits, which may allow neighbors to become on board. Dorr Fox noted that the neighbors did not like the engineering solution to their drainage problems. The Council on Aging function would remain with eight new affordable units and offices. Mr. Fox recalled that, based on the consultant's report at the last meeting, the AHT voted not to send this property forward. Mr. Britton responded that the AHT was not behind it, but it was his proposal, which he had been paying for.

Rick Mitchell felt the AHT could not tarry indefinitely because the HDC needed to move forward. The AHT might be able to help with the financial responsibility of the HDC. They might be able to take an option on the property but would need Board of Selectmen approval. The AHT had \$230,000, according to Dorr Fox but were about to spend \$15,000 to \$20,000. The AHT could put in a request for \$600,000 from the CPC then that money would be available for whatever purpose the AHT was legally able to do.

Bill Gisness wanted to have commercial use as part of the development. Bill Gisness said a land swap with the landfill site would be a great idea for Dodge Tree as well as Welch & Lamson. Peter Britton thought the owner of Dodge Tree was about to retire. Dodge Tree had paid \$800,000 for the Willow St. property as an investment. The Willow St. sites would be good locations for retail below and housing above. Brian Stein said they would experience the same septic and drainage issues.

Brian Stein would call Andrew DeFranza to run the scoring test and asked if an appraisal should be completed. The Corporation agreed that it would be nice to have a bit of profit to roll over into the next property. Peter Britton stated the AHT had funding from the CPC, the General

Fund, and Donations and ended his discussion stating the State was very serious about moving affordable housing forward.

Dorr Fox recalled that he had submitted the National Grid bill to the tenant at 63 Willow St., but the tenant had not responded to any contact. Mr. Fox said the tenant had transferred over responsibility but the past bills had not been reimbursed. The tree had not been taken down yet so no bill had been submitted. Mr. Fox would receive an approximate bill of \$2,500 for test pits and septic plan for Willow St.

New/Old Business

None

Motion to adjourn made by Brian Stein.

Seconded by Bill Gisness.

Vote Unanimous to adjourn at 8:27 am.

Prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marcie Ricker

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Attest

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date