

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MEMORIAL ROOM, HAMILTON TOWN HALL  
December 12, 2018

Members Present: Brian Stein (president), Bill Gisness, Rick Mitchell, Tom Goodwin, and Anthony Nickas

Others Present: State Representative Brad Hill; Russ Tanzer, Chair of the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Brian Stein called the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC) meeting to order at 7:33 a.m. with a quorum present.

**Warrant for Bills**

Mr. Stein presented Warrant HDC-1913 for \$3,301.48, which included Mr. Fox's time, Minutes Secretary's time, Harborlight Community Partners' fee, and holiday wreaths from Nunan's.

Bill Gisness made a motion to approve payment of Warrant HDC-1913. Tom Goodwin seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (5-0) to approve payment.

**Approve Minutes for Nov. 28, 2018**

Mr. Goodwin made a motion to approve the Nov. 28 meeting minutes. Anthony Nickas seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (5-0) to approve the minutes.

**Downtown Improvements—Discussion with State Representative Brad Hill**

The HDC thanked Rep. Hill for coming to the early morning meeting. Rep. Hill mentioned he started his career in Hamilton as a Zoning Board of Appeals member. He discussed funding mechanisms/options that could be pursued for the downtown infrastructure upgrades and had narrowed the list down to three grant programs: the MassWorks Infrastructure Program (the big one), a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and the Massachusetts Complete Streets Program.

Rep. Hill said under Governor Deval Patrick, a few smaller grants merged into the MassWorks program. Mr. Mitchell asked if that program is directed to local government. He said, yes, including entities like the HDC, and it was just funded at \$500M over the next three years. Rep. Hill listed other communities that have applied for MassWorks grants as well as some who have received grants.

He said the CDBG comes out of the Federal Government and gets dispersed through the State Department of Housing and Community Development. He brought materials on each of the three grants for HDC members to look at. The CDBG is for smaller cities and towns so the Town wouldn't be competing against big cities with that one as it would be with the MassWorks grant.

Mr. Goodwin asked what grants the City of Beverly had received [for its Rantoul Street renovations]. Rep. Hill thought the bulk of that was through Complete Streets, but said he would check.

Mr. Mitchell asked the difference between the Complete Streets and MassWorks applications. Rep. Hill said they are similar. He said the Town would be looking about two to three years out. Many towns apply numerous times. Each time they learn what they are doing wrong in the application and can fix for the next round. He advocated hiring a professional grant writer. It isn't necessary, he said, but is generally well worth the money spent because grant writers know the programs, process, and what's expected.

Mr. Stein said Jay Ash, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, met with Town Manager Joe Domelowicz and Director of Planning and Inspections Patrick Reffett. One thing they noted is that the State wants housing so if there is a big housing component, it helps in getting grants. Rep. Hill said to let him and State Senator Bruce Tarr know after applying as they are advocates for the Town. Also there is a way to earmark money in the budget for specific items, such as they had done with purchasing Hamilton's generator. The State can also earmark a bond bill. That authorizes dollars and then the Town "has to shake them," he said. He talked about Wenham's planned projects and said there is \$500K sitting in a bond bill that could help with the projects.

Mr. Mitchell noted that since the budget is now in the formation stage, if the HDC is going to be asking for money it should do it now. Rep. Hill said that was correct. The HDC will also need to talk with the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager about priorities for the Town. Rep. Hill noted projects can be done in phases. Tax receipts are doing well now, he said, but are expected to go down. He mentioned paving Chebacco Road, which he said has been a big issue.

The HDC asked Rep. Hill who writes the grants for the towns and he said it usually falls with the Town Manager or Town Administrator.

If Chebacco Road is paved, one idea discussed is getting Dodge Tree to move out to the dump site, which would free up their existing property downtown for housing.

Mr. Mitchell talked about the meals tax, which generates about \$75K a year. If the HDC sells Mac's property, it will go off the books so there would be money for a small bond issue.

Rep. Hill asked if Mr. Ash had toured downtown Hamilton. The answer was no, but they could invite him back for a tour. Mr. Ash was interested in the Patton Homestead's story, he said. He said the HDC might want to think about hiring a grant writer, perhaps in conjunction with the Town of Wenham. He noted Mr. Domelowicz was well-versed in the process. He said there are contacts printed within the materials who can help guide them in the application process.

Rep. Hill said he would not be attending this evening's public meeting due to another engagement, but to let him know if there is another meeting coming up. The HDC thanked him for his time.

Mr. Mitchell said he'd like to go through all the paperwork and rank what would be the best grants to pursue in terms of the timing and then they should sit down and talk with the Town Manager.

### **59/63 Willow Street**

- Discuss property appraisal estimate with possible vote**
- Discuss options for property**
- Vote to pay Salem Five for an updated appraisal**

Russ Tanzer, chair of the Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust said speaking for himself personally, he appreciated Mr. Stein's coming to the Dec. 10 meeting and speaking frankly. He said Hamilton recently completed the two [Habitat for Humanity] houses on Asbury Street at \$300K for the two units, which makes the "ask" for the 7-9 unit project proposed by Harborlight seem like a bargain (at about \$94K).

Mr. Stein updated the HDC on the Dec. 10 Trust meeting at which he spoke with the Trust about the proposed 7-9 unit project at 59 Willow Street and suggested the Trust tell Andrew DeFranza that they want nine units for the "ask" of \$850K. The Trust decided at its Dec. 10 meeting that it needs specifics from Mr. DeFranza, including a specified price per unit. Mr. Tanzer had asked Mr. Fox to reach out to the Department of Housing and Community Development to confirm money is not available for 20 senior units, which he did. Mr. Fox said to develop senior units, a needs assessment would be required. Also he said the HDC had missed the deadline for applying; the deadline was before Thanksgiving.

Mr. Goodwin noted HDC's Plan B entails an appraisal and market feasibility study. He asked if they wanted to put that on hold. The HDC members said no, don't wait. Mr. Goodwin said he had a proposal for \$8,500 from Bob Shannon for the feasibility study, and he can get it done in 4-6 weeks. Salem Five can do an "as-is" appraisal for \$2,200. The appraisal is going to be needed in June anyway and if there is an increase in equity they can cash out. Mr.

Goodwin said the question is whether the study be for rental, sale, or some combo. The terms of the feasibility study are that half is due up front and half is due at completion. To authorize the work and issue a check, the HDC will need to sign a document. They decided to meet next Wednesday to facilitate that.

**Decision:**

Mr. Goodwin made a motion that the HDC approve expenditures of \$2,200 payable to Salem Five for an as-is appraisal and \$8,500 payable to Bob Shannon of Ipswich for a feasibility study. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the expenditures.

The HDC confirmed it will meet on Wednesday at 7:30 a.m. and will also discuss the results of this evening's public meeting at that time.

**Downtown Improvements**

Mr. Fox said Carl Frushour of Carol Johnson [landscape architects] has said he can make tonight's public meeting. Mr. Mitchell said it would be helpful if Mr. Frushour could give a brief review of the last meeting, showing the slides of the proposed improvements, and then discuss the cost estimates and potential funding sources.

HDC members discussed grant writing. Mr. Mitchell said he has written grants and can do it.

Mr. Goodwin noted the flashing LED sign in front of the Public Safety Building reads: Hamilton Development Commission (instead of Corporation).

Mr. Stein said the owner of the Timeless Interiors building and the auto parts store on Railroad Ave. Dave Cutter has expressed an interest in buying Willow Street. After the HDC gets the appraisal they will reach out to him.

HDC members noted the nuisance tree on the property hasn't been taken down yet.

**New/Old Business**

None.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 a.m. Mr. Goodwin seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the meeting.

Prepared by:

  12-19-18

Mary Alice Cookson

Attest

Date