

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

Memorial Room, Hamilton Town Hall, 577 Bay Road

May 1, 2019

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

Members Absent: Tom Goodwin

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Rick Mitchell called the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC) meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. with a quorum present.

**Warrant for Bill**

Mr. Mitchell presented Warrant HDC #1924, which included liability insurance for the upcoming Street Fair and consulting services for HDC staff.

**Decisions:**

Anthony Nickas made a motion to approve payment of Warrant HDC #1924 in the amount of \$1,816.46. Bill Gisness seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve payment of the warrant.

Brian Stein made a motion to approve payment of Warrant HDC #1925 for the mortgage in the amount of \$3,029.99. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present to accept the motion.

Mr. Mitchell said he had sent them the 30-day extension of the mortgage. In two to three weeks the HDC will be signing a new one at Salem Five Bank. Mr. Fox asked if the mortgage would be increased by \$100K. Mr. Mitchell said he hadn't seen the terms of how it is structured yet. When he sees the terms and conditions he will let them know. The HDC discussed they wanted to have it as a line of credit, but Mr. Nickas pointed out they could pay it down.

**Approve Minutes (April 17)**

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Stein seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the minutes.

### **Downtown Improvements**

Website: Mr. Fox said he had sent them a link to the new website for the Downtown from website developer Alexa Lucci and wanted their thoughts. Ms. Lucci had used "Visitors" on the tab. Mary Alice Cookson is working on assembling the business listings, which involves a fair amount of work. He and Ms. Cookson aren't completely happy with how the Google map was used/presented. They like local business owner Tim Neill's map better.

In response to how to handle businesses without actual storefronts, Mr. Mitchell said if they had a physical presence they could be on the map, but if not, they couldn't. However if a business operating out of a home were based in Hamilton-Wenham, they could have a listing on the site.

Mr. Mitchell asked how changes would be handled. Mr. Fox said the map could be changed once a year or twice a year. They discussed that it might be difficult to stay informed about these changes.

Mr. Fox said Ms. Lucci will train him and Ms. Cookson to maintain the website. The next step is to get back to Ms. Lucci on the tabs and get the information to her. His hope is that the site will go live A.S.A.P., although it might have some mistakes at first. Mr. Mitchell asked if they could target two weeks for having it live.

Mr. Fox discussed the four tabs on the side of the site. Some of the ones selected aren't fitting to HDC purposes, such as Career Opportunities or Schools. The top one was the map that Mr. Neill did. Events was the second one. It was decided to call the main tab "Downtown" (rather than Visitors.)

Ms. Cookson suggested a "Contact Us" tab as a portal for the business owners to message the HDC about changes and such. Also there could be a link to the ShopLocal folks included there.

Signage: Linda Meiggs, property manager of the Shoppes at Hamilton Crossing, has said she is OK with having a sign on their property and suggested having it near the commuter rail station. She wants the HDC to take it through the Zoning Board of Appeals process. Also, the HDC will most likely have to pay for it.

Mr. Mitchell suggested that if the businesses wanted another sign located across 1A, perhaps a ladder sign, that they go to the local banks and solicit donations. He thought it good if they take ownership.

Street Fair: The fair is on track for May 19. True North Ales still needs an alcohol license for supplying beer. They have a Sweet Treats truck lined up. A little over 20 vendors have signed up. Railroad Ave. will be closed starting at about 10:15 a.m. The Town will have a booth and hand out buttons and information for the Patton Homestead, the Hamilton Foundation and possibly others. Someone mentioned including flyers about the discount rain barrel program. Ms. Cookson suggested passing out candy, such as mints, with a card attached from the HDC as a show of good will. Mr. Fox said the Board of Health has many rules and health concerns, but he will check. They discussed that Cherry Hill Farm is a Hamilton family that often provides ice cream for social events in Town.

### **59/69 Willow Street**

The HDC discussed the renter who is in arrears (by about four months). They received one \$600 check. The lease is up at the end of May. The HDC decided Mr. Fox should send out the official letter that had been drafted, which will go under Mr. Mitchell's signature. Mr. Gisness asked if the space was advertised yet. Mr. Fox will do it this week.

### **Review of Responses to the RFQs**

Mr. Fox listed the engineers, architects, and lawyers who responded to the RFQ as well as those who hadn't. Mr. Mitchell reviewed the formal process for selecting the candidates, seeking the Board's feedback. He had downloaded an RFQ evaluation process from online and went over it with them. He will send out five criteria to consider and asked if they could complete their rankings of the respondents within a week. They discussed that some of the reviews will be based on reputation, prior relationships, and past experiences with the particular firms.

They hope to make the decision by June 15. The next two meetings (May 15 and May 22) will last two hours each and be devoted to interviews of the firms chosen, with each interview taking about 20 minutes to a half hour. Mr. Mitchell asked everyone to come up with two winners in each category when they completed their rankings. Mr. Gisness said he's already ranked them according to who had the better packages and who has worked with the Town in the past. He was concerned with wanting to know their fees, though.

Mr. Stein said he will recuse himself from the architect portion of the review.

### **Budget**

Mr. Nickas asked if the HDC wanted to show them utilizing the line of credit for their recent RFQ project or show drawing it out of their budget. Mr. Mitchell thought out of budget. Mr. Gisness said this year they would have the flower baskets, signs, website, etc., coming out of the \$10K so they will most likely spend it all. Mr. Nickas said normal consulting fees are about \$15K, which doesn't include legal costs. He thought they should add another line item for the RFQ/permitting project.

Mr. Mitchell said the Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) had asked him what the HDC's plans are for the future, after making it through site plan review, and were asking for more definition from them. He suggested the HDC think about the idea of potentially hiring a part-time Executive Director or dedicating someone to focus exclusively on this work, going after grants, etc. It will require working with the State, the merchants, etc., not just in little increments but managing the big picture. He asked Mr. Nickas to see if there were \$30K-\$40K in the budget to use toward that. Mr. Nickas said it was doable, and they could build out a three-year budget.

### **New/Old Business**

The HDC discussed that they want business owners represented on the HDC as associate members. Angela Arvenites from A Monogram Shop had submitted an application and Mr. Stein had been speaking with someone he knows. Some of the HDC members' terms will be expiring soon; the Board of Selectmen will need to reappoint and put out notices for new members.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 a.m. Mr. Stein seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to adjourn the meeting.

Prepared by:

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Mary Alice Cookson

Attest

Date