

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

Memorial Room, Hamilton Town Hall, 577 Bay Road

May 22, 2019

Members Present: Brian Stein, Anthony Nickas and Bill Gisness

Members Absent: Rick Mitchell and Tom Goodwin

Coordinator: Dorr Fox

Brian Stein opened the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC) meeting at 7:31 a.m.

Interviews for Consultants for 59 Willow Street Project

Charlie Wear, Meridian Engineering

Mr. Wear said he hadn't prepared a PowerPoint but provided details in his statement of qualifications. He introduced Michael Novack, VP of Meridian, who lives in Wenham. He referenced April Ferraro, the civil engineer who would be working on the project. Mr. Wear is President at Meridian. He cited the history of the company, which started in 1990 and detailed all the changes the company has gone through. Meridian currently has offices in Westborough and in Beverly at the Cummings Center. It has 40 employees. The company does LIDAR scanning and has a LIDAR drone. The territory is all of Massachusetts, but he is centric to the North Shore. The company did the Pingree School expansion, the Institution for Savings, and recently took over at Canter Brook Estates to finish the design and manage the engineering of its construction. Mr. Wear said he does work for Peter Britton and has deep roots with Andrew DeFranza at Harborlight Community Partners. They do a lot of due diligence, looking at the hurdles for a piece of land. They did the design for a Wenham project on Maple Street; the suit was just settled. He listed other projects, including affordable housing projects and expansion the YMCA Sterling Center. He has 42 years of experience as a civil engineer. Ms. Ferraro, who would be the prime civil engineer on the project, has about 20 years of experience.

Mr. Novack provided his bio. He's been with Meridian since 2011 and also worked there at an earlier time in his life. He has 20 years of total experience. He works closely with Ms. Ferraro, whom he described as a solid engineer. His workload is majority residential; he doesn't do a lot of affordable. He manages seven to eight people now. They have an

engineering staff of about 15 to 20. He's based in Beverly. He sits on the ConsCom in Wenham.

Mr. Wear went over the challenges with the site. Under existing zoning, multi-family is allowed but needs a commercial component. He said a 40B permit would be the ideal way to go because it allows for flexibility around zoning. The site is a low spot and a lot of the areas drains into it. He looked at the soil testing and said it is sandy down below. There isn't a wetlands issue per se, but there's no way to go with the drainage other than down into the ground. He is not pessimistic that a septic system can be developed, but said there are challenges that need to be overcome.

Bill Gisness asked who would represent them in front of the Planning Board. Mr. Wear said it would be Ms. Ferraro or it could be himself. Mr. Gisness noted this is going to be a market-rate project and won't be through Andrew [DeFranza]. He said they will be looking for a developer once they get site plan approval and welcome recommendations.

Mr. Stein explained some developers have felt Hamilton is a tough place to get a project permitted. That's why the HDC had the idea to get it permitted first.

Mr. Gisness asked if there were creative ways to solve the drainage problems, such as new technology on the market. Mr. Wear said there are new technologies associated with septic systems and there are always new products, but this issue is about infiltration. Mr. Gisness commented on a past experience where one of his neighbors put in a new septic and it flooded the other systems in the area. Mr. Wear said he'd be surprised if the new installation is what flooded it. He said a properly installed system won't ruin someone else's system.

In response to Mr. Gisness's question about whether 20-24 bedrooms on the property was a safe number, Mr. Wear responded he thought that was the max in terms of density. As far as what the cost would be for site construction (not building), he said it could be \$250K. Mr. Gisness mentioned they would want to do it "as of right."

Mr. Gisness asked if Meridian be involved in talking to neighbors. Mr. Wear said absolutely. Mr. Novack said it was a common thing they did and he strongly recommends having that conversation in a public forum where people will listen and be civil. He said some people you can't win over, but you can smoke out people's concerns and take steps early on.

Mr. Gisness asked if there were any sustainable things they can do. Mr. Wear discussed capturing roof runoff and using it for irrigation if they have room on the roof for tanks. It won't save money per se, but would allow them to save money on the size of the system they use. Also, he said if you do a pretreatment system, you can make the argument that you went above and beyond what was required by Title 5. The HDC noted that water

quality is high on everybody's list of concerns. They discussed some information about the new marijuana facility in Town.

Jill Mann, Attorney

Ms. Mann said she's been practicing law for 31 years. She is a graduate of Boston University. She started her career in New York City. She specializes in land use, commercial development, residential development, and contract law. Her practice includes two other attorneys, one of which is her husband. The office is in Middleton. She has ties to many great developers and said she can give the HDC names.

She mentioned a property she sold yesterday that was 15 units on 9 acres with 5 being wet. She said she liked the cluster effect of it. She can assist in the selling and marketing of a project. As far as the legal side of things, she said she coordinates all the parts and gets the timing down. She advocates meeting with the abutters beforehand. She thinks it's better to have a private conversation, but prefers a public setting only because people don't tend to like to meet in homes. She talked about a meeting she had held at a school. All the abutters came and some of the project's plans were changed at the meeting to accommodate them. She said one abutter meeting can save three public hearings.

She handles residential and commercial both and doesn't specialize in one over the other. She does a lot of condominium work. She works with ConsComs, Planning Boards, Zoning Boards, etc., and said she has worked with Mr. Wear most recently in Hamilton. She listed some clients, including the Ferncroft Country Club and the City of Salem, where she does land use consulting work. She sits on the Affordable Housing Commission in Middleton. She said she doesn't find Hamilton difficult to work with. Doing it the way the HDC is doing it, they will have more economic control, she said. When a community does this themselves, it results in a better project, for example, the landscaping may be more impressive and the approach to the property might be a bit more measured. She said it would be helpful to have a landscape architect involved. She helps with designs and says it's always good when there is an architect on the Planning Board.

Mr. Gisness said the lawyer would be the one getting everyone organized, doing the scheduling, and leading the presentations. She said she controls the scheduling. She likes to have a pre-meeting since she needs time to review documents. She makes sure she understands the bylaw and makes sure there is no appealable claim. Before there is a public hearing, she comes in to show the board what will be coming up. She said she finds Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett very proactive. She deals with the department heads—police, fire, Board of Health, DPW, etc.—and always has a department head meeting before they kick off.

Mr. Stein said a big thing is the neighbors. He gave some history of how the Willow Street neighborhood had bought into the idea of having 20 senior units there. They discussed that families were not likely to be in the units since they are only two-bedroom. They might be good for empty nesters and divorced parents. Ms. Mann said she loves the commercial aspect and fact that the site is near the train station. She said the price point should be high and the project should sell out quickly. She mentioned that Mr. Reffett is a good landscape architect who can advise them.

Mr. Gisness asked if the time frame were reasonable. She said yes, if they start literally right now. He asked if properties are allowed to drain onto other properties. She said no, but they are allowed to continue the natural flow, so if it is already flowing onto someone else's property right now, you can continue it. Mr. Gisness said there are areas on the site that collect water and look like a swimming pool. She said that if it's an area subject to flooding you need to keep it on site. You can use the water for irrigation. She asked if it would be an elevator building. They said, yes. They discussed putting parking under the building. She thought they could do a great 2 ½-story building with nice roof lines and a nice design. She said if you have a decent developer you can bring in trees to make it look nice. The elevator cost is about \$130K.

When asked, Ms. Mann said she doesn't work for a fixed fee. She charges by the hour at \$375/hr. She said the project shouldn't be more than about 50 hours and will involve two to three site plan meetings. She said it was best if they don't use the terms "apartments, rental or affordable" when Mr. Gisness mentioned they were thinking about making it rentals.

New/Old Business

Mr. Gisness said there was a tree branch on the site that needed to be trimmed or pulled down. Mr. Stein will inform the tree service. Mr. Gisness also noted the mailbox for the renter was stuffed full. They discussed the status of the back rent owed and letter that was sent requesting payment.

Dorr Fox said he has the ad on Craig's list, but that they had better success with putting the "For Rent" sign there. Mr. Stein said he thinks he still has the sign. Mr. Fox said they could use his (Mr. Fox's) number as the contact on the sign. Mr. Stein said he still has the key to the building and can meet with prospective renters to show it. Anthony Nickas said he can also show it.

Warrant for Bill

Mr. Stein presented Warrant #HDC-1927 in the amount of \$286.36 for Mary Alice Cookson's time. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (3-0) to approve the motion.


Approve Minutes—May 1 and May 15

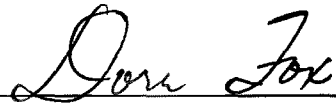
Mr. Stein made a motion to approve both sets of minutes, for May 1 and May 15. Mr. Gisness seconded the motion The HDC voted unanimously among those present (3-0) to approve the motion.


Adjournment

Mr. Stein made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 a.m. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (*3-0) to adjourn the meeting.

Prepared by:


Mary Alice Cookson


Attest


Date