

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

Conference Call

December 2, 2020

HDC Members Present: Rick Mitchell (President), Brian Stein, Anthony Nickas, Chad Smith, and Anthony Passaretti (Associate Member)

HDC Members Absent: Angela Arvanites

HDC Coordinator: Mary Alice Cookson

*\* Note: All of the above participated via remotely via conference call. The conference call number was published on the posted public agenda.*

Chair Rick Mitchell opened the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC) conference call/meeting at 9:03 a.m. with a quorum present and took a roll call. Brian Stein, Anthony Nickas, Anthony Passaretti, Chad Smith, and Mr. Mitchell were present.

**Warrant for Bills**

Mr. Mitchell presented Warrant HDC-2107 in the amount of \$3,315.50, which included staff pay, the water bill, and the Salem Five mortgage.

Mr. Stein made a motion to approve Warrant HDC-2107 in the amount of \$3,315.50. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Nickas, Mr. Stein, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Mitchell, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

**Approve Minutes— Nov. 4, 2020**

Mr. Nickas made a motion to approve the Nov. 4, 2020 minutes. Mr. Stein seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Smith, Mr. Stein, Mr. Nickas, and Mr. Mitchell, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

**Update on 59/63 Willow Street**

Mr. Mitchell said the sale of the Willow Street property is scheduled to close on Jan. 15, 2021, but that could change because Ben Corwin, tenant at 59 Willow St., has 120 days to

find an alternate living space. His search started the beginning of November. Traggorth Companies LLC is helping Mr. Corwin find similar housing to what he has.

Mr. Mitchell said a roof repair (to replace missing shingles) was completed at 63 Willow St. at a cost of \$450.

Mr. Mitchell said Traggorth Companies was granted a one-year extension by the Planning Board for the site plan review and to complete construction and is in the process of lining up more funding. Traggorth did receive funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Construction is expected to begin sometime in the spring.

### **Budget Report and Future Initiatives**

Mr. Mitchell said he and Mr. Nickas would be meeting with the Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) this evening to talk about last year's budget and where they are with this year's budget. He guessed FinCom was going to ask what the HDC wanted to do with the money from the sale of the 59/63 Willow St. property. He and Mr. Nickas had discussed that after the HDC pays off its mortgage, it will have about \$575K. Subtracting the \$112K paid for site plan review and the \$100K purchase price, the HDC will have netted \$363K. Mr. Nickas added that closing costs will reduce that sum a bit more. Mr. Mitchell said an idea was raised that perhaps the HDC will not require future Meals Tax contributions, which is false and he will make it known that the idea is off the table.

A discussion of what the HDC might propose to do with the money from the sale ensued. Mr. Mitchell noted Railroad Ave. is a Town asset, and the Town would need to bond for making improvements to it, but perhaps the HDC could offer assistance in hiring a planning consultant and teeing up the project to present to the Board of Selectmen (BOS). Another idea was exploring the idea of purchasing the Dodge Tree property and replicating what the HDC did at Willow Street. He said that there had also been conversation about expanding the commercial district to include the Winthrop School site (in light of talk regarding consolidating the elementary schools.) Mr. Stein asked what the HDC could do other than lobbying for a zoning change in that area. He said this move would not involve any HDC money. Mr. Mitchell said it wouldn't involve money but would show that the HDC is cognizant of the situation and supportive of the Town in moving in that direction, which might give the schools impetus to move in that direction also.

Mr. Passaretti asked if sidewalk paving was something the HDC would get involved with. Mr. Mitchell said the sidewalks are Town-owned, but the HDC could perhaps help with the design process. Mr. Passaretti said the path at Patton Park is in bad shape. Mr. Mitchell said the HDC could help with getting it addressed and finding funding sources. Mr. Stein said he is hesitant about the HDC contributing to what the Department of Public Works does, although he thinks the idea of downtown improvements should still be on the table.

However, in light of the Town's current finances and the pandemic, he did not think anything would be pursued at present. Coordinator Mary Alice Cookson asked what would happen after the Parking Study was completed and whether the HDC would contribute to what the study indicated needed to be done. Mr. Mitchell said it might involve paving and striping of pavement, but again, that would be a Town issue. Ms. Cookson brought up the idea of branding, which had been mentioned in the past, and signage to tie the two parts of the shopping area (on each side of Route 1A) together and lend a unified look to the business district. Mr. Mitchell thought the idea worth exploring.

Selectman/BOS liaison Jamie Knudsen announced he had joined the call at about 9:05 a.m. Mr. Knudsen reminded the HDC that the Master Plan had been approved at Town Meeting. He said the BOS had also been working to get the schools to consider a good capital plan and might consider something like what was being discussed regarding Winthrop School. He said he thought this was something the HDC should discuss with the BOS.

Mr. Mitchell said the HDC could become more active in its support of Shop Local HW and help the group become more self-supporting. He mentioned the recent mailing that the HDC had paid for. He said if Shop Local charged a membership fee to the businesses, it would give the group a financial base to do more.

Mr. Mitchell said he would look to explore opportunities at the Dodge Tree property. Mr. Stein said he had heard, albeit quietly, that it was on the market.

Mr. Mitchell said Shop Local HW is currently running a holiday program (Thursday shopping nights) and has placed two sandwich board signs to advertise it. Shop Local has also designed and printed 200 flyers and asked the HDC for help/sponsorship--\$404.90 for the sign and flyers and \$419.40 for 9 banners to be placed on the telephone poles. The requested total so far was \$824.30. The group also wants to string a banner across Railroad Avenue, extending from the Timeless Interiors building across to where Mr. Smith's reality office is located. Stringing the banner will be an additional cost. Shop Local has already received permission from the owner of the Timeless Interiors building.

Mr. Stein said he knew it was a tough time for businesses, but in the future after the pandemic crisis is over, he wanted to see more "buy-in" from Shop Local and see the group raising more of its own funds. He said he didn't mind assisting them, but wanted to see more buy-in. Mr. Mitchell said with 200 businesses listed on the flyer, if each paid \$30-\$50 per year in membership dues, that would help, although Mr. Stein pointed out that not all of the businesses have storefronts; many are small businesses working out of their homes.

**Decision:**

Mr. Stein made a motion that the HDC approve \$824.30 to support the promotion of Shop Local HW. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Smith, Mr. Nickas, Mr. Stein, and Mr. Mitchell, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

**Parking Study**

The next Zoom meeting concerning the Parking Study will be Thursday from 2 to 4 p.m. At that time, they will be given an update. People can contact Pat Shannon in the Town Manager's office for a Zoom invite.

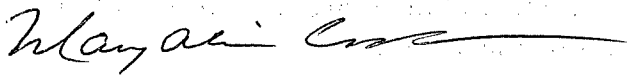
**New Business**

The next HDC meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 30, at 9 a.m. *\*Note: This was later changed to Jan. 4, 2021.*

**Adjournment**

Mr. Stein made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 a.m. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Nickas, Mr. Stein, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Mitchell, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

Prepared by:



1-6-2021

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Mary Alice Cookson  
HDC Coordinator

Date