

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MINUTES OF MEETING

Conference Call

May 5, 2021

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

HDC Members Absent: Brian Stein

HDC Coordinator: Mary Alice Cookson

*\* 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 at 9:05 a.m. and took a roll call. Present were Angela Arvanites, Anthony Nickas, Chad Smith, Anthony Passaretti, and Mr. Mitchell.

**Warrant for Bills**

Mr. Mitchell presented Warrant HDC-2112 in the amount of \$1,374.45, which included full payment for the Board of Directors' liability insurance as well as staff pay.

**Decision:**

Mr. Nickas made a motion to approve Warrant HDC-2112 in the amount of \$1,374.45. Ms. Arvanites seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Smith, Ms. Arvanites, Mr. Nickas, and Mr. Mitchell, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

Mr. Nickas asked if the HDC would be receiving a refund for the 59/63 Willow Street property insurance. Coordinator Mary Alice Cookson said she would find out.

**Approve Minutes—April 7, 2021**

**Decision:**

Mr. Nickas made a motion to approve the April 7 meeting minutes. Ms. Arvanites seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Ms. Arvanites, Mr. Nickas, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Mitchell, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

### **Update on 59/63 Willow Street**

Mr. Passaretti said there was a bit of a bottleneck with trucks and traffic on the corner of Linden and Willow Streets but no rumblings from the neighbors. He said he hadn't heard from David Traggorth for a while, but had seen the Willow Street project was progressing. Mr. Mitchell said Traggorth Companies had locked in its funding.

Mr. Smith said he had not heard anything back from the Dodge Tree property owners after having sent them another email, this one proposing a potential option to purchase. Mr. Mitchell summed up that the HDC had made a concerted effort and would keep monitoring to see if anything changes in the future.

### **Downtown Business Grant Update**

Mr. Mitchell reported on a Zoom meeting held last Monday with Assistant to the Town Manager/CPC Coordinator Pat Shannon, Ms. Arvanites, and Jan Shulman in attendance. Shop Local HW members looked at the grant and wrote a scope of services, which Mr. Mitchell then put into a "bid-worthy" format. Another meeting was taking place today at 10 a.m. Mr. Mitchell said Shop Local HW had compiled a \$75K "wish list" and the grant is for \$50K. Ms. Arvanites said they had proposed the list knowing some things would fall off.

Mr. Mitchell detailed the proposed marketing efforts to be covered by the grant. He said a mailing similar to the one sent previously would be sent out, this time with a paid effort to follow up with electronic mail and social media. Also proposed is an independent Shop Local HW website with a recruitment component. Shop Local members would be able to go on the website to pay dues, submit business information and ask questions. A Street Fair is planned for September. Shop Local is looking to hire a consultant to develop a strategic plan for helping its organization become self-sustaining. Ms. Arvanites commented that they need to plan for the future in the event that the current leadership steps down someday.

Mr. Nickas asked how operations would work. Mr. Mitchell explained the Town would be the repository of the funds. He said Mr. Shannon had already submitted a request for half of the grant funding. The HDC will write the scope of services. While Shop Local would drive the process, the HDC will be lining up bids, evaluating the bids, recommending the awards, and making sure the Town follows through with the processes to make things happen. He said it was a fair question that would need to be refined, especially in light of the fact that Mr. Shannon will be leaving his position for a job with the State.

### **Future Initiatives/ New Business**

Mr. Nickas requested an updated budget report, which Ms. Cookson said she would get from Dyan Katz in the Finance Department.

HDC members discussed how to broaden the HDC's base by looking for high-visibility projects and also explaining to the community what the HDC does as many are not aware. It was noted that the \$69K request (meal tax money transfer from the Town to the HDC) was approved by Town Meeting.

Mr. Nickas suggested the HDC "tie down the numbers." He said it didn't seem like people were aware that the Town audit includes a section on the HDC every year or that the HDC pays money to the Town, for example, \$4K in auditing and other services. Mr. Smith said he watched the segment of Town Meeting concerning the HDC and someone had commented that the development at Willow Street was not going to result in a significant tax revenue increase--but it will, he said. He asked if something could be included in the mailer to note that the HDC was sponsoring the mailer and also to include a list of the things the HDC does for the Town. Ms. Arvanites agreed many people in Town do not know. Both she and Ms. Cookson suggested some of the grant money be used toward branding for the HDC.

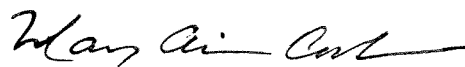
Ms. Cookson commented that when she and former coordinator Dorr Fox had talked with Hamilton downtown business owners in the past, there seemed to be a feeling that the studies the HDC had funded had not been implemented. Mr. Mitchell said that in addition to branding, the HDC has to put pressure on the Board of Selectmen regarding the implementation of downtown improvements (such as fixing problems cited in the parking study) and also needs to compile facts and figures while working on projects with Shop Local. Ms. Arvanites asked if they should set up a meeting with Mr. Domelowicz. Mr. Mitchell said he had contacted him about a month ago and had not heard back. He suggested Shop Local approach the BOS directly and ask to be put on an agenda. Ms. Cookson suggested that Shop Local introduce themselves to the newly formed Human Rights Commission, as well as to other Town boards and committees, to let them know what they are working on for the benefit of the downtown community, stressing inclusivity.

The next HDC meeting was set for Wednesday, June 2, at 9 a.m. Mr. Mitchell said the Regional Director for the Office of Business Development would be joining the meeting and giving an update.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Arvanites made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 a.m. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken with "ayes" from Mr. Smith, Ms. Arvanites, Mr. Nickas, and Mr. Mitchell, (4-0) unanimous among those present.

Prepared by:



Mary Alice Cookson  
HDC Coordinator

6-2-2021

Date