

HAMILTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MEMORIAL ROOM, TOWN HALL, 577 Bay Road

August 4, 2021

HDC Members Present: Rick Mitchell (President), Brian Stein, and Chad Smith

HDC Members Absent: Anthony Nickas, Angela Arvanites, and Anthony Passaretti (Associate Member)

HDC Coordinator: Mary Alice Cookson

Chair Rick Mitchell called the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC) meeting to order at 8:02 with a quorum present.

**Warrant for Bills**

Mr. Mitchell presented Warrant HDC-2201 for \$1,836.20, which included staff pay and a Nunans' (Florist) maintenance fee for the downtown hanging baskets.

Brian Stein made a motion to approve payment of Warrant HDC-2201 in the amount of \$1,836.20. Chad Smith seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (3-0) to approve the warrant.

**Presentation by Kathy Walker, The Community House**

Ms. Walker, Director of Development for the Community House presented plans for expanding the patio in front of the building. The effort will be part of their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary campaign that will raise funds largely for programming but also for capital projects. The Community House will be selling pavers for the walkway and offering other donor opportunities, such as sponsoring benches. Cole Landscaping Inc. is doing the redesign; Barbara Cole is on the Community House Board of Directors.

Ms. Walker said original plans for the outdoor space were drawn up prior to COVID and are being revised. The Community House changed gears from the idea of creating a children's garden to redesigning the outdoor space to make it more of a community gathering place, adding more fencing, outdoor tables, and seating where people can eat and congregate. Ms. Walker said the Community House will vote on the revised plans at its Sept. 20 meeting and unveil the

project to the public on Oct. 2 at an event called Centennial Cocktails, which this year is replacing the annual Harvest Dinner.

Mr. Mitchell noted Ms. Walker had indicated the Community House hoped the HDC can provide financial support and asked her what amount they would be asking. She did not know as she is not familiar with what level of funding the HDC can provide. Mr. Mitchell said it would be helpful for the HDC to see the final design and cost. Mr. Stein wondered whether the HDC should be an initial player or come in at the end of the fundraising campaign. He noted it was the HDC's charge to help the downtown business community. Ms. Walker responded that the project would be a beautification project for the downtown and would help local businesses by offering a space where people can enjoy their purchases. She said that can be made clear in the grant request.

Mr. Stein commented that the space in front of the Community House seems now to be part of the building and there was a discussion about how to draw people into the space through messaging, signage, and word of mouth. Coordinator Mary Alice Cookson suggested a sign reading: "Please enjoy this public way" as is done in Beverly and suggested the HDC might contribute to cost of the signage.

Mr. Mitchell suggested Ms. Walker connect with Shop Local HW regarding the Sept. 19 street fair and promote any connection it has with the downtown businesses in a grant request to the HDC. Mr. Mitchell pointed out that the Community House is an important institution with high visibility and could offer support to Shop Local HW to help it grow and become self-sustaining. Ms. Walker said perhaps the Community House could feature a local business each week, offering a pop-up market or food on-site. Permitting issues were discussed. Liquor licenses need to be granted per event, but the Community House has a licensed kitchen so providing food might be OK. A discussion with Director of Planning & Inspections Patrick Reffett was recommended.

Mr. Mitchell said the best approach was for Ms. Walker to return to the HDC once the plan is revised and make an ask. Mr. Smith pointed out that some board members were absent today so it would be good to get their feedback. Ms. Cookson suggested Ms. Walker connect with Ms. Arvanites, HDC member, Shop Local HW co-founder and toy store owner, who has two donkeys and might be willing to bring them to the new outdoor space for an event to attract moms with young children.

Jamie Knudsen, Board of Selectmen (BOS)/\*Selectboard Vice-Chair and liaison to the HDC [*\*The BOS is known informally as the Selectboard*] asked about the area where the Community House sign is located. Ms. Walker said that is at street level. He inquired if there were anything planned for that particular area.

Robin Davis, 57 Lois Street, said she thought that might be a good place for seniors to congregate as they would not have to climb the stairs. She also suggested having a few benches placed at an angle from each other so people can talk as opposed to individual benches spaced apart. Mr. Stein suggested perhaps placing benches about halfway up the walkway.

Ms. Walker has not approached the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) yet about the fundraising campaign or project. Mr. Mitchell suggested she talk with CPC Chair Jay Butler as the CPC is now taking grant applications.

Mr. Mitchell said the next HDC meeting will be Sept. 1 or Sept. 8. \*Sept. 8 was chosen.

### **Approve Minutes—July 7, 2021**

Mr. Stein made a motion to approve the July 7 meeting minutes. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved (3-0) among those present.

### **Update on Willow Street**

Mr. Mitchell said the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) had transferred at least \$400K in construction funds. Currently joists are going up. It was discussed that it would be a big building on the space, but there is still a fair amount of room there. There have not been any flooding issues as people had originally feared.

### **Downtown Business**

Mr. Mitchell said planning is going at full speed for the event to be held from noon to 4 p.m. on Sept. 19. Plans are to close off Railroad Ave. with vendors lining the middle of the street. Alcoholic drinks will be served. A trolley will run between the two towns. A presentation was made to the BOS for closing off Railroad Ave. and there will be a request for a one-day liquor license, which Mr. Knudsen said would happen at the next BOS meeting. Mr. Mitchell said the Master Plan Steering Committee will have a table and the HDC can have one. He suggested blowing up large photos of the proposed Railroad Ave. redevelopment project to show what it could look like and also said they should explain the function of the HDC for anyone who isn't aware. He is looking for volunteers to man the table for the four hours. Mr. Smith and Mr. Stein said they could do it and would trade off.

Ms. Cookson recommended the HDC offer some kind of gift to give out at the table, such as a magnet or sticker with HDC and Shop Local HW contact info. Mr. Smith suggested Koozies (can holders) with HDC on one side and Shop Local HW on the other. He said he would handle the ordering. Mr. Mitchell suggested he connect with Natalie Bowers to make sure the branding aligns with Shop Local's other marketing.

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

Mr. Mitchell said the HDC had expressed willingness to help with pedestrian improvements and other work indicated by the recent parking study. Aside from working to support Shop Local HW and downtown events, the HDC wants to physically connect the various shopping areas of the Town, making it more walkable and "sticky" (place where people stick around as opposed to just running errands in and out).

Ms. Davis talked about her desire to improve the outdoor space at the corner of 1A and Railroad Ave. that is by People's Bank and across from Connolly's Pharmacy. It is a good-size piece of land that Ms. Davis discovered is owned by 86 Bay Road Realty Trust in Bridgeport, CT. She said in talking with seniors about what Hamilton needs to make it better, she got the idea of adding benches and gathering points. She said having a park that is out of the way, such as Pingree Park, doesn't tend to attract people like a central spot such as the area by the bank. Mr. Mitchell suggested she approach a public relations person at People's Bank for information and help with enhancing the area.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Stein made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 a.m. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (3-0) to adjourn.

*Respectfully submitted as approved at the 7/8/2 meeting by*

*Mary Alice Cookson, Coordinator  
Hamilton Development Corporation*

**Documents Discussed at Meeting:**

- Minutes from July 7, 2021 HDC Meeting, Mary Alice Cookson
- Concept Landscape Plan prepared for The Community House by Cole Landscaping Inc.