

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

September 8, 2021

HDC Members Present: Rick Mitchell (President), Brian Stein, Chad Smith, 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 a.m. with three members present (Mr. Mitchell, Brian Stein, and Anthony Nickas). At 8:04, Chad Smith and Angela Arvanites arrived.

Warrant for Bills

Mr. Mitchell presented Warrant HDC-2202 for \$1,919.40, which included staff pay and a Nunans' (Florist) maintenance fee for the downtown hanging baskets.

Mr. Stein made a motion to approve payment of Warrant HDC-2202 in the amount of \$1,919.40. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (3-0) to approve the warrant.

Approve Minutes—August 4, 2021

Mr. Stein made a motion to approve the Aug. 4 meeting minutes. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. The motion was approved (3-0), unanimous among those present.

Update on Willow Street

Trusses are going up and the project is on schedule. An independent firm monitors the process and funds. Regarding #63 Willow Street, Ms. Arvanites said she was still in a fact-finding phase, working with developer David Traggorth. She has had various tradespeople walk through the building and is still considering offering coffee and pastry (prepackaged goods from a local bakery). Mr. Stein commented that as soon as 30% of the value of the building is invested in improvements, the whole building needs to be brought up to code. Mr. Mitchell added that this is based on the cumulative total of work done.

Downtown Business / Event

The Shop Local HW Fall Festival will be held from noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 19, 2021. Mr. Mitchell said he's had conversations with Shop Local HW's Jan Soolman and Natalie Bowers and everything is progressing well. The HDC will have a table and Mr. Stein will serve as the main HDC contact as Mr. Mitchell will be out of town. Shop Local HW will be starting to assign space numbers and an email will be going out soon. Mr. Smith will be working the table along with Mr. Stein. Mr. Smith ordered the cozies to give away and the order is expected to arrive by Sept. 16. Ms. Arvanites said she will provide a table skirt and will heat-press "Hamilton Development Corporation" on it.

Mr. Mitchell showed photos he had blown up depicting what Hamilton's downtown could look like based on renderings by the designer hired by the HDC a couple of years ago. He will also create a board summarizing major HDC accomplishments and a photo of 59 Willow Street. The Fall Festival event will be held rain or shine. Ms. Arvanites said the long-range weather forecast looks good although it is too early to tell.

Future Initiatives / New Business

Robin Davis, 57 Lois St., gave a presentation to the HDC. In recent weeks, she took a video showing areas of Hamilton's downtown in need of physical improvements. Ms. Arvanites also commented that trash had not been picked up on Railroad Avenue and bins there were overflowing. She said she talked with Board of Health Chair David Smith who took photos. Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Tim Olson and Town Manager Joe Domelowicz seemed unaware and the problem was said to be on the part of Casella, the hauler. Ms. Davis and her husband, Jack, who was with her at the meeting, said they spent time pulling weeds at the post office on Railroad Ave. and showed pictures of the noticeable difference it made. She also took note of rusty bollards outside the post office and proposed some solutions. The HDC was in favor of using black bollard covers (sleeves) as opposed to painting the bollards. Ms. Davis also showed photos of the courtyard at the post office, which she noted was a terrific location for a community gathering space. She suggested involving the Garden Club in making some new flower boxes. Also, there used to be two benches there that had been removed for safety reasons and she proposed adding the benches back. She suggested benches made of recycled plastic for durability sake.

Mr. Stein commented that the benches along Railroad Ave. supplied by the HDC took a long time to get approved. Mr. Mitchell said he wasn't sure whether the HDC can legally make a donation to the post office and will ask the HDC's attorney. Ms. Davis also prompted a discussion about fixing up the space at the corner of Bay Road and Railroad Ave., which is owned by the condominium company for the bank and Dr. Hugh Taylor of Family Medicine. Their big concern is liability. Ms. Davis suggested adding a bench on that corner to replace one that used to be there—perhaps putting it on a part of the property owned by the Town. Also, she thought that there may be State grants available to make it happen.

Mr. Mitchell talked about hiring a part-time Executive Director for the HDC to handle some of the legwork because the HDC is lacking in manpower to make things happen. Mr. Stein said that

would depend on buy-in from the Town. Perhaps the event on Sept. 19 will foster that. Mr. Davis said he noticed while pulling weeds the awful state of the sidewalks that scream neglect and poverty. There was a discussion about how to appeal to decision makers to start an action plan.

HDC Coordinator Mary Alice Cookson suggested Ms. Davis might organize a community clean-up day or assemble a team to demonstrate to the Town their seriousness in wanting to make things better. Ms. Davis also commented that the state of the public restrooms in Patton Park is bad and the signage seems to be all negative--no dogs, no horses, a huge water ban sign, etc.

Mr. Mitchell noted the Community House had approached the HDC at its last meeting regarding an outdoor courtyard proposal. He suggested Ms. Davis compile a list of things she would like to see happen and the costs. Ms. Davis said she would bring up her ideas for the flower boxes to the Garden Club and also organize a community weed-pulling day before the Shop Local HW festival. Mr. Mitchell said he would talk with the HDC's attorney about whether they could pay for the bollard covers and flower boxes at the post office.

The next HDC meeting will be held Oct. 6, 2021.

Adjournment

Mr. Stein made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 a.m. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted as approved at the 10/6/21 meeting by

*Mary Alice Cookson, Coordinator
Hamilton Development Corporation*

Documents Discussed at Meeting:

- Minutes from Aug. 4, 2021 HDC Meeting, Mary Alice Cookson
- Proposal for HDC helping to improve the appearance of the Post Office, Robin Davis