

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

October 6, 2021

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

HDC Members Absent: Brian Stein

HDC Coordinator: Mary Alice Cookson

Rick Mitchell called the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC) meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. with four members present: Mr. Mitchell, Anthony Nickas, Chad Smith, and Angela Arvanites.

Warrant for Bills

Mr. Mitchell presented Warrant HDC-2203 in the amount of \$2,118.79, which included staff pay and the final Nunans (Florist) maintenance fee for the hanging baskets.

Mr. Nickas made a motion to approve payment of Warrant HDC-2203. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to approve the warrant.

Approve Minutes—September 8, 2021

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the Sept. 8 meeting minutes. Ms. Arvanites seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (4-0) among those present.

Update on Willow Street

Ms. Arvanites reported that roofing work will start next week. She has an agreement with developer David Traggorth for her to take the space next to her toy store at 63 Willow St., for a general store offering prepackaged baked goods, coffee, and offerings from local artisans. After the roof is done, the interior work will start. The agreement involves her husband serving as General Contractor with Mr. Traggorth handling the trades work. They plan to renovate the bathroom and work on the heating/cooling system, anticipating finish by spring.

Mr. Mitchell said Anna Siedzik, outreach coordinator for Harborlight Community Partners, is currently taking applications for the affordable housing component at 59 Willow St.

Downtown Business

- **Recap of Local HW Fall Festival:** Ms. Arvanites reported that Local HW (formerly Shop Local HW) is working on an economic impact statement. She said that overall, the Fall Festival was great and feedback positive. Businesses were excited about getting in front of the community and valued the coming together of the Town. She said people were wanting something like that on a regular basis and liked the food trucks. Local HW has been meeting weekly. The membership drive has begun, and the group will be holding quarterly events in an effort to recruit business owners. For the first public meeting, they would like to invite the HDC and Master Plan Steering Committee to speak about their plans.

Mr. Mitchell noted there is still a \$5K HDC-allocated grant that Local HW has not yet accessed. He asked Ms. Arvanites if Local HW had the resources for handling the membership drive. She said she thought so and that event planner Megan McGovern will continue working with the group through the end of the year. The membership fee for the businesses will be \$100.

- **Update on Downtown Improvements:** Robin Davis, 51 Lois St., reported on her new volunteer group called Friends of Downtown Hamilton. The group meets on Tuesday evenings to weed, cut suckers from around trees, and pick up trash. She has been in communication with the Postmaster who welcomed the group's beautification efforts around the Post Office. The next focus will be to fix the rusty bollards there. She said anything making the area more attractive will help entice people to linger, which will benefit the business community.

Mr. Mitchell complimented Ms. Davis on laying the groundwork and said he had contacted HDC Attorney Kathleen O'Donnell for advice. Ms. O'Donnell prepared a document to give to the Postmaster that gives the HDC the legal right to make improvements and also addresses some liability issues. Ms. Davis said a few of the higher-ups at the Post Office aren't as amenable to her ideas as the Postmaster has been and she felt that a letter detailing what is being proposed is needed. She wrote a memo of suggested improvements and costs and produced a short slide show, which HDC Coordinator Mary Alice Cookson forwarded to the Board.

Mr. Smith asked whether they could just encourage the Post Office to do the work on its own. Ms. Davis said due to the layers of bureaucracy, it wouldn't happen. Mr. Mitchell asked the HDC if it was comfortable considering the potential project (new bollards, flower boxes, and painting) if it can be worked out. Ms. Arvanites and Mr. Nickas said yes. Mr. Mitchell suggested the HDC could add plaques on the various improvements to promote its sponsorship of them. He said licensed contractors would be needed for the work.

The next point of discussion was the land at the corner of Bay Road and Route 1A outside People's United Bank. Mr. Mitchell said the land is owned by a condominium company headed by Dr. Hugh Taylor. He said he had spoken with David Cutter who has been in discussion about potentially buying the property as well as other Railroad Ave. properties.

Mr. Mitchell discussed the idea of the HDC's sponsoring the addition of holiday lights to the trees downtown now that there is outdoor power available. The HDC was receptive. Ms. Arvanites will discuss the idea with Karen Moulton of TM Landscaping. Another suggested contact was Cole Landscaping. Ms. Cookson noted Barbara Cole is on the board of the Community House. Mr. Mitchell had distributed to the HDC the Community House's new plans to improve the outside space in front of their building. Kathy Walker of The Community House has not yet approached the HDC with an ask.

The HDC had a discussion about the responsibility for the sidewalks downtown, for leaf blowing and clearing snow, for example. There was a general lack of knowledge about how maintenance gets done and it was said that the work seems inconsistent. The consensus in the group was that business owners should contact the DPW directly.

Future Initiatives / New Business

Mr. Mitchell reported that Mr. Nickas, the HDC Treasurer, has indicated he wants to step off the board but will stay on until his replacement is found. Mr. Mitchell encouraged the HDC to help recruit. Tony Passaretti asked how big the HDC should be. Mr. Mitchell said the statute called for five members, but they couldn't have more associates if desired. Mr. Passaretti said he would ask at the Acord Food Pantry Board Meeting. Pertaining to Acord taking storage space at 56-63 Willow St., he said that discussion was ongoing with the developer.

- **Ordering Holiday wreaths:** The HDC was given copies of the proposal from Nunans for (23) 24" holiday wreaths in the amount of \$1,236.

Decision:

Ms. Arvanites made a motion to approve the Nunans quote/2021 proposal for the holiday wreaths. Mr. Nickas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken with "ayes" from the four members present, (4-0).

Future Initiatives / New Business

Ms. Cookson was asked to find out if Nunans offers any services for installing holiday lights.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Nickas to write up a job description and bullet list of his duties as HDC Treasurer. Mr. Smith may know someone interested in the position. Mr. Nickas said he would forward a description and list of duties to the Board.

The next HDC meeting will be on Nov. 3, 2021, at 8 a.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Nickas made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 a.m. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The HDC voted unanimously among those present (4-0) to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted as approved at the 11/3/21 meeting by

*Mary Alice Cookson, Coordinator
Hamilton Development Corporation*

Documents Discussed at Meeting:

- Minutes from Sept. 8, 2021 HDC Meeting, Mary Alice Cookson
- Nunans Florist 2021 Proposal for Holiday Wreaths