

TOWN OF HAMILTON

TOWN MANAGER

Community Forum on future of Gordon Conwell property

The process, goals and reasons for our outreach

By Town Manager Joseph Domelowicz Jr.

(Nov. 8, 2022) – In May of this year, the administration at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary announced their intention to investigate selling all or a portion of their property in Hamilton, to better position themselves to serve their primary goal of providing theological education to students from around the world.

As education has evolved, the Seminary found itself with a student population that was largely deciding to engage them through virtual platforms, with less emphasis on in-person instruction and less need for large student housing complexes.

The Gordon-Conwell site, a 102- acre campus, presents a unique challenge to the Town of Hamilton in that the underlying zoning of the property, if it stops being a Seminary, only allows for single-family housing development. As a result, over the course of several months and several meetings, representatives of the Select Board and the Planning Board and town administration began to meet with market professionals, and representatives from Gordon-Conwell to talk about how best to position the Gordon-Conwell property in a way that would maximize the value of the property for the Seminary and create the least impacts on the Town of Hamilton resources, while returning at least a portion of the property to the tax rolls.

“As a result of those meetings, the Town was able to contract with real estate market and urban planning and design consultants that can help the Town and the Seminary understand what the property’s highest and best uses are, what the current real estate market options are and at the same time develop restrictions that can protect the town’s natural and environmental resources, the desired characteristics of the property and provide real financial benefits to both the Seminary as the property owner and the Town,” explained Town Manager Domelowicz.

Recently, the Town, the Seminary and the consultants convened an initial conversation with property abutters who will be most impacted by the site’s redevelopment. The first community-wide forum on the future of the property will be held on Monday, Nov. 14 at 7 p.m. at the Community House on Bay Road in Hamilton.

“The Town and the Seminary have agreed that there are no pre-conceived ideas about what development or partial development of the site will look like. We are open-minded in our engagement with the consultants,” added Kenneth Barnes the Project Manager for Gordon Conwell Seminary, who is a professor of Business Ethics and is leading the Seminary’s participation in the study with Hamilton.

The goals of the first public meeting are to find out what Hamilton residents, the Gordon Conwell community and the neighbors of the Seminary see as the most important characteristics of the site to preserve and protect and to work with the Consultants to identify marketable uses that can maximize the value of the property for the mutual benefit of the Seminary and the Town of Hamilton.



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