



**TOWN OF NORTH HAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
NORTH HAMPTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**MAY 1, 2019 5:00 PM
NORTH HAMPTON TOWN HAL
*APPROVED MINUTES***

EDC MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Jim Better, Kirsten Larson Schultz, Gary Stevens, Jeff Hillier, Jonathan Pinette, Glenn Martin, Leszek Stachow (in audience), Select Board Rep Kathleen Kilgore, Heritage Commission Rep Nancy Monaghan, Planning Board Rep Phillip E. Wilson

AGENDA

Chairman Jim Better called the May 1, 2019 Economic Development Committee Meeting to order at 5:04 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Better stated that 2 new members of the Committee were present and asked for introductions.

Review of Conventionalization Plan – Jeff Hyland, Ironwood Design Group

Chairman Better said Jeff Hyland, of Ironwood Design Group in Newmarket, NH, was the successful bidder on creating the landscape architecture for the Village District. He said Mr. Hyland would run through the scope of the project and what kind of tasks were ahead in order to bring the project to fruition.

Jeff Hyland, of Ironwood Design Group, said he responded to the RFP and put together the proposal. He said he would first talk about his company and what they proposed to do, go through the scope of work they had developed, and answer any questions. He said he was a Landscape Architect practicing for 24 years, and an Urban Designer and Planner, and said Ironwood Design Group had been in business for about 15 years. He said he would be joined on the project by Jen Martel, also a registered Landscape Architect in NH, Julia Colloby who was currently an intern with their company doing a lot of the graphic work, Donna Jensen who was a copy-editor and writer, and Planner Liz Durfy who would investigate existing North Hampton planning regulations to make sure what they were planning was feasible for current zoning.

Mr. Hyland said the main body of the proposal identifies the project area which runs from Hobbs Road to Cedar Road, primarily in the Route 1 corridor. He said they put together a fairly detailed scope of work, and the first task would be to hold a kick-off meeting to talk about the visioning and planning the Economic Development Committee (EDC) had done and get a better idea of what they would like their Village Corridor to look like. He said the project would run smoother if they listened to people and based their design and planning work on public sentiment, and said community outreach was very important in urban projects.

Mr. Hyland said the first outreach efforts would be a combination Public/EDC meeting, a stake-holder workshop for direct abutters and property owners who have a stake in the outcome of the project, and then develop a draft Master Plan to present that as preliminary back to the EDC and get their feedback. He said after that the Master Plan would be revised based on that feedback and Ironwood would begin to design the visual graphics, show some examples, and then have a Public Meeting where the Revised Master Plan and visual graphics would be presented and get feedback from the community.

Mr. Hyland said that was basically the schedule, and if EDC wanted more public meetings, more outreach, or more collaboration that would be doable, though it might affect their proposed fee. He said this timeline was fairly aggressive, based on the funding set aside by the Town of North Hampton, and said they were accelerating this significantly to be wrapped up by July 1, 2019.

Discussion: Selectwoman Kilgore said she did not think the project needed to be done by July 1st, but needed to be contracted by then and submitted to the Select Board to encumber funds from the Town. Mr. Wilson said they just needed a signature on a contract showing the EDC was committed. Selectwoman Kilgore thought it might be better to present the proposal to the Select Board at a meeting. Chairman Better asked Mr. Hyland if he would be available on May 13th to present a summary to the Select Board, and he said he would be available.

Ms. Schultz asked if they were saying that EDC had decided for sure to move forward with this group. Chairman Better said Ironwood Design Group was the only bidder on the project, and after their presentation to the Select Board they were approved to move forward with the next step. Ms. Monaghan asked Mr. Hyland if the initial stakeholders' meeting would involve residents of the Town. Mr. Hyland said he felt it was important to allow the stakeholders and key property owners to have a separate discussion, as they were critical for the success of the vision.

Mr. Wilson felt it was very important that they operate in the context of public meetings, and said EDC had done quite a lot of surveying in the Town that specified what the Town wanted. Mr. Hyland said part of their existing conditions analysis would be collecting all the data and planning done over the years. Chairman Better said there was a priority of stakeholders and the Select Board would be the next level, then the Planning Board/Zoning Board. He said their Inventory Sub-Committee was working to find who the property owners were, and said they would invite key property owners and operators and then hold a Public Hearing.

Ms. Schultz asked Mr. Hyland to speak to some of the projects they had done with a similar outcome. Mr. Hyland presented the Cocheco Waterfront in Dover, and said it was the largest waterfront redevelopment project in NH in 100 years. He said they were in the process of redesigning and their part was the master

plan, a waterfront park space, and some planning for the internal part of the project. He said there were a lot of stakeholders and a lot of interested parties, as well as downtown property owners with a real interest in how the project evolved over time.

Mr. Hyland next showed a project in Bridgton, ME, and said Bridgton was similar in that it also involved a main corridor with a lot of traffic and pedestrians as it was a tourist attraction with parks, beaches, and naturalized areas. He said their Main Street was the economic engine for their town with a lot of businesses, and involved a lot of public outreach as well as outreach with the Chamber of Commerce. He said the street was about a mile and a half long with mostly commercial and a little residential.

Chairman Better asked what the success rate was in the Bridgton project with getting owners and operators involved, and Mr. Hyland said it was generally good. He said the project was under construction and the town had already seen some reinvestment. Chairman Better asked when he would be able to put ink to paper, and Mr. Hyland said once they had some public outreach as he did not want to start designing a master plan without listening first. Chairman Better said they envisioned being able to show property owners and operators a vision of what the project could look like, and Mr. Hyland said he usually started with comparable images and examples from other locations to get the discussion going. He said sometimes they do a visioning survey online but it was challenging digesting all the information.

Mr. Wilson said he felt the Bridgton example was comparable in that it was a main thoroughfare, and asked Mr. Hyland if he had any experience with NHDOT. Mr. Hyland said working with DOT was the biggest challenge, and said they were currently working on 6 transportation alternative projects in their office. He said they completed the Route 101 project through Bedford, and said Bedford put in an effort early on to develop a kind of master plan before DOT even started developing the reconstruction plan. He said what Bedford wanted was not fully achievable in the context of a major arterial roadway, but because they had prepared the document, DOT had to listen.

Mr. Wilson said North Hampton was dealing with a different issue, because DOT already had a vision for the Route 1 corridor and they needed to go in and say they would like to change it. Mr. Hyland said because DOT has a mandate to follow context-sensitive solutions they are required to listen to communities their roadway runs through. Chairman Better said they would see Mr. Hyland at the May 13th Select Board meeting and the Committee would work on setting the agenda. Mr. Martin asked what Mr. Hyland would recommend for an aggressive but realistic timeframe for North Hampton, and Mr. Hyland said to basically stretch it out to a 5 or 6-month project.

New Members

Chairman Better thanked Mr. Hyland for an excellent presentation, and introduced new members Jeff Hillier and Jonathan Pinette. Mr. Hillier said he moved to North Hampton in 1967 and worked for the Exeter School System for many years. He said he had been retired for 12 years now and was getting more involved in municipal things in the Town. Mr. Pinette said he had been in Town quite a few years and was involved with some property owners as well. He said hopefully he could provide some good feedback and move forward with the development of Route 1.

EDC Vacancy and Appointments

Chairman Better announced that Joe Bernardo officially resigned due to business commitments outside the area and there would be another opening on the Committee. He said he would also be leaving North Hampton at the end of June and officially had one more meeting here. He said hopefully they could do a video conference and he could continue on.

Inventory Sub-Committee Report

Mr. Martin said they had a couple of meetings and Ms. Schultz was doing a summarization consolidation of what they had done as individuals. He said a few of the items they could not find, but they were close to having contacts for some of the bigger groups. He said they were trying to filter through duplications to find what was new and that they needed and would meet again shortly to see what was left. Selectwoman Kilgore said they were pretty much on target for the initial goal of May 20th.

Chairman Better asked what they were finding in terms of property owners who were also operators and people who owned property but did not live here. Mr. Martin said under 10% that live here and own businesses, and Chairman Better said that would make outreach more difficult. Selectwoman Kilgore said they were talking about reaching out to business owners and helping to foster a communication between them and property owners and have them come together to participate.

Chairman Better said the next step would be to coordinate with Mr. Hyland after the Select Board and Planning Board/Zoning Board so that it becomes part of the outreach to property owners then a Public Meeting. He said that would be the point where they would want to have some kind of presentation to owners/operators as to what the vision and get their feedback. Mr. Martin said that did not necessarily address abutters which would go to Town input. He said they needed stakeholders for the Economic Development part of it and to have the Village Center as the Town's vision of it, but they needed the land and the businesses.

Economic Impact of Full Buildout of Lafayette Road – Frank Ferraro

Chairman Better explained that Joe Bernardo had done a review of what taxpayers might experience with a full buildout of Lafayette Road, and said Mr. Frank Ferraro had done more work on it and parts of the original would be changing as they move forward. He said Mr. Ferraro would present to the Committee what he discovered with his review of the tax implications.

Frank Ferraro said he had heard the presentation given to the Select Board by the EDC where their conclusion was that any additional revenue from the buildout of Route 1 would essentially be a loss with additional services that would be required. He said he went through Mr. Bernardo's work, which was essentially a spreadsheet of developed and undeveloped properties and the assessed value based on values prior to the reassessment. He said he noticed that Mr. Bernardo had only taken the Town portion of the tax into consideration and not the School portion, which about doubled his values.

Mr. Ferraro said he used the same list of properties, the same prior assessed value, and same prior tax rates. He said he used the same ratios as Mr. Bernardo assuming undeveloped property could be developed at the same ratio of buildability as the developed properties. He said the undeveloped

properties with no buildings had a tax rate of \$14.86/1,000 for Town and School. He said Mr. Bernardo had 480 acres of improved property with a total assessed value of approximately \$130 Mil and undeveloped property of about 188 acres at approximately \$2 Mil assessed value. He said he took out State-owned property, Town-owned property, and the Coakley Landfill.

Mr. Ferraro said he took the assessed value per acre of developed land of approximately \$270,000 assessed value/acre, and said assuming you could transfer that value to undeveloped properties if they were all built out it would amount to approximately \$51 Mil of new assessed value. He said if you then multiply that by the Town and School tax rate they would get \$756,000/year revenue. He said currently those undeveloped properties were paying about \$30,000/year, so the potential net future revenue would be approximately \$725,000/year. He said this did not include any future revenues that might come from redevelopment, and said using some gross assumptions he came up with \$725,000-\$726,000 increased net revenue to the Town.

Mr. Stevens asked about the cost of services, and Mr. Ferraro said quantifying was difficult because modern buildings would use a lot less services than buildings out there today. Chairman Better asked what the impact would be of a homeowner with a \$500,000 property, and Mr. Ferraro said he did not look at that but revenue would be coming to all taxpayers. Mr. Stevens said adding new inventory would add to the competition. He said if they could not fill the inventory they already had, what if they filled everything and the businesses did not work out. Mr. Ferraro said he was not advocating for full buildout but was just crunching numbers.

Chairman Better said they had been fairly public with the fact that a full buildout of Lafayette Road would not result in significant tax savings to residents, but had an idea what full buildout would mean. He said they now had a different perspective based on new calculations. Mr. Ferraro said if it were based on the new tax rates and new assessments it would be slightly more. Ms. Monaghan asked if Mr. Ferraro had taken the wetlands into account, and he said he did not as he used the same assumptions as Mr. Bernardo that the ratio of buildability was the same in developed as in undeveloped properties.

Ms. Monaghan said the Committee started with a survey in which residents said their number one priority for economic development was to reduce their taxes and Mr. Bernardo basically said that would not happen and now that was changing. She said they needed to get this settled as a foundation of the EDC and felt they needed an expert in this kind of analysis to give them the bottom line and what this will cost. Mr. Ferraro said he agreed but the problem was what were they going to build on the undeveloped property and so the value was unknown. He said to do what she suggested would involve someone looking at every property and determining the amount of buildable land.

Mr. Wilson said the problem was with the underlying assumption that acreage could be built out the same way, and felt it was important to refine the numbers. He said Epping tried to pursue development in 2010, and since they had seen a 30.49% increase in the town portion of the tax rate. He said before they go out to the Town saying there would be a considerable reduction in the tax rate he wanted to be a little more confident about the numbers, and said he did disagree with Mr. Ferraro on the issue of services.

Mr. Ferraro said he did not disagree, but felt the taxes in Epping would probably have been higher without the development. He said the results showed there was money to be had, and said maybe the cost of

services could be researched, studied, and calculated. Ms. Monaghan said she was not advocating thousands of dollars for surveys, but wanted to make sure the assumptions were on the right track.

Mr. Hyland said tack one in their process would be to collect existing conditions information: NHDOT, right-of-way, GIS and LIDAR data, and take aerial photographs. He said that would eventually lead to setbacks, property lines, locations of wetlands, and topography which would all be assessed. Chairman Better said residents committed to EDC that they wanted to see some revenue relief on their tax rate or to slow its growth. He said when they proceed with Ironwood Design as developed, and get a picture of what the Village Center would look like, they could see those numbers by way of impact on the tax rate and go forward from there.

Mr. Hyland said a lot of their projects looked at economic impact as a second step. He said once you determine the buildable area and size of buildings, then determine services needed, you can start to come up with pretty solid numbers. Mr. Martin asked if it took into account commercial as well as residential. Mr. Hyland said as part of the visioning exercise they would listen to what people want to see in their community. He said it may include things not allowed with current zoning, but that would be addressed at the very end to assess the zoning and make recommendations that work with the vision.

Chairman Better said they had a mechanism in place with 2 representatives from EDC and 3 representatives from the Planning Board charged with working together on zoning issues. He said Rick Stanton agreed to stay on in that capacity. Selectwoman Kilgore asked how Mr. Stanton was in while no longer an EDC member. Chairman Better said he volunteered to continue since they lost Joe Bernardo. Selectwoman Kilgore asked about the 2 new members, and Mr. Pinette said he would be happy with Mr. Stanton continuing as he would be an asset.

Chairman Better asked if it would then become a procedural issue. Ms. Monaghan said she did not think it would, as Mr. Stanton was on the EDC for the last year and a half and understood the issues. Ms. Schultz questioned allowing non-EDC members to serve on their sub-committees, and Mr. Wilson said anything that comes through this Board is a recommendation to appoint someone to their sub-committee. Ms. Monaghan said if this was so controversial, the Planning Board could appoint the second member.

Mr. Martin said he understood that 2 members of this board would be representatives, and Ms. Schultz said it should be discussed and not presented as if it were already decided. Ms. Monaghan stated that Mr. Stanton was already voted on as a member of the sub-committee. Selectwoman Kilgore said that he then resigned from EDC. Chairman Better said his expertise and value to that position were very important to the ongoing process.

Motion: To allow Rick Stanton, as a non-EDC member, to serve on the Sub-Committee to the Planning Board for the development of zoning and other necessary regulations.

Motioned: Chairman Better

Seconded: Mr. Wilson

Discussion: Mr. Martin asked how Mr. Stanton would be representing EDC if he was not attending these meetings. Mr. Wilson one of the goals of that Sub-Committee would be to look at the vision they came up with and propose that to the Planning Board to incorporate in the Master Plan for the whole Town,

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which Mr. Stanton understood very well. He said Mr. Stanton served as Chairman of the Zoning Board and knew the zoning ordinances and regulations of the Town, which was a valuable asset that he did not think anyone else on the EDC could bring.

Chairman Better said he understood that this was expedient and not totally within the process, but that the expertise Mr. Stanton brought to the table was valuable in order to keep the momentum of this process going on what they have built so far. Mr. Hillier asked if there were one or two sub-committees, and Chairman Better said the EDC and the Planning Board each have a Sub-Committee to work on zoning issues.

Vote: Motion approved 5-3, with 2 abstentions

Chairman Better said in prior discussions they were in favor of this, and in order to move the Committee along with its mission and agenda, he felt this was an important exception that had to be made. Mr. Stachow said he abstained because he was not familiar with the issue.

Approval of the Minutes of the April 3, 2019 EDC Meeting

Motion: To approve the Minutes of the April 3, 2019 Economic Development Committee Meeting.

Motioned: Mr. Wilson

Seconded: Selectwoman Kilgore

Vote: Motion approved 7-0, with 2 abstentions

Closing Comments

Chairman Better said they would put off the discussion of the Fish Bone Chart until the next regular EDC meeting.

Next Meeting: The next regular Economic Development Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 1, 2019 at 5:00 pm.

Adjournment

Chairman Better adjourned the meeting at 6:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary