



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

3                                   **FEBRUARY 5, 2020     5:00 PM**

4                                   **NORTH HAMPTON TOWN HALL**

5                                   ***DRAFT MINUTES***  
6

7 EDC MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Richard Luff, Vice-Chair Jeff Hillier, Heritage Commission Rep Nancy  
8 Monaghan, David Ciccalone, Gary Stevens, Jonathan Pinette, Renee Locke, Glenn Martin, Leszek Stachow,  
9 Select Board Rep Kathleen Kilgore, Planning Board Rep Phillip E. Wilson

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11 ALSO PRESENT: Interim Town Administrator Michael Tully  
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13                                   **AGENDA**  
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15 Chairman Richard Luff welcomed everyone to the February 5, 2020 Economic Development Committee  
16 Meeting and called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.  
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18 **IRONWOOD PRESENTATION OF DRAFT VILLAGE CENTER MASTER PLAN**  
19

20 **Recap of Public Meetings & Review Project Objectives**  
21

22 Jeff Hyland of Ironwood Design said he would present a recap of where they have been, review the  
23 assessment work done by Liz Durfee on the Town's existing zoning, provide a cause-and-effect view of the  
24 corridor, look at some of the development there, discuss potential regulatory changes, and look at some  
25 development concepts. He said he will also discuss the relationship of private property and the corridor  
26 and public and State property.  
27

28 **Assessment of Existing Zoning in Corridor**  
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30 Ms. Liz Durfee said she provided a memo on potential zoning and land-use recommendations for the  
31 Village District that the Town may wish to consider. She said she reviewed the zoning ordinances and  
32 found a disconnect between the purpose descriptions for each district and the dimensional standards,  
33 and also a disconnect between the descriptions of the districts and what is on the ground now. She said  
34 the current minimum lot size of 2 acres is not compatible with the purpose of the IBR district to establish  
35 compact areas for businesses, light industrial, certain residential uses, etc. She said the district was

36 originally intended to develop campus-like patterns and the R-1 high density district was intended to be  
37 on sewer and said it might be time to revisit the purposes and underlying goals for each of the districts to  
38 make sure they are supporting the kind of development the Town wants to see in that area.

39  
40 Ms. Durfee said some zoning issues could be a barrier to redevelopment, business viability, and fostering  
41 a vibrant walkable community, and recommended that the Town review purpose statements and goals  
42 for each district, revisit and/or update the Town Master Plan, and revise dimensional standards to reflect  
43 the desire for density. She said the Town Master Plan should be the document driving all their zoning and  
44 ordinance changes. She suggested a small formatting change be made to the list of permitted uses to  
45 make it easier for anyone wanting to invest in the community to see what is and is not allowed in each  
46 district. She said the types of permitted uses allowed in the IBR District may not be compatible with their  
47 vision for the Village District.

48  
49 Ms. Durfee said there is a high prevalence of outdoor storage and vehicle service facility in the district  
50 which are inherently auto-oriented and detract from the aesthetics and appearance of the area. She said  
51 multi-family dwellings will increase density and potentially support villages in this commercial corridor,  
52 currently permitted through the Special Exception process, which is an extra hurdle for a developer. She  
53 said they may also want to promote mixed-use buildings, but residential and commercial are currently  
54 not permitted on the same lot.

55  
56 Ms. Durfee said industrial uses support the tax base and provide high-quality jobs but may not be best  
57 use on their prime commercial corridor, and recommended identifying and zoning the best area in Town  
58 for industrial. She said one way to incorporate these changes is to create an Overlay District so they have  
59 the flexibility to shape permitted uses for a smaller area. She said dimensional standards include minimum  
60 lot sizes, setbacks, and density standards, and said the lot and yard requirements were complicated. She  
61 said the standards in the ordinance do not meet and reflect what is existing, and they may need to modify  
62 lot size and setbacks in the Village District to be conducive to dense development and find an appropriate  
63 setback that can be relatively standard across all lots.

64  
65 Ms. Durfee said the maximum height allowed in the Town is 35 feet. She said the 50-ft setbacks along  
66 Route 1 necessitate developers/property owners to put parking in front, and recommended potentially  
67 offering a height bonus in exchange for reduced impervious coverage, and to consider reducing the lot  
68 size to one-half or one acre. She said dimensional standards for signs in the Sign Ordinance could be  
69 problematic for multi-tenant buildings, and suggested allowing signs for all businesses instead of having  
70 a maximum size cap. She said the Site Plan Review Process is a potential deterrent, particularly for small  
71 businesses, and the Town can consider an expedited review process. She said the Site Plan Review  
72 contains provisions for parking, landscaping, and outdoor storage, and said they can consider requiring  
73 that parking be on the side or in back of a building and consider shared lots.

74  
75 Ms. Durfee said some landscaping standards for businesses are not being implemented on Route 1. She  
76 said outdoor storage can be limited or prohibited from front setbacks to improve visual quality of the  
77 corridor. She said she looked at the Town Municipal Master Plan and said North Hampton should retain  
78 its rural New England Seacoast character and heritage which should guide all zoning changes, and said it  
79 is important to go back and re-evaluate the current Master Plan on whether to update to adapt zoning to  
80 goals. She said North Hampton should develop the district in a manner encouraging locally-owned

81 businesses, strengthen the Town methods for building a sense of community, continue restricting  
82 commercial development to the Route 1 corridor, and strengthen the municipal complex as a Town  
83 Center.

84  
85 Questions: Chairman Luff asked for suggestions on where to locate an Overlay District. Ms. Durfee said  
86 they would not have to limit it to the Village District, and it could be a smaller district where they want to  
87 concentrate and it could extend into a different district. Chairman Luff asked about R-1 high density being  
88 originally intended to be on sewer, and Ms. Durfee said that is in the zoning ordinance for that area and  
89 may need to be updated. Mr. Stachow asked how North Hampton compares with other communities in  
90 terms of dissonance between what is written and what is practiced. Ms. Durfee said it varies a lot as zoning  
91 ordinances for other communities each have a different purpose.

92  
93 **Relationship of Corridor to Private Property and Town**

94  
95 Mr. Jeff Hyland said they collected a lot of information on this project and pulling that all together is part  
96 of the Master Plan, and said they also looked at development trends. He said he hoped that at the end of  
97 this they will have a great marketing tool to use to highlight opportunities in their community. He said  
98 they needed to identify private development potential and ways to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty  
99 from a development standpoint, and convince developers with a clear and concise vision so they will be  
100 more likely to invest in the community through improvements, redevelopment, or new development.

101  
102 Mr. Hyland said he hoped they would come out of this project with a nice concept for their Route 1  
103 corridor that will position them for grants from NH DOT and capitalize on transportation alternative funds,  
104 which is a primary way to get pedestrian improvements in a DOT corridor. He said to safeguard your  
105 corridor it is important to document what you want for corridor requirements. He said first they looked  
106 at existing conditions along the corridor.

107  
108 Mr. Hyland presented a graphic showing the value of properties from a developmental standpoint, as  
109 having low, moderate or high value for development based on the dimensional standards discussed  
110 earlier. He said many of the low value properties are under 2 acres and some have no road frontage. The  
111 second graphic showed what the current uses are and their value to the community, with the area of  
112 empty storefronts at low value, and he said the strip mall format is harder and harder to make financially  
113 viable. He said there is also a closed-down gas station on Route 1 of very low value, and an empty lot with  
114 boarded-up buildings on a corner lot of low value, which is basically the front door to their community.  
115 He said there are some car dealers and service stations which might have some value to the community,  
116 but from a visual aesthetic do not have a lot of value in your Village District.

117  
118 Mr. Stachow asked why the gas station across the road was low value when it was a thriving business, and  
119 Mr. Hyland said gas stations are vehicularly oriented, and from a Village District standpoint you want  
120 people to come and stay. He said some of the other thriving businesses are basically stuck on non-  
121 conforming lots and cannot invest in their properties. Vice-Chair Hillier asked if it was possible for the  
122 businesses to go up a story, and Mr. Hyland said they could go to 35 feet but could not mix the use. Mr.  
123 Pinette asked about sewer and what type of businesses might be brought in, and Mr. Hyland said that was  
124 outside the scope of this project.

125

126 Mr. Hyland said this graphic shows to Hobbs Road: areas for development, arrangements of structures  
127 and infrastructure, consider vehicular circulation and bicycle and pedestrian circulation, explore the  
128 corridor and streetscape enhancements/crosswalks/islands, identify possible community nodes, and  
129 consider place-making elements. He showed other developments happening in the area with mixed use,  
130 and said residents are an important part of any kind of mix to make something that is attractive and meets  
131 the objective of the Town.

132

133 **Review Corridor Design Concepts and demonstrate Potential Opportunities**

134

135 Mr. Hyland said they started off looking at three (3) different locations in the corridor and how they might  
136 materialize. He said the concepts assume some of the zoning regulations have changed because they want  
137 mixed use, residential properties, greater density, and an exciting Town Center Village District currently  
138 not allowed by regulations.

139

140 Mr. Hyland said in **Development Area A** (LL Bean, Shaws) they looked at blocks of use with proposed  
141 buildings shown in red. The building in the upper right is the approximate size of a full-size LL Bean retail  
142 store, not an outlet. He said there is also a multi-use path running parallel to the roadway for bicycles and  
143 pedestrians. The buildings on the right to the north are 2 residential buildings, with a conservation area  
144 behind and connection to the multi-use path which could connect to the East Coast Greenway in the  
145 future. He said they should start connecting recreational amenities to residential housing and businesses.  
146 He said the small building in the front could be a restaurant, and to the left where Staples was could be  
147 start-up retail with office space on the second floor in the back.

148

149 Mr. Hyland said **Development Area B** encompasses the now closed Philbrick's building as well as the Irving  
150 Station which only utilizes part of the lot. He said there are wetlands to the north and 2 very small lots on  
151 Atlantic Avenue, both non-conforming. He said this concept steps over the project boundary a little  
152 because of the lot. He said this is a corner lot and is important from an Urban Design standpoint, and said  
153 something needs to happen in this area. He said they are looking at filling in where existing development  
154 is, and on Route 1 could be a free-standing building, with a mixed-use building across Atlantic that  
155 dovetails with the transition to residential. He said the building in back of the lot is townhomes.

156

157 Mr. Hyland said on Route 1 on that corner they need something that creates energy that stimulates the  
158 Village District. He said the area behind Philbrick's is excessive and they could do a small infill building  
159 there that fits with the architectural style. Mr. Stevens said he was trying to add a wing to the south side  
160 of his shopping center and was told he would not have enough room for septic. He said he can reduce the  
161 leach field but the water table is 2 feet below and also wetlands. Mr. Hyland said that is one of the  
162 constraints, but said he does have traffic volume, a great location, and a great community. He said the  
163 concept is good but the intersection needs more energy and stature and they need to start connecting to  
164 current resources coming in the near future.

165

166 Mr. Hyland said **Development Area C** is on the opposite corner (Mobil Gas Station) and there are currently  
167 5 lots for sale on the market and on a corner lot. He said the property is limited by significant wetlands in  
168 the upper part, on the right, and on the left, and there are a lot of constraints to its use. He said for the  
169 upper part perhaps single-family homes surrounded by wetlands, with a more gravelly soil further down  
170 on the site to support more housing. He said a fair amount of green space is left for septic and Stormwater

171 treatment, and said on roadway frontage buildings with more structure, possible a boutique hotel  
172 because of the high visibility. He said other building blocks could be retail and a daycare center with small  
173 retail.

174  
175 Mr. Hyland said they can make incremental changes by altering the way they look at development, focus  
176 on form to ensure harmony with community core values, encourage greater economic opportunities  
177 through flexibility, higher density and diversity of use. He said they can look at ways to change a building  
178 front while preserving existing uses or make zoning changes to allow greater investment. He said private  
179 investment, public infrastructure, and public amenities help tie everything together to create place-  
180 making and identity for your community.

181  
182 Mr. Hyland said with corridor planning on New Hampshire DOT Route 1, the State has jurisdiction but they  
183 are required to listen to communities and said it is important for North Hampton to get their vision out  
184 there. He showed a sketch with a 15-ft landscape area, followed by a 10-ft multi-use path, a 6-ft wide  
185 vegetated edge, two 11-ft travel ways, then a 20-ft wide curbed media, and again an 11-ft travel way,  
186 then a 6-ft grass strip and a 5-ft sidewalk, which all fits out here. He said at the corner of Atlantic Avenue  
187 and Route 1 there is less opportunity but they could still get a 6-ft wide vegetated median, with small  
188 trees and possible lighting, a 10-ft multi-use path on the left side and a 5-ft path on the left. He said there  
189 is a lot of parking there, approximately 50 feet of pavement between parked cars and the roadway.

190  
191 Mr. Hyland said at the corner of Hobbs Road a roundabout might be a good idea, as the State is proposing  
192 to realign Hobbs Road and sever that connection, though there is a fairly large wetland and roads come  
193 in at unusual angles. He said a roundabout is a good idea because it helps manage that intersection better,  
194 is viable so Hobbs Road does not have to be eliminated, and creates a gateway element to their Downtown  
195 area. He said for signage there should be one large destination sign then smaller-scale pedestrian-oriented  
196 signage and business and directional signs. He said the Rail Trail as is a great amenity for the Town; towns  
197 compete for business and foot traffic and the challenge is to transform an area already existing into a  
198 viable and vibrant part of the community.

199  
200  
201 Questions: Vice-Chair Hillier said some of the suggestions will take someone with big bucks. Mr. Hyland  
202 said they are not making money having vacant storefronts, and said there can be some impediments but  
203 nothing he has shown tonight is not something that has really been done elsewhere. Chairman Luff said  
204 he is very encouraged by what he has seen, the zoning issues they are facing, and over time to allow a  
205 framework for more creativity and address issues with property shortcomings.

206  
207 Mr. Wilson said he read in the Portland, ME newspaper that LL Bean is closing a call center and  
208 consolidating operations, and said a full LL Bean store will not happen. Mr. Martin asked if mixed-use to  
209 get the density is necessary for success. Mr. Hyland said it was not a necessity but provides a broader  
210 financial model, and said the majority of people want a diverse experience. Ms. Monaghan asked about  
211 the next step, and Mr. Hyland said the next step is to take this, refine it more, and provide additional  
212 visuals. He said it is primarily for marketing purposes and to get the word out so people can better  
213 understand what is being envisioned.

214  
215 **Any other Item that May Legally come before the Committee**

Economic Development Committee Meeting  
February 5, 2020

216

217 Kirsten Larsen-Shultz of Post Road said she was speaking as a resident, and thanked everyone for their  
218 efforts. She suggested the Committee look into the Economic Revitalization Zone Tax Credit (ERZ) and said  
219 it is easily done through State offices and provides business tax credits.

220

221 **Next Meeting:** The next regular Economic Development Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday,  
222 March 4, 2020 at 5:00 pm.

223

224 **Adjournment**

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226

227 Respectfully submitted,

228 Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary

DRAFT