



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

FEBRUARY 3, 2021 5:00 PM

**NORTH HAMPTON TOWN HALL
ZOOM MEETING**

Approved April 7, 2021

EDC MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Richard Luff, Vice-Chair/Planning Board Rep Phil Wilson, Heritage Commission Rep Nancy Monaghan, Glenn Martin, -Business Associate Rep Renee Locke, Jeff Hillier, David Ciccalone

EXCUSED: Select Board Rep Larry Miller, Gary Stevens, Jonathan Pinette, Leszek Stachow

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Michael Tully

AGENDA

Chairman Richard Luff welcomed everyone to the North Hampton Economic Development Committee Meeting of February 3, 2021 and called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

IRONWOOD REVIEW OF FINAL MASTER PLAN DOCUMENT AND DELIVERABLES – Jeff Hyland

Jeff Hyland said he focused on three different goals: (1) to provide a Village District Master Plan; (2) provide a comprehensive overview of the corridor geared toward potential future funding opportunities and working with NH DOT; (3) encourage more investment in the Village District from private property owners and developers. The Economic Development Vision Statement includes elements to achieve, project goals, and objectives to develop a comprehensive Village District Master Plan, that reflects desires of residents and stakeholders, to define a clear Village District identity, promote as a destination, provide opportunities for diverse businesses, and motivate property owners and developers to invest in high quality development.

An existing-conditions analysis of the project area talks about the corridor, architecture, and current land uses in the district; opportunities analysis with potential locations for gateways; heart of the district has the most potential for investment and enhancement. From a pedestrian standpoint the Village District area is quite walkable from the intersection of Atlantic Avenue and Lafayette Road. Three public outreach

meetings were held: one with property owners, one with business owners/operators, and the last with residents and property owners. Mr. Hiller asked what the significant changes are to this over the past 2 months, and Mr. Hyland said no significant changes, just putting everything together in one comprehensive document.

Mr. Hyland said they reviewed current zoning and what might be some appropriate changes in the Zoning Ordinance to help facilitate the changes being suggested, including a quick summary of current zoning recommendations. The Route 1 Corridor is under the jurisdiction of NH DOT, and there is private property within the Village District; NH DOT is obligated to follow context-sensitive solutions in proposing any changes and the Town of North Hampton has a lot of sway. Need to clearly define what people would like to see and how the corridor should evolve over time, and this document is a valuable part of grant funding.

Mr. Hyland said the building blocks of the corridor related to improvements such as walkability with sidewalks, street treatments and enhancements, creating a raised median with possible street lighting and trees, reduce stormwater, and traffic calming to help define an identity for the Village District. Worthwhile to have a discussion with NH DOT about intersection improvements and a potential roundabout at Route 1/Hobbs Road.

Mr. Hyland reviewed development concepts which defined existing parcels of land in the corridor today and rated which were most advantageous and valuable for development; three potential locations were identified for development. Vice-Chair Wilson asked if Mr. Hyland reviewed the architectural standards listed for North Hampton; Mr. Hyland said he had and said it is a question of whether you want a traditional zoning approach where you have architectural guidelines which could be more fine-tuned. Mr. Wilson said you are really suggesting form-based zoning. Mr. Hyland said it is something they might want to explore as it defines what you want to see as an end-product with a more predictable outcome.

Mr. Hyland reviewed development Concepts A, B, and C in more detail, and said Concept C is the largest with the most potential, with some wetlands in the back corner needing more study. A signature architecture building on the corner of Atlantic and Route 1 will create prominence and identity of the Village District; can provide density with a sizeable open space component in a high-value area.

Mr. Hyland said next steps are to build on the zoning analysis conducted through the Village District Master Plan, perform a development analysis including a TIF District evaluation, provide opportunities in the Village District to regional developers, use the Village District Master Plan to start a discussion with NH DOT and Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC), and consider all available funding sources; may host a working group on preferred architectural styles for the Village District which could evolve into a technical review committee which would be helpful to the Planning Board.

Questions: Ms. Monaghan said she is very concerned that there is not a word in this report, or throughout the months of preparation, about the Town Survey upon which the Village Center was conceived; the results of the Survey are very different from what is being proposing here. Mr. Hyland said some of the feedback through this effort did vary; Ms. Monaghan said what is provided here is pretty much a roadmap for dense development on Route 1 which is not what residents want.

Mr. Wilson said he agrees with Ms. Monaghan's assessment of the situation though his concern is different. He said the charge of Ironwood was to create a plan for an organic development of North Hampton that retains the characteristics of North Hampton from consistent Town surveys. He felt that instead Mr. Hyland has taken his vision of what contemporary quasi-urban development is and imposed that on the plan for North Hampton; he said he was disappointed and felt the analysis and study done by Ironwood was flawed in many ways.

Ms. Monaghan said there are some really good things in the study like pedestrian walkways, changing lights and access paths that do reflect what residents want, but dense residential development is not. Mr. Wilson added that the plan for the beautification of the Route 1 Corridor were excellent. Mr. Hillier said he essentially agrees and feels the plan should have gone further and looked at the value of dreaming what could be. He thanked Mr. Hyland for his tremendous amount of work and for helping to get a vision of the future.

Mr. Martin said he felt Mr. Hyland presented several valid points of what is needed to have actual Economic Development go on, and said it is not all about what everyone wishes they can have. He said residents want to maintain the rural character of North Hampton, but Route 1 no longer has rural character. Mixed-use allows us to move forward with obtaining more housing, with maybe 20 apartments scattered throughout all the zoning. He said the biggest thing he is taking out of the Ironwood report is if we want any kind of economic development, we need to go forward with a mixed-use concept on parcels and changing our Zoning Ordinances.

Mr. Wilson said his concern about that is that developers said they cannot afford to put affordable housing in mixed use and meet profit margins, and affordable housing requirements need to be balanced. Mr. Ciccalone said adding affordable housing will then alter the Town's overall proportion; it is only stipulated on new developments and they can work with the Planning Board Sub-Committee. He said the overall density displayed in the presentation is greater than what was discussed by the EDC and the community, and he felt it was not there from an infrastructure standpoint though it may be more feasible on a smaller scale.

Chairman Luff said one of the major deliverables they needed out of this was a picture that would be easily identified by anyone in this town that created a vision for North Hampton. He said the picture should be pulled back, businesses identified, and show what the potential could be on both sides of Route 1 looking south. He said as far as scale, they did not ask Ironwood to specifically provide detail on the number of units but asked that a picture be created based on desires, etc., that can be economically feasible for enticing property owners to take off on this type of development.

Chairman Luff said it is still in the purview of everyone in the Town, the Planning Board, Select Board, and residents to fine tune that. It should be a clear picture of the changes like parking in rear of buildings, walkability, open green space along Route 1, and corridor entry way changes which has been done. He said this picture is a start and the nuances need to be figured out. He said they need to get together quickly to decide what they are going to do and where they are going with this. He said there is a lot of value here, but they have to balance and make compromises.

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Ms. Monaghan said she agreed that nothing is insurmountable, but that they need to decide whether they will do what residents want or not. She said the closer they get to what they want, the more successful this will be. Mr. Hillier said the responsibility of the EDC is to somehow get this to the Select Board and let them decide the logistics and mechanics of where it goes from here. Chairman Luff felt they had not yet reached a consensus as a Committee which they feel they can stand by. Mr. Hiller said he was not sure they needed a consensus as the world has changed a lot in the last 2 years.

Mr. Wilson said they do not have to come to a consensus about the whole report, just use the work Ironwood provided on how to characterize a Village Center by beautifying Route 1. He said the suggestions are excellent and they should pursue work with DOT, and RPC work should start immediately as a way to start filling empty storefronts and make the place more attractive to businesses of all kinds. He said any changes to the Zoning Ordinance will start with the Planning Board. (Legislative Policy Committee for Land Use Planning) and make recommendations to the legislative body to decide.

Mr. Hyland said in closing that it is important for EDC to work out the details, and said it is very difficult using private property to come up with viable solutions. He said his presentation shows renditions and possible scenarios and are not set in stone. He said he had to make realistic development scenarios, and these are not meant to be final products. He said the path to do improvements in the corridor is relatively easy, and said he also tried to strike a balance between financial viability and economic development.

ANY OTHER ITEM THAT MAY LEGALLY COME BEFORE THE COMMITTEE – PERIOD OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Next Meeting: The next Economic Development Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 5:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Luff adjourned the meeting at 6:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary