



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

AUGUST 07, 2019 5:00 PM

NORTH HAMPTON TOWN HALL

Approved September 4, 2019

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

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Bryan Kaenrath

AGENDA

Chairman Richard Luff called the August 7, 2019 Economic Development Committee Meeting to order at 5:04 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

IRONWOOD PROJECT PRESENTATION – Jeff Hyland

Mr. Jeff Hyland, of Ironwood Design Group, said his team visited the project area and did an initial opportunities and constraints analysis of the Village District, considering the classic New England landscape they all wanted to preserve. He said based on his reading of the Town's Master Plan it was clear that North Hampton wanted to retain the residential/agricultural landscape balanced with commercial.

Mr. Hyland said along the Route 1 corridor there were commercial enterprises that looked residential in style and properties with metal structures without a lot of curb appeal. At the major intersection of Atlantic Avenue and Lafayette Road was an Irving Gas Station and a mall on the left with empty storefronts. On the other side was a State liquor Store and an empty Mobile Gas Station along with some undeveloped land. After that there was a mix of used-car dealerships, service stations, an office building, and more metal structures, followed by a strip mall with a variety of commercial uses. Moving east on Atlantic Avenue there was a Rite Aid on the left, a residence on the right, and a municipal complex with the Rail Trail to the right.

Mr. Hyland showed an aerial view of the Village District project area and said the multi-use path, part of the East Coast Greenway, had the potential for bringing people and money to the community. He said at

the top was the focus area where most of the redevelopment would potentially occur. He said there was a mix of building types, building architectures, and building placement with a lot of low-value metal buildings, some relatively old structures, and also some attractive buildings in the corridor. He said they needed a way to identify the Village District and needed some continuity in the District to achieve some of their goals.

Mr. Hyland said the red dashed line on the map represented an opportunity to promote more pedestrian activity, possibly extending bicycle use to coincide with the East Coast Greenway. He said the area was very vehicle-centric with no sidewalks and to create a village character they would need sidewalks, gathering spaces, and green spaces in combination with commercial use. He said they needed something to attract people to the Village District area, and said it was becoming popular to create destination shopping experiences.

Mr. Hyland said the area is part of the DOT Corridor Study, updated in 2011 with elements and changes being proposed. He said DOT proposed to eliminate the Hobbs Road intersection with Lafayette and move it farther to the north. He said it was important for the community to get their desires down on paper in writing, so when DOT comes to make improvements they have a planning initiative showing what the desires of the community are. He stated that NH DOT follows a context-sensitive solution process which means they are somewhat mandated to listen to a community.

Mr. Hyland said NH DOT would be cleaning up the intersection of Atlantic Avenue and Lafayette Road adding sidewalks on both sides. He said the map showed the sidewalks right up to the curb, but he usually promoted using an 8-foot wide strip of grass for a better walking situation for pedestrians. Selectwoman Kilgore asked if they were proposing crosswalks, and Mr. Hyland said they were proposing four (4).

Mr. Hyland said at the Home Depot intersection DOT was proposing to dead-end the street coming in at an acute angle to Lafayette and to carry a road through by the Post Office. Mr. Stachow said in an earlier discussion, they had talked about connecting both sides of the road so there was not a barrier, and it appeared the barrier was retained in the DOT's concept. Mr. Hyland said DOT was concerned with volume in the corridor and getting traffic through as quickly as possible with the least amount of backup at the signals, rather than aesthetics or promoting pedestrian crossings, and were widening the road as well. He said the changes were not set in stone.

Mr. Wilson said he recalled that the plan was to widen Route 1 to 5 lanes from Hampton to north of Atlantic Avenue and also increase the speed limit, which was antithetical to what the Town was trying to do and reduced the likelihood of someone stopping in North Hampton. Mr. Stachow said he had observed there is often a lot of backup at the Hobbs Road intersection from people trying to get across that road to move toward Portsmouth, and felt that minimizing that would be highly desirable for safety.

Mr. Hyland said they were going to try to work some improvements to the DOT recommendations into the Village District project, and try to find some common ground with the Town's goals and objectives in trying to create a more human scale commercial development. He said they might look at different types of intersections like a roundabout, which would slow down traffic speeds entering the Village District, and also create signature element with an attractive traffic management feature. He said there may be some tweaks to the planning and zoning that comes out of the process to achieve their end goal.

Mr. Hyland said the objective in the Town's Master Plan to continue commercial development along the Route 1 Corridor and strengthen the municipal complex as a Town Center was a great idea. He said the relationship between their Town Center and their Commercial Zone should start to blend together. He said as they move forward into the Master Planning process they would be looking at trying to balance existing buildings, infill potential and redevelopment.

Mr. Hyland said they would be working with property owners to try to find opportunities to enhance or redevelop. He talked about infill development mixing building styles and architectures and potentially looking at mixed uses. He said the next step would be gathering community sentiments and said he had sent out a public participation plan with possible next steps and dates. He said tonight was basically the kickoff meeting, and he stressed the importance of getting feedback from the different property owners on what they see as limiting factors, challenges, and hurdles, and to make them aware of this project.

Mr. Hyland said he was proposing the Key Stakeholders' Meeting as the first initiative after tonight, and six days later holding a Visioning Workshop for the general public. He said he would then reconvene with the Economic Development Committee for discussion, look for any consistency between comments heard, and would then have a consensus on how to proceed. He said at that point they would start the development of preliminary concepts for the corridor to be presented sometime in December, get the Committee's comments, and revise the Master Plan with illustrations by end of the year. He said based on their regular meetings on the first Wednesday of every month they could hold public engagement on Thursday and Friday afternoons. He said he had provided a large window for the invitations, and Chairman Luff said Mr. Martin was working on the inventory.

Mr. Hyland said initially they needed every property in the Village District identified and probably even the businesses in each property or just key businesses. Ms. Monaghan asked about out-of-town businesses, and Mr. Martin said only 10% of owners lived in North Hampton and said there was also a Business Associate part of it. Mr. Hyland said it was an important step to get property owners involved and they could also be advocates for the Town along the way.

Chairman Luff opened the discussion for questions. Mr. Hyland said any feedback Committee members could provide for tonight would be appreciated. Mr. Stevens said the key focus should be the stakeholders first and then they could refine the area a little bit more. Ms. Monaghan asked Mr. Hyland if he had reviewed the Town Survey done by this Committee showing what the citizens want, and said that was really the foundation of what they were trying to do here. Mr. Hyland said he had that information.

Colleen Lake of Stratham said their community went through this a few years ago and were now redoing their Master Plan. She said they had found it helpful to go out and look for grant money, and they asked for \$25,000/year in their budget and they found 20% matching money for \$100,000 over 4 years. She said getting money in the budget in small pieces was really helpful. She stated that Mr. Hyland did a beautiful development in their Town Center and in Greenland, and said they could not be in better hands.

Mr. Stachow said they had talked about trying to give the Village District a heart, and one way to do that would be to have more of an internal road. He said in the area to the south, one of their thoughts was to have a road to link that area with the next plaza so people would not have to cross Lafayette Road. Mr.

Hyland said secondary circulation was a great idea which would help businesses, get people where they need to go faster, and pull vehicles off of Route 1.

Mr. Hyland said for Stratham they did a Master Plan for the Gateway District that included secondary and tertiary roads as part of the Commercial Business District. He said they have also been able to use that Master Plan as a leveraging tool to get the businesses to do some of the infrastructure work. He said for grants, the key is having a planning vision down on paper, and said there was a NH DOT Transportation Alternatives Fund for general enhancements to roadway infrastructure. He said usually the Town made the application for the grants, along with key letters of support, spearheaded by the Town Manager.

Ms. Lake said she was the Chairman of the Town Center Revitalization Committee in Stratham, and said the committee is usually responsible for pulling the group together to do it, then it goes to the town, then to zoning and to planning and Selectmen who all need to sign off on it. She said a committee could apply for a lighting grant or a construction grant, and recommended a sub-committee should be formed to go through all the steps. She said it was a long process to get all the signoffs and eventually had to be voted in by the citizens.

Ms. Locke asked Ms. Lake what she thought was the most effective thing their committee did to get the stakeholders to a meeting. Ms. Lake said they had to work to get landowners to show up, meet with abutters, town businesses, and Conservation and had meetings every week. She said it is a wonderful thing to bring to your community but involves a lot of hard work. She said you have to start with a plan, fix the plan, and adjust the plan along the way.

Mr. Stachow asked why the list of Committee members was not complete. He said he felt offended, and not only was he not on the list but did not even get notification of the July 10th meeting or an agenda. It appeared the list of names was taken from the most recent minutes.

Mr. Hyland asked the Committee how they felt about the public outreach plan, and asked if finishing by January 8, 2020 was agreeable. Chairman Luff said the Committee probably needed to sit down and have time to discuss this, and felt the September 20th date might be a bit ambitious to notify all the parties on the property list. Selectwoman Kilgore asked why November was not listed on the schedule and Mr. Hyland said the period where they were developing the draft Master Plan needed a fairly large amount of time. He said after the October 2nd meeting they hoped to have the green light to move forward.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

Mr. Stachow said he wanted to make an observation that the minutes from the June 5th and July 10th meetings were wonderful and hoped they would continue in this order. He said whoever is doing them is doing an excellent job. Mr. Pinette agreed, and said Patricia Denmark was doing a very good job.

Approval of the EDC Meeting Minutes of June 5, 2019

Motion: To approve the EDC Meeting Minutes of June 5, 2019.

Motioned: Mr. Pinette

Seconded: Mr. Stachow

Vote: Motion approved by a vote of 11-0

Approval of the EDC Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2019

Corrections/changes: Chairman Luff made a correction to line 134, second line of the second paragraph on page 4, and the sentence was ended after “how to staff these businesses.” Mr. Martin questioned the last sentence on line 169, and Mr. Wilson reworded it to: “the cost of living was even an issue for employees.”

Motion: To approve the EDC Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2019 as amended above.

Motioned: Mr. Wilson

Seconded: Mr. Martin

Vote: Motion approved 10-0, with 1 objection*

** Mr. Stachow declined to approve the minutes because he was not notified, given a copy of the minutes, or informed about the meeting, and asked that a methodology be put in place to prevent this happening in the future.*

FISHBONE DIAGRAM AND OUTLINE – Discussion on Revisions

Chairman Luff asked if they should postpone the discussion of the Fishbone Diagram at this point. Mr. Wilson said there was not much to discuss and that he had just added the four (4) tasks of the Ironwood project which were fully elaborated on by Mr. Hyland at tonight’s meeting.

Vice-Chair Hillier suggested that with all the turnover on the EDC Committee over the past two months it would be helpful for each of them to have a list of all current members. Mr. Stachow asked if the Committee had any Rules & Procedures they could get a copy of. Selectwoman Kilgore said they needed to discuss that at the next meeting and she would forward the file.

Any other Item that May Legally come before the Committee

Mr. Wilson said at the last meeting there was some discussion about partnering in some way as a Committee with the Hampton Chamber and sharing expenses for someone to promote filling the storefronts with Hampton and Seabrook. He said he did not think that was a good idea and it might not be consistent with what they were trying to do. Selectwoman Kilgore said she would like to make that an agenda item for a future meeting and have Town Administrator Bryan Kaenrath come in and explain the whole concept before they decide to recommend it or not as a Committee.

Town Administrator Kaenrath explained it was a concept from the Hampton Chamber of Commerce and the Chairman, John Nyhan, to hire a regional Economic Development person, and said he could also invite Mr. Nyhan to come in and brief the Committee. Selectwoman Kilgore said it would be helpful to know the real concept. Chairman Luff said there were then two (2) ideas, to work with the Hampton Chamber or do the work in-house. Ms. Monaghan asked about the idea of having a consultant paid for by the Town for the next year to only work on storefronts.

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Vice-Chair Hiller said this month's issue of Business New Hampshire magazine was filled with charts showing where North Hampton stands in terms of all the communities in New Hampshire. Selectwoman Kilgore said members could also subscribe for email notification from New Hampshire Business Review.

Ms. Monaghan suggested that because they have so many new members, it might be time to hold another informational Workshop on a Saturday morning to get everyone up to speed. Selectwoman Kilgore recommended they request the meeting be recorded. Mr. Martin said he preferred extending a regular meeting to hold the workshop. Mr. Wilson said they should make this an agenda item for the next meeting as it needed more discussion.

Next Meeting: The next regular Economic Development Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 5:00 pm.

Adjournment

Mr. Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Chairman Luff adjourned the meeting at 6:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary