



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

3 **DECEMBER 4, 2019 5:00 PM**

4 **NORTH HAMPTON TOWN HALL**

5 ***DRAFT MINUTES***

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8 EDC MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Richard Luff, Vice-Chair Jeff Hillier, Select Board Rep Kathleen Kilgore,
9 Heritage Commission Rep Nancy Monaghan, Planning Board Rep Phillip E. Wilson, Leszek Stachow, David
10 Cicalone, Gary Stevens

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12 EXCUSED: Jonathan Pinette, Renee Locke, Glenn Martin
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14 **AGENDA**

15
16 Chairman Richard Luff welcomed everyone to the December 4, 2019 Economic Development Committee
17 Meeting and called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
18

19 Chairman Luff distributed a compilation of Ironwood materials from all the outreach sessions, and said
20 the objective tonight is to decide what the Committee can take from this to provide feedback to Ironwood
21 before their presentation on January 8, 2020.
22

23 **Review Materials/Public Comment from Ironwood**

24
25 Ms. Monaghan said she was pleased with the turnout at the resident's meeting and thanked Chairman
26 Luff for allowing the questions to keep going at that session. She said she was concerned about the
27 direction Jeff Hyland appears to be going to make North Hampton a tourist attraction, and said that is not
28 what the citizens' want.
29

30 Vice-Chair Hillier said the thing heard more than any other was why Mr. Hyland used the samples he
31 showed as models for North Hampton, and said the way it was presented was not helpful. He said there
32 are real concerns about the role of this proposal concerning traffic, and said the plan calls for calming the
33 traffic but people will seek other ways around the Town. He said Mr. Hyland needs to show how this can
34 be done in a way that respects the desires of the townspeople. Ms. Monaghan agreed that the traffic
35 would go off into side-streets and create a very difficult living situation.
36

37 Chairman Luff said he spoke to Mr. Hyland about the models, which were presented more to get ideas
38 going, and said the redirection of traffic was already happening. Mr. Wilson said he became increasingly
39 concerned as the meeting progressed and was not surprised at people's reactions. He said the models
40 should be a precedent for future action, and he would like to have seen them present real possibilities for
41 North Hampton. He also pointed out that the examples at the end of the presentation show a density
42 which you cannot have without sewer.

43
44 Mr. Wilson said Ironwood needed to come up with something within the constraints of the form we have
45 in North Hampton, and he needs to focus on what residents want and how to make that happen and
46 create economic development. He said there were a lot of ideas and input; people want to fill empty
47 storefronts with more small business that provide unique opportunities for economic activity, and they
48 don't want a big tourist mecca. He said Ironwood's charter was not to stimulate thinking, but to deliver a
49 doable vision. He said the EDC Committee does the incremental steps but Ironwood is supposed to
50 provide that end vision using the parameters provided.

51
52 Mr. Stachow apologized for not being able to attend the last few meetings. He said he felt some of the
53 feedback was bothering and seemed to be reinforcing what was being presented, including the
54 subsequent correspondence that was received. He said people either misunderstood or were distressed
55 by what they heard, and what they wanted to achieve was not adequately portrayed or did not recognize
56 people enough so they felt they could convey their ideas. He said somehow these people and their
57 concerns need to be addressed as they move forward.

58
59 Mr. Stachow said they are talking about a strategic vision for the Town, but have not started thinking
60 about incremental steps. He said if they start thinking in terms of incremental goals they can think about
61 actionable items and test their acceptability. He said he feels less critical of Mr. Hyland now as he is trying
62 to raise their awareness, provide a broad field of vision, and they can take or leave what he has to say. He
63 said at this point he is not afraid of receiving information from any source that helps to build our common
64 understanding.

65
66 Selectwoman Kilgore said she might be misunderstanding, but she felt the 3 meetings were not to give
67 the Committee the deliverables, but rather to open a dialog and get more engagement from property
68 owners, business owners, and residents. She said the Committee made it very clear to Mr. Hyland that
69 sewer is not an option and he needs to work within their regulations for wetlands. She said what she took
70 from the sessions is the reinforcement that this Town wants a community where they can interact with
71 each other. She said people are excited about the Greenway, and the Committee can figure out how to
72 incorporate that into the Town. She said the concern will be what Ironwood presents to the EDC
73 Committee in January.

74
75 Mr. Stachow asked if this means they should wait until January to see if their deliverables will be what the
76 Committee is looking for. Selectwoman Kilgore said the Committee needs to reiterate the parameters for
77 Ironwood to work with in trying to come up with a concept, and said the Town is ultimately the customer.
78 She said people were encouraged by sidewalks, and maybe that is the first step. Mr. Ciccalone said he did
79 not find the meetings to be a big departure from what Ironwood described as their process, and said this
80 is an opportunity for the EDC Committee to give a little re-direction back to Ironwood. He said Ironwood

81 has a tough task to pull this all together, and the Committee can give direction and define what they are
82 going to provide in January.

83

84 Mr. Wilson said he thought the deliverable was quite clear and that Ironwood has not accepted the
85 parameters. He said for North Hampton, we need to take all the input into account and it gives the
86 Committee something they can work with here. He said the meetings were to give Ironwood some
87 direction so they come back in January with a vision that is within the realm of possibility for this Town.
88 He said Ironwood worked through 3 different constituents and the Committee wants something refined,
89 and said he did not see them doing that.

90

91 Chairman Luff said he agreed, but still thinks they are at a point which is healthy and the Committee is
92 right where they need to be. He said we can take the comments from everyone here tonight, refine them,
93 and provide Ironwood with a little more feedback. He said he agreed with Mr. Stachow that there was a
94 little confusion in the crowd, but people expressed themselves after through emails. He said he is willing
95 to give this a lot more time, and he is excited about January 8th. Vice-Chair Hillier suggested that instead
96 of telling Mr. Hyland what they don't want, they should ask how to start making the Town more appealing
97 in the meantime for possible businesses and ask him for short-term specifics. He said he felt it was pressing
98 to get businesses into empty storefronts and under-utilized buildings.

99

100 Mr. Stevens said he was looking for what Mr. Hyland finds to be most important for the success of
101 businesses in the Village Center. He said if people want less traffic on Route 1, sidewalks and trees, and
102 beautiful buildings, what owners will look at first is the numbers. He said he can only charge so much for
103 rent, and he does not want to price himself out if he has to invest in sidewalks or infrastructure. He said
104 he has an advantage in his Shopping Center because he owns it. He said building something brand new is
105 a large investment, and they have to get a return on the money. He said he is concerned about how much
106 it is going to cost, and said Ironwood has a very difficult task if the picture is going to be worth anything.

107

108 Chairman Luff asked Mr. Stevens to name two things the Town could do from a zoning perspective that
109 would change the dynamic for him. Mr. Stevens said he is not sure it is a zoning problem. He said he wants
110 national companies he can count on that will pay him for 10 years, and they will be looking at the numbers.
111 He said companies all generally ask for the same thing and if this matches their criteria they will sign in.
112 He said as far as traffic, the residents do not want traffic, but as a business owner you want traffic. Ms.
113 Monaghan said the question is do they want more traffic or want people to stop.

114

115 Mr. Stevens said with sidewalks he will have to take out his sign, his parking, and will have to maintain the
116 sidewalk, and asked if it was feasible. Ms. Monaghan said there were a lot of comments at the meeting
117 about interactivity, and she wished Mr. Hyland would focus more on the assets and access between them.
118 Mr. Stevens said a path between them would be impassible in winter and people do not want to walk on
119 Route 1. Selectwoman Kilgore said she would like to walk on Atlantic Avenue all the way down to the
120 ocean, but it is a hazard. She said Route 1 traffic will now have the Rail Trail to bring in people. Mr. Stevens
121 said, again, that would only be for 6 months out of the year, and a business could starve during the winter.

122

123 Mr. Ciccalone said it will be seasonal, but his experience has been that in communities with Rail Trails,
124 small businesses popped up around them. He said he participates in the International Conference of
125 Shopping Centers, and said shopping centers are no longer typical of what is being built these days

126 because people want foot traffic and want a destination where they can get out of their cars, walk around,
127 and stay longer and spend more. He said there are vacant properties across the street and vacant gas
128 stations which do not speak well to trying to draw people to the area. He said people would like sidewalks
129 and a little more beautification to make the area more enticing.

130
131 Chairman Luff said it only takes one or two landowners or business owners along Route 1 to make the
132 commitment to build something that is attractive and drives some local opportunities. He said landowners
133 and business owners will see the vision, and that is where the potential lies and why they are doing this.
134 Selectwoman Kilgore said their assets are also not centered in one area and should be tied together to
135 keep to the rural nature and character of the Town.

136
137 Mr. Wilson said they need to build the benefits of Route 1 into their plan and take advantage of those
138 potential benefits. He agreed with Chairman Luff that they need to get 2 or 3 good projects built that will
139 attract people and clean up some of the eyesores to make it look like a good place to do business. He said
140 shops are also closing everywhere and they need to be careful. and said surviving ones are places people
141 need to go to, to accomplish what they want to do.

142
143 **Identify Key Findings from Ironwood Public Sessions**

144
145 Chairman Luff said asked everyone to give him 1 to 3 things that they need to focus on.

146
147 Mr. Ciccalone said the focus should be to get Mr. Hyland away from any developments that require sewer,
148 and toss out the examples with tight spacing that were shown at the meetings. Vice-Chair Hillier said they
149 should ask Mr. Hyland for advice on what types of businesses we can hope to attract to this Town, and
150 what fits for this community. Mr. Stachow said number one would be to take into account the variety of
151 comments that came in, especially those critical or uncertain of the direction of this exercise, so people
152 do not feel they are being left out. He said secondly, he hoped Mr. Hyland would give some short-term
153 direction on the first things they need to do.

154
155 Selectwoman Kilgore said they should have Mr. Hyland talk about traffic on Route 1 and how they can
156 minimize traffic going off-route while maintaining quality traffic. She also felt they should ask Mr. Hyland
157 how to help manage what NHDOT might be thinking about expanding traffic, and said traffic off Route 1
158 is a concern. Ms. Monaghan said she would like Mr. Hyland to go back to the beginning and think about
159 what residents want, what kinds of stores they want and services. She said in 2013 this Committee had in
160 an Economic Development Consultant who said if you try to make your Town a shopping center for out-
161 of-town people it will fail. She said residents want small shops and services and filling empty storefronts.

162
163 Mr. Wilson said they need to reinforce that any business that comes to this Town is going to be able to
164 attract residents, and Mr. Hyland needs to focus on that. He said they should ask what kind of design for
165 a Village Center would be most attractive, and he listed the businesses in Town that have been successful.
166 He said they have an opportunity to tell Mr. Hyland to come back with something that exemplifies the art
167 of the possible for North Hampton.

168
169 Mr. Stevens said the biggest thing is a destination business, so if they can attract someone who is 20-45
170 minutes away, and to figure out what businesses. He said they should look at other bigger companies and

171 what businesses are around there. He said it helps if companies can move in next to a business that is
172 already successful, and helps them relax their criteria.

173

174 Chairman Luff said he will compile all this information and have a conversation with Mr. Hyland.

175

176 **Review Fishbone Diagram to Discuss Next Steps**

177

178 Chairman Luff asked if anyone wanted to move forward with another area on the Fishbone Diagram. Mr.
179 Wilson said they should have some sort of organized effort to see what they can do to fill empty
180 storefronts. He asked if anyone on the Committee thinks they should invite the owners of the Mobil
181 Station, and the vacant lot next to it, in here to talk about what they might be willing to do or what they
182 are looking for. Chairman Luff said he was contacted by their consultant, and he would be happy to reach
183 out and invite them to come in.

184

185 Vice-Chair Hillier said a few months ago Hampton and Hampton Falls were considering hiring an Economic
186 Development Consultant to help with businesses, and Chairman Luff said it was John Nyhan. Selectwoman
187 Kilgore said that was still moving forward. Vice-Chair Hiller asked if North Hampton was considering being
188 a part of that, and Chairman Luff said he would contact him and find out more.

189

190 **Name of Village Center**

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192 Ms. Monaghan said they agreed several months ago to call this a Village Center instead of a Village District,
193 which is a very specific land-use entity, implying things they are not talking about like an overlay district.
194 She said calling it the Village District is confusing because it is a legal term, and for now they should make
195 it clear it will be called a Village Center.

196

197 Chairman Luff said, lastly, he wanted to thank everyone for their efforts to put these 3 meetings together.

198

199 **Approval of Minutes of September 26, 2019**

200

201 **Motion:** To Approve the minutes of the Economic Development Committee Meeting of September 26,
202 2019.

203 **Motioned:** Ms. Kilgore

204 **Seconded:** Ms. Monaghan

205 **Vote:** Motion approved 8-0

206

207 **Any other Item that May Legally come before the Committee**

208

209 Selectwoman Kilgore said she would like to take this time to thank Town Administrator Bryan Kaenrath
210 for being here and for supporting this group, and for all his help and assistance. She said he sounds excited
211 by the prospects of economic development where he is going, and they appreciate everything he did for
212 the Committee.

213

214 **Next Meeting:** The next regular Economic Development Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday,
215 January 8, 2019 at 5:00 pm.

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217 **Adjournment**

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219 Chairman Luff adjourned the meeting at 6:08 pm.

220

221 Respectfully submitted,

222 Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary

DRAFT