



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

3 **SEPTEMBER 2, 2020 5:00 PM**

4 **NORTH HAMPTON TOWN HALL**
5 **and VIA ZOOM**

6 ***DRAFT MINUTES***
7

8 EDC MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Richard Luff, Select Board Rep Larry Miller, David Ciccalone, Jonathan
9 Pinette

10 VIA ZOOM: Vice-Chair/Planning Board Rep Phil Wilson, Heritage Commission Rep Nancy Monaghan,
11 Leszek Stachow, Glenn Martin, Renee Locke-Business Associate Rep, Jeff Hillier

12 EXCUSED: Gary Stevens

13 ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Michael Tully, Jeff Hyland of Ironwood Design Group
14

15 **AGENDA**
16

17 Chairman Richard Luff welcomed everyone to the September 2, 2020 North Hampton Economic
18 Development Committee Meeting and called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm, followed by the Pledge of
19 Allegiance.
20

21 Chairman Luff said the main focus of the meeting is to review the Conceptual Plan from Jeff Hyland of
22 Ironwood. He said nearly 2 years ago ECDC came up with a vision statement centered around a Village
23 Center, and recognized what they have on Route 1 is a product of existing Zoning Laws and lack of a
24 cohesive vision. Ironwood Design was hired to help develop a visual of an improvement plan in
25 collaboration with residents, business owners, and property owners, and has come up with a plan based
26 on that collaboration.
27

28 **Jeff Hyland of Ironwood to Review Key Points of Conceptual Plan**
29

30 Jeff Hyland said they have gone through a lot of steps to date, have reached out to the public for feedback,
31 and now is the time for EDC comments and review to finalize the Master Plan and pull everything together.
32 He said Chairman Luff went through the Vision Statement, but it is also important to talk about the
33 Seacoast Region as well as the corridor that runs through the Village District. The Route 1 Corridor is under

34 NHDOT jurisdiction and averages approximately 16,000 vehicles/day which fluctuates seasonally. He said
35 some businesses and developers rely on heavy traffic volume, but traffic congestion can also be a problem.

36
37 Mr. Hyland said they discussed the Route 1 Corridor as a critical component of the Village District and a
38 conduit for movement in the area. He said there are positives and negatives to NHDOT jurisdiction as they
39 have their own ideas for Route 1 improvements, and said it is important for North Hampton to make their
40 thoughts and opinions known to help influence and set the tone for any future NHDOT improvements,
41 and said DOT ultimately listens to what the community wants.

42
43 Mr. Hyland said within the project area are both opportunities and constraints, and said either end of the
44 project area could be considered a gateway or arrival zone. He showed graphics of what changes in the
45 roadway could look like including possible treatments for a median in the middle of Route 1 as a signature
46 element or a multi-use path parallel to Route 1; roundabouts can transform the district and make it more
47 pedestrian friendly particularly at gateway entrances. He said North Hampton needs a signature element
48 that identifies the Village District, and signage can be coordinated to create a cohesive visual which helps
49 visitors navigate.

50
51 Mr. Hyland said the Route 1 Corridor is in the public domain but the Town does not have control over
52 private property except by dictating certain land-use regulations. He said economic goals in other
53 communities have been realized through a variety of approaches, some with public and private
54 partnerships. He said they need to start a discussion of how investment in infrastructure goes hand-in-
55 hand with private development as a visual aesthetic drawing people to a community and creating vibrancy
56 and successful businesses, also looking at development trends and the trend right now is mixed use.

57
58 Mr. Hyland said when a developer decides to invest in a community they need a sizeable piece of land. He
59 showed a graphic of the area with low, moderate, and high value properties from a developer's
60 standpoint. Based on the Town's current zoning, low value properties have small lot sizes and are
61 grandfathered into current regulations; moderate value properties have a fairly valuable current use but
62 are challenging due to wetlands or not enough road frontage; high value properties are the most desirable
63 and more doable from a redevelopment standpoint, such as corner lots with high visibility. He then
64 showed multiple examples of towns in the region.

65
66 Mr. Hyland said for North Hampton they designated 3 concept areas within the corridor with a high
67 probability of redevelopment, areas that might benefit, and generated some rough concepts of what
68 could occur. Area A north of Shaw's Supermarket encompassing LL Bean and Brew Pub; Area B
69 incorporates the old Philbricks Plaza and extends down; Area C encompasses the gas station and the
70 parcel behind. He said some assumptions were made as we developed the concepts: some zoning changes
71 would be made, particularly relating to mixed use; public sewer not necessary but limiting as septic
72 systems take up area and green space.

73
74 With *Development Area A*, they looked at the age of buildings and their desirability in the current market;
75 currently small storefronts which are hard to fill; looked at Seacoast demand for residential and started
76 moving toward mixed use. He said resident apartments could take the place of the large section of empty
77 storefronts and back up to conservation land, LL Bean could be moved as a free-standing store, and
78 restaurant elements and small office/retail could be added; showed visual examples of potential buildings.

79 A trail could be introduced and possibly a multi-use path along Route 1 connecting in future to the East
80 Coast Greenway.

81

82 With *Development Area B*, the Philbrick building would remain, adding some infill in underutilized areas.
83 Behind Philbricks there is room for a small incubator space by creating low-cost square footage to add
84 vibrancy and set this area apart from others on the Route 1 Corridor. Toward the roadway could be a
85 6,000 sq ft retail/restaurant creating a signature element and identifiable landmark in the corridor that
86 architecturally defines the Village District. The area shows some mixed use office/small retail, some
87 townhomes and visual examples of buildings that might fit.

88

89 With *Development Area C*, where the gas station currently is on Lafayette Road, is a high-value property
90 and corner lot on a fairly large parcel of land that may lend itself to a more traditional development; a
91 small boutique inn or hotel with some retail, as high visibility is important for small businesses. A building
92 out front that is noticeable and identifiable is a good idea, with more residential apartments behind, and
93 farther back wetlands for a bungalow-style subdivision. He said all development scenarios show septic as
94 part of a community septic system.

95

96 Mr. Hyland said incremental change is necessary to get from the vision to reality: (1) alter the way we look
97 at development; (2) focus on form/appearance, scale, architectural quality to ensure harmony with
98 community core values and vision; (3) encourage greater economic opportunity through flexibility, higher
99 density, and diversity of use. Enhancements to the Village District include creation of consistent, cohesive
100 Town development standards for the district, both public and private, and working with NHDOT to add
101 amenities and street treatments to transform the Village District without impacting private property.

102

103 Mr. Hyland said the private side requires some level of regulatory oversight, and the current zoning
104 regulations do not really jive with the Master Plan vision and effort. He said there needs to be more
105 consistency and flexibility in Zoning Regulations for an end product that is really achievable. He said they
106 basically regulate what they don't want rather than what they do want.

107

108 Mr. Hyland said next steps for the EDC and North Hampton are to build on the zoning analysis conducted
109 for the Village District Master Plan and possibly conduct an audit; perform a Developmental Analysis
110 including a TIF District evaluation; promote Economic Development using District Master Plan graphics;
111 start a discussion with NHDOT, a critical partner in the corridor; consider applying for TAP (Transportation
112 Alternatives Program) or CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality) Grant Funding. He said all grants
113 have a matching component and they need to look at how to pay for that.

114

115 **EDC Members to Provide Feedback to Ironwood on Conceptual Plan**

116

117 Mr. Wilson said he has some pretty serious reservations about the concepts Mr. Hyland presented: (1)
118 plan does not square with what residents want; (2) call it a Village District which emphasizes changing
119 zoning when we asked for a Village Center doable in 10 years; 3 specific districts were presented; disagree
120 it could be done without sewers; some of your areas are wetlands and questionable for development; (3)
121 question whether this is doable within the Town's current zoning and land-use regulations without
122 significant changes to what we will allow with respect to wetlands.

123

124 Mr. Wilson said Liz's analysis of zoning and land-use regulations was extensive but based on several
125 misconceptions or wrong assumptions. He said there is encroachment on the wetlands in the areas
126 described which is problematic from a DES standpoint; median improvements and gateways are great
127 ideas, but the plan presented is not appropriate for North Hampton. All the examples provided were of
128 towns much larger and very different, and high-density in North Hampton is not the same. He said he felt
129 Mr. Hyland missed the mark because he did not present a coherent plan for a Village Center characteristic
130 of North Hampton which expresses the desires and expectations of residents.

131
132 Chairman Luff asked Mr. Wilson to go over the 3 points he raised so Mr. Hyland can respond. Mr. Wilson
133 said: (1) plan does not express the desire of residents and therefore does not serve best interests of North
134 Hampton; (2) plan not doable in a 10-year timeframe as prescribed by EDC and Vision Statement; (3) plan
135 runs counter to many fundamental zoning and development review regulations that residents have
136 consistently supported for decades.

137
138 Mr. Hyland said they did a lot of outreach and people wanted more walkability, and more vibrant and less
139 auto-centric developments. He said it will probably take longer than 10 years to complete the Village
140 Center because the Village District is linear in nature and more challenging with a lot of property owners.
141 Mr. Wilson said each of the 3 properties is in the hands of one owner and they do not have the problem
142 of trying to aggregate property.

143
144 Mr. Hyland said those areas were high on the developmental scale because of their size and he used them
145 as an example of what might happen, showing some sort of re-development potential on existing lots that
146 are currently underutilized but highly desirable; other lots are more challenging. He said it is correct that
147 they do not reflect the current zoning, but very little meaningful change can happen under current zoning,
148 He said Ironwood was under the impression there would be tweaking of zones to allow more flexibility,
149 and said a lot of businesses and properties are not being invested in because there is no clear roadmap.

150
151 Mr. Stachow said he agrees with a lot of what was said in terms of the current situation and expectations
152 of the Town. He said one of the things he had hoped under Village Center was a pedestrian-friendly area
153 to allow people to move from one set of buildings/residences/businesses to another relatively freely, and
154 not necessarily along Lafayette but also to embrace Route 111 more extensively and to think of something
155 that had a "heart" for the Town. He said they are replacing buildings here but retaining the strip-mall
156 character along Lafayette; maybe the medians, a rotary, or signage would help alleviate that, but said he
157 is missing the heart here.

158
159 Mr. Hyland said that is a very important point and the challenge is you are talking about private properties.
160 He said what they have provided to this point is very conceptual and did not go far enough to show
161 pedestrian circulation on private property. He said they are hoping to go further with development
162 scenarios. He said the challenge is you are taking away from development opportunities and taking away
163 from the economic reality of that development, and a subtle balance of all of that is beyond the scope of
164 what we are doing here.

165
166 Mr. Hyland said somewhere in the zoning regulations it has to say you want open space, pedestrian
167 sidewalks, and circulation within private development, otherwise it is up to the Planning Board to dictate.
168 He said you can achieve many of the EDC goals in a relatively easy way along Lafayette but it is challenging

169 with private property. Mr. Wilson said with a good plan we could develop an access management program
170 for the Town and make the Village Center the starting point. He said Lez's plan was very good but was
171 unsure how to get it down Atlantic, but starting on Route 1 it would be a beginning. Mr. Hyland said they
172 talked about shared services and amenities, and can go beyond between lots to curb cut consolidation on
173 Route 1, which is also part of access management.

174
175 Ms. Monaghan said her concern from the beginning is that they started this by doing a survey of residents
176 to determine what they want for Economic Development on Route 1, and developed the Village Center
177 concept based on that. She said Mr. Hyland's plan has a few of those things but most of the plan is very
178 far from what residents want with focus on high-density residential development and attracting tourists.
179 She said the other issue is the differences of opinion on this Committee. She said her biggest concern is
180 the issue of maintaining the rural character of the Town, and said our zoning ordinance was designed to
181 preserve that.

182
183 Ms. Monaghan said she personally feels they set the boundaries too wide for a Village Center based on
184 what residents want, and asked if the Committee is looking to develop Route 1 or looking for a conceptual
185 design for a Village Center, and urged consideration of a scaled-down version of the plan. Mr. Martin said
186 he disagrees on percentages, and he thinks Parcel A would be doable in a 10-year timeframe and is a start
187 for mixed-use zoning. He said it does not have to be high density, just a little higher for our Town, with
188 some residential mixed in as well.

189
190 Mr. Martin said he likes the Parcel A program and feels it is something to start with and go from there. He
191 said there are wetlands there but some of the mapping is inaccurate; they can require a developer to do
192 wetlands mapping and the new septic systems can greatly reduce discharge. Ms. Monaghan said they paid
193 \$8,000 to Survey Professionals to do the survey and they should pay attention to what residents want
194 more than anyone else; residents will use this Village Center and vote to approve the zoning changes. Mr.
195 Martin said mixed use is something they definitely need to do to improve anything on Route 1.

196
197 Chairman Luff said he liked the way Mr. Hyland broke out the public domain part of the improvements
198 that can happen along Route 1, especially partnered with DOT, and the gateway and median concepts are
199 critical to attracting better development. He said people do not know what town they are in on Route 1
200 and it is important that North Hampton create that uniqueness. He said he thinks it will come down to
201 zoning, and he likes the way Mr. Hyland proposed the form-based code for what the Town wants to see,
202 and said he is extremely hopeful about an approach to development in North Hampton.

203
204 Mr. Hyland said with form-based code you dictate what you do want rather than what you don't want
205 and flip the code. He said you can define architectural styles, building scale, building placement along the
206 property line, and the relationship of buildings to public infrastructure, usually a roadway, and said it helps
207 to tell a developer what you do want. To Ms. Monaghan's comments he said the plan does have a lot of
208 residential, but could be something else, and mixed use is important as well as market viability. He said
209 the examples he showed were not to say that is what North Hampton should do, just that a mixture of
210 uses is being proposed in about 75% of all developments now.

211
212 Chairman Luff said we hired Ironwood to come up with a picture to support this vision. He said there are
213 roadblocks right now but he is hopeful they can strike a balance here where they can still create that

214 picture and make recommendations to the Select Board. He said this has gone on long enough and EDC
215 has some decisions to make here. He suggested they hold a Work Session before their October 7th
216 meeting and get together as a Committee and hash out their differences. He said he would email dates to
217 Committee members to meet in a week or two, and the Committee was in agreement.

218

219 **Any other Item that May Legally come before the Committee – Period of Public Comment**

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221 **Next Meeting:** The next regular Economic Development Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday,
222 October 7, 2020 at 5:00 pm.

223

224 **Adjournment**

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226 Ms. Monaghan made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. Hillier. The motion to adjourn was
227 approved by a vote of 10-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 pm.

228

229 Respectfully submitted,

230 Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary