

# Nashua Business Industrial Development Authority

City Hall Room 208  
Friday, April 15, 2016  
8:15 a.m.

## Meeting Minutes

### 1. Call to Order and Welcome

Jack Tulley and Camille Pattison excused. David Denehy & Brad Vear not present. Members of the public present. James Vayo arrived after the beginning of the meeting.

Meeting called to order at 8:22 am by Vice Chair H. Gaffney.

### 2. Approval of Meeting Minute

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 19, 2016 MINUTES MADE BY JASON HAVILAND AND SECONDED BY CARL ANDRADE AND APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH 18, 2016 MINUTES MADE BY MARK PROLMAN AND SECONDED BY JASON HAVILAND AND APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### 3. Bridge Street Project Update

S. Marchant updated the BIDA on the following project progress as follows. The 408 permit was submitted to the Army Corp of Engineers two weeks ago. DPW expects a 90 day approval process, with the approval expected to come in late June/early July. The Skate park relocation is making progress. They will be hosting a Ward 5 meeting with the Mayor and Aldermen in early May. DPW still expects to have construction done by Labor Day. Legal is working with all parties to make sure all legal documents are prepped and ready to go for a final sign-off and closing after the 408 permit is approved.

J. Stabile asked what the outcome of the roundabout study for the intersection of E. Hollis Street and Bridge Street. S. Marchant notes that the roundabout is not currently moving ahead. The city is reviewing options internally to determine how goals for the intersection can be met. Ideally, we reduce wait times, create access to the immediate area, and develop an aesthetic entryway to downtown. The project will take place but will likely take the shape of an intersection without southern access. The traffic is a major challenge to making local improvements.

M. Prolman asked about the levee and inquired about how long it will take for US Army Core to

approve the 408 permit. S. Marchant notes that it is anticipated to be approved within 90 days.

Member of the public, Peter Schafer of E Street, would like to see a light at the end of “D” Street. He also notes there is no noise associated with the skate park. Many kids in the neighborhood but they have no place to go.

H. Gaffney notes that security cameras would make the skate park safer.

#### **4. 25 Crown Street Project Update**

S. Marchant updated the BIDA on the following project progress: Seven firms attended the mandatory pre-bid meeting, who all stated the timeframe laid out in the RFP was unachievable. A bid addendum went out yesterday asking for alternate timeframes. Bids are due back the first week of May. The permitting and engineering made the timeline unfeasible. City is required to have a Local Project Administrator assigned to this project.

J. Haviland, asked if the city can we hold off on completing the project until we have a more realistic timeline for the introduction of commuter rail. Do we want a park & ride?

S Marchant notes the Park & Ride is an opportunity for the expansion of bus service. Bicycle and pedestrian access to the area is an importance factor.

Mayor Donchess comments that the building at the rear of the lot may be worth saving. Building the Park & Ride may make the warehouse a more valuable asset afterwards.

S. Marchant notes the building will receive an analysis to determine if it should be rehabilitated.

J Stabile asked if federal brownfield’s money was available to rehabilitate. It may be expensive to bring the building up to occupancy levels.

#### **5. Economic Development Update**

J Stabile asked if a new director has been selected. The interviews were completed and an offer should be provided in the near future.

James Vayo arrived and provided an update on conceptual housing & mixed use development in Downtown Nashua: First project area, 249 Main Street, a fenced in parking lot. We are discussing the potential for development with the property owner. Looking to determine what challenges exist. Elements such as housing on Maple Street and the alley to connect to municipal parking on Elm Street need to be addressed.

H. Gaffney asked if it was feasible to have tuck-under parking with apartments above at this site. A building similar to the type that is being built on Bridge Street.

S. Marchant noted that it was possible but the frontage on Main Street needed to have active uses either storefront or similar programming.

J Vayo then moves on to the Courthouse Oval. Vayo met with the owner of the property to discuss the opportunity to develop the site and look at the opportunity to square up the oval in order to create developable blocks.

H. Gaffney asks if that would involve elimination of one of the streets on the oval.

J. Vayo notes that this would not be good urban practice, notes that power, water, sewer all run within the street. Smaller urban blocks would create a more amenable environment for pedestrians and residents. Vayo notes the oval is only 48,000sf and squaring off the site would render approximately 80,000sf. By developing 4 or 5 story buildings with retail and office uses on the first floor and parking in the back, the city could realize significant property tax benefits.

S. Marchant mentions Portwalk Place in Portsmouth, NH as an excellent example of a similar project with outcomes as described by James Vayo.

Mayor Donchess notes that he remembers when that was a rundown area of Portsmouth.

J. Vayo and the property owner had discussed the potential for applying for New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) through a Economic Development Corporation. Currently, the site is being reviewed by Jack Duggan from Monadnock Economic Development Corporation to determine if he is a good fit for his organization. If a NMTC application were created, it would be on the order of magnitude of 150 - 200 units of residential. Vayo moves on to Parson Avenue. The location and land value within the city may merit the creation of structured parking.

M. Prolman asks if the surface parking lot behind 60 Main Street is part of 60 Main Street and if so doesn't he need that parking for his tenants?

J. Vayo informed the authority that the parking is associated with 60 Main Street but that he has discussed the concept of consolidating shared parking in a municipal parking structure with the owner. A new building on this site would also include tuck-under parking on the first floor to meet a portion of the parking demand.

Mayor Donchess notes we are planning on extending the Riverwalk along the 60 Main Street property to connect Main Street to the Library.

Vayo then shows the North side of 10 Spruce Street. The total lot is over 6 acres but discussion with owner was on 2 acres on the northern portion of the parcel.

Mayor Donchess notes it is an interesting site as you can see Main Street from the corner of Temple and Spruce Street.

J. Vayo points out that Worcester Street still runs under the property and is an example of what happens when public streets are abandoned.

Mayor Donchess notes that residential areas between Spruce and Main Street could become more valuable over time due to being able to walk to Main Street.

Member of the public, Peter Schafer, asked about how pedestrians can get from Bridge Street to Main Street.

J. Vayo notes Temple Street is called out as a pedestrian oriented street in the 2006 East Hollis Street Master Plan.

S. Marchant notes that there is a plan to expand the Heritage Rail Trail to the East which would connect the Bridge Street & future commuter rail station to Main Street.

M. Prolman asks if any recent master planning has been done for Main Street to demonstrate demand for downtown.

J. Vayo states that demand for walkable environments is very high and will remain high for at least 20 years. A master plan would create a knowable outcome which takes the guess-work and some risk out of the development process for prospective developers.

M. Prolman asks about the opportunity to develop a façade grant.

S. Marchant notes that a façade program already exists but has been unfunded for 2 years and no money is left for new grants.

M. Prolman suggests a master plan would stimulate development along Main Street.

J. Vayo agrees that a downtown master plan would clearly identify how much and what kind of future development the city wishes to see and provide some level of certainty to developers and investors that their projects reflect the desires of the community.

J. Stabile requests a synopsis of the recently completed market studies for various developments as tools which can be used to assist others in making decisions to invest in downtown.

J. Vayo mentions there are several new businesses opening up in Downtown Nashua as outlined in the annual report from Great American Downtown. Vayo recommends reviewing the variety of new businesses.

M. Prolman asks if the School Street lot would be a good example of a site which could be developed into condominiums. The group was in agreement that School Street would be a good site to explore development.

M. Prolman asked is River Casino is going to locate in Nashua? No one knows the answer.  
J. Havilland asked how feasible any of these projects are and how they can be prioritized. He would like to build excitement by folding several of these projects together as a marketing effort. By doing this we can actually create demand beyond what already exists.

J. Vayo notes one of the biggest challenges is capitalizing projects and an ongoing market analysis would reinforce the documentation needed to obtain capital from

S. Marchant notes the city will be beginning a master plan initiative in 2017. This may be a great time to target efforts around marketing development in downtown.

**Further discussions about the façade program. Is there any funding available?**

J. Stabile recommends the city meet with the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA) to request assistance in funding or lending for new housing development in downtown. NHHFA offers many ways to package funding for developments. They could offer preferential loans to people buying condominiums in a new development.

The group talks about the function and structure of the Community Development Block Grant and the various projects funded in the upcoming fiscal year.

Mayor Donchess agrees that a follow up discussion with NHHFA would idea.

J. Vayo notes that tax credits from NHHFA do differ from New Market Tax Credit in that NHHFA requires income restrictions.

## **6. Other Business**

None

## **7. Next Meeting Date:**

Next meeting will be held May 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Room 208 at 8:15am

**MOTION TO ADJOURN MADE BY HEATH GAFFNEY AND SECONDED BY MARK PROLMAN.  
MEETING ENDED AT 9:42 AM**