

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

JANUARY 21, 2020

A meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee was held on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman David C. Tencza, Chair, presided.

Members of Committee present: Alderman Jan Schmidt, Vice Chair
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws

Members not in Attendance: Alderman Thomas Lopez

Also in Attendance: Alderwoman Elizabeth Lu

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CLERK

MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT TO NOMINATE ALDERMAN LAWS TO SERVE AS COMMITTEE CLERK FOR THE 2020-2021 TERM

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN SCHMIDT TO CLOSE THE NOMINATIONS
MOTION CARRIED**

MOTION CARRIED TO ELECT ALDERMAN LAWS AS COMMITTEE CLERK FOR THE 2020-2021 TERM

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-20-002

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
 Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
 Alderman Patricia Klee
 Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
 Alderman Richard A. Dowd
 Alderman Thomas Lopez
 Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$294,000 FROM THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY INTO CAPITAL PROJECT GRANT ACTIVITY "INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT PROGRAM FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER"

- Also assigned to Committee on Infrastructure (mtg 1/22/20)

**MOTION BY ALDEMAN SCHMIDT TO TABLE R-20-002
 MOTION CARRIED**

PRESENTATION BY TIM CUMMINGS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Alderman Tencza

What I am going to do at this point is invite Director Cummings to come up and join us at the Committee, with the Committee here. As I mentioned, we are still forming, not forming the Committee, but thinking about what we want to do as a Committee this term. Director Cummings offered to come and just give us an overview of what he thinks is important things for us to know; things that are coming up in Economic Development over the next two years, probably a lot sooner than that for a lot of these though. So I'll turn it over to Director Cummings.

Tim Cummings, Director of Economic Development

Thank you Mr. Chair, Tim Cummings, Director of Economic Development. It is great to be with you this evening. I asked for this meeting for a couple of reasons: One for those of you who may newer to the Committee and not expose to maybe some of the continuing conversations that have occurred in year's past, this would be an opportunity to orientate you, to brief you on some of the priorities and projects that this body as well as the administration and myself have been working on over the years. But then also more importantly give this body an opportunity to guide me and give me some director as to where you would like to see me go as well as maybe some of the projects that I'm working on. What are some of the priorities you may have or details that you would like to see as I continue to advance these projects? I am hoping to keep this as an informal, casual conversation; what you have before you is just a Memo I very quickly put together to just help organize the conversation to basically give me some reminders as I talk with you this evening about various things that I am working on.

Up on the screen is a GIS map of the City of Nashua. A lot of what we do is visually very helpful to have a map to kind of orientate us. I will highlight certain map and parcels as we talk about them as we continue to move along the evening. I am not sure, Mr. Chair, how you would like to proceed, but you have a list in front of you. I am not going to go into great detail on any of these items because some of these topics could have devoted meetings in and of them to themselves.

Some of them you may be aware, I am happy to answer any questions that you may have but the way I was foreseeing tonight unfold is I would outline in very high level the project or issue or task that my office is currently working. If there is a specific question, answer that question, but more important hopefully hear from you as to what you'd like to see as we continue to move forward with economic development.

My office is organized as being the strategic economic development arm for the City of Nashua. With that being said, this current administration has a real strong emphasis on downtown redevelopment, so a lot of my economic development plan or agenda focuses on downtown redevelopment. We are focusing on that in a couple different ways. First, introducing housing to the downtown environment, making it a mixed use environment where it is a more active built environment for longer periods of time so it doesn't go dark if you will come the evenings or the weekends but is more lively in a traditional, you know I don't want to say 24-hour type of environment because it is not 24 hours per se, but longer than a traditional businesses, services type of environment like 8 to 5 or something to that. So introducing uses that will expand that activity is very important. One of the best ways to do that is introducing residential in the downtown. Introducing residential development in the City of Nashua period is a priority.

Then one of the other ways we are looking to activate the downtown is through introducing Arts & Culture and entertainment type uses, which brings us to the Performing Arts Center. It is one of the major initiatives that this City is undertaking. What we are doing is looking to construct and sub out the operations to a third party vendor, but a 750 seat venue that will be a multi-purpose venue on the corner of West Pearl and Main. Right now we are in phase of construction documents which is designing the Performing Arts Center. Those construction documents won't be due until June. Prior to us starting to design the building we had a feasibility study done that was paid for in part by the Downtown Improvement Committee and the City of Nashua through the PEDC and the PEDC was a strong driver in the conversation that brought us to where we are today along with the Downtown Improvement Committee.

I am not planning on going too far into details this evening on the Performing Arts Center itself. As you all may be aware, there is a Resolution before you looking to continue the bonding authorization for the Performing Arts Center as we continue to advance that project. As the Chair indicated there will be a joint meeting of the Infrastructure and PEDC Committees on this topic in the near future.

So another topic that probably hasn't had much conversation with the PEDC Committee but maybe with the Board of Alderman at a larger level and definitely with the neighborhood is the idea of the cleaning up and redeveloping the Mohawk Tannery. So I wanted to make sure I highlighted this issue or this project because it is a priority project for the EPA at the Federal Level. The EPA about two-ish years ago made it very clear to the City of Nashua that they wanted to clean this site up, they were going to shortlist it through a specific program. They called it an Administrators Priority List which it made the Administrators Priority List so the Administrators Priority List Nationwide is 10 maybe 20-ish projects nationwide that the EPA felt was worthy enough to get extra attention, extra resources.

One of the conditions of making that list is it needed to have a private sector developer in partnership to make the project if you will shovel ready. Now this project is by no means shovel ready, we are working through a lot of complicated issues, but it is a concerted effort by my office coordinating on the City's behalf very closely with our DPW, our Planning Office and then my office working with the State through the State's DES Office and then the Federal EPA Office and then a perspective developer to bring about a redevelopment on this area of the City.

So as you are looking at the map, we refer to it as the Mohawk Tannery, for those of you who are familiar with this area, it is more than just the Mohawk Tannery; there is the Fimbel Door Site as well and it's mixed along in here. The concept plan, what I am about to share with you, I don't want you to take away as concrete fact, it is subject to change, but the idea would be in this lower half here you would see something in the order of magnitude of between 200 and 300 apartments going in through here. This lower half is being donated to the City and kept as open space and then the thought process is up here, would be about 50,000 square feet of commercial space. Then you would have a road coming in off of the Broad Street Parkway into this project.

So that is a very high level of what the developer is looking to do and is working through the various mitigation issues both at DES and EPA to try to bring this project forward. As some of you may know, this site was never officially placed on a Superfund Clean Up list, however, it does qualify for it and it was slated to be put on that list back in 2000. My understand it is was during the Streeter Administration, they worked very closely with the EPA to avoid that, the rationale being is once it got placed on this EPA Superfund List it doesn't qualify or meet the standards that it is as severe as its comparable categorized sites that it would never rise to the top for a cleanup. So it qualifies from a statutory prospective, but it is just barely qualified for that list. And so the fear was that if it got added on to that list then you'd be waiting 20, 30, 40 years before a cleanup actually occurred. Now that was in 2000 and here we are in 2020, so it's been 20 years so who knows whether that was the right call or not. Nonetheless it is still not on that list and if was added to the list it would go to the bottom of the list and it would be, as the EPA explained to me, a considerable amount of time, decades before it actually would actually see any attention which is why this special designation it received a couple years back is so important because it gets the extra attention, it gets the resources. And ultimately from the EPA's perspective cleans up a backlog of sites.

Chairman Tencza

Director Cummings do you mind taking questions now from Alderman Clemons?

Mr. Cummings

Yeah happy to.

Alderman Clemons

So this area I am very familiar with, I've had – actually my great grandfather owned quite a bit of land and that was right down where little Florida is right now, that neighborhood. So I had a lot of family, including my father, grow up there. I also have a lot of family unfortunately contract cancer from that neighborhood. Luckily some people, some of my family members were luckier than others. It is definitely the one link is you can say, well it's family but the other link is that the family members that got it were all the family members that lived in that section of town. So you know you can see it is hearsay or whatever but my priority on that would be that we get that cleaned up. I'd like to see the soil removed but I understand that isn't going to necessarily be economically feasible.

So I am wondering if the City has any leverage to require a mitigation fund be put in place by the developer so that 100 years from now when whatever concrete structure is built to hold that soil in place there, starts to fail – that the City has the money to reinforce it, go down and remove the soil, do whatever they have to do to make sure that, you know, we are not only just

kicking the can down the road but we are actually solving the problem and we are putting money away so that we can both utilize that land which is very valuable and clean it up. In addition to that, put into place a process that allows the future residents of the City, the ability to go back to the site when there are signs of some failure and have the means to do something about it.

Mr. Cummings

So Mr. Chair if I may, that is a great point Alderman Clemons and I don't know if legally the entity to require that would be the City of Nashua, though it could be and I just made a note to check on that. I do believe and I will confirm this that that is standard practice for the EPA or DES to require something like that. So I can find out what their plan is. My understanding, and it is the intention of the developer is to design mitigation containment barrier that can withstand 500 years of storm and not just the typical 100 year. That is the standard that is being required by the EPA. But to your point X amount of years from now so the burden doesn't fall on the City, could there be some kind of fund created to help mitigate that is a point well taken. I will ask and whether it is directly from the City or the EPA, I do believe that is something that would be required at some point.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you.

Mr. Cummings

So I guess my last comment would be on this and Alderman Clemons kind of hit upon it is the plan outlined by the EPA which is the entity that is charged with the regulatory process of the environmental cleanup is to contain the sol onsite. I know that has caused some concern with not just the neighbors but the City at large with the idea of wanting to remove all of the soils off-site. It is cost prohibitive but the EPA has fully endorsed, independently of the developer's proposal, this idea of a self-contained area and to clean up the site. That is the rationale and so of the 44-ish acres that is contaminated throughout this area, the thought process would be to consolidate it all into about a 2, 2 ½ acre site and cap it and make sure it is contained.

Alderman Laws

I'd like to add on to that and I am not an environmental scientist but there is a compelling argument that you made that leaving it where it is, is actually better for the people in the community because it doesn't disturb things that would be normally become airborne and get people ill. That is just something that I picked up going to those meetings.

Alderman Clemons

Just a point, I am conflicted on that because I understand what you are saying but I also know that those are just open gravel pits, so whenever it rains that stuff goes into the river, it goes all over the place. So I don't want to see us lose an opportunity to try to clean up the area. With the understanding, however, that there is a substantial sum of money that comes with maintenance. You know the 500 year standard is good, but you know as my favorite presidential candidate, Pete Buttigieg notes, there are two 500 year floods within a year of another in South Bend.

So you know with climate change and everything else, we just want to make sure that whatever we are going to do here, we are doing right by the folks that live in that neighborhood. So I think that I can, not necessarily endorse doing that type of remediation, however, I think there may be an opportunity to talk it out, work it out and come up with some kind of compromise that might achieve the same goals. So that is where I would go with it.

Alderman Schmidt

It is actually called a secant wall that they are going to be using and it is sealed, it is thick, it is safe and the land that is set aside for Nashua to keep, this would likely be put over all of the land that we haven't been able to recover. It is a nice thick piece of soil over the top of it and it will be used by people at that point, completely clean. The best part for them is that it won't be dragged through the neighborhoods, it won't be, I mean we are talking about having to take this stuff up to Canada. So we are really talking about making it a dangerous trip. This really is a good solution for what we have got right now and it will be safe in the section that they are talking about for about 400 or 500 years and it is above the river, so we can pretty much count on that. Thank you.

Alderwoman Lu

Were you saying that the EPA actually recommends it being contained? I wasn't clear on that, whether they said it would be OK if they did or did they recommend it?

Mr. Cummings

The term I would use is it is the preferred alternative of the three alternatives that were studied in what is referred to as the EACA which is the Environmental Assessment that was done. That was the solution that was studied by their environmental technical experts that rose to the level that made the most sense.

Alderwoman Lu

So they did consider moving it.

Chairman Tencza

Alderwoman Lu, I will just remind you to speak into the microphone so that if anyone is watching at home they can hear your questions.

Alderwoman Lu

OK thank you.

Mr. Cummings

Yes looking to remove all the hazardous material off-site was one of the alternatives that was studied.

Alderwoman Lu

Thank you.

Mr. Cummings

One last comment if I could or if you want to stay on this subject, happy to stay on it but I also want to make sure I am clear on some of these. And I apologize, there's so many various parts to these topics that I don't want to be accused later on of not including a detail. So I will just say whatever I think is important at the time and just know in advance that if I come back to you with a detail you know it was just by the sheer ignorance on my part of not getting everything out in time.

The Mohawk Tannery Site, the developer has requested a TIF being part of this project so it is something I want to make sure that this body is aware of, that he, being the developer, wants the City to be a financial partner. So some of these points that you are making, although we won't have direct regulatory oversight of this cleanup, he needs our financial commitment if this body is the body that has to approve any TIF, we have not begun to even negotiate a TIF. But he has made it clear that he would like to have some assistance to make this project work. So if we were to do that, I think some of these ideas, so long as they were brought forward early enough, could be built into the plan. I just want to make sure everyone was aware of that.

Chairman Tencza

And so if I could just make a comment about the Mohawk Tannery, I mean I think there are two distinct considerations here for this project. The first is the clean-up, the environmental clean-up that needs to happen. The second is the nature and character of the development on that site to preserve the neighborhood so that it doesn't become or change or alter the character of the neighborhood. Is the City going to have any leverage with the developer as to what kind of housing goes in there, what kind of building goes in there? Is the developer set on, I mean when you said 200 or 300 units, I don't know if that's a high rise or if that is more townhome type of development? Do you have any sense of that?

Mr. Cummings

So to answer your question, I don't want to necessarily use the term "leverage" but he's looking for the City to partner with him and so being a good partner, could we have some ideas that we would like to see brought forward? Of course this developer is looking to maximize density, and that's critical. And it critical not because the developer wants to make more money. The reality is that there is going to be some herculean cost associated with the cleanup of this project and to be able to make the math work, you are going to need to get as much units as you can out of the project. So typically when you are looking at a project like this, you are looking at some sort of mid-rise type of construction. Think of what we just built on the Hudson line, the Renaissance Project, it would be similar in nature to that. So the Building Code allows us, at this point, to do podium steel construction, stick on top, four or five floors, that really maximizes your density on a per acre count. That is probably what this developer will be ultimately trying to pursue; understanding that there might be different phases.

Of course, if there is a certain area of the land that it may work better to do some sort of rowhouses, or townhouses, to blend it, that obviously would be part of the conversation. But my understanding and what has been shown to the neighborhood and what the developer has conveyed to us, is it would be three or four, depending on how they are laid out, hundred-ish type units with the associated parking that you would need and then a pad site accommodating about 50,000 square feet of commercial retail.

Again, this is really all kind of nebulous because until you actually know how much space you have to work with that is from a site pan perspective and they haven't gotten to the point of actually developing site plans yet. These are all very high level concept plans based on contours and wetlands and what is allowed. Part of the issue here is there is only one curb cut allowed off of the Broad Street Parkway by Federal Mandates so making it work with the one curb cut, making it work with the City's drainage. As you can see, this right here is not a parcel of land that's developable, although you could develop some of it. It is actually technically right-of-way and that is because it is the drainage, the storm water containment for this whole roadway. So making that work has to all come into play which may affect the commercial square footage that is being projected. Maybe only 30,000 square feet actually gets developed but at a very high level, that's what they are talking about.

Alderman Laws

One curb allowed; is that just for this particular section of the Parkway? So future dreams of having an offramp at Franklin Street?

Alderman Clemons

No that's allowed. Franklin Street is allowed.

Alderman Laws

That is allowed.

Alderman Clemons

Yes.

Mr. Cummings

You can do a connection, I don't want to say Franklin Street per se, because it may not actually be Franklin Street. But yes, in that area you can do a connection. But a curb cut for a private sector development, there is only one anticipated on the Broad Street Parkway and it is roughly right in around here. The thought process is it would be common into this area right here which would allow you to go off into the Mohawk Tannery or you could go of into and this is another ownership over here, this is owned by JKS Realty. This is Fimbel Door and then this is the Warren Trust which is the former Mohawk Tannery.

And there is a concept although I can't speak to it because I am not sure where it stands today, but the concept would be once this roadway was in, for development to occur all along here which has always been understood to be developable land although some newer residents may not know what. So that is something that you should just be aware of.

They look at this and they see open forest or woods and they think it is always going to be open space and that is not necessarily the case. This is actually land privately owned that has concept plans that show development on it. So just so you are aware.

Moving on unless there are other questions on Mohawk Tannery. Again all of these conversation topics tonight, we could have whole meetings on. So another project that is near and dear to the City is the Downtown Riverfront TIF. And so my office is beginning to implement the Downtown Riverfront Master Plan that was done back in 2017 which studied

basically from the Millyard to BAE almost on the Hudson Line, this downtown riverfront area. That plan calls for some amenities and environmental stewardship and some improvements in and along the waterfront. To implement that plan, the City in I would say 2018, maybe late 2017, implemented a Tax Increment Financing. What is Tax Increment Financing? That is at a very high level where you have a base valuation that you collect taxes on.

Then based on new development or new growth, you create an increment that bumps up higher than the base valuation. You dedicate, or earmark if you will, that increment to be spent in a certain district for certain reasons. So the City has basically from the Broad Street Parkway Bridge to and you can't really see it right here, but believe it or not this is a rail line and there's a pedestrian bridge right here, that connects from this side of the Riverwalk to this side which is a Riverwalk per se but isn't necessarily as developed. The thought process is that we would develop a Riverwalk along this whole area here, transferring back right here, coming along here and then adding in some additional amenities like a floating dock by the Greeley House, making ADA accessibility important, doing environmental stewardship.

One of the things you may have noticed is there is a lot of tree removal going on right now which is opening up the river and its views. There was, in the fall, a huge effort to remove invasive species, that effort will continue. That is going to be a 3 year effort. The whole reason is to unlock the potential of this area. How were we able to fund this project? So as you all know Lofts 34 is 200 units of our apartments that command some of the highest rents in the City. Prior to Loft 34 being built, this was an abandoned mill building, former Nashua Corp. Factory I believe that was sold to a developer, Brady Sullivan, that came in did this \$20 million plus housing project. So we were able to take this development, the increment from it and dedicate to improving the riverfront down here.

We are going to be moving forward with designing all these mini-projects. I believe there's like 12 of them along the riverfront here. We are looking to finance the project through a bond which will be coming before this body once we get to that stage and we would be looking for – right now the TIF collects approximately a million dollars a year. We would be looking to bond about \$750,000.00 or in that range and then the other remainder be kept aside for maintenance and operations yearly. So it would be mowed, snow removal, general maintenance, lighting, clean-up, whatever needs to occur for a couple hundred thousand dollars is the rough accounting of how that TIF fund are going to be used. This has been a project that the PEDC has been working on over the years with me and it something that we are now in the stage of having VHB begin the preliminary design that will occur through May. We will then be looking for final design in the fall

If this Board authorizes a \$15 million dollar bond, we would be looking to start construction on all these 12-ish mini projects a year from this spring.

Chairman Tencza

I'll ask a question about the bond, I'm sure it will come up. So the idea is for the City to bond this but then the debt service on the bond to be paid through the TIF each year so it would not be essentially adding to the tax rolls? Or to the tax payers?

Mr. Cummings

No and it wouldn't count towards your debt service either. It is separated and isolated and because of the TIF they way it is written statutorily, so it would be above and beyond your debt service and it would not even get counted toward your debt service because you have a separate revenue stream paying for it.

Alderman Clemons

Yeah so that's actually a very good plan just generally speaking because I would imagine that doing a project along those lines, there are some buildings down there that are still vacant and undeveloped, isn't that true?

Mr. Cummings

Absolutely.

Alderman Clemons

Can you point out where they may be?

Mr. Cummings

Two buildings of concern are these right here that I would suggest are prime sites for redevelopment, in fact, I had a meeting this morning with a group to talk about a couple of these buildings right here and how we could redevelop them. But this was recently purchased by Clock Tower and the thought process was to make apartments into this but it has become economically infeasible at this time. This is an abandoned building basically, it is privately owned but it has got no real future potential and it needs to be redeveloped.

Alderman Clemons

What about on the other side of the river, aren't there some – that building along Franklin Street always has my curiosity, right at the corner there right below, well both of them really.

Mr. Cummings

So this one is a former school which is on the market right now. I have actually been talking to the broker and this is a 40,000 square foot building built out as a classroom and it is privately owned and they are looking to lease it or sell it. This building right here, is this the building you are referring to? So this building was recently just purchased by Brady Sullivan and they are planning, so it's currently rented 100%, it is a two-story building. Attorneys are on the second floor and I believe it is a medical group that's on the first floor. My understanding is that Brady Sullivan is very happy with it being commercially driven and they are not looking to change that. However, if the time comes they would be looking to convert it into two units, residential units. Again but they are in no rush to do that, they are very happy with how it is performing right now. The reason why they actually bought this building was the associated parking lot that goes with it over here. So they really bought it for parking.

You do have a future development site right here that you should be aware of. It is owned by John Stabile who built out these apartments right here; it is 100 units, that's referred to as Cotton Mill. And this is a pad ready site that you could get you know in the order of 60 to 80 units on this as well. It's currently just land. So that is a future development site along the riverfront. I don't know if that answers your question Alderman Clemons.

Alderman Clemons

It definitely does. I think by putting in the investment down there in to things like the Riverwalk and making sure that with the other projects and the maintenance, you are going to just naturally have a space that people are going to want to be. I think it is going to raise the value of that TIF even more. So that bond will essentially the TIF will pay for that bond probably faster than the debt service scheduled for it. The only thing I think as we look into those kind of developments as they come along, as Alderman Laws brought up earlier, I think the connection to Franklin Street or Front Street would be very important to have that conversation as well. Is that part of the bond as well, making that connection?

Mr. Cummings

The \$15 million dollar bond has not been part of the conversation to date though it could be and we designed the TIF to contemplate that at a future time. To your point, if we say future development come along and maybe we did one \$15 million dollar bond in three years from now. Part of the reason we held back is because this is on the short list for the State, so the State is looking to fund this. So if we were to see that come to fruition and we saw this new development, maybe we would authorize a new bond for \$3 million dollars and use that TIF funds to partner with the State. As you may or may not know, typically when the State does a project it is an 80/20 split, so we would need to come up with a 20% match. Maybe that is how we would do that match to make it work. My understanding is this connection is four to six years away on the timeline.

Alderman Clemons

Great thank you.

Alderwoman Lu

Could you just clarify the connection? What are you talking about? The connection between Factor and Front? Is that what you said?

Mr. Cummings

So the Broad Street Parkway, I am going to turn on an aerial view.

Alderwoman Lu

I do understand what I am seeing.

Mr. Cummings

And depending on how it is designed, the biggest issue is actually the rail crossing. This is a rail line right here and so depending how you want to cross it, the thought process is to make a connection at grade which would be your most economical way to do it is to connect here. This is the Carol Property, or as I understand it, you would come in right off of here and this is at grade as well. But nonetheless, no matter what you do, you'd have to figure out how to do the crossing here or the crossing here. You are looking, at, the numbers I'm hearing is anywhere between \$2 to \$4 million dollar type project.

Why would you do this? Because it would create and I am zooming out here a way of moving travel from east to west in a much easier way. So you would be taking all of this traffic here and creating a way for them to get out to the highway.

Alderwoman Lu

OK thank you. And just one other question I had for you, I may have misunderstood you. Did you say now that we have the VBB.

Mr. Cummings

Contract.

Alderwoman Lu

What is the VHB?

Mr. Cummings

I'm sorry, yes, the VHB is an acronym for the civil engineering firm, a multi-disciplinary civil engineering firm that we have hired to be the project manager to help us implement the Master Plan that was developed in 2017.

Alderwoman Lu

The Riverfront?

Mr. Cummings

The Riverfront Master Plan.

Alderwoman Lu

Thank you.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. Isn't that already an authorized crossing where Franklin goes into that other street? Charles Street?

Mr. Cummings

Right here is an emergency access. I only know this because I had to look into it. So this access right here is for emergency egress purposes only. We would have to upgrade this crossing to make it a full public access.

Alderman Clemons

Would we need to get, necessarily would we have to get permission from the railroad company though to do that? Because I know that they, in the past, have been to put it nicely, difficult to work with. So my thought process was that's already a crossing so I don't know if made sense to just do it there. But again I am throwing out hypotheticals this evening.

Mr. Cummings

It is definitely worth exploring because it is already here and then you just have to come in and turn and go here. And absolutely that is one of the ways you can absolutely do it. It's just what the conversation will be like with the rail company, which is always an interesting one.

While I have your attention on the TIF and we could talk about other areas if you would like, but something I do want to point out and I do want to make sure it is on the public record. I have heard over the last year or so that folks are very frustrated with the private parking lot that occurs right here.

So this is a City-owned lot and this is very confusing for people and I understand why. You don't necessarily know that this is a private sector lot. So this is a privately owned lot to support the functionality that occurs over in this building right here. This is a private sector lot that actually supports this building over here. But this is public and then this is public. So one of the thoughts that may make sense it to consolidate this area as just being your future supply of parking for Main Street and make this all public parking to support the corridor when the time comes. So it is something that I want to make folks aware of and to think about and you know, I don't have anything more to say about on it than just that. But the TIF plan does call for this area to be public parking. And it is in the TIF District.

Alderman Laws

Probably an unfair question but the ghost of James Veyo was speaking to me right now. Have you seen his concept plan for that particular lot?

Mr. Cummings

Yes.

Alderman Laws

Is there any traction for that whatsoever, is there any reason to look into it, do you think we could do something?

Mr. Cummings

Oh sure, I think a scaled down version of what Mr. Veyo put together is achievable. I think it is as anyone who knew Mr. Veyo....

Chairman Tencza

For the rest of us who do not know his plans for that lot, could you just fill us in?

Mr. Cummings

Yeah what Mr. Veyo outlined and for those of you who don't know him, Mr. Veyo worked for me for a period of time as the downtown specialist. He is an architect by grade. So he came up with the concept plan which basically took this, using the grade to your advantage and suggested that this be structured parking and making it common parking unlocking the potential of this whole area right here for future development. That was basically at a very high level what his plans suggested. It would take the cooperation of the Library Trustees, it would take the cooperation of the owner of this and it would take the cooperation of the owner of this and it would take the cooperation of the City here and here. And this is the best part, then it would take this part, that's the City right there, and then this own individual parking lot right there which is a privately owned space.

A lot of people don't realize that, but yes, that is a single parking spot to support this building right here. I would never recommend as an urban planner that a City ever do this. But I understand cities evolve in a certain way and decisions were made and so, yes, this was done. So consolidating all of this to clean up this urbanization that occurred over decades is a good thing to do. My whole point to you and why I am bringing it up to you now, you have a source of funds, so it doesn't come off of the property tax base of the general City but using TIF funds as an infrastructure improvement to unlock the potential.

Because if you do consolidate the parking in this area you do unlock the potential development of all this as well as anything in or around here, including even if you wanted to develop frontage right here. I would recommend that you look at doing a building right here on the City lot and this doesn't accommodate a lot of parking space. You could just make that over here as another deck and it could help improve your downtown immensely.

So it is those types of conversations that need to occur and I hope you will be part of those conversations as we move forward. Something I should note, I skipped over this, but my office is charged with overseeing the revolving loan fund for the City. We typically refer to it as an RLF. It is just very briefly a financing tool that is available for the private sector. I want to note our job is not to subvert the private sector and so often the way I manage this type of tool is that it is to provide gap funding. So we typically look for a local community bank to do a certain loan to value commitment. The example I often give is if you have a painter who is looking to buy a truck and expand his or her paint crew and they need \$100,000.00 and the bank is willing to loan \$80,000.00 of that \$100,000.00. \$20,000.00 for someone is a lot of money especially if they have a family and a mortgage. So the thought process is, is maybe the City come up with \$10,000.00 or \$15,000.00 or 10 or 15% and then business owner only has to come up with 5 or 10%. That is a risk sharing type of model so that is how the Revolving Loan Fund Program works. It was capitalized through an Economic Development Grant, Economic Development Agency and EDA Grant from the Federal Government many decades ago that my office continues to administer that program. It is a good tool for folks, we have done 20 plus loans over the life of the program. Since my tenure being here, we have probably done 5.

Chairman Tencza

So Director Cummings if someone wanted to inquire about that, a business owner, just contact your office and you will point them in the right direction?

Mr. Cummings

Yes you could absolutely contact me but all of this is all up on our website, so you could tell somebody to go to the City's homepage, type in "Economic Development" and it would be under "Tools/Programs".

Alderwoman Lu

Do you have loan officers sometimes send people your way?

Mr. Cummings

Yes and to be clear and I hope Alderman Clemons appreciates this. I do not make the decisions. We have a third party underwriter who reviews the loan package and makes a recommendation to an advisory committee which is made up of commercial lenders, local community banks participate in this Committee. I am the Chair of that Committee but based on the Committee's approval we then move forward with the loan.

So next item is a little sensitive to talk about because it is an active negotiation so I am not going to speak in too great of detail unless we go into non-public, which I am happy to do to get into the real details of this. This has been depending on how you look at it, a blessing or a curse of my office, having to figure out how to move this project forward. Prior to my arrival, the City of Nashua authorized the development of this parking lot. This was something actually Mayor Donchess spearheaded when he was a member of this body and he got approved by this body but yet here we are today, how many years later? And we are still trying to get this site developed.

We issued an RFP for development probably about 3 years ago and we have had many conversations with differing perspective developers about what they would like to do with the site. There are two common thoughts as to what could occur here that folks have expressed interest in seeing; a hotel, residential development being the other, mixed use residential development. It is a tough site to develop, you wouldn't think of it as being a tough site to develop but it is when you start to understand some of these developers' business models. They need to have, they being some of these developers that have these business models, need certain requirements.

One of their requirements is to have a certain unit count. We work with these developers because they are well capitalized and they typically can bring a project to fruition. Yes we could work with mom and pop developers who are a little bit more entrepreneurial but oftentimes what happens in those cases is you don't actually see a project come to fruition or it comes at a much higher cost. So when you are working with a well-capitalized developer, they typically look for 120 units as a unit count when you are talking about residential housing. This site just falls shy of being about to provide that 120 units; somewhere in the order of 80 ish units at the most aggressive level is what he would see. So then you would need to assemble in some of these lots here or this lot here. That has not proven to be of interest to those who own the land. So hence here we are, where we are today.

Now some folks have suggested a hotel which I would love the idea of a hotel and we have talked to a developer who has expressed interest in a hotel but the economics don't work. The City would have to be willing to subsidize the hotel at a certain dollar amount for a certain period of time to be able to make the economics of it work so a developer was willing to do it. I have received conflicting messages by both the administration and this body as to whether there is an appetite to do that or not. So here we are today, working with the developer who responded to the RFP just over the weekend; sent me a text message that they wanted to continue working to develop the lot and enter in a Memorandum of Understanding. So that's where I am with that.

Alderman Clemons

I think that's exciting news that there is somebody that is interested in that lot because like you said, it has been out there for a while. It would be great if it was a hotel. As an Alderman I can tell you that heavily subsidizing something that we do not currently have in our downtown is not something that I have any hesitation on. That is how you create a market, so that's just one Alderman's point of view.

I guess to follow that up I would welcome a conversation and if you need a sponsor for legislation let me know.

Mr. Cummings

I don't want to comment too much further on this anymore but if we went into non-public to talk about the details about this real estate transaction, maybe at another date, I would be happy to do that. If the body wants to pursue one use over another use, I just want to tell you the pros and cons and what the economic consequences of that would be. And then you can decide what you'd like to do.

I have been struggling to try to move this project forward. I received a text message from the developer from Florida on Saturday saying that he still wants to develop this site. He is bullish about it and really his thought process is, his text message said, "this is my foot in the door so I can do other projects and I want to do other projects in Nashua".

He is doing a lot in Manchester, he has to skip right over us, so it just makes sense for him to do a project here. So we should talk about what the ambition is that you'd like to see happen.

Chairman Tencza

And I think we will have time for that in the future when we get more details. I am sure we will have a non-public session to hear about that. And I don't think, I don't want to speak for the whole Board or even this Committee, but I don't think that there's one strong feeling. I mean I think a lot of people would like to get that parcel developed but whether it is housing or a hotel, I think everyone agrees that either would add to that area, to that neighborhood and to downtown. But I could be wrong, so please tell me if that's the case.

Alderman Laws

Correct me if I'm wrong here but people who currently own and operate a business there are leaning towards residential, right? Because I personally would prefer a hotel, I've said that a thousand times, I think Nashua's downtown is successful in spite of the fact that it doesn't have a hotel. I think a hotel would be a huge economic boon to the area. But if the people who already there and have been there for decades are resistant to it, then I feel like that's something we need to consider, certainly.

Mr. Cummings

If I may Mr. Chairman, so your comments are spot on. I am going to say a couple things. One, I think some of the small local businesses in and around that area don't like the idea of change. So whatever it may be, they don't want to see happen. I do know that they believe that this parking is critical for them and whatever happens there, they want to make sure there's ample supply, rightfully so. So we are sensitive to that. I do know that the folks along here have expressed a stronger desire to see residential because in Economic Development 101, retail follows rooftops. So if you were to build more residential, you are just building future demand for the retail. So it just helps their business model much more so than transient, though I think if you brought the right hotel in, and you designed it correctly you could have a lot of economic spinoff from this hotel. So I am not as sensitive to that as some of the retail uses are along here but I understand their concerns. You are correct to say that we have heard from the abutting businesses along here that they would prefer to see residential.

I will tell you that my recommendation would be to you to do a hotel over residential, because we have more than enough sites for future residential development. Having hotel development is a good thing in the downtown. My concern for you and the reason why I won't recommend it is because it comes at a significant cost where the City would need to subsidize the project, as opposed to a project that pencils right now and you could potentially earn money off it and reap the benefits of that and put it towards other projects that need to occur in the City. So you just need to know the economics of it before you make a decision. I think probably what would be best is that if I come back before you in the next, you know short order, the next meeting or the meeting after and we can go into a more substantive conversation of to what you would like to see happen there and what the tradeoffs may be.

Next up just quickly, passenger rail. So my office is charged with helping to bring the conversation of passenger rail to Nashua and the larger region beyond the City. We started this 3 1/2 years ago with the formation of a Committee trying to bring about advocacy and by no means was this Committee the sole reason why. But I would like to believe that it was Nashua's willingness to prioritize this and push this topic forward. That gave Concord the confidence to actually look at this project again,

To date, we are playing more of a secondary role where New Hampshire Department of Transportation is out currently with an RFQ looking to seek civil engineers for the design development phase of this project which would be the project that does the final permitting and financial analysis necessary. So you could look to bring passenger rail from Lowell all the way up the Capital Corridor, whether it actually terminates in Concord or Manchester or Nashua is still to be determined. But you have the study of this now occurring which will give us some concrete answers that we will be able to come back and at least provide this body with some options.

I will say that the Department of the State of New Hampshire have made it clear that they want to see a value capture model at the local level as part of the program. What does that mean, value capture? That's just a fancy way of saying they would like to see a TIF so that there is local support for the operations of a passenger rail. They being the State of New Hampshire, are very concerned about the operational subsidy that would be necessary to move this project forward. The idea of the Capital Corridor for those of you who may or may not know, is to have two steps in Nashua; one in South Nashua closer to the mall and the other one is an area that we just acquired and we built out a future rail stop in the more inner core area of the City right here which is 25 Crown Street. That would be servicing the downtown area and this all ready to go, so we have done our part to try and position ourselves as best as possible for when we can effectively see passenger rail come into the State.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. I know that there was one parcel down the end of Spit Brook Road that there was interest in integrating with a rail where I think the chemical plant used to be. But with Sears closing down in February, have you had any conversations with the mall?

Mr. Cummings

Yes.

Alderman Clemons

Are you able to speak to that?

Mr. Cummings

The mall has expressed an affirmative interest in seeing rail occur. So here's the interesting part, Seritage which is the Real Estate Group that owns the Sears parcel, so Sears Holdings transferred their real estate into another real estate holding company called Seritage which is this parcel that I have highlighted right here. This would be the site of where rail could occur on what I will refer to as the mall property. Now we have spoken to both Seritage, Seritage is interested in seeing rail happen there, but then more importantly, Simon Mall, which is the owner of the Pheasant Lane Mall, the common area if you will is interested in seeing passenger rail at this site. So this could be another site in play, though it is not technically studied because when the Capital Corridor Plan was being developed you know quite a few years back that first contemplated this, the mall and Sears were not as interested at the time as having it housed on-site.

Now why would that be kind of an interesting opportunity? Because this site right here you can have built-in residential throughout this whole complex right here. So malls, particularly enclosed shopping malls of a million square feet are going through a shift and becoming more mixed use environments. It is happening more and more across the nation. Now I will say, being that we are the State of New Hampshire, we have a very favorable retail climate.

So it is not as hotly pursued in this corridor as it is in other parts of New England. But I know Simon Mall is thinking about this very aggressively and wants to figure out a way to make this environment a mixed-use environment for the years to come. So that would be an interesting proposition.

Now the tradeoff on that is you have this area up here which is the or is traditionally of thought as the Southern Nashua Rail Station. This is the former Dow Chemical Site, 44 acres, broken up into like 3 different parcels. It just recently got sold to a local ownership group. They have contemplated rail occurring on their site right here on this parcel and they have designed for it and then they have thought about doing other types of uses on the remainder parcels here. Now the interesting thing that you should be aware of, is this is a former Dow Chemical Site, that 44 ish acres of that 44 ish acres, about 10 of this land right here would be dirty. Again, they consolidate in place like we talked about with the Mohawk Tannery; they did the exact same thing at the Dow Chemical Site. So of the 44 acres, they got a clean bill of health for the Southern Tier and then this area right here is all where the contamination is, consolidated, capped, stabilized, 10 ish acres. Now DES and other regulators have made it abundantly clear that they believe residential development could occur on this site, but the previous owner, being what they did there, would never want to see any residential on any of this development here. So that is just something that you need to be aware of.

When we talk about future rail, there still needs to be a conversation whether Nashua is going to have one or two stations. The Capital Corridor Plan calls for at least two stations, but you may only look to do one. So those types of mechanical exercises and the analysis is currently what is going to happen by New Hampshire DOT as they develop a plan and program that will hopefully bring passenger rail to fruition.

My last comment on this will be is we do have an active group of Nashua Transit Rail Committee Members working on this. They meet monthly, Steve Michon is the Chair of that group and they meet regularly here in the City to keep advancing this initiative and they have done a lot of work on this.

Next topic? So the next topic is a little bit newer of a conversation and it is something I wanted to telegraph for you to make you aware of and by no means is it 100% we are going to do this, I would welcome your feedback. The idea would be to bring about a TIF I am having trouble with GIS here, I apologize, in the East Hollis Street corridor. So there has been a lot of development that has occurred in this area of the City as of recently. More is going to continue to occur, the thought process would be as to make this area, this East Hollis Street area, going all the way down to Main Street, this area right in through here, pretty much along the Heritage Rail Trail East Project. For those of you who are familiar with it, the abutting parcels of this area kind of just gently showing what it would be so you have an idea, putting this in a TIF.

Part of the reasons why we are thinking about doing this is to make traffic improvements in and along this roadway here, which has seen some development and we know has been a concern. But ultimately the thought process is this is a ripe area in the inner core of the City that could really use some attention and to dedicate some resources to it so you can yield higher and better uses than what is currently there today.

Chairman Tencza

May I just ask a question generally about the TIF's. Is the only current TIF that we have now the Riverfront Master Plan?

Mr. Cummings

Correct.

Chairman Tencza

So is it something that the City utilized before the Riverfront Master Plan?

Mr. Cummings

Yes in a very limited way the City in I am going to say 2004, 2006 timeframe had a TIF from Main Street to essentially Margaritas, right here. They did that for this project that came about right here. And that was the start of the TIF concept that came about with the Riverfront trail right here. So all we did actually in 2017 was take this current TIF and expand the boundaries and made it bigger. That's all we really did. So to answer your question in two parts, did the City utilize before the 2017 Master Plan? Yes in a very limited way and we just leveraged it in 2017 and expanded it. The City has no other TIF's in any other areas of the City.

So the Mayor has currently asked me to develop a TIF plan and to start putting the technical details together. In lead up to that, I had a conversation with PEDC this past fall where we had a very lengthy discussion and we drew out boundaries as to what folks would like to see occur. We talked about the types of uses that you would like to see for the money. Again, at a later date I could come back and present that all to you. I just want to make sure that everyone is still comfortable now that we have a new body, with the overall concept of an East Hollis Street TIF to again ultimately look to redevelop this area of the City.

Alderwoman Lu

If I could just ask, could you remind me the pros, that's a tax incentive funding?

Mr. Cummings

Increment.

Alderwoman Lu

Increment. Why are they new? How did this work used to be done or what are the pros and cons. And another question I have is you had said that if there's a bond involved in any of the development, then if there is a TIF involved, you can't pay the bond payments with the TIF.

Mr. Cummings

You can. No what I believe I said is it doesn't count towards you debt service. So how do I explain that differently? The City, I don't know, rough numbers, the City has debt service of between \$10 and \$13 million in any given year, right, approximately that the debt service for the City?

Alderwoman Lu

Which is the interest and principal they are paying?

Mr. Cummings

On authorized debt.

Alderwoman Lu

Outstanding?

Mr. Cummings

That's right. This would not be lumped into that bucket, does that make sense?

Alderwoman Lu

The Tax Increment Revenue would not be not be put into that bucket, the revenue would not?

Mr. Cummings

The bond, the \$15 million dollar bond.

Chairman Tencza

The payments for the debt on that bond would not be included in the same category as the rest of the City's general debt.

Mr. Cummings

That's right, that is exactly right.

Alderwoman Lu

Ok. So how do you pay off, how is that servicing ...

Mr. Cummings

There is a separate account dedicated to the revenue and it is set aside and it accrues and it is that revenue that goes towards paying the debt.

Alderwoman Lu

And it is paid on schedule, yearly?

Mr. Cummings

Yeah, yeah, yeah, oh yeah.

Chairman Tencza

It has got to be. They know where to find us if it is not.

Alderwoman Lu

Yes I am just trying to get an idea of how it, you know, why it is done that way.

Mr. Cummings

So typically right so why is it done and typically, and I think East Hollis Street is a good example of why you do it. It is because for whatever reason over the years, East Hollis Street has never risen to the level and I would probably argue because, particularly this area of the City, is more of a traditional industrial area. So it didn't have the advocacy, it didn't have the attention, it didn't have the spotlight on it. So it did not have infrastructure improvements that were necessary and there is no fault to be assessed, that's just what came about. So whatever may have happened, so great example, here 10 Spruce Street. This is a development site in the future. Now there may be a water line that runs to this that is 100 years old and is only four inches in diameter. And to service the future use of this, you may need to run a new water line.

Now the developer may not be able to afford that infrastructure improvement, so you use TIF type funds for that infrastructure improvement, where you run a water line along Spruce Street here with stubs off of all of it so for future investment. And you use the funds from the TIF for that because it will then be the catalyst for future investment along the abutting properties.

So you could do that with traffic calming measures along East Hollis Street. You could do it with sewer pipe necessary for, let's say, a hotel that wanted to come into this area right here and the sewer line wasn't big enough to accommodate it. And we already talked about the fact that the economics of a hotel is challenging in and of itself. A City can make that type of public infrastructure improvement with TIF funds and that is the pro for why you do this. Now to be fair, why do you not do it? And the con and the more conservative minded folks will say it is an accounting scheme if you will where you are basically just setting aside money that is already coming and prioritizing it. And there's some truth to that but politically an elected group of people came together and said, we are prioritizing this area in a certain way because we believe in it, we see the future value in it, so therefore it is getting this special designation.

So you do all of this work in advance, you have to put a plan together, you have to adopt a TIF Legislation that was a State Statute that created this tool and you have to take all these steps to position yourself before you actually even incur any of the benefits of the TIF.

Alderwoman Lu

Ok, thank you.

Alderman Clemons

Yeah just to add to what Director Cummings had said, the other thing about it too is usually you would want to do those only in area where you knew there was going to be future development. For example, when the City did it at first over in Jackson Falls, they did it because they knew that there was going to be a building there that was going to add to the tax base. So you wouldn't want to just willy nilly do it somewhere and hope that you know there was going to be growth. You definitely want to do it in a place that you know that the tax base is going to rise. So that's just the one thing that I would add.

Alderman Laws

Capturing future value.

Mr. Cummings

Absolutely. You don't want to take the risk of not having that private sector partner.

Chairman Tencza

And just the example that you used before of the Riverfront TIF that we did, we put it in place right before the apartments on Franklin Street because we knew that was going to significantly increase the value of those parcels of land.

Alderwoman Lu

Yeah I think that phrase that Alderman Laws used "capturing future value" makes sense to me. I am expecting there to be some synergy and trying to leverage that ahead of ...

Mr. Cummings

And oftentimes you need to make those infrastructure improvements to unlock the potential value. So next, again, just kind of doing a little forecasting for you to talk about what I'll be working on over the next year or so is the Millyard, disposition of the millyard land. As we have brought the Broad Street Parkway to fruition, we still have some surplus land in this area and we are going to be looking to dispose of that land and so some of it we can do and some of it we have held back because we want to be a little bit more strategic, have a thought out plan. Back in early fall, late summer, this body escrowed money for a concept plan to be done. So I am going to be looking to go forward with developing some plans, which I hope, again, you will be part of that conversation that looks at developing this site right here and then this site down here.

What we have, and just to kind of keep it simple right now, the City owns this lot right here. I am just going to keep the acreage in a roundabout figure. So you have this lot right here and then is currently owned by Eversource. We are currently in a P&S to swap land where we are going to move this substation up to this corner. So just imagine a line right here and this substation will become the City's land. So then we will be looking to develop this whole area right along here, which equals about 3-ish acres. Now with that being said, it is complicated because the City owns this, Eversource owns that but the City will own it and then the City owns this. The City owns the building on top of the land on this parcel and then the City owns this right here, this parcel. So we are currently working through the various outstanding issues to be able to make this an attractive offering to the private sector with the development potential. But you know over the coming years, you will look to see an RFQ go out where we are looking to work with a developer for about 3-ish acres right on this site here.

And then down along here, you have this area of land and you have this area of land, which have future development potential. How do we work with that in coordination with this? So I am very upfront and clear. We have folks currently using these buildings now and we need to make sure we are thinking about what their uses are and we accommodate their needs as we look at an overall plan for the millyard. We will absolutely be having these concept plan type conversations now with the anticipation of trying to go out for an RFP sometime over the next two years, probably the way it is trending, it will be year two.

Alderman Laws

So there's a community formed and plans potentially to put a dog park somewhere in this area, how does that work into your plan.

Mr. Cummings

So I would be very careful about this part because the area that you are referencing is not under City control. The City has Mine Falls Park right in along here and then you have the Millyard Associates which owns this area of land and I'll turn on aerial view. So this would be the area if the Millyard Associates were to agree to it would be the future dog park that people have been discussing, which I think is a great idea and a good use because this land is not just in a flood plain, it's in a flood way making it very difficult to develop on. So future development potential of this land is, I'm not going to say impossible, because if you are willing to spend the money you could do it, but it is not easy.

But with that being said, it's not like a piece of land that the City has a fee interest in already. So whatever comes about would need to be worked out with the Millyard Associates. But this is the parcel that you were referencing.

Alderman Laws

It's also incredibly close to the water so there would be an environmental concern as well.

Mr. Cummings

It is all environmentally driven; this is going to be a very environmentally driven conversation. Well since we are here, we might as well talk about parking. So for better or for worse, parking falls underneath the purview of Economic Development which I do think makes sense strategically. If you are talking about developing your downtown; parking is such an integral component of it. I can't tell you how many real estate deals I work on day in and day out that the magical question is parking and how do you solve parking? And so we are getting creative to unlock the potential of that asset that the City owns a lot of for the private sector and the public sector's benefit is really an economic development issue. But the management of it, it's very raw and emotional issue. People are very sensitive about parking. I understand this, I work very closely with people day in and day out talking more about parking than I ever thought possible.

The City owns a parking lot right here which you may have heard in the news recently that lease has expired on it and the City is taking back active management and control of. With that being said, there are office buildings right here where there needs to be some sort of parking plan in place for the support of these buildings. So we can't lose sight of that and when we are developing this area, we need to make sure we have a communal answer to parking. I often say as you are redeveloping your downtown, you need to start thinking of parking as a utility for the greater good you provide this service or this community asset. So like water, like sewer, parking needs to be a common good utility that one thinks of in a downtown area where you want to redevelop in a mixed use type setting and have a more built out urbanized environment where it is not strict development, you need to not think of parking from a private perspective where you are looking to have on-site controlled parking. But it be more of a communal asset that is shared by the whole for the greater good.

Nashua is on the cusp of this issue and it will be very interesting to watch how the conversation unfolds over the coming months as to how we handle it. But thinking of this as a communal parking lot to support all of the development that I just talked about, and maybe it is not here but it is somewhere else, maybe it is up here. I am not going to get into how it happens, we should have design professionals, civil engineers, architects tell us what makes the most sense, but understanding what we could do to unlock the potential development of all of this acreage by making parking a communal asset is going to be my ultimate recommendation to you and to everyone. So more to come on that. I will say parking operations and parking enforcement was consolidated into my department over the last couple years. We have, I think, done a pretty good job of taking that consolidation. There have been bumps in the road and by no means are we doing it perfectly but I think we have, for the most part, done it reasonably well.

Parking enforcement prior to my office taking over the management of it, was running at a deficit and I am proud to say we are running at a surplus now. And we are continually looking to institute best practices in parking management. So with that being said, we have selected a vendor and I am hoping to get a contract before you to bring in a third-party professional. We will be recommending Desman to you. If you look up Desman Consulting, they are the national group that does parking studies and they will be hopefully coming in and over the next six months making some recommendations on how we should be handling the management of our parking moving forward. So that is a contract that will be going to Finance Committee hopefully in February. We will be looking to move that forward as quickly as possible.

In addition to that, we haven't selected the vendor, but we will be looking to do a deferred maintenance study. This is more of an engineering exercise, particularly structural engineering, where we will be looking at the assets that the City owns; parking lots, parking garages, and seeing what we need to do to be able to maintain the building, the structures in particular, the garages. I can't stress this enough to you, it makes more sense to maintain the current structured parking than we have than to build new structured parking.

The costs are astronomical. So if we can get as much life out of those structures; and I will say that the City of Nashua has done a great job in maintaining those structures. Compared to a lot of municipalities, this City actually I would say 10-ish years ago put about \$1 million dollars into those garages. But we need to make sure that we are continually, every year, doing something along those lines so you get as much life out of those parking structures as possible. So with that being said, we will have a deferred capital maintenance study going on in roughly the same period as the parking management study.

Chairman Tencza

Questions on parking?

Alderman Laws

I was going to say thank you, I was going to save it for afterwards, but I just wanted to say that Director Cummings and Alderman Clemons have agreed to figure out this dilemma with the 2:00 AM drinking and the 2:00 AM overnight parking ticket and that we will come to an amicable resolution before passing the ordinances that will get downtown employees \$25.00 overnight parking tickets just for the virtue of working late.

Alderman Clemons

It's a good point that you brought up Alderman Laws and it is not something that I had actually thought of. It is good because even though it is not going to come before this Committee, it will come before Personnel but I think that the discussion behind that Ordinance and I hope you can give me a little leeway Mr. Chairman will bring about – what I want to see happen here is obviously I want to see that happen but I want to see it happen with good policy behind it. I think we need to look at every angle at it and I think we might be able to figure out a way to solve that problem. With that said, we should have some discussion and see where we can move on that.

Alderwoman Lu

Mr. Cummings, the whole group of Aldermen got invited to a meeting with the tenants of that part of the millyard and it got cancelled and I don't think it's been ... have you had a chance to meet with them?

Mr. Cummings

Mm-hmm.

Alderwoman Lu

They sound like they never knew that their landlord was paying that and part of their lease was at risk or their rent was at risk of going up. What do you think of that? What do you think the City may – did we ask the owner to make sure that they were aware that this was coming up?

Mr. Cummings

Yes. I am not going to elaborate too much and I will say it is because you all should be well aware that there is potential litigation over this issue. So without going into non-public I am going to keep my comments at a very high level other than to say I have met with the tenants and actually Alderwoman Schmidt along with Alderman O'Brien. And I am very sensitive and very much understand their concerns and the issues that they raised. I can only tell you that we had actively tried to work with and we will continue to want to work with the owner of the office buildings; this millyard, this one here and this one here to try to come up with amicable resolution.

We have signaled to him and continue today to tell him that we will work with him to allow him to rent however many permits he may like in any configuration that he would like. We just need to understand what it is that he needs; that information has not been provided.

Alderwoman Lu

I didn't realize that that meeting had gotten rescheduled so I was trying to get some background information. So thank you.

Alderman Clemons

If I could, it is my understanding that in order for the City to charge anything in those two parking lots that legislation would have to come forward.

Chairman Tencza

That was my understanding as well. And if I may Director Cummings, I mean no one is being charged at those parking lots now and everyone is parking there still. The City owns it, the City I assume had to plow it and take care of it and make sure it was clear over this past snowstorm at least. That is my understanding as well that currently under the Ordinances, we are not allowed or there is no authorization to charge either a lease fee or charge for parking there. And I don't know but I don't think, I don't know what the temperature of the Board is for installing those at that time either.

Mr. Cummings

So I wouldn't recommend doing anything at this time. Wait for the parking management plan to come back; have a third-party independent professional come in and make some recommendations on how to handle it. And then it is up to you as to whether you want to actually pursue those recommendations or not. Anything that occurs over there will need the authorization of this body. And nothing is going to happen over there until that occurs. I made the mistake early on not understanding or realizing that this lot hadn't been designated as a Zone 3. Shame on me; I assumed that when we entered into a lease with the private owner for that map and parcel at the same time as we are entering into that lease would have designated the lot. Because if there was a default on the lease, we would need some way to manage it sort of like we are now in this situation where the lease has expired and we now need to actively manage that parking lot. We should have a plan in place on how to do that.

I think it makes sense you know serendipitously enough that we have a parking management plan going on, we include this as part of the scope of work and we ask for their feedback. There is no skin off of our nose to wait six months; there is skin off our nose to wait a year; there's no skin off our nose to develop a good plan that is satisfactory to everyone, so we should do that.

Alderman Clemons

I would agree with that and I think waiting for the parking study to be done I think is a good idea as well. But I guess just for the ease of the people who are renting there, you know and I did send out an e-mail to that group that legislation would have to come forward. And as Corporation Counsel has told me, he did not see anything at least on the near horizon.

Alderman Schmidt

Thank you. Part of the parking study is going to be community input and that will be very important for many parts of the City but especially here but is undergoing change. So I think that you're right, I think after the study we will be able to make some good decisions.

Mr. Cummings

So Alderwoman Schmidt's point there will be significant public outreach, six stakeholder meetings, one of the stakeholder groups has already been designated to be the millyard. Another than has already been designated is the Library. I also suspect that the Downtown Improvement Committee would be another group that will get engaged; PEDC, Infrastructure, the Chamber. Part of the reason why it is going to take six months to produce this document, is because the scope has a significant amount of public input that we are going to be looking for to help inform this decision or that the decisions that could potentially come about.

So moving on, just jumping back out, I kind of did the parking a little bit out of turn. Renaissance Downtown, this has been a project that's been ongoing for 10 plus years. The City was very fortunate to see essentially what we will refer to as Phase I come to fruition; 152 units developed right here. We are now currently activating this Phase which I will refer to as Phase II which you will look to see somewhere in the order of magnitude of 150 units, plus or minus on these two parcels right here off of Sanders Street. That will be the next Phase that will be occurring with the Renaissance Project.

Now for those of you who have been following this story from its beginning will note that it was actually a much story when this was originally conceived where this whole area was going to be redeveloped including this map and parcel. Although that could still come about, this is really a private sector driven conversation, it is currently being run, it is being operated and folks are happy. So I can't represent to you today that any of this will actually get developed, in fact, I would suggest to you it will never get developed with the Renaissance Downtown scheme that was originally developed 10 or 15 years ago.

But Renaissance Downtown as the master developer has put this program in place of 152 units working with a vertical developer of SMC. SMC is a very sophisticated, multi-family housing developer out of Watertown, Massachusetts. They both in partnership are again actively looking at trying to develop in this acreage right here, these two maps and parcels on Sanders Street. That would essentially close out the Renaissance Downtown's project. So it has been a 10-year horizon, but the City should be very proud of the fact that you are now seeing your vision realized for this area. It is great to actually be here at the end of the game, the end of the story and not here during the probably very frustrating beginning and middle part that folks had to go through. So that's Renaissance Downtown, happy to answer any questions that you may have on that project.

Alderman Schmidt

Thank you. The intersection in front of it, at Bridge Street and East Hollis, I know that's looking at some change that's coming. Do you have any idea when that will be started?

Mr. Cummings

So we are currently designing, on behalf of the State, East Hollis Street Traffic Improvement. It is looking like a ghostbuster symbol to describe it. So it is not a rotary in the most truest sense where this is an X. So there are three design concepts that were contemplated and this was all vetted in a prior session. It was an X and O and a third letter. It is escaping me at the moment.

Alderman Schmidt

I do know that the plans were on-line for a while and people were going through and saying, no, no.

Mr. Cummings

It is ultimately now what they are referring to as a ghostbuster symbol. I don't know if I can pull it up. Let's see if I can quickly pull it up for you. I'm never going to be able to get there. So that's the X, you know Alternative I. There's the O, that was Alternative II, ah the H as Alternative III. And this was the alternative that was submitted, that rose to the level of being the preferring alternative, that was ultimately submitted by DOT. NH DOT had some concerns and reservations and they ultimately recommended us go back and re-engineer it. We did that, our engineer came back and basically said, what you need to do is an O with a line through the middle, which is the ghostbuster symbol that is referred to now. So that is what is currently being contemplated in this area right here. To answer your I'm sorry, start of construction is probably, most likely 21 at the earliest.

So just general market and attract investment – something you should be aware of, my office is very active in trying to bring positive economic impact to the City. We do this by business retention and expansion and also attraction. My office is constantly going out and meeting with businesses to talk about what it is that they may need for expansion. As I alluded to earlier today, I actually met with one person who was looking at some blighted buildings in the downtown and how they might be able to redevelop them creatively. I met with a developer today looking to do multi-family housing. So I am constantly always out there, marketing the City to target audiences to try to bring about positive economic impact.

I have already kind of hit on parking, I'm not sure we want to talk about that again. Just general downtown redevelopment as I mentioned a few moments ago. We are in this administration and the Board of Alderman as well in concert with the Mayor have made it very clear that downtown redevelopment is a priority. Downtown redevelopment is different than what you would typically think of – classic retail is going away. So you need to use Arts, Culture and Entertainment as your anchors to try to drive positive economic impact.

One of the good examples of how we did that recently and it's a project I would like to replicate again, is we had under-utilized space at 14 Court Street. We made a small investment in \$100,000.00 and built out 9 artist studios. I am pleased to report to you that as of today, all 9 studios are rent. So that's great demand. We charge a rent, we treat it very much like the Hunt Building, the Hunt Library Building I should say, where we have office spaces that we rent out typically to smaller businesses that are looking for professional services type uses. We are doing the same thing with subgrade raw space at 14 Court Street, but really giving a home to artists and artisans,.

I see that as a pathway to the future as how you can take space and with minor economic investment, now I say minor I don't say \$100,000.00 casually, I understand that is a significant amount of money. But in comparison to other projects that we typically see and the type of money that we appropriate, that is a small pittance. And to be able to put that into positive economic use, just makes sense, especially because a lot of these buildings that I work on and I said this to someone the other day, I forget who. But typically for my office to be involved or for me to be involved, there is a problem with the project. If it was an easy project, if it was a market, private sector driven project then I wouldn't necessarily need to get involved. So there is going to be some buildings, and so part of my job is to identify buildings that are underperforming assets and prioritizes them.

I already mentioned earlier 10 Spruce Street; another one is Mulberry Street. This is, again, another building that has great potential but it is challenged from a market perspective. A private sector developer is not going to realize the return that they are going to want to get for the risk that they need to take. It is complicated, there are parking challenges. It's in reality a functionally opalescent building. So what creative solutions can we bring to help the nudge the private sector along; mitigate some risk, bring some creative financing to the project, give some relief on land use regulations, whatever needs to be to help push the private sector investment.

Similarly over here with some of these buildings over here, again, not only are they just old building with a lot of deferred capital maintenance. This whole area, being the millyard, was thought of as one single entity at one time. So what does that mean? That means under all this ground all your utilities are together and not separated and that is a huge economic challenge for a private sector individual to take on. And oftentimes you can't make the math work and the harder part you don't see the benefit of it. It is literally underground and so you don't really see the tangible benefit of separating the utility, separately metering, making sure you have the right type of size of the utility going in to the building. All of those things need to be laid, so you have a table set so you can actually spur the vertical construction that would happen on top which is much more achievable and much more practical to actually expect the private sector market to take on.

So you have some of these building over here that are challenged, then you have some priority sites. I mean the Court House was a project of mine and a priority that I am proud to say we have brought some good life to that building. We still need to look at squaring off the lot here and reintroducing the street grid but we do have Pennichuck coming into the downtown bringing 40 jobs and taking a 20,000 square foot building that was otherwise unoccupied and breathing new life into it. So these are some of the things that I have been focusing on from a re-development perspective and prioritizing some underperforming assets that the City has.

Alderman Laws

First off I think it is great that you are going to change the direction of traffic on West Pearl Street, that is excellent, thank you for that. Second of all, so low income housing is a huge issue. Are there any programs where, for instance Mulberry Street, when you were showing us the overhead. Is there anything that we can do as a City to maybe turn that into low income housing to help the citizens of Nashua who can't afford the exorbitant rates for rent?

Mr. Cummings

So the City is an entitlement community where we receive not only CDBG Funding, we receive HOME Funds that can be put towards low income housing or workforce housing or affordable housing, absolutely. When I use the term "creative financing solutions" that would be a source of capital that you could put into the conversation to help make a project pencil.

The unit count is only going to be so big and you need to yield so many units to get the return that you are looking for. If you can offer a subsidy, now granted it is a Catch 22 because as you offer this subsidy as a source of capital, in the next breath I am going to be saying I am going to be restricting your NOI. And so you need to be careful in how you do it, sometimes it is not used for that very reason, because if you restrict the NOI it may not be as attractive to you. So you've got to do that analysis, yes, to answer your question affordable housing on that site would be one of the sources of capital I would be using to help spur the private sector market. No question.

Alderman Laws

Thank you.

Mr. Cummings

So I guess lastly just to kind of talk about general, I have not hit upon the Elm Street Middle School. So as you are aware we are going to be constructing a new Middle School in a few years out from now but keeping in mind the future development potential in the repurposing of this structure is very important. One – it is in the inner core of the City; Two – it houses an amazing community asset that I don't think we want to lose sight of with the Keefe Auditorium. The Mayor, the members of the Board of Aldermen, as well as non-profit groups have already all approached me and asked me, when is an RFP going out? What are we doing? One of the concerns that I have, the way this building was constructed was to keep the Keefe operational mechanically, heat, electricity is all tied into the Middle School.

I don't want to put the City in a position where to keep the Keefe open you then have to keep open the Middle School. So I would like us to develop a good enough plan that we all agree to well in advance of the Middle School you know closing so you have a third party private sector developer ready to step up and do whatever it is that the vision may be that the City has for this land. Mainly so there isn't an undo burden on the City to keep the Keefe open, which I think is a priority that everyone has. I, over the next few months, will be developing an RFP looking to solicit just qualifications and visions that private sector developers may have for this site for this land area.

Alderman Clemons

A couple of things, I think that it is worth looking into keeping the gymnasium on that site as well because I know that it gets a lot of use. I mean the traffic that's there at night because people are using that; now granted we are going to have a new gym at the new Middle School. I just think that there is some worth there that we ought to look into.

Mr. Cummings

Is the gym here or here?

Alderman Clemons

It's in the back.

Mr. Cummings

There is two right? There's a gym in this corner here and then there's a big gym back here. Ok yeah that's what I thought. So which gym are you referencing?

Alderman Clemons

I actually didn't know that the other was there but I know the one in the back is the one that I was referring to. You know, the same thing with the cafeteria, there are some parts of that building that goes beyond just the theatre that I think are valuable assets to the City. And I think we ought to look at what their worth is and what we could do with them before we just decide that we want to give the whole thing away. Maybe we do we want to piece it out and keep the parts that are important to the community. I think there's a lot of potential there. That being said, have you has your office, back in 2011 we passed the Community Revitalization Tax Incentive Program. And I don't know that the District falls down into Elm Street. But that could be something that we relook at for that as well as the that building on Mulberry Street we were talking about earlier and other properties like that. That is a tremendous asset that this City has adopted that we could use for the private sector because basically what it does, for all intents and purposes, it says you rehab 75% of a building and we will freeze your taxes for a period of up to 15 years. That's the kind of thing that's a win/win. We don't lose tax revenue, we've got a brand new building that has some kind of future use and then in addition to that, it fully goes on to the rolls. So hopefully your office is promoting that. Legislation.

Mr. Cummings

Yes.

Alderman Clemons

If it is something that we need to restrict, because I know part of it was it had to be the center of town. Well I happen to believe that Elm Street is part of the center of town. So if that legislation could be a catalyst to a developer coming in and saying, yeah I would love to do that if I could take advantage of that, then I think it is a discussion worth having.

Alderman Laws

My question is kind of silly after that. I mean I think that's a brilliant idea Alderman Clemons. I've never actually been in Elm Street; I was a Fairgrounds kid. Are these courtyards in the middle here? I never knew those existed. And the second part, if you don't mind Chairman, has any developer expressed interest yet? Have you been having conversations?

Mr. Cummings

Yes I can tell you that there is interest from private sector developers. For what use? For what the details may be? I have not gotten into any of those conversations, but I have had more than enough developers ask me about when will the RFP be coming out? When will the RFP be coming out for this site? I've been hesitant to do it and I think Alderman Clemons raises a good point. I work for you so I would like to know what some of the community values that you may have or the community assets? I know about the Keefe one, so maybe we should have a separate conversation another time about how you envision this to be. Because I need that feedback so I can properly advise the private sector community when I am talking to folks as to what it is that you'd like to see happen there. I had never even thought about the gym as being a value and I absolutely understand that. That is a tremendous asset if you want us to write the RFP in a certain way, happy to do that. I can only tell you that everyone has made it abundantly clear to me that we have got to maintain and preserve and see if there's a pathway forward for the Keefe.

Alderman Clemons

Agreed.

Alderman Laws

I don't think the footprint is large enough but it would be great if we could put some kind of indoor sports center like the one that they have in Merrimack, something like that just to draw more families and revenue to the area. It would be a good area for a TIF too.

Mr. Cummings

I'm sorry, if I may, when you say an indoor facility like Merrimack? What is in that indoor facility, is it like 10 basketball courts all under one roof or something?

Alderman Laws

I think it is like three indoor soccer fields, something like that. I haven't been in well over a decade, probably more than that.

Alderwoman Lu

I was just wondering was there any consideration of using that for the administrative buildings that need to be replaced in Nashua?

Mr. Cummings

Such as? What do you mean, administrative like?

Alderwoman Lu

DPW and Police and all of those.

Mr. Cummings

So there's a couple of issues on that front. One is it is an old building and with that comes issues that the City would have to be willing to work toward solving. Secondly, each specific use, Police, DPW, whatever the case may be, they have their own special requirements that make it very unique, so it would be tough to repurpose this existing structure for those types of uses. But maybe, you'd have to explore it really in detail.

Alderwoman Lu

I wondered if it had been considered?

Mr. Cummings

No I don't know of anyone talking about it for that.

Alderwoman Lu

Thank you.

Alderman Schmidt

Thank you. I think for anything that would bring in heavy trucks or anything like that would be bad. But I can really see that as a Community Center, I can really see people in that neighborhood really benefit from keeping something there that feels like a community. So maybe that should be what we would be aiming for in the RFP would ask that this would be someplace where people want to come and be part of.

Alderman Clemons

Yeah and I would agree with Alderman Schmidt. I think that in the back of the building and when I say the back of the building I mean like along Chestnut Street. There are some one-story like additions. I have no idea what value they hold or what condition they are in.

Mr. Cummings

Oh this right here?

Alderman Clemons

No, no, those are the portables, yeah. I am talking about right there on the right like that kind of juts out behind Keefe. All of those are like one-story additions that go all the way down to that gymnasium in the back. When I think of a community center, I think the cafeteria is back there as well?

Mr. Cummings

This is the caf right here.

Alderman Clemons

And so when I think of a community center like that, you know, incorporating something like that into it with the gymnasium, Keefe, and maybe some of those back buildings. Where in the front, maybe you have more of a – you know – you could make it housing, you could do any number of things. The only thing that I wouldn't want to do is to put an RFP and make it so restrictive that, no we want to keep all this stuff and then somebody says, well I have no value. Because if somebody does want to come in and they want to, let's say, use that gymnasium and they want to keep that right as a facility, let's say if they want to put condos or if they want make it a big apartment building or something.

So I think we need to kind of keep an open mind as to what ... and then sort of come back and negotiate a deal that leaves some of their ideas open to the public and some of it can be private. So I wouldn't want to make it too restrictive but I think there are some things in there that definitely add to the community.

Mr. Cummings

So as I am listening to these comments I really appreciate actually because it helps give me guidance as to what you are looking for. If I was to set out some goals or some objectives, would realizing the highest and best use from a tax base perspective not be a goal or be a goal? I am only asking the question, right, I was originally coming at this thing, oh the City is going to try to maximize as much tax revenue on this site as possible. But if the City is willing to take not so much up front, tax revenue, but willing to partner with a non-profit or a third party to build a community center. Whatever the case may be, I'm just kind of talking out loud right now. You know, OK then you are foregoing the future tax revenue. If that is not a goal, or not as high of a goal as maybe preserving the gym, preserving the auditorium, making a communal cafeteria in the rear. I don't know I am just kind of talking out loud right? Then those are trade offs and I just kind of need that direction.

Alderman Laws

Obviously I am not going to speak for everybody else in the community but for me I think it would be a consideration, the tax revenue, but I don't think it would be a priority.

I think the priority for that particular building is to respect the feelings of the people who live in the neighborhood and surround it. If we can find an amicable relationship or project that will unite some tax revenue with keeping the neighbors happy; I think that'll be ideal.

Alderman Clemons

I mean ideally right any tax revenue that we get out of that is a net positive because it is a publicly owned building. You know if the whole front half turns into condos and the back half is all community center, including the Keefe, great because now you are a net positive. So I don't think maximizing the tax opportunity is necessary but I think that getting something out of it I think should be a goal definitely.

Chairman Tencza

And if I could Director Cummings, I think Alderman Lu mentioned moving other city departments into the building. I know the school department may be looking to move or expand their headquarters. I know that Dr. Mosley also talks about potentially trying to bring students back from other districts and create our own kind of special education program. I don't know what discussion, if any, there have been for that it would seem to, and I don't even know if they would need that whole space or if it could even be retrofitted to do something like that. I think if someone has an idea or wants to use that building, now is the time to bring it up.

Alderman Schmidt

I think with the changes that are coming about with the proposal for the Middle Schools that they are actually going to be able to move most of those children back into the new school and the updated schools. I don't know if this is everything but that's interesting. Do you think we could get a tour of this so we could get a look at what the spaces are so we can make some good idea, some good suggestions.

Chairman Tencza

That would be a great idea.

Alderman Clemons

Preferably after school hours.

Chairman Tencza

From what I understand they couldn't fit six more people in the building during school hours.

Mr. Cummings

So lastly just kind of the economic development plan for the City is at a very high level to bring more residential housing. We really, I can't stress this enough, almost every area that we have talked about, like I just learned today Lofts 34 is 100% occupied and has a wait list. I didn't realize that and that's the highest rents in the City. So every place that we talk to, there are wait lists, they are the highest rents being charged, which is good and bad, right? I mean so it's good because that makes me feel good about the economic health; obviously it is concerning for people who can't afford year over year, double digit and we are seeing double digit rent increases, that's just a fact.

Introducing more supply is really critical, making sure we are being very strategic and sensitive as to where that new supply is located. And also understanding that the new supply may not be what you think it was 20, 30, 40 years ago where the built environment, the expectations of the marketplace have changed dramatically.

There's reasons why now apartment complexes are not being built with swimming pools. So understanding what the market needs are and building towards the market needs is also important.

But ultimately having the readily available housing stock for the level of education attainment that we would want to supply our commercial industry is the ultimate goal. Because we have lots of larger employers here that could make strategic decisions to invest here, North Carolina, Texas, California and they are making decisions as to where they are growing and where they are going to be putting a couple extra heads. We need to be able to readily supply the labor pool and to do that you need to provide affordable housing options.

So throughout the City we are trying to make sure we are keeping housing in the back of our mind. With that being said, oftentimes the reason why people are sensitive to introducing housing is because it will more school children into the school district. Depending on where you are in the City, we actually have capacity in our school system to service children. Now I am not going to say that is in every district, but we have ample capacity in some of our neighborhood elementary schools where we could not be concerned with that concern that typically people talk about.

So with that Mr. Chairman, I've already talked about the East Hollis Street, in a roundabout way I think I've talked about all the bulleted items. This just kind of gives you an overview as to what it is that my office has been working on but I'd love to hear from the group as to what it is maybe that you'd like to see come out of my office, that you are not seeing as well.

Alderman Clemons

Director Cummings, can you take that map and go up towards the end of the Nashua Airport?

Mr. Cummings

Yes.

Alderman Clemons

Actually go down just a little bit. So there's a road that connects Perimeter Road with Amherst Street and currently it goes around the very end of the runway, it's right there. I can't remember the name of the street, Deerwood Street, Deerwood Drive. It's gated as well before you get to the railroad tracks. So right now there are some condos and things up off Amherst Street. But I wonder, you know, there's two things. One is that the need for a new Fire Station is coming down the pike I would assume just with the way that the City is growing. That street although you can connect it does connect all the way down, it currently a dirt road or a gravel road and it's got lots of potholes. It is literally Deerwood all the way down to Perimeter and then there's a gate.

I am wondering if your office has had any discussion on that road at all? With the way that the traffic is right now, that could potentially open up a new way to get around in the City. The infrastructure is already there, and I think part of it is we'd probably have to talk to the airport authority but the infrastructure is already there for that road. I don't know if that was even on your radar at all but I have always, even if it was just to leave it a gated road but have it paved so the Fire Department could use?

I have always wanted or desired to have that road paved to act as a faster connection for the Fire Department or ambulances to get up to Amherst Street, that portion of Amherst Street when there's something going on. The Fire Station is right there.

Mr. Cummings

Is the crossing already in place?

Alderman Clemons

Yeah.

Mr. Cummings

So the crossing is there, that's half the battle then that's interesting. I will look at this, no, no one has talked to me about this but that's, I appreciate you bringing it to my attention.

Alderman Clemons

Yeah I mean I think for the neighborhood that is in the back there, I think there might be concern but the idea would be that it wouldn't necessarily open up to that neighborhood. It would instead go and funnel down Perimeter Road.

Mr. Cummings

To there, connect there, that's Perimeter.

Alderman Clemons

Yes and see where all the airport buildings are? I think there's actually a connection where that red line is that goes down. My point is, is I think there's a massive opportunity there that we should explore because I think opening up connectivity to that part of the City is important and we have something that is pretty much half way there to do it. So I would be interested in that anyway.

Alderman Schmidt

I think you will find that the FAA will deny this I think that's the reason that the gate is there. I believe that they are trying to expand at this point rather than to have anybody crossing so close to where planes are landing. We can check but the last time I checked on it, the FAA was frowning upon anything closing in on their runways.

Alderman Clemons

I mean I can see that, the runway is a little further down. I know they are expanding but I think the conversation is worth having at least with them because to me, like I said, to me we are half way there.

Alderman Schmidt

Trust me if that was there, it would save me tons of time, because I am just up the street from there.

Alderman Clemons

Well let's look into it.

Mr. Cummings

Definitely.

Alderman Laws

I wouldn't be surprised in any way if Alderman Schmidt was 100% correct on that. But I think it's a great idea. I've spent more time than I'd like to admit hanging out in that field when I was in high school. I think it's a great opportunity. So I giggled when Alderman Clemons asked to go near the airport because I thought he was going to bring up Daniel Webster College.

Mr. Cummings

So Daniel Webster College is privately owned, in good standing on their taxes and my understanding is the plan is to, how do I describe it? I'm probably not going to describe it as artfully as it probably could be. But essentially an international high school to help students with a year of their high school education before they transfer on to a college or university that they've been accepted to is the current business plan for the site. So individuals who are overseas, a year up whatever the case may be, who are going to matriculate to a higher ed university, in the United States in theory, but probably New England. But they need to spend an extra year, not necessarily strengthening their academics, but maybe strengthening their English proficiency would come to this site and go to school here for like a prep year before they would go on to a college or university. So that is the current business plan for the site.

Alderman Laws

Is there a timeline for that?

Mr. Cummings

It is happening now.

Alderman Laws

They are already renovating it?

Mr. Cummings

Yes.

Alderman Schmidt

Do you know how many students?

Mr. Cummings

Very limited, 10, 20. My understanding is they just renovated one or two dorm buildings to accommodate the demand that they had. Once they get that going I think the plan would be to try to bring as many in as possible, but right now starting with 1 or 2. One or two buildings have occupancy permits.

Alderwoman Lu

Is that a non-profit college?

Mr. Cummings

No.

Alderman Schmidt

That means they'll continue to pay their taxes.

Chairman Tencza

Anything else? Any other comments, questions or concerns? No. Director Cummings thank you very much for being there this evening. You've given us a lot to work on over the next two years and I am sure the list will only grow as we get going here. So thank you very much for taking the time and being here tonight.

Mr. Cummings

Thank you.

PUBLIC COMMENT – NoneREMARKS FROM THE ALDERMENChairman Tencza

So I'll just say that this is a great list, great place to start. I think my hope as Chairman of Committee is that if there is, or if you have an interest in one or two of the topics, that maybe we can divvy them up as a Committee and people will stay on top or be the point person or kind of the expert on those fields, and then report back to the Committee so that we all understand what is going on and stay informed so we can kind of keep on top of these projects and make sure that if Director Cummings or anyone else needs our input, they will certainly have it. We will have a way to get that to him.

The next meeting I think Director Marchant will be here to talk about the planning side of Planning & Economic Development. There is plenty going on there too with the Master Plan and we will go into that over the next four years really but as we start the next two years. So there is going to be plenty to do in this Committee. It's a great start and looking forward to getting a lot of things done and moving things out to the rest of the Board.

If there is nothing else, I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

POSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION – NoneADJOURNMENT**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAWS TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws
Committee Clerk



To: D. Tenza, Chair of Planning & Economic Development ("PEDC")
From: T. Cummings, Economic Development Director
Cc: Members of Planning & Economic Development
Date: January 21, 2020
Re: **General Conversation about Economic Development - Overview**

Background & Purpose:

This meeting is to have a general discussion and outline some of the many priorities and project my office is currently or plan to be working on over the coming year(s).

Projects – Issues – Assignments - Committees

- Performing Arts Center
- Mohawk Tannery
- Revolving Loan Fund ("RLF")
- Downtown Riverfront TIF
- School or High Street Parking
- Passenger Rail
- East Hollis Street/Bridge Street Traffic Improvement Project
- Millyard Land Disposition – Concept Plan – Redevelopment
- Renaissance Downtowns Project – Phase II
- Market & Attract Investment (BRE/Commercial Real Estate)

Parking – In general

- Downtown Parking Management Plan
- Deferred Capital Maintenance Assessment
- Consolidated Parking into a new Department
- Unlocking the potential of the City's Parking Assets for downtown redevelopment

Downtown Redevelopment

- Continue To Use the Arts, Culture and Entertainment as an anchor for redeveloping Main Street, i.e. 14 Court Street
 - Identify Underperforming Assets In the Inner Core and Seek Out Economic Investment
 - Bring More Residential Housing
 - Make Downtown a mixed-use environment activating the area for longer periods of time
- Elm Street Middle School – Disposition
 - Bring More Housing – Multifamily Residential Development
 - Housing Study
 - East Holli Street TIF

**The above list is outlined in no particular order*