



Town of Hopkinton

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 25, 2022 – 12:30 P.M.

Hopkinton Town Library

Members Present: Andrea Folsom, Jim Fredyma, Ian Hart, Meredith Lee, Greg Sagris
Public Present: Brian Cressy, Judith Hull, Sara Lightner
Staff Present: Anna Wells

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Folsom called the meeting to order at 12:35pm.

Greg Sagris made a motion, seconded by Meredith Lee, to allow Ian Hart to join the meeting remotely. There was no discussion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Andrea Folsom	Yes
Jim Fredyma	Yes
Meredith Lee	Yes
Greg Sagris	Yes

MOTION PASSED 4-0.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

1. Community Heart & Soul

The committee was joined in person by Judith Hull, Program Coach/Facilitator of Community Heart & Soul, and via Zoom by Sara Lightner, Senior Director of Community Heart & Soul. Ms. Hull provided the Committee with an overview of the program principles and phases, and what it would entail should Hopkinton choose to undertake the process. Her presentation is appended to these minutes and additional information about this program can be found at www.communityheartandsoul.org.

Following the presentation, the committee members asked questions. Ms. Folsom noted that the process is designed to be data driven, and asked whether the organization provides guidance and examples for the community surveys used to gather the data. Ms. Hull replied that they do provide examples and ideas for questions to ask during the interview phase as well as for designing online surveys for wider audiences. Ms. Lightner also informed the group that CH&S uses a spreadsheet system that helps organize and quantify the data.

Mr. Sagris asked on average how long each phase takes. Ms. Hull and Ms. Lightner responded that the whole process takes around 18-24 months.

Ms. Lee inquired whether there is a recommended number of volunteers for the initial phase. Ms. Hull and Ms. Lightner responded that the size of the core leadership team is approximately 7-10 people, but that the size of the overall group involved will expand and shrink depending on the needs of each particular phase and the interests and availability of the volunteers. Ms. Lightner explained that the

commitment from any particular volunteer varies widely, summing it up with the phrase, “Got a minute? Got a morning? Got a month?” She also added that all volunteer hours are tracked, and the makeup of the core leadership team should be demographically representative of the town’s residents.

Ms. Lee also asked how the Project Coordinator is paid. Ms. Hull and Ms. Lightner responded that often that role is taken on by someone who is already a town employee, sometimes someone volunteers for the position; there are different models from different towns/cities around the country.

Ms. Lee asked for recommendations for how best to inform the public about the program’s efforts. Ms. Hull and Ms. Lightner responded that most often, cities and towns will create a Facebook page or group for the Community Heart & Soul program. They added that many different ways should be pursued for reaching people, not just web-based.

Ms. Folsom asked whether, after going through the process, is there some sort of special designation the Town would receive. The answer was, yes, Hopkinton would be “A Community Heart & Soul town.” Ms. Lee inquired about the origin of the strategies depicted in some of the slides in Ms. Hull’s presentation. Ms. Hull and Ms. Lightner responded that many are featured in the CH&S Workbook, but that many ideas also arise from collaboration among the volunteers. Additionally, there is a bimonthly Zoom call during which anyone involved in CH&S from around the country can share and collect ideas.

Mr. Hart asked if there were examples of when the process didn’t quite work out or ended up leading to widespread community disagreement. Ms. Lightner gave an example of when a community could not gather enough people to form a viable core group of volunteers. She also explained that at times, difficult issues are raised, but that it’s important not to ignore folks’ concerns, as those issues can often inform how to make things better in a community. She said it’s important to remember that, while there are broad goals around building community pride and involvement, the process doesn’t have an agenda; there is no end goal to accomplish a particular project or political goal. Mr. Hart also asked how to take on this process while also not putting other projects or goals on hold while the CH&S process unfolds. Ms. Hull and Ms. Lightner assured the group that many things can happen concurrently, recognizing the fact that every municipality has ongoing responsibilities they must uphold in a timely manner. However, as the CH&S process progresses, it can provide guidance on where a municipality might focus. Furthermore, the process can uncover ideas and strategies that may not necessarily be a direct responsibility of the municipality; it may be discovered that other groups are willing and able to take on other efforts.

At this time, the Committee thanked Ms. Hull and Ms. Lightner for their time, and the guests left the meeting. The EDC had a brief discussion about whether to engage in the CH&S process. Concerns centered around the capacity of the members of the EDC to undertake such an effort at this time and the length of the process. The group felt that starting with a shorter, more focused effort, such as the UNH Downtowns and Trails program might be a better fit for the near term. The EDC will pick up this discussion at the next meeting.

2. Riverway Park & Contoocook Village Revitalization

a. Parking lot

Ms. Wells updated the Committee on the status of repaving the parking lot at Riverway Park (where the Gazebo is located). The Shoreland Protection Permit the Town submitted to the Department of Environmental Service was approved. The Committee expressed thanks to Ms. Wells for her work to secure that permit. Ms. Wells explained that the work is being held up, however, by a shortage of granite curbing throughout the region. The project includes installation of granite curbing in 2 areas to help delineate and protect the grassy area of the park from the paved parking spots. The Town’s DPW Director has explained to Ms. Wells that in order to get a good seal, the curbing should be installed prior to the paving, otherwise grass will grow in the cracks and water will get in and freeze and buckle the pavement. The EDC discussed the use of other methods and materials instead of the granite curbing, and instructed Ms. Wells to suggest to DPW that they explore other options to try to get the paving completed this fall.

Ms. Wells explained that if the project has to be put off until the spring of 2023, the hope is to encumber the funds from this year's budget for the project, to reduce the risk of not being able to accomplish the project in the spring. The EDC Members expressed their gratitude for this forward thinking. Ms. Wells will update the Select Board at their next meeting.

b. Park cleanup

The EDC and Ms. Wells then discussed other projects that could be undertaken to spruce up the park. One is to clean up around and behind the Section House. The Committee also shared concerns about the fire hazard posed by the wood-burning stove inside the structure. Ms. Wells will investigate these issues.

c. Abenaki Trails Project Sculpture

Ms. Wells shared that she has met with a few folks from the Abenaki Trails Project, who have commissioned a sculpture they would like to place in the park. They believe they have found a mutually agreeable location for the sculpture, which is a bas-relief sculpture mounted on a boulder. The group plans to unveil the sculpture on Indigenous People's Day on October 10. Ms. Wells will brief the Select Board on this effort at their next meeting.

d. NHDOT Ten Year Plan Project Proposal

Ms. Wells explained the NH DOT's Ten Year Plan Process, and that Central NH Regional Planning Commission is requesting project proposals for the next TYP round. Ms. Wells has discussed several options with Planning Director Karen Robertson, Town Administrator Neal Cass, and the Transportation Planner at CNHRPC and all are in agreement that the project that should be put forward is to rework the Fountain Square intersection in Contoocook Village, to include repair and construction of sidewalks and crosswalks. The ultimate decision is to be made by the Select Board; Ms. Wells will brief the Select Board at their next meeting. The EDC strongly supports that the inclusion of this intersection in the next Ten Year Plan. Ms. Wells thanked the Committee for their support and asked them to take a vote to that effect.

Greg Sagris made a motion that the Economic Development Committee endorse the submission of Fountain Square (the intersection of Maple St (NH127) and Main St (NH103)) as a Ten Year Plan Project Proposal. Meredith Lee seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Andrea Folsom	Yes
Jim Fredyma	Yes
Ian Hart	Yes
Meredith Lee	Yes
Greg Sagris	Yes

MOTION PASSED 5-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Greg Sagris made a motion to approve the Economic Development Committee minutes of August 1, 2022 with one edit to reflect that Ms. Lee was not present. Jim Fredyma seconded. There was no further discussion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Andrea Folsom	Yes
Jim Fredyma	Yes
Ian Hart	Yes
Meredith Lee	Abstain

Greg Sagris Yes
MOTION PASSED 4-0 with 1 abstention.

At this time, Mr. Hart left the meeting.

OTHER

Next Meeting Date(s):

a. Tuesday September 6 12:30pm @ Hopkinton Town Library

NON-PUBLIC SESSION - RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) Personnel

Ms. Folsom moved to go into a nonpublic session under the provisions of Nonpublic Session RSA 91-A: 3 II (a). Mr. Sagris seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Andrea Folsom	Yes
Jim Fredyma	Yes
Meredith Lee	Yes
Greg Sagris	Yes

MOTION PASSED 4-0

The Committee went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately, at 1:45 p.m. The Committee returned to public session at 1:55 p.m.

These minutes were not sealed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Fredyma made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Sagris. There was no discussion. Motion carried 4-0, Mr. Hart having previously left the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 1:55pm.