

Economic Development Advisory Committee
Date: 03/17/21
Town of Hooksett Municipal Building,
Time: 5:00 PM
Minutes

1 **CALL TO ORDER@ 5:03**

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3 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: 5:03**

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5 **ATTENDANCE: David Scarpetti-Chair, Jim Sullivan-Council Rep, Alden Beauchemin, Mark**
6 **Chagnon, Matt Barrett, Paul Scarpetti**

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8 **STAFF & OTHER DEPARTMENTS, Nicholas Williams-Town Planner**

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10 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES 02/17/2021: Motion to approve made by Jim Sullivan 2nd by Mark**
11 **Chagnon as written. All approved motion passes**

12

13 **DISCUSSION:**

14 **1.) Exit 11 proposal: ZBA Decision**

15

16 **David S** a Variance was approved by ZBA for a warehouse at on the west side. it was a long
17 presentation and discussion by the board and abutters. The applicant was represented by
18 John Cronin,

19 **Alden B** added it is important for the EDAC to be involved and show support for this project
20 and had we not gotten involved that application may not have been approved. There were
21 legitimate issues by the abutters that the ZBA listened to and discussed with the applicant
22 and the variance came with conditions addressing some of those concerns.

23 **Jim S** what were the conditions that they added to their approval and what about the lot in
24 front for access.

25 **David S** ZBA wants the access closer to the east.

26 **Nicholas W** yes, to keep It lined up with the Pike access. They had conditions of noise too

27 **Mark C** who are the owners of the other lot? I have heard they may want to build a
28 restaurant.

29 **David S** we may have them come in and talk with us about those lots and what ideas they
30 have for it.

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31 **Mark whatever they want to do with that land and it is zoning approved then that's what**
32 **it is.**

33 **2) Vacant Buildings in town:**

34 **Nicholas W** we have several buildings with vacant space, The Kmart Plaza, Animal Crackers,
35 Regal and Cinemagic Cinemas are just a few I will be going to Town Council on the 24th with the
36 presentation to adopt RSA 72:80 – 83 Commercial and Industrial Construction Tax Exemption and a
37 lot of those properties may be eligible I would like to get something in the Master Plan as we
38 struggle with our brick n mortar spaces. Now we have Cinemagic, Regal that are both vacant.
39 What is an adaptive reuse strategy for these buildings? They sit and deteriorate and come off
40 tax rolls. So, what is an alternative use, thinking outside the box for these building. If we adopt
41 a commercial side plan and adopt these places to help the owners find alternative uses. Maybe
42 not retail but ideas that reflect what the town's needs are and how we can use these buildings
43 to meet them. Maybe medical facilities or special event spaces.

44 **Mark C** the Kmart space is being developed. I have talked with the owner. They know they have
45 to go through planning with the town.

46 **Paul S** would it have to go through Planning Board?

47 **Nicholas W** no it would have to go through Occupancy Review.

48 **Mark C** my fear is that it may hurt another business we have in town that have similar use.

49 **Jim S** we can't discourage other businesses that may create completion. We want development
50 but we can't cut off our nose by allowing one in and then we lose one. The adaptive use ideas
51 that Nicholas is talking about is a good idea to explore.

52 **Paul S** competition may push them to move forward with their bigger ideas

53 **Mark C** where my head is at with these plazas is to have an ownership group that is thinking
54 ahead with a plan. Maybe we can invite the plaza owners in and help them brainstorm to
55 redevelop with a plan. Mark provided some examples of some plazas in Hooksett and
56 Manchester that have a master plan and they have turned their vacant spaces around and are
57 full and successful now. Maybe we can help them to come up with a plan

58 **David S** the Cinemas have had churches using them on weekends. Maybe comedy clubs can use
59 those spaces.

60 **Mark C** and again it takes the owners to come up with plans

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61 **Nicholas W** the owners could get creative if we have more allowable use for some of these
62 spaces. We don't want to limit the parcel owners with getting creative because of our
63 ordinances. We don't want to shy away with more mixed use in these larger spaces. Maybe
64 have residential components or medical facilities.

65 **Alden B** CIGNA building has sold. Has anyone heard what may be going in there?

66 **Jim S** I saw several cars there for the first time in a while and Nicholas is right that we should
67 consider help with uses. We have been a bit picky in the past. We have to be adaptive and not
68 turn people away but help them find solutions. Maybe through TRC with the town and
69 departments can help them find the ways to work

70 **Nicholas W** the technical review is more about the proposed plans that are provided and to
71 make sure that the applicant has everything right before going to Planning Board.

72 **David S** we have tried to streamline things so that the process is easier.

73 **Nicholas W** what cost people the most time is that they want to try doing something on a
74 parcel that the zoning doesn't allow. I don't know how we avoid that other than looking at our
75 ordinances.

76 **Mark C** is it the property owner that does not understand the zoning?

77 **Nicholas W** yes and the demand for housing right now is the main question There are not a lot
78 of parcels available, so they are requesting residential to everything.

79 **Mark C** is it single family they are asking for condos?

80 **Nicholas W** multifamily and duplexes.

81 **Mark C** and how do they react when they find out not allowed

82 **Nicholas W** they immediately what to submit for a use variance. I tell them they can petition
83 too but It takes time and it is a one shot annually. If someone see property for sale they want to
84 jump on it not wait for our processes.

85 **Paul S** and sometimes they propose mixed use and we are in favor then they come back and
86 take out one use. Its an issue when you have approved it in a commercial zone and they only

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87 build the residential part and then you can understand why the other commercial property
88 owners in that area get upset.

89 **David S** we have had 7 applications that got the rewarded ERZ credits. We have 6 ERZ in
90 Hooksett that business can receive a tax credit. The credit comes from the state, not the town

91 **Peter S** is there a size requirement?

92 **Nicholas W** explained the requirements

93 **David S asked** the committee if they had any other ideas for vacant spaces or for ideas that
94 would help those landlords?

95 **Nicholas W** it's up to the landlords, we don't want to impede them, we need to know who or
96 what kind of tenant they are looking and will they have to jump through a lot of hoops for uses
97 to bring to the town. I may have to reach out to the owners and have a round table discussion.

98 **David S** have them come here and we can talk with them and give ideas and research with
99 them to help fill their vacancies.

100 **Alden B** yes could we have one visit each month, come in and meet with us?

101 **Nicholas W** maybe the managers of RK management that owns Kmart, they are located in
102 Massachusetts, maybe we can get them in.

103 **Jim S** the 5 zoning Warrant Article changes to the Performance Zone. Can you tell me about the
104 changes, were we removing the zone?

105 **Nicholas W** it was the PZ lots off Martins Ferry Road. Rezoning several small lots that were not
106 big enough for commercial development and that should return to residential, we zoned them
107 MDR

108 **3) Branding**

109 **David S** we have talked a lot about it but never did anything. Andre talked with me about signs
110 in Londonderry and what they say. We are looking at purchasing welcome to Hooksett signs
111 and maybe we should come up with ideas as what to say (brand our town)? We have our
112 Bicentennial Celebration coming up and Town Council would like these sign up.

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114 **Jim S** like a slogan? In the 70s we had one. I think that would be great. Maybe something to
115 promote businesses. "Hooksett the center of it all" "History meets progress" add a contest to
116 the Bicentennial Event.

117 **David S** we would have to talk with TC of the ideas that we come up with

118 **Alden B** involve the kids. If our Bicentennial is coming that would be great to do something
119 special.

120 **David S** we will talk more about this at our next meeting and try to come up with an idea and
121 suggestions. Should we put it in the union leader, Concord monitor press release?

122 **4.) Development Updates Nicholas Williams:**

123 **The Dominos Plaza has completed TRC and submitting to PB in April. Blue Bird Self Storage**
124 **has been approved. Nothing has been submitted for Old Chinese Restaurant site.**

125 **Jim S** Would our new code enforcement officer can come in and introduce himself to us?

126 ***Request for management of Kmart or the cinemas be invited to come in a talk with EDAC.***
127 ***Also bring ideas for Branding***

128 **Motion to Adjourn @ 6:08 made by Alden Beauchemin 2nd by Matt Barrett**

129

130 **Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathy Lawrence**