

**Economic Development Advisory Committee**

**Date: 06/16/21**

**Town of Hooksett Municipal Building,**

**Time: 5:00 PM**

**Minutes**

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

2

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

4

5 **ATTENDANCE: David Scarpetti-Chair, Jim Sullivan-Council Rep, Alden Beauchemin, Matt**  
6 **Barrett, Peter Stoddard, Michele Gannon, Ivan Gult**

7

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

9

10 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES 05/12/2021: Motion to approve made by Jim Sullivan, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Matt**  
11 **Barrett as written. All approved, motion passes**

12

13 **DISCUSSION:**

14 **1.) Current state of brick and mortar: Kenneth Fries w/RK Centers**

15 **Kenneth Fries:** with RK Centers Real-estate owner and developer. Traditionally I own and  
16 manage grocery anchored retail shopping centers. I have been in business for 30 yrs. bought  
17 and sold all around country primarily focused on the northeast. RK has owned the Kmart Plaza  
18 for 15-20 yrs. And at this time with the Kmart closing, we have lost quite a few smaller tenants.  
19 We are in the process of marketing the property, but we have not had a lot of luck and what is  
20 adding to that is the retail tenants we have to the other side of Hooksett. I met a few weeks ago  
21 with your town Planner Nicholas and we discussed different options we can look into. Any  
22 suggestions this committee may have I am here to listen to.

23 **Jim S** are you familiar with the Maple Tree Mall in Manchester? They did a complete overhaul  
24 of the design, and it seems to help to fill those smaller shops. The overhaul was more attractive  
25 and that helped.

26 **Ken F** it is not a case that we would not spend the money for an overhaul, the anchor is what  
27 you would want to do the overhaul to but we need to know the tenant. Kmart still has a lease  
28 and there was not much of an intent to stay. Are hands are tied with a lease.

29 **Jim S** that does create issues. Does Kmart intend to seek someone to come in and lease?

30 **Ken F** they have hired a broker out of Mass that is very qualified. I don't know what their intent  
31 is but they want us to write a big check to get back our space.

32 **Jim S** would it help to write a letter of support?

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33 **Ken F** I appreciate that but anyone that cares is long gone. Kmart is looking to take the assets  
34 and squeeze as much as they can. With the lease they control the space. If I do find a use, I have  
35 to bring it to them and give them money to buy out the lease. They are not doing anything they  
36 are not supposed to, it just hurts the smaller tenant spaces within it and they need an anchor  
37 store to bring in shoppers. Large retailers like Market Basket when they locate within a market  
38 they force small users out too.

39 **David S** Maple Tree also did the parking lot and I think that helped a lot. The flow of the lot  
40 works so much better.

41 **Michele G** I think Maple Tree is full now along with the Hannaford Plaza, so where are the rest  
42 looking for space going to lease.

43 **Peter S** has the parking lot at the Kmart Plaza been fixed?

44 **Ken F** yes at our expense

45 **David S** how many more years does Kmart hold the lease?

46 **Ken F** they could have it for another 40-50 years

47 **Alden B** your parking lot could handle another restaurant

48 **Ken F** it's interesting that we have the 1 shopping center that doesn't have an anchor. We are  
49 willing to make deals with the smaller shops just to keep them there.

50 **David S** on the community fb page there is a community blog that has lots of ideas for that  
51 space a popular one is a Christmas Tree Shop

52 **Ken F** that is part of the Bed Bath and Beyond corp., but they are in the process of closing  
53 several stores, not opening more. When you do a deal with the big anchors as tenants in other  
54 malls, they have radius clauses in their leases, and they can't have another store to near by.

55 **David S** what about the carting interest for the Kmart building?

56 **Ken F** We had a call recently and it has hung out there but nothing has moved forward.

57 **David S** it would be a great use.

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58 **Ken F** this has been a difficult time and our tenants are still trying to get out of the black. The  
59 cart option needs a 2<sup>nd</sup> structure for it to work and it takes someone to understand  
60 entertainment to work with other venues. The revenue won't come from the carts it will be the  
61 bar, liquor and ancillaries. Industrial is paying more per sq ft and it is coming north. It is paying  
62 as much as big box retail. We are in the PZ so that would be a permitted use.

63 **Michell G** if they have 40 more years and you get their rent what is driving you to lease it out?

64 **Ken F** the small stores need an anchor. We need to keep the small stores we have. We would  
65 like to see a gym where the hockey store was.

66 **Peter S** would Kmart be willing to sub lease even part of the building?

67 **Ken F** It is not cheap to cut a big building up. It can cost up to a \$M for a small fit-up we would  
68 rather keep it one use.

69 **Michelle G so what is ideal?**

70 **Matt B** self-storage?

71 **Ken F** it is a good idea, we have talked with some. We may have missed the boat on self-storage  
72 or U-Haul at this point. That would not help the small shops though because it would not bring  
73 a lot of shopper in. I also don't see mixed use there. We have gone through a lot of  
74 conversation over the 10-15 years that this has been going on, we have tried to think of many  
75 options.

76 **Alden B** a trend of mixed use is moving forward on another properties in town.

77 **Ken F** I look at what you have on that strip. Shaw's gets by like we get by, when you try to take  
78 a property that has tenants you work to keep what you have and get more density on the  
79 property. We don't want to kick everyone out and rebuild. We have hired brokers that will be  
80 coming in and showing the space.

81 **Michele G** How many sqft of space is there in the building?

82 **Ken F** 14,000 in Kmart

83 **Jim S** so finding a tenant for re-adaptive uses and you mentioned IND, that would require  
84 rezoning? But the key is to draw people, volume is needed to help the other stores.

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85 **Ken F** If someone calls with a use, we will have a conversation.

86 **Jim S** if we can help in any way we will, and it is good to see the mechanics of what you're  
87 working with.

88 **David S** what if the ceiling clearance? Is this property in the revitalization zone.? Or can they  
89 take advantage of the tax credit we just adopted?

90 **Ken F** 14 - 16 feet clear we would need 18 – 20 ft clearance for gymnastics

91 **Peter S** you only have 3% vacancy of all your properties?

92 **Ken F** yes, there is a secret about Amazon that is the return rate will be the death of internet  
93 sales. The retail that takes the returns will pick up the products at a good discount because it is  
94 not viable to pay the return shipping on all the returns

95 **Peter S** so Kmart is not considered a vacancy?

96 **Ken F** probably not but it is. Our Florida properties are at a 100% occupied.

97 **Michele G** how about medical or rehab?

98 **Ken F** that would be good and they are a good they tend to be a long-time tenant

99 **Michele G** I work with someone looking for sports complex, but your ceiling height is a problem

100 **Ken F** yes, it is but baseball training or hockey training is a good fit. We could do more, but the  
101 building columns also get in the way.

102 **David S** we will come up with some ideas. Keep thinking on it

103 **Matt B** so the reality is we could have an empty Kmart for a long time. Now I see why they are  
104 still there.

105 **Ken F** I have 30 years of trying to think outside the box something will come along. The state  
106 has a web site we can list our property on and we need to coordinate with that.

107 **Nicholas W** I wanted Ken to come in and help our land use boards think about new uses. It is in  
108 PZ and as discussed IND non nuisance he could have there but he needs foot traffic.

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109 ***Alden Beauchemin shared proposed plans for 2 projects in town. 1) #400 Technology Drive***  
110 ***and 2) Cigna building recently purchased by Brady Sullivan @ 2 College Park Dr:***  
111

112 **Alden B** 2 College Park Dr has been to ZBA for a variance to convert the commercial building to  
113 an 81-unit residential apartment building. They handed out a design of their concept to convert  
114 it was very impressive and this is a big plus to the village area. The rest of the plan for their site  
115 is some commercial and mixed development. They made an interesting point that from an  
116 economic standpoint, we are always pushing the commercial component be developed first but  
117 you can't have successful commercial without the residential. A support letter would go a long  
118 way to see this move along.

119 **Michele G** how will that impact our schools?

120 **Nicholas W** the proposal shows a majority will be 1 bedroom.

121 **David S** Brady Sullivan does a great job with their buildings there should be a component of  
122 affordable housing a certain percentage should be part of it.

123 **Nicholas W** we are anticipating that a planned unit proposal will come to the Planning Board  
124 and town and show the composition of use for the space, but we have not gotten into those  
125 conversations yet

126 **Michele G** they have been great with what they have done in Manchester and they have a great  
127 track record, if they want to come here that is awesome. What is the projected timeline?

128 **Nicholas W** as soon as possible.

129 ***Motion to send a Letter to the ZBA that Economic Development Advisory Board is in support***  
130 ***of the 2 College Park Dr. 81-unit residential apartment building conversion made by Matt***  
131 ***Barrett, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Alden Beauchemin. All in favor. Motion carries***

132 **Peter S** can the letter say anything about adding affordable housing?

133 **David S** should we add about the addition of carports to?

134 **Nicholas W** you can but it will have to be more specific to the Planning Board.

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135 **Alden B** the 2<sup>nd</sup> (#400 Technology Dr) property is the proposed parking lot at exit 10. Amazon is  
136 currently looking for parking for their vans and employee cars there. Alden shared 2 plans to  
137 board. The sites have been vacant for a long time. Given the ledge there the difficulties to  
138 develop it for any use is a problem. This concept is a win win, to start with a parking lot any  
139 development that makes it shovel ready is encouraging to future development. The tax value to  
140 the town is 10,000 annually, when they do the parking lot it will go up another 14,000. Not  
141 much but it is going in the right direction. It will open the doors to more development and a lot  
142 more tax value. The players are in line right now, they are before ZBA and ultimately PB, they  
143 could use a letter of support as well.

144 **Michele G** is this Amazon?

145 **Alden B** Amazon is renting the parking spots right now sub leasing and with no organization this  
146 would be a chance to consolidate and add better management to their parking.

147 **Michele G** what are the proposed building?

148 **Alden B** those are just showing possible buildings, there is nothing at this time.

149 **Peter S** what is the reason for going to ZBA?

150 **Nicholas W** The parking is an accessory use, on the same lot they don't have a principle use so  
151 the parking lot is not an allowable use.

152 **David S** The Richmond Co is talking about bringing the sewer line up there too.

153 **Jim S** is this package going to be presented.

154 **Alden B** this is still just potential we need to make sure we are clear with the sewer proposal.

155 **Nicholas W** I can't comment much because they are before ZBA at this point, and I believe their  
156 intent is to phase development with the project.

157 **David S** this start would make the site more desirable for development.

158 **Michele G** sometimes they get what they want and then it never gets done.

159 **Alden B** do we want this property to sit vacant for another 20 yrs? We want to keep Amazon  
160 here.

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161 **Peter S** what is the worst case, we have a parking lot if Amazon moves out? No one even knows  
162 its there.

163 **Alden B** the important part is that they are talking of bringing sewer and maybe water

164 **Jim S** and if it does get developed and they see that there is sewer there and a parking lot. It  
165 looks more desirable.

166 ***Motion by Matt Barrett to provide a letter to Richmond Co that Hooksett Economic***  
167 ***Development Advisory Board supports the concept of the project as long as they level the site***  
168 ***and bring sewer to the site. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim Sullivan***

169 ***Alden asked about developments of the rail trial developments supported by Manchester***  
170 ***moves.***

171 **Nicholas W** Councilor Walczyk is involved, and they are working on a concept. It is on our radar,  
172 but we don't know all the players yet, I will talk with him tomorrow.

173 **David S** Jim Sullivan has a slogan idea as a contest for our Hooksett welcome signs we are in  
174 working on. His idea is to get the town involved. How do we get this organized and off the  
175 ground?

176 ***Jim Sullivan read thoughts he had written down to the committee:***

177 **In celebration of our upcoming 200<sup>th</sup> Bicentennial in 2022, the Hooksett Economic**  
178 **Development Committee is holding a town slogan competition.**

179 **The goal of the slogan is to promote the town of Hooksett from a business, economical,**  
180 **historical and/or residential point of view. The committee will be seeking suggestions (a start**  
181 **date is to be determined).**

182 **The committee will make its selection based on originality, creativeness that captures the**  
183 **best of Hooksett.**

184 **We welcome all submissions and look forward to the friendly slogan competition as a lead**  
185 **into our town's yearlong celebration of our 200<sup>th</sup> birthday.**

186 **Please submit your suggestions to Nicholas Williams, Town Planner.**

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187 **Jim S** I think it would be a good idea for EDAC to be part of it and planning maybe can get  
188 information on the web site. Not just the signs but a slogan for the town too.

189 **Michele G** would it be beneficial to get Cawley Middle School involved?

190 **David S** who at Cawley would be willing to get involved?

191 **Michele G** the Builders Club.

192 **Jim S** then we should let them know.

193 *Jim Sullivan made a motion, Hooksett Economic Development Committee recommend and*  
194 *propose a town slogan contest be used in promoting Hooksett business, economical, historical*  
195 *and/or residential points of view. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Michele Gannon. All in favor.*

196 **Development update, Nicholas Williams:**

197 **Nicholas W** we received a proposal at 10 Eastpoint Dr. site of the Ravena cold storage  
198 property. They are interested in a 300,00 sqft distribution and warehouse facility.

199 **47 Hackett Hill – Granite Woods Commerce Center** has an application with the Planning Board  
200 **and will be heard Monday 6/21.**

201

202 **Motion to Adjourn @ 6:56 made by Matt Barrett**

203 **Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathy Lawrence**